

thing around them, even in the real existence of the material world; and finally this absurdity culminates in the disbelief of their own existence. "Thus professing themselves to be wise they become fools."

The apostles found all these errors prevailing in their day, and they had to encounter them in their ministry, quite as much as we have in the present day. They make frequent allusions to these noxious delusions. There were sceptics in the Jewish Church, who denied the resurrection, and the existence of angel or spirit. In Greece the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered Paul asking, "What will this babbler say?" And everywhere the Gospel messengers had to encounter the Gnostics or some other teachers of error. Truth was in continual conflict with false opinions; and even within the Churches themselves "men arose speaking perverse things." Hence those frequent admonitions to hold fast the form of sound words; and hence the special instruction to Timothy, Titus, and Christian teachers generally to beware of false doctrine, and to abide by the Scriptures as the oracles of God and the only standard of truth.

What, then, is *our* duty? Shall we substitute these theories for the Gospel? That would be to degrade our reason, by discarding the evidence of moral demonstration for mere speculation! Shall we so modify our theology as to make it conform to the opinion of some modern scientists? That would be to wrest the Scriptures and corrupt the Gospel as did the Gnostics, the Manichæans of old! Nearly all the errors which degraded and enfeebled Christianity after apostolic times, arose from attempts to make the Gospel quadrate with the philosophies of the day, and which have since, one after another, passed away. The experience of the ancient Church is loudly admonitory to the Church in the nineteenth century. It gives emphasis to the apostolic admonition, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments (*στοιχεῖα*, elements) of the world, and not after Christ." The Gospel was foolishness to philosophers of Greece and Rome in apostolic times; no wonder if it is so to the speculators of the present day. It is a thing to be expected. But our duty is plain. We must buy the truth and sell it not. We must ask for