

and readers of the word that it is the very voice of the Most High, and is specially addressed to them. The Spirit by His nature has direct access to the souls of men, and can so quicken and intensify their spiritual perceptions that they can see sin and its consequences, God and his holiness, Christ and his adaptation to them, as they never saw these truths before. This influence of the Spirit may be resisted and overcome, and it often is opposed because it produces convictions concerning self which are most humbling and painful.

Some of those thus convicted are brought by the influence of the same Spirit to contrition for their sins and faith in Jesus Christ. It is by the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost that the will is renewed and the sinner persuaded and enabled to embrace the Saviour. At the instant when the Spirit has made the inner nature quick, living, sensitive, He pours in the light of truth whereby the image of Christ is formed in the soul. In order to emphasize the truth that the initial and characteristic change of heart is effected by God, it has been customary to say that the soul is passive in regeneration. But this needs to be carefully guarded : in all that leads up to regeneration, and in all that follows it, the soul is certainly active. And an instantaneous passivity is not very easily imagined. In the change of his ruling disposition he is the recipient and not the actor ; but in the very first exercise of this disposition he is active. Although the efficient power which secures this exercise of the new disposition is the power of God, yet the man is not therefore unconscious, nor is he a mere machine worked by the Divine fingers. No violence is done to the moral nature of those who are converted ; their choice is not governed by irresistible force ; they have the full exercise of all their faculties all the time ; they repent and accept Christ as their Saviour freely and willingly. The power by which a sinner is truly turned to God is not like the force of gravitation acting on matter, it is the power of truth affecting the mind, of infinite, gracious love melting the heart.

In this operation and all others which follow it the Divine