

effect, to make way for something yet to be done. Nor will I ascribe every thing to what the Spirit has done, in the enditing and confirming the testimony, to the exclusion of any influence upon the minds of believers or of the gift of the holy Spirit to them who ask. Thus the scriptures encourage all to activity. The whole world with whom the Spirit of God strives in the *written* word now, as it once did in the mouths of the prophets and apostles, have no excuse for their infidelity or unregeneracy—and those who have put on the Lord Jesus are invited to abound in all the joys, consolations, and purifying influences of this Holy Spirit. Such is the operative system of supernatural truth—the scope of the practical principles of the Bible.

Those who have contended for physical and irresistible influences, have found themselves at variance with the manifest scope or bearing of a large portion of the apostolic addresses to their auditors. They, to prevent or to obviate the charge of making the word of God of none effect by their traditions, have invented a curious doctrine of 'common operations, contradistinguished from the special; and, like the pious Mr. Baxter, have attempted to reconcile the jarring systems by making it *possible* for all gospel hearers to be saved—*certain* for some—possible for all who did not resist the common operations—and certain for all upon whom the irresistible or special operations were employed. This is a lame expedient. Their doctrine of common operations is as unscriptural, as their special operation is subversive of all praise or blame, of all virtue and vice, of all excellency in faith, or criminality in unbelief. The Bible doctrine requires not the aid of either system.

Let no man say that in explicitly opposing both systems, we argue that men are converted without the Holy Spirit. By no means. The Spirit of God works upon the human mind as well as dwells in it. It dwells in the record which God has given of his Son, as the spirit dwells in the body of a man—clothed with this record it enlightens, convinces, and converts men. It is never once said to work in any other way upon the minds of men since it consummated the record. Even in convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in the age of miracles, it did this *in words* concerning Jesus. When men hearken to the word, they hear the Spirit of God; when they will not hearken, they resist the Spirit of God,\* **IT MAKES EVERY MAN WHO HEARS THE WORD ABLE TO BELIEVE;** so that his unbelief is wholly his own sin; owing to his aversion, and not to incapacity. Yet still they are enabled to believe by the Holy Spirit, and without his aid no man ever could have believed in Jesus, as God's own Son. In one sentence, all men who hear the spirit of God, have all natural inability removed, and faith is just as easy to them as it is to hear. Salvation, or the heavenly inheritance, 'is of faith, that it might be by grace or favor,' says an apostle. I rejoice to know that it is just as easy to believe and be saved as it is to hear or see. That the Spirit of the living God has made it so to every man, and so works upon all men who read or hear the record which God has given of his Son, as to remove all natural incapacity out of the way, is just what makes the record of Jesus *glad tidings of great joy*

\* Acts 7. 51. 52. Nch. 9. 30.