

4th. A *supernatural* change.

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It is effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is true, instruments are employed. Ministers may preach; the word of God may be quick and powerful; yet, the power—the agency is the Holy Spirit; he effects the change. God works in man to will and to do, and under that influence he wills and acts. Man has no inclination, no power for action otherwise. “Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.” “Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God.” “You hath He quickened,” etc. To be born of the spirit is to be born by the mighty energy and influence of the Spirit. To be born from above is to be born by heavenly power. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, applies the blood, conveys internal power, and makes the believer acquainted with his sonship. * * * * *

5th. A *mysterious* change.

We are not to expect any minute philosophical account of the manner how it is done. “The wind bloweth,” etc. As though the Saviour had said, “Marvel not because you cannot understand *how* the Holy Spirit operates upon the soul, for there are some things in nature you cannot understand: consider the wind; it bloweth where it listeth,” etc. Who can account for all the phenomena of winds? We know it is a current of air, and we know the elements of which air is composed, and the proportions of their composition; we know also the general causes of its motion. Yet there are many inexplicable circumstances in the blowing of the winds which never have been accounted for. You cannot tell the laws by which its particular movements are governed and regulated. How is it that it sometimes blows furiously, at other times gently, and at other times not at all. All the observations of science which have as yet been brought to the subject have been insufficient for its illustration. But, although it is invisible, yet you hear it; although you cannot account for it, yet you feel its effects. So it is with the influences of the Spirit. How he acts upon our spirits is unaccountable, but you know he does act, because you feel the effects in conviction, comfort, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, etc. No one should, therefore, cavil at this doctrine, because it is mysterious. It is confessedly so. It is so because it cannot be otherwise. If it could be explained it would lose the character it now sustains. * * *

II. EVIDENCES.

The evidences of our new and heavenly birth are to serve two ends,—for our own satisfaction, and for the conviction of others: internal for our own satisfaction, external for the conviction of others. More distinctly and accurately speaking,—there are *three* kinds of evidence by which the reality of this work may be discerned.