

them to expound the dark mysteries and sayings of the prophets and Revelations, and the 9th of the Romans, which I believe contains some of those many things which, in Paul's epistles, Peter saith, were "hard to be understood;" I say none are more forward to dig in these mines than those that can hardly give a sound reason for the first principles of religion; and such as are ignorant of many more weighty things that are easily to be seen in the face and superficies of the Scripture; nothing will serve these but swimming in the deeps, when they have not yet learned to wade through the shallows of the Scriptures: like the Gnosticks of old, who thought they knew all things, though they knew nothing as they ought to know. And as those Gnosticks did of old, so do such teachers of late break the unity and peace of churches.

How needful then is it, that if we desire the peace of churches, that we choose out men of knowledge, who may be able to keep them from being shattered and scattered with every wind of doctrine: and who may be able to convince and stop the mouths of gainers.

(2.) You must not only choose men of counsel, but if you would design the unity and peace of the churches, you must choose men of courage to govern them; for as there must be wisdom to bear with some, so there must be courage to correct others: as some must be instructed meekly, so others must be rebuked sharply; that they may be sound in the faith; there must be wisdom to rebuke some with long-suffering, and there must be courage to suppress and stop the mouths of others. The apostle tells Titus of some whose mouths must be stopped, or else they would subvert whole houses, Titus i. 11. Where this courage hath been wanting, not only whole houses, but whole churches have been subverted. And Paul tells the Galatians, that when he saw some endeavour to bring the churches into bondage, that he did not give place to them, no not for an hour, &c., Gal. ii. 5. If this course had been taken by the rulers of churches, their peace had not been so often invaded by unruly and vain talkers.