

Concerning Error, Heresy, &c.

It is not error to forsake the opinions of any natural man whatsoever, nor to withdraw from the Church of Rome, as they call it, nor from any who have reformed some things since the time of Popery, but yet are not come to the true foundation of the Apostles, though they call themselves National Churches, or Gathered Churches whatsoever. But the error is to err from the Spirit of God and His teachings, and the Church which by its teaching alone is gathered into God, out of all the ways, worships, sects, and opinions of the world, convocations and councils, that are not in God. And the Church so gathered into God, is the pillar and ground or stay of truth, where the Spirit alone is Teacher; and all that are gone out from this Church, and teaching, are in error, where all the sects, and opinions, and false ways and worships are, and their teachers, who have erred from the Spirit of Christ, and the Saints Teacher and their practice; and are gone after their pride, and covetousness, and filthy lucre: Here lies the world's teachers, though they do not know from whence they are erred, because they never yet came in the right way; nay, who never yet came so far as Balaam, who had the word of the Lord from His own mouth, and knew it, and yet his heart erred after gifts and honors. So these preach against Balaam, but cannot see themselves in the same error, ever since they were promoted to honor, and gifts, and masterships, and great livings, by the Pope, who received his power from the beast, and gave of it to all his adherents, to cause such as dwell on the earth to worship them; but such whose names are

written in the book of life, who have suffered to this day, and do suffer, because they cannot bow to that power, nor worship it, nor according to its likeness; and under pretence of error and heresy do these always suffer, by such who are erred, and with the spirit of error do judge, which spirit has shed all the innocent blood since Abel to this day, though the error was ever in the persecutor.

So that there is no error from the Spirit of Christ and His teachings, and all who are gone from that, are gone into error, whatever they pretend. And confusion, and vain janglings, and contention, disputing about the things of God, but are gone out into the world, where all the deceived ones are, antichrists and seducing spirits which deceive the nations with enchantments and witcheries, which none can see, till to the light of Christ, and His Spirit they return, which only leads out of all errors, as it is believed and followed. For no spirit can lead out of error, but that Spirit which never erred; and whoever is led out by any other, is erred already, though unknown, to them who are so deceived. For error could never truly judge of error, nor darkness of light, though it will be doing, to show enmity.

So error cries, Take heed of being deceived, which is deceived already; but the Spirit of light searches out that deceit: But who walks not in the Spirit and light of Christ is blind, and knows not by what he is led, nor where, and stumbles at the light which should judge his blindness, and become his Leader; and such an one, though he be in error, yet knows not whence he is fallen, who never knew the right way; as many at this day, who

are talking of blindness, but themselves in the pit, and must be, till they own the light to lead them out of it, which never erred, which is of God, even as they who received it are of God: and they that were of God, knew that all that would not hear them had the spirit of error; and thereby they knew it, and the Spirit of truth.

And whatever that be which leads out into the world's conformity, and pleads for it, or anything that is come in by the fall, that is the spirit of error: but that Spirit which testifies against all that is in the fall, and convinces of it, and leads out of it, that is the Spirit of truth, and comes to testify of the Redeemer Christ Jesus, who is to set us free out of it; which all that live in, live in error.

So all who desire to know the spirit of error, you must turn to the Spirit of light, from whence you have erred; for no other shows the error, but that which reproveth the fruit of error; that which reproveth for sin, is that from which man has erred, the faithful and true Witness, which is the beginning of the creation of God, to which all must give an account, and which alone is appointed for a light, and Leader of the people that sit in darkness, to show the darkness, and the way out of it: So, to that which was in the beginning all must come, that with the Light, from which man has erred, you may know the ways of error, and the way of truth.

James Naylor 1656