to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overſeers, to feed the church of God, and to contend earneſtly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints@@\*." See Episcopacy, Independents, Presbyterians, Pope, and Quakers.

By theſe, and the like means, doth the Spirit of God ſanctify the ſons of men; and in conſequence of this ſanctification proceeding immediately from his office, he is called the Holy Spirit and the Comforter. This is ſuch a proviſion “ for renewing us in the ſpirit of our minds, and enabling us to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteouſneſs and true holiness,” as, when made known by revelation appears to have been expedient, may be conceived to have been even neceſſary, and, though reason could hardly have hoped for it, is contradicted by none of our natural notions either of God or of man. Many, however, are the controverſies to which it has given rise in the church of God ; ſome contending that it is given only unto the elect, upon whom it operates with reſiſtleſs efficacy ; others affirming that it is offered to all, but in ſuch a manner as that, by the abuſe of their free will, it may be “ reſiſted, grieved, and quenched;” and ſome few, ſtill intoxicated with the pride of Pelagius, think it is not neceſſary, and of courſe is not beſtowed.

The queſtions concerning *election,* the *efficacy of grace,* and the final *perſeverance of the saints,* we have ſtated elſewhere, and given a ſummary view of the arguments by which the contending parties maintain their respective opinions (ſee Predestination) ; and the texts of Scripture which we have juſt quoted, under the different heads of ſanctification, ſhow ſufficiently that the opinion of Pelagius is directly con­trary to the doctrine of the apoſtles. It may not be im­proper to inquire whether it be as agreeable to reason and experience as its proud patrons ſeem to imagine.

If it be unreafonable to expect any aſſiſtance from the Spirit of God in carrying on the work of our own ſalvation, how came ſo many of the wiſeſt and beſt of men in all ages to believe, that he who ſincerely endeavours to diſcharge his duty is ſupported in that endeavour by aſſiſtance from heaven ? That ſuch was the popular belief of the ear­ly Greeks, is evident from the poems of Homer ; in which we everywhere find ſome god calming the paſſions of the heroes, altering their determinations when improper, and inſpiring them with wiſdom. Nor was this the ſentiment of the poets only. Socrates, it is well known, profeſſed to believe that his own conduct was under the direction of a ſuperior ſpirit, which he called a *demon;* and Plutarch, as we find him quoted by Wollaſton, speaks of the gods assiſting men, by “ exciting the powers or faculties of the soul ; by ſuggeſting ſecret principles, imaginations, or thoughts ; or, on the contrary, by diverting or stopping them.” Of the ſame opinion muſt Cicero have been, when he ſaid, “ ſtabit illud quidem, quod locum hunc continet, de quo agimus, eſſe Deos, et eorum providentia mundum adminiſtrari, eoſdemque conſulere rebus humanis, nec ſolum *univerſis,* verum etiam singulis@@\*;” for it is not conceivable that a particular providence can be adminiſtered without the influence of the Deity on the minds of men. That the poets and philoſophers of the heathen world derived theſe notions from pri­meval tradition, cannot, we think, be queſtioned ; but if they were abſurd in themſelves, or apparently contradictory to the laws of nature, they would not ſurely have been ſo univerſally embraced ; for it will hardly be denied, that So­crates and Cicero were men of as great natural ſagacity as Pelagius or any of his followers. It is indeed ſo far from being incredible that the Father of ſpirits occaſionally directs the thoughts and actions of men, that we believe there are very few who have made obſervations upon themſelves and their own affairs, who have not found, upon reflection, many inſtances in which their uſual judgment and ſenſe of things were *over-ruled,* they know not how or *why* ; and that the actions which they performed in thoſe circumſtances have had conſequences very remarkable in their general hi­ſtory. See Providence, n⁰ 18, 19.

This being the case, why ſhould the pride of Chriſtians make them heſitate to admit, upon theauthority of divine revelation, what Socrates, and Plutarch, and Cicero, and all the virtuous and wise men of antiquity, admitted in effect, upon no bet­ter evidence than that of oral tradition, ſupported by their own meditations on their own thoughts, and the principles of their own conduct ? Is it that they ſee not ſuch benefi­cial effects of Chriſtianity as to induce them to believe the profeſſors of that religion to be indeed “ choſen to ſalvation through the ſanctification of the Spirit@@\**”* Let them ſtudy the practical precepts of the goſpel, conſider the con­ſequences which they have had on the peace and happineſs of ſociety, and compare the general conduct of Chriſtians with that of the Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans (ſee Re­ligion), and they will doubtleſs find reaſon to alter their opinion ; and let thoſe who embrace the truth, remember, that as they are the temple of God, if the Spirit of God dwell in them, “ it is their indiſpenſable duty to cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit ; to fol­low peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord ; and to work out their own ſalva­tion with fear and trembling, ſince it is God who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.”

From this ſhort view of the ſeveral dispenſations of re­vealed religion, it is evident that the goſpel is not only the beſt but the laſt gift of the kind which man has to expect from his Maker ; that the ſcheme of revelation is comple­ted ; and that the pretences of Mahomet and of more mo­dern enthuſiaſts to divine inſpiration are not only falſe, but fraught with contradictions. All theſe men admit the di­vine origin of the Mosaic and Chriſtian religions ; but it appears from the ſcriptures, in which thoſe religions are taught, that the ſyſtem of revealed truths which conſtitute the Patriarchal, Moſaic, and Chriſtian revelations, commen­ced with the fall of man, and that it muſt therefore neceſſarily end with his reſtoration to life and immortality by the ſa­criſice of Chriſt upon the croſs. A new revelation there­fore like that of Mahomet cannot be admitted without re­jecting the whole Bible, though the impoſtor himſelf every­where acknowledges the inſpiration of Abraham, of Moſes, and of Chriſt. Nor is greater regard due to the claims of Chriſtian enthuſiaſts. Such of theſe men as pretend to have been in heaven@@\*, and thence to have brought ſpiritual discoveries to the earth, have either forgotten or never under­ſtood, that in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments the great ſcene of Providence appears to be cloſed in the full completion of its one regular, entire, and eter­nal purpoſe ; that St Paul has pronounced@@\* **a** curſe upon any man or angel from heaven who ſhall preach another goſ­pel than what has been already preached by the apoſtles and evangeliſts ; that in their writings we are taught every thing which it is our duty to believe or to practiſe in order to our own ſalvation ; and that we have the promiſe of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, that the Spirit of truth ſhall remain with **us** to guide us into all neceſſary truth, till that great day when he ſhall come again to judge the world in righteouſneſs, and render to every man according to his works.

@@@[m]\* Acts xx. 18. And Jude ver. 3.

@@@[m]\* De Div. lib. I. sect. 51.

@@@[m]\* Thess. ii. 3.

@@@[m]\* Boehman, Swedenbourgh, and others.

@@@[m]\* Gal. i. 8.