

THE
SUFFICIENCY
OF THE
SPIRIT'S TEACHING
WITHOUT
HUMAN LEARNING:

OR
A TREATISE,
TENDING TO PROVE HUMAN LEARNING TO BE NO
HELP TO THE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING
OF THE WORD OF GOD.

BY SAMUEL HOW.

The Lord frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh the diviners
mad; he turneth the wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge fool-
ishness. Isai. xliv. 25.

FIRST SEEN, APPROVED, AND PRINTED, BY HIS FRIENDS,
IN THE YEAR 1639.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY E. HUNTINGTON, 55, HIGH STREET,
BLOOMSBURY.

1816.

To the Reader.— A Friend to this Treatise of
“The Sufficiency of the Spirit’s Teaching,” &c. by SAMUEL
How, thinks it requisite to let the Reader know the occasion
of the work.

Christian Reader;

THE occasion of the first preaching, printing, and publishing of this sermon, was as follows, as I have been credibly told by Mr. How’s successor and others, and as you may partly perceive by this epistle.

In the year 1639, Mr. John Goodwin, parson of Coleman Street, London, and others, said, that a man could not preach except he had human learning.

And he was answered the contrary; as for example, Samuel How could; and, for proof thereof, he might send him what text he pleased to preach on, and be at the hearing of it himself; accordingly Mr. Goodwin sent him this text in Peter.

Samuel How was well known, and preached in a meeting-place in Coleman Street, being a pastor of a christian people that were called Puritans; he had no school learning, being by trade a shoemaker, vulgarly called a cobbler; and worked at it to administer to his necessities, as the great apostle Paul did. His manner of studying on a

text was, as he sat in his shop, mending of shoes, his bible lay by him, and when he thought fit, he looked therein, and considered thereof.

Accordingly, at the time appointed, Samuel How preached, and John Goodwin heard; who, finding it confounded his former thoughts, he was therefore greatly offended, and said, 'Ye have made a calf, and dance about it;' whereat he was desired by Samuel How's friends to show wherein they had made a calf. But Mr. Goodwin went away in a huff.

It was therefore agreed, by Samuel How's friends, that the sermon should be preached over again, and printed, to prevent skander; so the sermon was preached again, and endeavours were used to print it at London; but Mr. Goodwin so prevailed, that all presses were stopt; Samuel How must have nothing printed. But the copy was sent into Holland, and printed, and the books brought into England; and the following post-script annexed to two former impressions, written after the death of the author, by Mr. Kyffen, minister; wherefore I may reckon this impression the sixth.

By this spiritual sermon, and the reprinting of it, people may still see by sacred text, as also now by every day's experience, that gospel preaching is not by God confined to scholars only, witness John Bunyan and others, as if preaching, as some suggest, were a kind of worldly trade; which clearly shews God's sovereignty, and that he rules

according to his own will; and as he is a spirit maker, so, against all opposers of the Spirit, he spirits whom he will for his work; and they shall stand against all the world, as Jeremiah did, like a brazen wall against the house of Israel, &c.

C. D.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING long before the death of Samuel How been acquainted with him, and tasted that spirit of light which God in his day did more than ordinarily pour out upon him, by which he was enabled to minister seasonable words to the refreshing of many weary souls, and also to contend against those corruptions and inventions which men brought into the worship of God, raging like the mighty waters, against all the servants of God which opposed them in the same; I mean the power which ruled in that day, the weight of whose persecutions, this author, while he lived, had his share of, and when he died, was not suffered to have that which they called christian burial; therefore his friends were forced to lay his body in the highway, as one that was numbered among the transgressors, of whom I may say, "the world was not worthy." My intent in writing this, is not to commend the author, but to tender to thy

review the matter of the following book; the bent whereof is to advance the teachings of the Spirit of Christ, in the unfolding of the mystery of the gospel to the hearts of men, as the choice Revealer of that glory of the truth to the soul, which will change it from glory to glory into his own likeness; a truth much opposed by men of corrupt minds in this day: and therefore it becomes all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, to stand upon their watch; and be earnestly begging of the Father of lights, for his Spirit, which may help them to judge of things that differ, and may lead them into straight paths, trying all things, and holding fast that which is good. Thou wilt find, in this Tract, the spirit of the author strongly and zealously contending for the advancement of the Spirit of Christ; which if therein thou meetest with any words that may seem harsh against that which men advance, let it not be an offence to thee, but try whether it be agreeable to the form of sound words or no. I shall detain thee no longer; but my desire to the Lord is, that all Israel may more and more know the truth as it is in Jesus, shining as the sun more to their perfect clearness, knowing the night is far past, and the day near approaching, so that we may walk as the children of the light, waiting for the glorious appearing of him that will come, and not tarry,

Yours, in the love of Christ,

W. KYFFEN.

**WHAT, *How!* How now? hath *How* such learning found,
 To throw art's curious image to the ground?
 Cambridge and Oxford may their glory now
 Vail to a *cobler*, if they know but *How*:
 Tho' big with art, they cannot overtop
 The Spirit's teaching in a *cobler's* shop.**

Reader, If thou an human artist be,
 Let human learning be no judge for thee;
 Lay down thine arts, then try this *cobler's end*,
 And see if it be by the Spirit penn'd.
 Mean time adieu, ye arts and artists all,
 The Spirit's teaching may attend the *awl*:
 And thou, brave *cobler*, blow another blast
 Upon their learning, though thou blow thy *last*.

R. O.

To all such as love the truth in sincerity ; Light, and understanding, be multiplied through Jesus Christ.

GOD's gracious promise it is, Christian Reader, 2 Thes. ii. 8, that by the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, he will reveal the man of sin, and son of perdition : Yet thus witnesseth the Spirit, that when it shall come to pass, Rev. xvi. 10, 11, the vial of God's wrath shall be poured upon the throne of the beast, to the darkening of his kingdom, and discovering of those strong delusions, whereby he hath long deluded the world ; then the men of that throne shall gnaw their tongues for sorrow, and shall blaspheme the God of heaven.

All which to me appears to be fulfilled and made good concerning this following Treatise : 1. That the Lord by his word, the breath of his mouth, having blown out some smoke of the bottomless pit, which I conceive to be human learning, and which is so much magnified, as being a help, whereby to understand the mind of God ; it did so vex and torment the men of the throne of the beast, that even the man himself, at whose request I was moved to open this portion of scripture, Mr. Goodwin, hath, as I am credibly informed, reported about this city that I made a calf, meaning a false and unsound exposition, and when I had so done, danced about it ;

exposing not only me but the truth which I had delivered, to the derision, contempt, and table-talk of such as wish to be deceived; who believe their learned teachers, as men call them, on their bare word, having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons, rather than to receive and justify the truth of God, if the messenger be weak and contemptible, though his message be in power, plainness, and demonstration of the Spirit; and not beautified with the excellency of speech, and swelling words of man's wisdom, which is enmity to God; it crosseth and opposeth the simplicity of his way, in the dispensation of the glorious mystery of the gospel. And therefore God hath said of it, as Simon Peter said to Simon Magus, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter," Acts viii. 21; 1. Cor. i. 12.

But yet, methinks, such men as would carry the shew of godliness should remember the counsel of the apostle, that such carriages are things not seemly; though, for my own part, I bless the Lord for it, being to me more strong confirmation that I have the truth on my side: for thus was Jesus Christ our Lord served by the wise and learned pharisees, when he taught them such doctrine as pleased them not: and thus was Paul, the preacher of righteousness, dealt with by the learned Athenians, for preaching Jesus and the resurrection, Acts xvii. 18. Likewise I read in Heb. xi. that this, in former times, was part of the trial that the Lord exercised his witnesses with, even mockings, ver. 36. And there-

fore, as our Saviour teacheth, I have in this case great cause to be glad and rejoice; for they having so served Jesus Christ my Lord, and his faithful followers; then what am I, that I should be one of that number, that have so large encouragement and reward promised? Matt. v. 12. I shall therefore quietly pass by all such things, and only with Job, in his distressed condition, crave that he and all you who have done these things against me will suffer me to speak, and when I have spoken, mock on, Job xxi. 3; for as the servant of God said, indeed, because "ye are the people, and wisdom must die with you," Job xii. 2; so will I make bold to say to you also. Yet, for all his understanding, and such others with him as heard me, they failed of zeal for God and his glory, in that they sought not to suppress and throw down that calf of dishonour, which must, if an idol, be a high provocation in the eyes of his glory. Mr. Goodwin having excepted against it when it was finished, and with much passion, manifested his great dislike thereof, before many witnesses; ought especially, being then lovingly requested by a friend that was there present, to instance, if not in all, yet at least in some particular scripture, wherein I had perverted it, seeing he had openly cast an aspersion on all that I had said; whereas neither he, nor any of his profession, though many were then present, did undertake that task; nor yet to this day hath he, or any of them, endeavoured to do it: so it may appear my error was none at all, that they could

prove; or else their zeal for God and his truth, and their charity to me and others, was very small. And if there were a calf, it was their human learning and wisdom, which the men of the throne of darkness set up, and themselves danced about it; whilst I, to their great grief and discontent, was labouring with all the power and might that God assisted me with, utterly to cast down, grind to powder, and to blow it away with the word of God, with the breath of his mouth. Whether it be thus, or no, I leave now to the judgement of all such as love and know the truth; not doubting but there will be some found, that out of love will reprove what is amiss, and so turn the sinner out of the error of his way, though some others, as Job saith, forge lies, as I could name divers, who are physicians of no value, Job xiii. 4.

For God, who knows the hearts of all men, knows that it was not my intent at all at that time to have meddled in this argument, nor with this scripture, till the night before I spake from it; and all because I knew if I did it would be offensive, as it hath proved; and what I did herein was by the advice of friends: but now I see that God's hand was in it, and I doubt not but for good; though it is, and may be my portion deeply to suffer for it. And for men to be offended at the truth, and such as declare it, is no new thing, even for the builders themselves to stumble at the stumbling stone, Psal. cxviii. 22; Acts iv. 11; Isa. viii. 14, 15. But, leaving all such to stand or fall to their own Lord,

something remains to be spoken concerning the matter following, for the preventing of such things as may farther be objected against it.

1. Though this sermon be the same in substance that it was at the first delivery, yet somewhat may be wanting, and is, which was then said; and more is added, in other respects, than at that time was spoken; which I thought fit to give notice of. 2. Another exception, and that of great moment, is, that I have blasphemed against Jesus Christ, in saying, that he was without human learning.

Now besides what is answered hereunto in the first objection belonging to the first doctrine, if any yet remain unsatisfied, and will affirm the contrary, let them declare, as the apostle saith, who was Christ's counsellor? and who taught him? and he shall be recompensed, Rom. xi. 34, 35. The scripture tells us that, "He grew in wisdom and stature," and so couples them alike together. Now none will affirm that he learned his stature; then from the like will I affirm that he learned not his wisdom, no more than he did his stature: and so, if none taught him, then must it needs follow that he was without human learning; for we in common speech, as did the Jews, call them unlearned which were never taught, John vii. 15; and learning presupposeth one to teach; so that, methinks, it is but requisite, if any affirm he was taught, that they should declare his teacher; which if they cannot do, why then should they affirm him to have had human learning? And methinks, the matter

being rightly considered, it will be found blasphemy for any to affirm that he had human learning, seeing that in so doing they call in question the perfection of his manhood; as if there were others that could add unto him, seeing all grant that the master is above the scholar; and the scripture witnesseth for me, that at twelve years old such was his wisdom observed amongst the doctors, that they were "astonished at his understanding and answers," Luke ii. 47; and doubtless this was a part of their great wonder, that he never learned; as it was the council's wonder also, concerning Peter and John, Acts iv. 13. Therefore, for any to affirm him to have been taught by men, is to take that glory from him which he had of his own, and so they are most likely to be them that blaspheme.

3. It is also very likely that pride and vain glory will be imputed to me, as it hath been already, that I, being as I am, should undertake to maintain that which many godly and learned men are contrary to me in.

I answer, that it is no strange thing for the servants of God to meet with such hard measure, even for declaring of the truth; for so was Joseph dealt with by his father, and by his brethren; and so was David used for speaking for the Lord; and Paul, you shall find, was scoffed at by the learned Athenians. And, seeing that it hath always been so with God's servants, why should not I affirm with the apostle, It is a light thing for me to be judged of men, whatsoever they be, though godly,

wise, or learned; seeing that, as the apostle saith, it makes no matter to me, God is no respecter of persons: and therefore I hold it a defence sufficient with David to say, "Is there not a cause?" seeing that there is none that I know of, that will stand up for the Lord, against those that defy the host of Israel; because that they be not, Goliath-like, men of stature, having bows of brass, and such like furniture, as that the fleshly hearts of men dare not look such in the face; and all because that they be so strongly furnished with man's strength: though the soldiers of the Lord of Hosts may with one blast of a ram's horn, through the might of God, blow down the strong wall of this spiritual Jericho; seeing that the Lord hath said, "That by the mouths of babes and sucklings, he hath ordained strength to perfect praise," Matt. xxi. 16; and this, if babes should neglect to do, the very stones would cry out. Whence it is to be observed, our Saviour descends from babes to stones, and not from babes to learned men, for he hath chosen such, to bring forth his righteousness as the light; he doth not despise the day of small things.

Now these things considered, why should any, with the proud Pharisees, disdain at what the Lord will do? rather let them lay their hands upon their mouths, and say nothing, because he doth it; and, seeing it is the Lord's doing, why should it not be marvellous in our eyes? I doubt not but the Lord will, in his good time, bring forth one

learned Moses, and another as excellent that way, as was Paul, and cause them, disclaiming that human excellency, to magnify the foolishness of God, as wiser than the wisdom of men, 1 Cor. i. 25, and so every way convince them of their folly, to his praise.

And, in the mean while, let them that can receive this truth receive it; and let none be so conceited of learned men, as if the word of God came only to them, and from them, 1 Cor. xiv. 36, 37, as Paul said to some that were puffed up. But let such as are spiritual know, that the Lord reveals his mysteries to whom he pleaseth, and where he will; and therefore the eye of none should be evil because his is good: but we should learn, as the wise man saith, "That the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" but it may so prove that little David without Saul's armour, only with a sling and a stone, through the name of the Lord, may so mortally wound great Goliath of Gath, the enemy of God and his people, that he may lie grovelling on the ground, to the dismaying of all the host of the Philistines, and great rejoicing of the Israel of God: the stone that is hewn out of the mountain without hands, is only able to do it. Therefore let all that fear the Lord take heed that they lean not to their own wisdom; but by so much the more, as any of us have wisdom and understanding, memory, and such like natural parts beyond others, so much the more let us be watchful and careful over ourselves, as knowing

that the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7, and is ready to butt against the Spirit. And now, to draw to a conclusion, in the words of the prophet, "The Lord frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh the diviners mad; he turneth the wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolishness;" Isa. xlv. 25.

If any shall except against the matter for the rudeness of it, as that it is without form or learning, all such are to know that it is but suitable to the whole argument; and that if it should be otherwise, I should condemn that in practice which I justify in words, and so make myself a trespasser. Thus I commit this my labour, with all those that out of love to the truth, shall seek information in this matter, to the blessing of the most High, and remain an unfeigned well-wisher to all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. The 25th day of the first month, 1639.