

dissent from what is contrary to their inclination ; this only proves the influence which the will has upon the understanding—the mere assent to scriptural truths from education, by those who do not understand their import, nor the evidence on which they rest, is not faith.—A man's saying he believes, while the truth does not work effectually in the heart and life, is no evidence that he believes to the saving of his soul.

'There is one point which I should like to have seen occupy some place in the systems of this day with a reference to this subject, viz. As respects the actual possibility of salvation to those without the Bible—whether there is any advantage at all, as respects salvation, to those who have the Bible, over those who have it not. Or is not an Englishman with the Bible, (unless some special influence be exerted upon him,) in exactly as hopeless a condition as a Hindoo without it?

We are apt to interpret an hundred things said of 'sinners,' of 'natural men,' of 'children of wrath,' of 'the dead,' of 'those without strength,' never taking thought that there are essential differences between those without, and those under, the revelation of God. This clearly apprehended, is like applying the pruning hook to the vine: it lops off a great many quotations and applications of scripture which are thought to bear upon these.

I have long felt an unconquerable repugnance to that system of religion which destroys the uses of the holy scriptures to unconverted or unregenerate men. The doctrine of physical and irresistible energies of God's Spirit upon unbelieving men, as absolutely and indispensably prerequisite to their deriving any religious benefit from all that is *written* on the sacred pages; from all that is *spoken* by christian tongues; from all and every moral or religious means; is, in my view, at war with Moses and the prophets; with the Lord Jesus and the apostles; with the whole Bible; with all rational analogies; with all the faculties yet belonging to the human race; with all and every thing, natural, moral, and religious, except the sheer inoperative dogma of some indoctrinated fatalist. I do therefore, with all my heart, oppose every sentiment, which either grows out of, or is connected with, the establishment of such a cold, lifeless, and inoperative system: believing it to be entirely unauthorised by the Holy Spirit, and that it is the most genuine wresting of the holy scriptures to the destruction of thousands, who are now, as they have been for centuries, standing all the day idle; some running into all manner of excess: and others looking with aching hearts for some irresistible wind, afflatus, or spirit, to carry them, not *literally*, but figuratively, as Elijah was taken, in a whirlwind to heaven.

I have contended that the Spirit of God *has done* something, which renders unbelief and unregeneracy a sin in all men who have access to the Bible, independent of any thing to be done: and I have taught that it *will do* something for those who, from what it *has done*, obey the gospel. What it *has done*, has given strength to the weak, life to the dead, and reclaimed enemies to God—what it *will do*, is to beget a holy spirit and temper, to fill with peace, and joy, and righteousness, those who believe. I will not, therefore, with the speculative philosopher, make what the Spirit of God has already done of none