

sages that are more plainly and literally revealed, and which they strongly illustrate. And here, we notice a method of interpretation, which the supporters of mere human opinions adopt to have any show of scriptural proof,—it is to identify the figurative and obscure passages on a subject, with their opinion, and then to make these, explain away, or add to, what is plainly, and literally revealed—the figure to explain the fact, instead of the reverse of all this—to make what is plain and literal, explain what is more obscure or figurative—the fact to explain the figure. Keeping in mind then, what we read, that as men heard, believed and obeyed God, and received spiritual blessings, just so far, does this strictly verify the scriptural definition—“that faith comes by hearing the word of God” and explain other more figurative allusions to this change—“God begets us,” but “it is with the word of truth.”—We are born again, born of the Spirit &c. but it is “by this incorruptible seed, the word of God which is the gospel”—“we are begotten, through the gospel.”—“The gospel is the power and wisdom of God, to every one that believes.” Dare we then, add to the word, and infer an omission in it,—which the consistent use of this gloss would necessarily oblige us to do and to teach as a fundamental truth expressed or implied,—That faith comes by *special and supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit*, and by hearing the word of God? or shall we correct Peter, by teaching “that we are born again of *special influences*, and by the the word &c?” or Paul’s declaration “that *special influences* &c. and the gospel, are the power and wisdom of God to every one who believes,” and thus disregard wisdom’s warning voice. Every word of God is pure, “add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” Besides, this doctrine seems necessarily to require, a phraseology respecting the Holy Spirit quite unscriptural; and to imply, a preparation, or a prerequisite of something done in us, or by us, quite inconsistent with the free apostolic gospel, proclaimed to sinners, without money, and without price. We can only briefly hint at these scriptural objections, and submit as a proof of their necessity and nature, the following extract from the circular, “*The first operation of the Holy Spirit in the human heart, is that of convincing the sinner of his guilt, and thus shewing him the need of a special divine interposition, to save him from deserved wrath and prepare him for the glad reception of that &c.*” but this is not all. “*In addition to this work of conviction, it is by the Holy Spirit alone, that men are regenerated and turned unto God.*”

In the second place, it is a fact, that there is not in the whole of the Bible, one passage, which reveals the sentiment contended for, nor is there an example of any Prophet or Apostle, prefacing, or in any way ever mingling with the testimony of God they had to deliver, any such doctrine whatever—as, that those to whom their message was sent, could not believe, or that they were to look for some special or supernatural agency, to prepare and to enable them