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THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD, IN THE COMMUNICATION OF THE PERSONAL AND EFFECTUAL INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO INDUCE THE SINNER TO REPENT AND BELIEVE.

THE
SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON,

PREACHED AT WILLIAMSBURG,

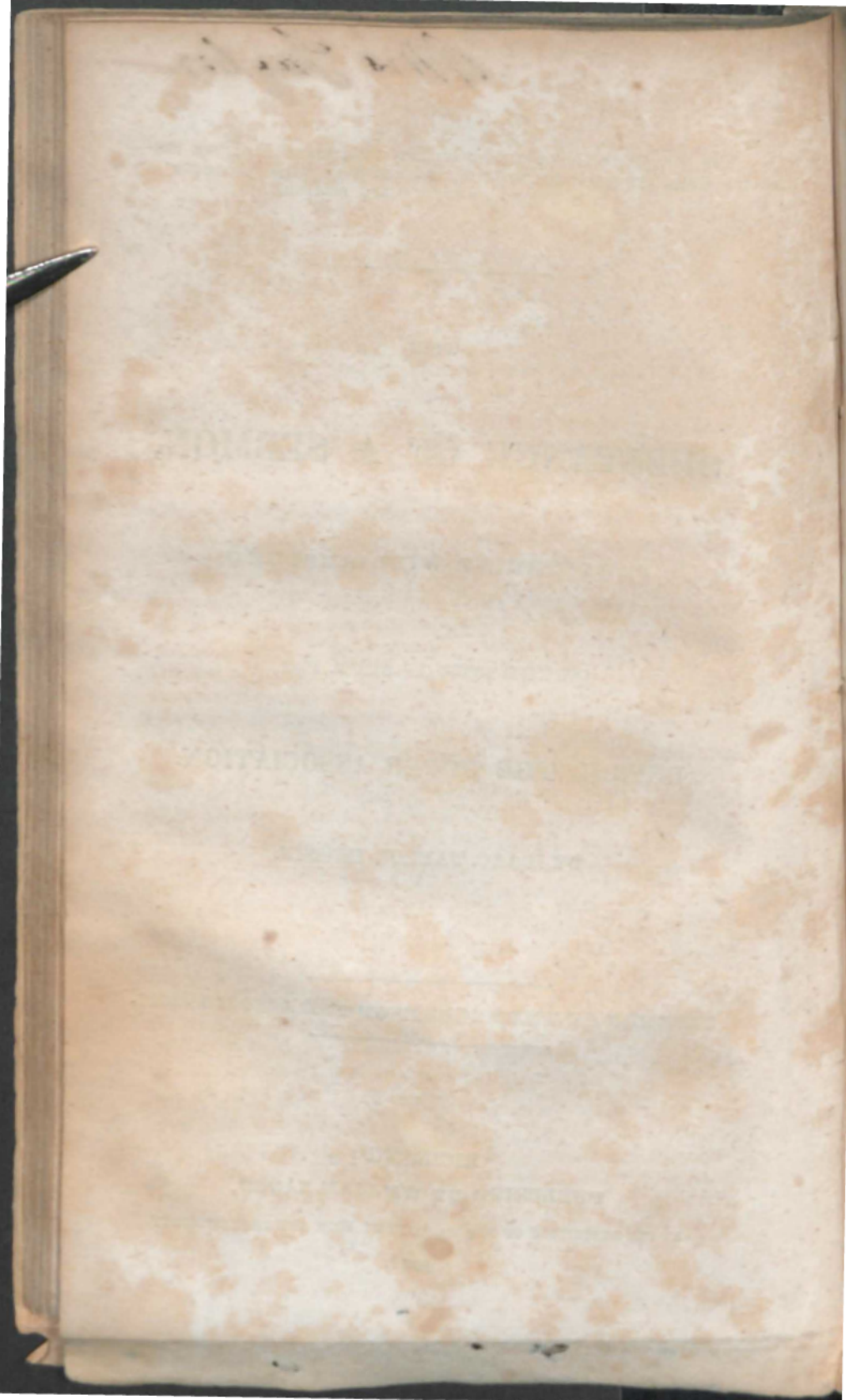
ON THE 20TH OF SEPT. 1833,

BEFORE THE DOVER ASSOCIATION.

BY ISAAC TAYLOR HINTON.

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SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON

THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD, IN THE COMMUNICATION OF THE PERSONAL AND EFFECTUAL INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO INDUCE THE SINNER TO REPENT AND BELIEVE.*

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"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you:" ROMANS VII. 11.

"But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you:" JOHN XVI. 17.

"Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul:" ACTS XVI. 14.

It is through the instrumentality of the word of God that the moral image of his Maker is restored to the soul of man from which it has been obliterated; but this result is attained by the reception of that word as a whole—and not by the apprehension of one of its parts only. The word of God consists of facts, doctrines, precepts, promises, and prophecies. Any system of theology, omitting or underrating either of these constituent parts of the divine word, is either *essentially* or proportionably defective. The doctrines are based upon the facts—the precepts are upheld by the doctrines—the promises are attached to the fulfilment of the precepts—and the prophecies encircle the whole with irrefragable attestations of divinity. It is true that it is the glory of Christianity that its disciples are called upon to believe no doctrine which is not based upon fact—but it is equally true, that facts are of value only as they, directly, or indirectly support the doctrines which respectively are based upon them. The facts are made known unto us for the sake of the doctrines connected with them. Take for instance the most interesting of all facts—the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The *fact* is that Christ was crucified—the *doctrine* is that he died for our sins. Of what interest is the *fact* without the doctrine? The Socinian admits the *fact* as fully as the Christian who humbly relies on the all-atoning sacrifice; but he denies the *doctrine* of the atonement; and thereby annihilates, as far as he is concerned, the value of the fact. It is true facts constitute the foundation; it is no less true that the doctrines are the main timbers of the temple of truth for which the founda-

*The author is desirous it should be understood that as the discourse was chiefly extempore, he does not vouch for all the *illustrations* of the points advanced, being identical with those delivered from the pulpit. Having, however, some brief notes, he is confident he has not varied from the *arguments* adduced.

tion was laid. It is true facts are the bones of the system; it is no less true that doctrines are the muscles without which they will never become active and operative either for our own or others' good.

The perfect harmony and the beautiful proportions of divine truth should doubtless be embodied in the due discharge of ministerial labours; and on an occasion like the present, a difficulty is frequently experienced by the individual appointed to speak before his brethren, in selecting from the wide range of scripture truth an appropriate subject. At a time, however, when widely extended efforts are making to undervalue the importance of the *doctrines of Sacred Writ*, by altogether denying them to be objects of faith, and by stigmatising them as "mere opinions" and "theories," it cannot be unsuitable to direct our attention to that portion of God's revealed will. The same circumstances also point out the doctrine of the *sovereign grace of God in the communication of the personal and effectual influences of the Holy Spirit, to induce the sinner to repent and to believe in Christ*, as one peculiarly claiming our consideration not only on account of its essential character, but of the persevering boldness with which it has been attacked by some, and the crafty sinuosity by which it has been attempted to be undermined by others.

Would the limits of our time have permitted, it might have been desirable to have introduced a few remarks on the Personal and Divine character of the Holy Spirit. It is hoped, however, that such an appropriation of time may be as unnecessary as it would be inconvenient; and that relying on the scripture truth on these points being generally maintained we may proceed to notice,

- I. THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GENERAL.
- II. THE NATURE OF HIS OPERATION IN THE CONVERSION OF A SINNER.
- III. THE ABUNDANT EVIDENCE BY WHICH THE FACT OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE PERSONAL AND EFFECTUAL INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN CONVERSION IS SUSTAINED.

I. THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GENERAL, with propriety and advantage, admit of the following classification.

1. *His operations upon matter.*
 2. *His operations on intellectual capacity.*
 3. *His operations on disposition.*
1. In contemplating the *operations of the Holy Spirit on matter*, it is peculiarly interesting to observe, that his agency in its formation is affirmed by the inspired historian in the very commencement of his narration, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. i. 2.) The same writer in his unrivalled biography of the most patient of men also assures us, that, "by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens," (Job xxvi. 13.) It was undeniably the same almighty agent, which was employed in effecting the various miracles, no less lovely in their manifestation of benevolence, than magnificent in

their exhibition of power, which were wrought by our Lord and his apostles; for, when these glorious effects had been attributed by the malignity of the pharisees to demoniacal influence, our Lord charged them with blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; in which allegation there could be no possible propriety, unless the miracles thus attributed to Satan were the work of the Spirit. While on this point, it would be criminally unfaithful were I to pass over the solemn warning furnished by our Lord's awful denunciation, that whosoever was guilty of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost it should not be forgiven him." Far be it from me, to alarm the timid by encouraging an idea, that they have been guilty of the unpardonable sin; there is no such danger on their part; but I would most affectionately urge on the minds of my hearers, *how nearly* the sin of claiming that faith on which everlasting life and glory are made to depend, as the act of our own minds unaided by any personal or effectual influence of the Spirit of God, may approximate both in its necessary influence on the heart, and in provoking the just displeasure of God, to that of the Jews who attributed his agency on matter to Satan. The difference is only this; they attributed his glorious operations to *evil spirits*—the upholders of this doctrine to *evil men*. I will not say the Holy Spirit is *equally*, but he is *immeasurably* dishonoured in both; and the danger is too great not to make every thinking mind, much more every sincere christian, consider most deliberately and solemnly before he either adopts sentiments, or associates himself with individuals, who may, by any possibility, lead him to the commission, or even lay him open to the imputation, of such a spiritual atrocity.

2. *The influences of the Holy Spirit on the human intellect* are no less wonderful in their character, and yet more interesting in their results, than those we have already been contemplating. These influences are evident in the communication to the mind of facts the knowledge of which had been lost, as well as in the revelation of those which, through a long series of ages, were yet to come; in the instructing the minds of the inspired teachers, both of the old and new dispensations in the truths of God; in imparting the capability of speaking in languages of which the individuals thus inspired had previously been entirely ignorant; and in other methods which the limits of a single discourse will not permit to be entered upon. In some cases the *form* in which these communications respecting the past or future history of the world was communicated, is not stated; and where this is the case to attempt to supply it by conjecture, is perhaps both irreverent and vain. The prophetic intimations were chiefly given by the medium of visions impressed by the Spirit on the imaginative faculty sometimes while the body was asleep, and other times in its waking hours. These visions, however, were generally followed by explana-

tions conducted either with an audible voice, or by an intellectual process of which we are ignorant, but which produced the same results.

The *gift of tongues*, is perhaps, though not the most important, yet the most striking of all the operations of the Spirit on the intellect of man. Far from consisting in the uttering of a few syllables or words in forms of sound never before heard of, as now practised under the sanction of some excellent, but most unhappily deluded men, the gift of tongues was a miracle which enabled its possessor to make full use of the whole range of a language or languages well known to thousands or millions in the vicinity of the abode of the favoured minister of the gospel. *How* the human mind can be capable of such an instantaneous acquisition of knowledge, of such a character and extent, is indeed a mystery; but the fact is on that account neither less true, nor its existence less credible.

The last kind of operation of the Spirit on intellect which it will be needful at this time to notice, is that of his *teaching truth*. This portion of his work, if less brilliant, is far more important than the former; since upon it the reliance of the church in all ages for the divine and infallible character of the doctrines taught in the word of God has rested, and must of necessity rest; and in a degree proportioned to its importance has the testimony concerning it been made plain. Our Lord, after informing his disciples that there were many things which they were at present unprepared to hear and learn, assured them that he would send them the Holy Ghost, which should "teach" them "all things," (John xiv. 26.) and should "guide" them "into all truth" (ch. xvi. 13.) To this operation of the Spirit of God I would invite your particular attention. In all the cases in which these promises were fulfilled, it is evident, that the human mind has been instructed in truth, without the agency of any written or oral communication. The apostles could not have been instructed by the forms of truth, which they for the first time developed; they must have been taught these truths *directly* by the Spirit. The position, therefore, which has been assumed by some, that the influence of the Spirit on the human mind in conversion, as distinct from the word, however, acting in conjunction with it, is not to be believed, *because the method of it cannot be understood*, must be abandoned, or the inspiration of the New Testament must be given up; since if the influence of the Spirit contended for is denied, because the method of its operation is not understood, on the same principle the divine character of the truths the apostles taught may as truly cease to be acknowledged, because the method of their acquirement cannot be apprehended. The melancholy history of error, fully attests the correctness of this assertion; how many who have commenced only with denying the necessity of the influence of the Spirit on their own hearts, have terminated in denying the

inspiration of the epistles, and in regarding the gospels as the production of illiterate and ignorant men!

3. That class of operations of the Spirit the most interesting in its nature, and far the most momentous and glorious in its results, now remains to be noticed—that *exertion of his power which affects the disposition, and consequently the moral character of man*. It cannot fail to be perceived in the operations on matter and intellect, that, whatever may have been the *instrumentality employed*, the Holy Spirit was the *direct agent* in these operations. Whether a man break a stone with the blow of a hammer, or melt gold by the power of fire, he is in either case, equally the *agent* who accomplishes these results, however different or even opposite the character of the instrumentality. The harmony of truth requires the same view with respect to the operations of the Spirit; the work of the Spirit on matter and intellect has been seen to be personal and effectual—that on the disposition must be so also. To believe the former and not the latter, would be to assert that the material part of humanity was more susceptible of the operation of spirit than the spiritual; which must manifestly in its own nature possess a much greater adaptation to spiritual influence, than the material part of the human system. It is true we have no idea of the *method* by which spirit operates directly upon spirit; neither have we of the method by which spirit operates upon matter—as in the case of raising the arm of the body in obedience to the volition of the mind: nor indeed of the method in which spirit is operated upon by the expression of thought or sentiment. It can no more be developed *how* the oral or written expression of truth operates upon the mind, than how spirit operates upon spirit without such expression. All that can be affirmed in either case is, that the human mind is so constituted as to admit of such operations; and the proof in either case is to be derived not from the demonstration of the mode, but from evidence of the *fact*. I maintain that both facts exist, and that the evidence of the latter is as clear and satisfactory as that of the former.

I by no means, however, design to affirm, that the word of truth, in its oral or written form is not the instrument *ordinarily employed* by the Spirit in his operations on the human mind; far less, that he ever communicates to the mind *any other truths* than are therein revealed: such an idea is the basis of all fanaticism; and is tantamount to a declaration that the divine word is incomplete, and inadequate to the purposes for which it was designed. Were it to be admitted indeed, that the sacred scriptures are the instrumentality *always* employed, still the personal and effectual agency of the Spirit *wherever* spiritually good results are produced, is clearly necessary; but we are prepared to maintain that to *limit* the operations of the Spirit of God on the heart to the *oral or written forms* of truth, is both contrary to the *nature* of spiritual existence, to the *analogy* of the influence exercised by human

minds on each other, to the *experience* of Christians in all ages, and to the *testimony and examples* of sacred writ. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart, separately from the scriptures, is of more vital consequence than many are apt to perceive; the *truth* can only be justly said to be present with us, when we are "in remembrance" of it. Is there any Christian who will be willing to limit the *indwelling* of the Spirit spoken of in the text even to his believing the word whenever presented to the mind? But if the Spirit of God be in the heart when the word is not present to the memory, then the *distinctive* possession and operation of the Spirit is clearly proved. Even, however, were it admitted that the Spirit of God was never present with, or acting on the mind, when the word oral or written was not, whatever other valuable doctrines might be affected, that of the personal and direct agency of the Spirit would remain untouched. The circumstance of the instrumentality employed by the Spirit in his operations on the disposition being apparent, so far from diminishing the evidence of the Spirit being the agent, manifestly confirms the fact; the "sword of the Spirit" is not only *made* by him, but *exercised* by him also.

The operations of the Spirit on the disposition are indeed of a variety commensurate with the diversified states of feeling of which the human mind is capable; they may, however, be summarily comprehended by the terms *regeneration* and *sanctification*;^{*} or the production of repentance, faith, and obedience. As the remainder of this discourse will be devoted to the delineation and the proof of the influences of the Spirit in regeneration, I shall only here refer to some of those passages of sacred writ, which assert them to be the agency by which sanctification of heart and life are also produced.—We cannot help observing with delight, that the very title bestowed on the Spirit is descriptive of his agency in this blessed work. If conquerors have received their titles from the most celebrated of their achievements, the triumphs of the Almighty conqueror of depravity in the human heart, have added to the glory of his name, and he is not only the Holy Spirit, but *the Spirit of Holiness*, Rom. i. 4.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received

^{*}I believe the ideas designed to be conveyed by these terms are still generally understood, notwithstanding the attempts which have recently been made to confuse the mind by a profusion of words respecting them.

the Holy Spirit, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."—Rom. viii. 13—15.—
 "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17.—"For
 we, through the Spirit do wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;"
 Gal. v. 5.—"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suf-
 fering, gentleness, goodness, faith," verse 22.—"We both have access
 by one Spirit to the Father," Eph. ii. 18.—"In whom ye also are build-
 ed together for a habitation of God through the Spirit," verse 22.
 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," Eph.
 vi. 18.—"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through
 sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. ii. 13.
 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through
 sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood
 of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 2.—"Seeing you have purified your soul
 in obeying the truth, through the Spirit," verse 22.—"Know ye
 not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God
 dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16.—"And such were some of you: but ye
 are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the
 Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. vi. 11.—"What
 know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is
 in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" 1 Cor. vi. 19.
 "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,
 ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living
 God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." 2 Cor. iii. 3
 "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost," Acts
 xiii. 52.—"In the comfort of the Holy Ghost," Acts ix. 20.—"The love of
 God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost," Rom. v. 5.—"For
 our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in
 the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 5.—"Praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude 20.

The foregoing is but a selection from the abundance of testimony
 with which the word of God teems, to the fact, that the Holy Spirit
 is the great agent in the sanctification of men. There are but two
 ways to evade the force of these passages—to limit their applica-
 tion to an age of miracles, or to affirm that they are metaphorical, and
 that *literally the word* is the sole agent in producing all these results.
 Is it possible that any man, having read these passages can put such a
 construction upon them, and yet ask to be regarded as a christian?
 That attempts to maintain these positions have been made, the history
 of the past, and present circumstances, alike testify. How widely and
 how currently such notions as—that the word is the Spirit—or that it is
 inseparably connected with it—or invariably accompanied by it—that
 the Spirit influences us by the word only as we may each other by a
 letter; or that the Spirit is in the word as a man's spirit is in his writ-
 ings—and such like approximations to blasphemy, have been circulated
 in this State, if the speaker can form but an imperfect, it is yet a lament-
 able estimate. To any who may have received such ideas he would

suggest the question, by what agency do they expect the resurrection of their bodies will be effected? It is expressly asserted, (Rom. viii. 11.) that "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies *by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" If therefore, this Spirit be the word—it is the Bible which is to effect their resurrection! It is presumed, that persons entertaining this notion will be careful to give directions that a Bible should be enclosed in their coffins.

It would appear, however, that the progression of error in this form, not answering the expectations of its advocates, it is now to undergo a new modification. We are in future to be allowed to believe that the Spirit of God dwells in *baptized believers*, even as a man's spirit dwells in his body; and that love, joy, peace, and all good works are the consequences of his presence; but *that repentance and faith are performed by the sinner without any aid from the Spirit*, except the communication of the facts, and the testimony, in which the sinner is to believe; an error equally destructive to those by whom it is received, though happily less dangerous as to its adaptation to gain the assent of the understanding, on account of its palpable absurdity.

Before proceeding to refute this error by establishing the fact of the existence of the work of the Spirit in the production of repentance and faith, it may be desirable to take a brief view of the nature of that work; since mistaken ideas on this subject not only produce serious evils of an opposite character, but often lead to the abandonment of the truth itself, with which they have unhappily been associated. Let us therefore, consider,

II. THE NATURE OF THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN CONVERSION.

1. *It does not consist in the bestowment of any faculty of the mind not already possessed.* The same faculties are requisite to understand, to love, and to determine upon that which is evil, as to understand, to love, and to determine upon that which is good. The work of the Spirit, all will admit, consists in removing depravity. Now depravity of mind is manifestly an indisposition to do that which it ought to do. But no man *ought* to do that which literally he *cannot do*: what a man ought to do he can do; or has the faculties to do. If a man's faculties be limited, his obligations are equally so; but it is not the work of the Spirit to create obligations, but to lead to the discharge of obligations already justly claimed. It is not, therefore, his work to create faculties, because to create faculties would be to create obligations.

Again, that the faculties necessary to moral acts, exist independently of the communication of the Spirit is clearly evinced by the fact, that men devoid of the Spirit are called on to exercise them, and are condemned for non-compliance. To suppose that God calls on men to exercise powers they do not possess, is to charge Him whose wisdom is perfect with inconceivable folly; but to represent the "Judge of all the earth," who infallibly "does right," as making everlasting punishment

lusion, may justly be classed, as far as its accessibility to argument is concerned, with the "east wind."—Repentance and faith, I apprehend are not "dead works;" that is, are not works performed in a state of spiritual death. They are *actions* of the mind; they are *spiritually good actions*; but *action* implies *life previously existing*. Accordingly, the Apostle tells us that those who were "dead," were "quickened," that is made alive: "For I know" (says Paul to the Romans, ch. vii. ver. 18:) "that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Now repentance and faith are spiritual actions commanded by God; to maintain that God commands any thing but what is *good*, is blasphemy more direct than I am persuaded the minds of any of my hearers, under whatever training they may have been, will be willing to adopt: repentance and faith must be admitted to be *good*, and therefore *they do not dwell in the flesh*. To be "in the flesh," is to be without the Spirit. The expression is used for exactly this purpose by Paul throughout the next chapter. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—Romans viii. 1, 5, 8, 9. *Are repentance and faith pleasing to God?* Certainly—for he has commanded them: then THEY ARE NEVER DONE BY THOSE IN THE FLESH. "So they that are in the flesh cannot please God." But those who are not in the flesh are in the Spirit; "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit;" and those who are in the Spirit, have the Spirit in them; "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." The case therefore stands as clear as the sun in its meridian glory; those only who have the "Spirit dwelling" in them, are "in the Spirit;" those only who are in the Spirit do any thing to "please God:" repentance and faith do "please God;" therefore, *repentance and faith are performed only by those who have the Spirit dwelling in them*. Will any man then ask you, brethren, to be acknowledged as a Christian *who owns that his repentance and faith did NOT result from the indwelling of the Spirit of God?* If it should be the case I trust he will ask in vain.

If I pursue this subject further it is scarcely because I entertain a hope that any person not yielding to the assertions of divine truth already quoted will be convinced; but rather for the purpose of manifesting to our minds the wisdom and goodness of God, in defending so vital a point with bulwarks so numerous and impregnable. With this view I observe, that the fact of the effectual and personal influence of the Spirit in conversion is maintained,

2. *By the express connection of conversion with the divine determination.* Like other intelligent agents, what God does he predeter-

influences to do. (Strictly speaking, I apprehend, God may be said to determine only his own actions, and to foreknow the actions of others. In a secondary sense however, God is justly said to determine to do what he influences men to do.) As what God does he determines to do, so what he determines to do, that he does. I am aware there are cases of evil, where God is figuratively said to do, that which he *permits* to be done; but the case about to be adduced, manifestly cannot be thus disposed of; the transaction is one in which no reason exists, why the connection of the Deity with it should be changed into a permissive character only; on the contrary, the act in question is one which God promises to do, "I will put a right spirit in you," &c. and one which he claims to himself, "not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." It is asserted, (Acts xiii. 48) that "as many as were ordained (*τεταγμενοι*) to eternal life believed." The believing on which eternal life depends, must manifestly be included in the ordination, that assures eternal life itself.

This is apparent from the construction of the sentence. It is not said, "and as many as believed were ordained to eternal life;"—in that case, indeed, the ordination to eternal life might be said to be the consequence of believing; but I may appeal to every candid person who understands the principles common to all languages, whether the construction used by the inspired writer, does not inevitably involve the idea that the believing here spoken of resulted from the fact of the individual's being ordained, and not the ordination from the fact of believing. If this be the case, as undoubtedly it is, the only method by which the being "ordained" of God, can rationally be connected with "believing," is the predetermination of God to induce faith in the mind of the persons spoken of. This believing is, a good work in the heart of man; and the *agency* which God employs to effect good operations in the heart of man is the Holy Spirit. No one questions that if faith be personally effected in the heart by God, that his Spirit is the agent; the whole question (and it is a vital one) is, whether the act of believing be effected by God at all, or whether he only furnishes the "fact," and the "testimony" which are believed.

I am aware that this passage has been found to press so heavily on more errors than one, that a desperate effort has been made to evade its force by asserting that the Greek word rendered "ordained," may be rendered "disposed" or "inclined." I shall cut this matter short by denying it in the most unqualified manner; and by challenging any individual to bring a single instance from any writer, sacred or profane, in which the word *τεταγμενοι*, or any of the derivatives of the verb *τασσω* are ever used in the sense of *inclined*: till then I must indulge a painful regret, that any theologian should so far become blinded to what is due to honesty itself, as to make such an assertion.

3. The influence of the Holy Spirit in conversion, that is, in pro-

ducing repentance and faith, may be affirmed *from the continually repeated assertions in Scripture of its influence in the work of sanctification.* A sufficient selection of passages of sacred writ to sustain the work of the Spirit in sanctifying the believer, has already been produced, under the third particular of the first general division of this discourse; and therefore, it is unnecessary to repeat them; the more so, as the foremost in the cause of error, are content apparently to rein in their steed, admit the indwelling of the Spirit in the *baptized believer*, and confine their denial of his personal influence to the period before baptism; that period in which repentance and faith must, or at least, are commanded to be performed. The absurdity of this position, as well as its impiety, has already been asserted; and the speaker feels, that he needs to apologize to his hearers for introducing proof of characteristics so self-evident. The position controverted, then, is, that the personal influence and indwelling of the Spirit are given, and therefore, are necessary, to produce "love" and "joy," expressly asserted to be the "fruits of the Spirit," but are not necessary, and therefore not afforded to produce repentance and faith. Now either the influences of the Spirit are *necessary* to produce love and joy, or they are not; if they are not necessary, then God bestows a superfluous gift, which will be maintained by none; if they are necessary, then, in a spiritual sense, *love and joy never exist without them.* But the advocates of this view maintain, that repentance and faith *do exist* without such influences; and therefore, that *repentance and faith do exist without love and joy.* True *repentance* existing without *love* towards the Being whom we repent having offended; and *faith* in an almighty Saviour—a faith having by his express declaration, eternal life attached to its possession—actually possessed without one particle of *joy!* If this be not an absurdity, in what region is one to be found?

But the *impiety* of this error exceeds its *absurdity.* It represents the *Holy Ghost* condescending to *carry on* the work which *man* has *commenced:* it allots to man the more difficult, and therefore the more glorious part, and to God the inferior, both in point of effort and of glory. It exhibits to us, man reflecting on his past conduct, taking just views of his relation and duty to God, expressing sincere sorrow for his ingratitude and rebellion, turning from his sins and the world to God, exercising faith in the Lord Jesus, willing to obey him at the risk of all his earthly prospects, and even of life itself; and all this without reference, in (the words of one of the advocates of this soul-damning error,) to "that fatal and *immoral* maxim in popular theology, that special spiritual operations are necessary to faith."* Yes, this state of mind and conduct without the Spirit!—"the Holy Spirit is *not* given to men to make

*"The Holy Spirit; a Discourse;" as re-published in the Evangelist, Feb. 1833, p. 30.]

them believe and obey the gospel; but rather *because they have believed and obeyed the gospel.*** Thus the "seeking first the kingdom of God;" the "agonizing to enter into the strait gate;" the "cutting off the right arm," and "the plucking out the right eye," are the *cause*, not the *consequence* of the influences of the Spirit, being bestowed. In ancient times it was deemed blasphemy, if a man made himself *equal* with God; how are we to look upon these who make themselves so much his superior? I shall quote the words of our Lord, and leave them to your prayerful consideration, that we may keep at the utmost distance from its awful anathema, "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world neither in the world to come." Matt. xiii. 32.†

4. The fundamental truth we are maintaining, *rests upon the express assertions of the divine oracles.* Acts xvi. 14; as quoted at the head of this discourse, affirms that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended—and that Paul spoke. The decisive character of this passage as ordinarily understood is apparent to every one. Two methods are adopted to evade its force; one to assert that Lydia was already a believer, and therefore, that though the operation of the Spirit is admitted, the case is not in point; the other that she was not a believer, and that the "opening" spoken of was not an operation of the Spirit, but an effect of some natural circumstances, as "*curiosity*" for instance. That Lydia knew any thing of Jesus Christ before this time, is an unwarranted assumption (by no means a solitary one) of those who declaim against every appearance of it in others. If "*curiosity*" opened the heart of Lydia, it is somewhat strange "the Lord" should be brought into connection with this state of mind; it has generally and truly been held, that people who hear from curiosity only, seldom get much good. These contradictory methods of avoiding so plain a passage indicate a melancholy harmony of determination, to deprive, in any case, the Spirit

*Ibid. p. 26.

†It is a circumstance of a character as extraordinary as it is disreputable to the parties whom it concerns, that many of those who countenance and support the individuals who maintain and preach that "there is no personal influence of the Spirit previous to baptism," continue to deny that such doctrines are promulgated by the individuals alluded to. Whether intentionally or not, there must be great deception practised, and great delusion produced by this course. Either the personal influences of the Spirit are necessary to induce repentance and faith, or they are not: if they are, of course no person can be saved without repentance and faith produced by them. How any individuals, who believe that these influences are necessary, can by their presence, countenance, and fellowship, support those who deny this essential doctrine, must be matter alike of grief and amazement to every sincere christian. We call upon them to separate themselves from the unclean thing:—"He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."—2 John 11. That Mr. Campbell does still maintain this ruinous error, is unhappily too manifest to admit of a doubt from the following passages in his Extra, No. VI. dated August, 1833. "That we may, in the light of truth, ascertain the true and heaven-taught doctrine of regeneration, we shall cautiously survey the whole process as devel-

of the Lord of the glory due unto his name. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase:" 1 Cor. iii. 5-7.—"Ye believed, according as the Lord gave to every man." What did the Lord give? Faith. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.—"Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." Other passages might be brought, but one more shall suffice; "by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Suppose it could be found out that in some esteemed and ancient manuscripts this passage, read "and that of yourselves, it is not the gift of God; should we not have it declared, that the correction ended the controversy? that the passage was too explicit to be mistaken, and that nothing but the greatest prejudice could now maintain that faith was the gift of God? Well if this overthrow would result from the text being reversed, what overthrow results from the text standing as it really does? Who does it not leave inexcusably guilty now? Admitting the text to read as every unprejudiced man of common sense

opened by the commissioned teachers of the deep counsels of the only true God. That certain things, parts of this great process, may be well understood, certain terms which we are wont to use to represent them, must be well defined, and accurately apprehended. These terms are *Fact, Testimony, Faith, Repentance, Reformation, Bath of Regeneration, New Birth, Renewing of the Holy Spirit, Newness of Life*, [p. 339.] Mr. C. asserts this to be the "natural order." It will be seen in a moment, that Mr. C. places the "renewing of the Holy Spirit," *after* "Faith, Repentance, Reformation and the Bath of Regeneration," (or in plain words Baptism;) of course, therefore, he holds that faith and repentance, exist *before* and necessarily *without* the "renewing of the Holy Spirit;" and this view he endeavours to sustain by this exercise of ingenious sophistry; "If then the fact and the testimony are both the gift of God, we may well say that faith and eternal life are also the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord:" (p. 341.)—No; it may not be "well said" that "fact and testimony" *only* being given, "*faith* is the gift of God; for both fact and testimony are abundantly given where faith is not possessed.—But to place Mr. C's sentiments beyond all doubt, let us hear him once more;—"All that is done in us *before* regeneration, God our Father effects by *the word*, or the gospel as dictated and confirmed by his Holy Spirit. But *after* we are thus begotten and born by the Spirit of God—after our new birth, the Holy Spirit is shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

If it be still a subject of dispute what are Mr. C's sentiments on this point, let us learn a lesson from the ancients. It was one of the characteristics of the heathen oracles (to which the apostle alludes in renouncing "the hidden things of dishonesty") that from their sacred caverns they issued responses to their deluded votaries and enquirers capable of various and even opposite interpretations. Thus, when Cræsus, after offering presents of immense value, sought direction from the Delphian oracle, whether he should make war with the Persians, obtained for answer, that if he did, "he should dissolve a great empire," he deemed the oracle propitious, made war against Cyrus, and fulfilled the prophecy by the dissolution and destruction of *his own* empire being the result. So now, upon an essential doctrine, the votaries of the oracle of Bethany do not understand its decision; one half maintaining that it admits the necessity of the personal influences of the Spirit to induce repentance and faith, and the other half scouting such a sentiment as "immoral." They are in danger of doing far worse than Cræsus; he risked an empire by trusting to a pretended prophet—they their souls.

would read it, and the only way in which the passage is sense at all, it does decide the case that "faith," not "facts," not "testimony" only, but "faith, is the gift of God, and "not of ourselves." The miserable necessities of a party, however, have suggested the palming upon the public the equally ungrammatical and senseless construction, that the antecedent to the relative, "that not of yourselves, &c." is not "faith," but "grace." Why who ever dreamt that the grace of God was of ourselves? Where was the necessity of introducing any such caution? Where the propriety of asserting that the grace of God was the gift of God—in other words, that the gift of God was the gift of God? But let the Apostle speak for himself: He tells the Ephesians they are "saved by grace," "through faith." Now faith, *under whatever influence performed*, is clearly an act of the human mind; from this circumstance the Apostle deemed it possible they might find, as hundreds now do, some source of spiritual pride: he therefore hastens to remind them that though faith was the act of their minds, yet in another and most important sense, it was "not of themselves," it was "the gift of God"—it was God that wrought in them. There is no fear in leaving this passage to the common sense of Christians and of mankind. The grammatical criticism, by which it is attempted to be perverted alike to error and to nonsense, is altogether superficial and utterly untenable.*

5. *The figurative expressions of Scripture by which a change of heart is set forth*, equally support the truth maintained. The whole of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, though figurative indeed in its language, is directly in support of the view which has been taken of this doctrine.—"Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:" "of water, *even* of the Spirit;" the word *even*, being an equally correct rendering of the Greek conjunction *kai*, relieves the passage of all difficulty. It is evident our Lord was speaking wholly of an *internal change*, not at all of an *external ordinance*, for there is no allusion to baptism whatever through the whole chapter, except the supposed allusion in the term "water:" manifestly the *figure*, of which the phrase *the Spirit*, connected by the

*Since the above passage was written, the author has referred to the admirable exposition of Doddridge; and the critical observation attached by Dr. D. to this passage is so fully confirmatory of the view taken already, that he cannot refrain from inserting it here. Some explain the following clause ("and this not of yourselves,") as if it were only a repetition of what was said before, that the constitution that made faith the way to salvation was not of their own appointment, but of God's. But this is making the apostle guilty of a flat tautology for which there is no occasion. Taking the clause as we explain it, that is, asserting the *agency of divine grace* in the *production of faith*, as well as in the constitution of the method of salvation by it, the thought rises with great spirit. As for the apostle's using the word (*louo*) in the neuter gender, to signify *faistá*, the thing he had just before been speaking of, there are so many similar instances to be found in scripture, that one would wonder how it were possible for any judicious critics to have relied so much on this as they do, in rejecting what seems beyond all comparison the weightiest and most natural interpretation. Compare the original of the following texts: Phil. i. 29.—Eph. vi. 18.—Gal. iii. 17. iv. 9. and for the like construction of other Greek authors of undoubted credit. See Eisner, *Observ.* vol. i. p. 128, and Raphael. *Annal. ex Herod.* p. 186.

word *even*, is *explanatory*. Exactly the same idea is assigned in Titus iii. 5:—"The washing of regeneration, *even* the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Our limits will only admit of referring to some of the passages wherein the figurative expressions which attest the Holy Spirit to be the agent in the change of heart wherever it occurs: John iii. 6—8:—"Born of the Spirit;" John i. 13:—"Born not of blood. . . but of God:"—"Born of God:" 1 John iii. 9:—ii. 29:—iv. 7:—v. 1. 4—18.

6. Our belief in this doctrine, is sustained also by *the united testimony of all true Christians in all ages*. It is at once highly consolatory and deeply painful to make this assertion; consolatory in its aspect on those who adhere to and defend this truth—painful indeed, with respect to our feelings towards those who venture to abandon it. Strange infatuation, that, professedly associated with a desire for the unity of the church, a sentiment more directly at variance with the doctrine and experience of every existing section of it, than any sustained in modern times, (the denial of the atonement of Christ alone excepted,) should be introduced among its members. With the exception already alluded to, where is the Congregational or Presbyterian church, where the Methodist or Evangelical Episcopalian, where the Baptist, in any quarter of the globe, who would receive a person into communion on a profession of repentance and faith, asserted not to be produced by the influences of the Spirit? They all confess with united voice, that it is the blessed Spirit of God, who hath made them to differ from the impenitent by whom they are still surrounded: it is the hope that he began the work that sustains their faith that he will carry it on in their hearts; and with undivided hallelujahs, they sing, "Him first, him midst, him last, and him in every thing."

7. Finally, I observe, this doctrine is sustained by the consideration that *there is no other rational method of accounting for the existence of the fact of conversion to God*—"Who made thee to differ?" is the touchstone of the case. It is a principle of nature from which the Deity does not depart in his moral government of mankind, that "like causes, operating on like subjects produce like effects." If men are alike essentially depraved, and if the divine testimony be communicated equally to them, and that is the sole agent by which conversion were effected, conversion would follow either in *all* cases or *none*; but this is not the fact:—on the contrary in circumstances apparently the most similar, some repent and believe, while others take occasion only to harden their minds in sin. There is a difference either in the subject operated upon, or in the causes operating, because there is a difference in the result: either God acts uniformly on objects essentially differing from each other; or otherwise on objects essentially of the same nature God himself acts differently. The question is not now by *what method* the eternally momentous difference is effected, but by *whom*? The question in its operation is analogous to that put by our Lord to the Pharisees, respecting the preaching of John; "Was it from heaven or of men?" They could not, or would not tell. If men are totally, and therefore

equally, depraved, they present a like subject; and when operated on by like causes a difference of result cannot by possibility ensue. Either therefore, the doctrine of total and equal depravity must be given up, and something spiritually good be maintained to exist naturally in some men; or else special action of some kind on the part of God must be admitted. That in this distressing dilemma, the former method of solving his (to them) extreme difficulty, is adopted by the opposers of divine influence, there is abundant evidence both from the lip and from the pen; and yet dare they come forth and avow that *all conversions are to be accounted for (for the principle must be uniform)* on the ground that the least depraved of men are those who are converted to God? Were Mary Magdalen, the woman of Samaria, the thief on the cross, yea Paul himself, instances in accordance with the philosophy of this new school of man-made theology?

Is there any heart among you brethren, that has known the power of sovereign grace, that can bear to behold the glory of Him whose delight it is to save the very chiefest sinners thus cast down, that the pride of the "least depraved" of men may be exalted on its ruins? Let me entreat you, dear brethren, not to be deluded with words smooth as oil, but which are mixed with the deadly poison of asps. What should we think of the sincerity of the repentance of that thief who while confessing the crime of having stolen silver or gold, was at the same moment secreting about his person the brightest jewel—the most valued object—we possessed? And what shall we think of the sincerity of that sinner who while professing to be penitent for having defrauded God of his rights so long, shall rob the Redeemer of the most precious jewel of his crown, by appropriating to himself the glory of that repentance, which if it exist in his heart at all, is one of those precious gifts which Jesus, shed his heart's-blood to purchase, and ascended to heaven to bestow through the agency of the blessed Spirit?

While, dear brethren, after faithful and affectionate warnings, we are compelled by fidelity to our Lord, to withdraw ourselves from those who thus either distinctly or virtually deny a doctrine not only so dear to our hearts, but so essential to salvation; let us rejoice in the truth, that while opportunity of salvation is freely and sincerely afforded to all who hear the gospel, the Lord in his infinite mercy doth by the suasive influence of his Spirit induce some to accept the gracious offers of his love. Let us humble our hearts before God, and give glory to Him, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began."