

never in any instance overpowered, but is, in every case, left perfectly free. He is drawn, but not driven; led, but not compelled; persuaded, but not coerced. God sets before him life and death, the blessing and the curse, and calls upon him to choose life, that he may live.

“And when the rebel chooses death,
God wails his hapless lot,
Deep breathing from his heart of love,
I would, but ye would not.”

But third, this view of the nature of the Spirit's work in conversion, beautifully coincides also with the express teachings of Scripture. “My Spirit,” said Jehovah to the antediluvians, “shall not always strive with man.” But why strive, if nothing short of an irresistible influence could effect his conversion? And especially, why should he be spoken of as ceasing to strive with man, in the way of giving up the gracious work, if he had it in his power according to the theory we are combatting, to convert all and sundry if he had only so willed. Then, as it was with the antediluvians, so with the Israelites, regarding whom Nehemiah says—“He gave his good Spirit to instruct them,” “But,” says Isaiah, “they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit,” and that to such an extent that “he turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.” Stephen, therefore, charges them with “always resisting the Holy Ghost;” thus showing—1st, that the Holy Spirit was actually drawing them, and drawing them, too, with a gracious influence in the direction of Jesus and of God; and, therefore drawing them with the view of actually converting them from the error of their way—from their soul destroying unbelief to the saving faith of the gospel. And if so then he shows—2d, That the Jews, in resisting the Holy Ghost, were resisting his gracious converting influence. It was not, we suppose, the common influence of the Spirit that God never intended should convert them that Stephen charged them with resisting. No, it was the Holy Ghost, and therefore an influence put forth in deep compassion for their souls, and with the infinitely earnest desire of bringing them to Jesus. God, sir, is never in deeper earnest than when he is pleading with the sinner. It is then he plies the mind with his mightiest motives. O how earnest he is seen in those through whom he pleads. “Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you, by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.” And lest any should think is