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“ PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”

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LETTER FROM BISHOP R. B. SEMPLÉ TO A. CAMPBELL.

*Washington City, March 23, 1830.*

BROTHER CAMPBELL,

*Dear Sir*—IT seems, from your Christian Baptist, that you are about to commence, or have commenced, another and a larger work, to be called the *Millennial Harbinger*. Well, now, though I differ radically from your opinions or doctrines, &c. I think I must become a subscriber for this last periodical also. I wish to watch and see what is to be the end of this *new gospel*; or, if you please, of this *ancient order*, as you term it.

You seem to allow me (in your last notice of me) to be, at least, not under the influence of prejudice. This, I assure you, is the fact. Indeed, so far as I can judge of myself, I am prepossessed in your favor. Your able defence of baptism against Walker and M'Calla, and recently the complete route of Owen and atheism have produced favorable impressions upon my mind. But, sir, under all these partialities, I am more and more compelled to say, that if your view of christianity be correct, I have read and studied my Bible in vain. You say of me, “Although unable to rise above all his early associations, and the long received opinions which a long course of reading and teaching had riveted upon his mind,” &c. Now, my dear sir, the act is exactly the other way. My early opinions, my education was predicated upon a system greatly in accordance with your views. In the very first christian lesson ever taught me, I was directed to answer that my name was *Robert*, and that I obtained this name in my baptism, “wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” As my mental powers expanded I was farther taught to read the scriptures, and pray in private and public; to go to preaching, and to practise moral and religious goodness. So far from being taught to seek for experimental

religion, or the attainment of the Holy Spirit, I was constantly informed that this was fanaticism inculcated by the enthusiasts of the day. That a mere belief of the Saviour and of the scriptures, and to practise virtue, were all that were necessary to please God. I not only was taught this system, but I imbibed it and acted upon it above many. I could, in sincerity, repeat the Creed, (called the Apostles' Creed,) and thinkingly say I adopted it as my real belief. The preaching which I heard regularly was also distinctly of this kind. Neither you, nor I, nor any other preacher of the present time, could more plainly inculcate the necessity of believing and reading the scriptures, than the preacher whose ministry I first attended.

Well, sir, I was quite satisfied with my religious attainments, and lived satisfied until I was 20 years old. My present views were the effect of subsequent convictions; and as you admit that you and I can discuss matters without any uncourteous feelings, I will now relate to you how the change took place in my thoughts and feelings. As I said above, I was taught to look upon every expression which claimed the influence of the Holy Spirit, as being enthusiasm, and I acted upon it; I failed not to make light of any thing of that sort advanced where I was. It is worthy of observation that this was really the very subject on which the conversation turned on the day of my conviction. An old disciple was talking very ardently about his conversion. I said to him, What do you mean by *conversion*? Do you think that men can feel the influence of the Holy Spirit now as in ancient times? He paused and solemnly answered, "I do, and that there is no saving faith without the influence of the Holy Spirit." He went on to quote text after text to prove it, until I became astonished. My first thought was (for I said nothing) a determination to read the New Testament again, with a view to ascertain this point. I did so, and made use of the blank leaves at the beginning and end of the book to note down such texts as seemed to maintain the real operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart, &c. This I did that I might turn to them again and examine them closely. The result was a firm belief, that without the influence of God's Spirit directly on my heart, I could not be saved. Well, sir, I sought it—I sought as a sinner, a justly condemned sinner; and I have found it, thanks to sovereign grace! More than forty years have passed off since, during which time I have laboured to correct my errors and to search for truth. The effect of this forty years' examination is a conviction, amounting to assurance, that the Holy Spirit begins, and carries on, and finally completes the work of salvation. Indeed, how can I believe otherwise? It is the sheet-anchor of my tempest-toss'd soul. It is the light of my eye, and the strength of my heart. My own spirit groans and grapples in the dark until God's Spirit helpeth my infirmities and beareth witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. This, my friend, is no matter of speculation. It is a foundation truth that must stand sure. If this could be destroyed, I know not what the righteous would do.

God has sealed his own people with the Holy Spirit of promise. God's word is the production of God's Holy Spirit. It is equally true that his work is also.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible that the Holy Spirit is active as the efficient agent of man's salvation? He moved upon the face of the waters and formed creation. Shall the greater work of salvation be effected without him? An arm almighty was necessary to make atonement for sin and to bring in an everlasting righteousness for man. Will it not require an almighty arm to apply the atonement, and to make the death of the Son of God effectual, "that of those which his Father had given him none should be lost?" God's word is a precious treasure, but it is precious because the Spirit opens our understandings that we may understand the scriptures. *Without the Spirit* the word would be a *dead letter*, as it really is to thousands who have it in their hands. God honors his word by accompanying it with his Spirit. It is the Spirit that makes it sharp and two-edged. Without it the word neither cuts nor pierces. If the world has been standing not quite 6000 years, as some say, then nearly half that time it was without the written word; yet doubtless many thousands (I hope many millions) went to glory without the word. The Spirit made direct revelations to their souls, and pointed them through a long vista to an expected Saviour. Do I, then, make void the word? God forbid! Yea, I establish the word. It is because the Spirit of God sustains it, that it is more stable than heaven and earth. To conclude, my brother, show me thy faith wrought by the word, and I will show thee my faith wrought by the Spirit through the word.

When I began I meant to write a short epistle, somewhat explanatory of your paragraph respecting me. I've lengthened it out. Be it so. Take it, and let it go for what it is worth. Perhaps you may hear from me again upon other points.

Dear brother, the above contains some hasty effusions on some points in which we differ. I have not even copied them; yet I believe I will venture to let them go for what they are worth, either into your old or new publication. You have the advantage of most men in point of style; but if any discussion should take place between us, I hope it will be with a sole view to elicit truth, and not for mastery. I hope also it will be accompanied by prayer and a holy temper.

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT B. SEMPLE.

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Christians ought to be particularly on their guard against tampering in any degree with the Word of God. We should never forget, that when we are explaining any expression of Scripture, we are treating of what are the very words of the Holy Ghost, as much as if they had been spoken to us by a voice from heaven.

## REPLY TO ROBERT B. SEMPLE.

BROTHER SEMPLE,

THE arrival of your letter when the copy for this number was nearly completed, prevents me from paying so minute an attention to it as I would have done had it been received at an earlier day. I think I told you when parting in Essex, that if you and I should never approximate nigher to each other in our views, I would nevertheless still love and esteem you as a christian—as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Since parting with you I have found this affection and esteem increase; and your letter before me is a new excitement to the cultivation of all brotherly kindness and charity. It gives me pain to have to differ in a single opinion from one whom I venerate so highly; and glad would I be if I could say a hearty *Amen* to every sentiment in your letter.

One consolation I have, that you and I believe all the same gospel facts. We believe every fact which Paul called “the glad tidings,” viz. that “*Jesus died for our sins; that he was buried; and that he rose the third day according to the Scriptures.*” Nay, we are equally assured of all facts in the gospel history, and consequently are of *one faith*. I do not think there is one historic fact in all the testimonies of the four Evangelists in which our faith is not the same. We are not only of *one faith*, but we agree in *one immersion* also. You say that we are buried with Christ in immersion, and raised with him; and that *in this act we put him on*. We do not differ in the *one Lord*—in the *one God*—in the *one body*—in the *one Spirit* which animates that *one body*; and in the *one hope* of a glorious resurrection from the dead. *In some points of view we differ on some of these unities; or, rather, we view them with more or less distinctness and force.* We pray to the same God and Father, through the same Lord and Saviour, and *by the same Holy Spirit*. In a word, we agree in a thousand things, constituents and connectives of the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian ages of the world. But we differ in the strength or weakness—in the latitude or longitude of our conceptions of some matters and things *connected with, or proceeding from, the seven unities.*

You are pleased to commence with the good old catechism of the church of my grand father. I was taught the Westminster “*Larger and Shorter*;” but “when I became a man I put away childish things.” Well now, brother Semple, there is, as a Vermont Telegraph says, the *refraction* of some great truth below the horizon of the Episcopalian world in this very answer. And you and I both agree in the proposition that neither the “Church of Rome” nor “the Church of England” has lost all truth; I agree with both of them in many items, and so do you. Had you not been sprinkled, and had you been a believer of the testimony which God gave of his Son before

you were baptized, I would not much dissent from the answer which you were taught to give to that question. These circumstances, however, alter the case very much. The sprinkling of a speechless and faithless babe never moved it one inch in the way to heaven, and never did change its heart, character, or relation to God and the kingdom of heaven. *But not so a believer, immersed in obedience of the gospel. He has put on Christ; and whatever belongs to the husband belongs to the wife: "You are Christ's property, and therefore all things are yours."* You and I agree that we have righteousness, or pardon; that we have all the blessings of salvation through Christ; that his blood cleanses from all sin; and that the reign of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in a holy spirit. The question is, *At what instant of time do we enter this kingdom, or come under this reign of God, and by what means?* I say, the moment we view allegiance to the King in the constituted way—the moment we are naturalized—the moment we are born of water and the Spirit—the moment we put on Christ—the instant we are *converted*, and not before.

It was, you say, upon the face of the waters that the Spirit first moved in creating. It is upon the face of the waters the Spirit still moves in recreating. Jesus himself came by water before he came by blood. It was while wet with the waters of the Jordan, the Spirit descended upon him. Thus the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, agreed in one testimony concerning him. You have referred to the Spirit moving upon the waters—I refer to the New Testament allusions. I do not, however, argue from them, save allusively, to this subject. No; it depends upon a plainer, a more literal, a positive testimony. Please examine again my essays upon immersion.\*

The question between us is not whether the reign of God is not righteousness, peace, and joy in a holy spirit; but the question is, *Do we come under that reign, or enter that kingdom, before or after immersion?* This is the single question which embraces all the ground about immersion. After the most minute, patient, devout, and long protracted examination; after hearing all objections, and examining them with care, I am more and more confirmed in the conclusion to which I had come in my debate with Mr. McCalla in 1823. I will, however, examine, and regard, with all attention, whatever you may please to offer upon that question which embraces the whole subject.

The next point, and the remaining one in your letter, is what refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit. You favor me with what you suppose to be a correction of a mistake into which I had fallen concerning your early reading and teaching. I am much pleased with the narrative which you give, though it does not relate to what I had in my eye in the remark quoted. I did not mean that period of your life from childhood to twenty, so much as the early part of your public life as a preacher and teacher. This, however, is a small matter. Your narrative is an interesting one, and worthy of attention.

\* *Christian Baptist*, vols. v, vi, vii.

It is strange to the unreflecting and inattentive observers of the human mind in all its developments, *what different conclusions men will arrive at from the same premises*; and with what tenacity they do adhere to them from the *supposed sincerity* and honesty by which they have arrived at them.

About the same year in your life and mine, I began to examine most diligently the holy scriptures on the work of the Holy Spirit. I took your course, I noted down the passages, and have to this day upon the blank leaves of a Testament many references still extant. I had received an education different from yours in many respects; more evangelical as you would call it. From the age of sixteen I read devoutly at intervals, the most "*evangelical* writers, I bought *Baxter's Call to the Unconverted* and *Allen's Alarm*, that I might be converted, hearing them highly commended by the pious. Boston's *Fourfold State*, *Newton's*, *Bunyan's*, and *Hallyburton's Memoirs*, and all the converting books were sought after and read with avidity. The accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit, were prayed for most ardently on these and other works, as well as on the holy scriptures. After I had hope that I was converted, and differed much from those mere moralists of whom you speak, who called prayer and devotion, except in a stone house denominated a church, "*fanaticism*:" I say after I hoped that I had passed from death to life, I began to examine this subject, and with the aid of the great and "*evangelical* Dr. John Owen." He was a great favorite with me, I read most of his works, and, with especial delight, his "*Christologia*," or "*the Person and Glory of Christ*;" his "*Death of Deaths in the Death of Christ*," the strongest work against the Arminians I ever read; his *Treatise on Independent Church Government*; and, above all, his work on the Holy Spirit, in two large octavos. This work I ate up. I wrote it off in miniature on two quires of paper, in order to make my own of it. Not a verse that mentions the *Holy Spirit* which he does not take notice of. I was thoroughly imbued with his systematic illustration of it. Other works of his I also read; but this became a text-book. So that I was, at the age to which you allude, perfectly indoctrinated into the right faith, as the evangelical christians called it. I think I informed you once before how laboriously and extensively I had examined the question of faith. For the space of one year I read upon this subject alone. Fuller, Bellamy, Hervey, Glass, Sandeman, Cudworth, Scott, M'Lean, Erskine, *cum multis aliis*, were not only read, but studied as I studied geometry. And I solemnly say, that, although I was considered at the of twenty-four a much more systematic preacher and text expositor than I am now considered, and more accustomed to strew my sermons with scores of texts in proof of every point, *I am conscious that I did not understand the New Testament—not a single book of it*. Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott were my favorite commentators. I read the whole of Thomas Scott's commentary in family worship, section by section. I began to read the scriptures

critically. Works of criticism, from Michaelis down to Sharp, on the Greek article, were resorted to. While these threw light on many passages, *still the book as a whole*, the religion of Jesus Christ *as a whole*, was hid from me. I took the *naked text* and followed common sense; I read it, subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation, and thus it was it became to me a new book. Then I was called a *natural* man, because I took the *natural* rules of interpretation. Till then I was a *spiritual* man, and a *regenerated* interpreter. But, alas! *as I learned by Bible I lost my orthodoxy*; and from being one of the most evangelical in the estimation of many, I became the most heretical. I can only say for the spirit which actuated me, that it was a most vehement desire to understand the truth. I did most certainly put the world out of my sight. I cared no more for popularity than I did for the shadow which followed my body when the Sun shone. I valued truth more than the gold of Ophir, and I sought her with my whole heart, as for hidden treasure. My eye was *single*, as King James' Translators said. I paid no court to the prejudices of the world, and did sacrifice every worldly object to the Bible. This much of my experience and history I deem due to you for the narrative you have given. I would only add, that experience has taught me that to get a victory over the world, over the love of fame, and to hold in perfect contempt human honor, adulation, and popularity, will do more to make the New Testament intelligible, than all the commentators that ever wrote.

But, brother Semple, I do not claim any regard or authority to my conclusions from an argument drawn from those premises. No; I appear before the public with the Bible only in my hand. What I cannot evince and demonstrate to be the mind of the Holy Spirit from that, my experience, or my labors in pursuit of truth, will not be plead as any evidence in favor of its truth; for in discussing the views of others I will not allow an *argumentum ad modestiam* (an argument addressed to my modesty) to have any weight.

I differ not from you in the conclusion that the Holy Spirit begins, carries on, and consummates the salvation of men, *But the question is, whether independent of, accompanying, or simply by the word of life?* Much has been said upon this subject already, and much may yet be said about it before the speculations of the dark ages shall be banished.

I have long thought that the best way to understand the work of the Holy Spirit, is, to take every sentence in which it is named, one by one, and, *in the light of their respective contexts*, decide their import. When you attempt this, or have done it, you will find no text supporting the views of Andrew Fuller's *previous* holy disposition infused *anterior* to faith. This idea, sometimes called *sovereign grace*, is the radix of the system, and of the religious metaphysics of this age.

You speak of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit. *Do you mean in any other way than by the written word?* I had a



long conversation in Richmond with a Methodist teacher on this subject. He claimed some sort of a witness in the heart from some suggestion of the Spirit attesting his conversion. The "Holy Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are children of God," I understand to be the concurrence of the testimony with our own experience. But of this again.

In the mean time brother Semple, be assured that my views of the Institution of Jesus are antipodes to that cold, formal, moral, lifeless system, in fashion in Old Virginia. The result of the gospel when obeyed, according to my proclamation, is, "righteousness, peace, and joy in a holy spirit." And for you and all the saints, I can pray with Paul, "The favor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen!"

In hope of immortality, yours,

A. CAMPBELL.

#### LETTER TO R. B. SEMPLE.—No. II

Dear Sir,

If all my opponents were as candid as you—if they exhibited a christian spirit like you—if they were as disinterested and as easy to be entreated as you—my controversy with them, call it by its most unacceptable name—I say, my *controversy* with them would be much more pleasing, profitable, and easy to be terminated. But what a generation of perverters, misinterpreters, and captious spirits have beset me! who, like the great adversary, are lying continually in wait to devour.

Brother Semple, you and I were not taught first by Paul, and therefore we will have to wrestle with ourselves for some time before we can rise from among the pots, and think and feel like them who were taught by the Apostles. Some vessels long retain the flavor of the first liquor which filled them. Our minds resemble them a little. Neither you nor I, methinks, will ever understand and feel the whole result of the christian institution upon our minds as though we had *never* been indoctrinated into the systems of Calvin, Gill, and Fuller. I have been at war with myself, more than with any man living, for many years, to eradicate from my mind every plant which Paul did not plant, nor Peter water. In this I consider myself as having only partially succeeded. Care is to be taken here, as well as elsewhere, that, in rooting out the tares, the wheat is not also rooted out.

But it is only by the constant study of the oracles that we can attain to those clear and healthful views of the religion which produced such wonderful effects upon the first converts. Those who depend upon any operation of the Holy Spirit to impart to them *what is already written, or to explain it to them*, will never, never find such aid. I think the experience of *one thousand years* last past

is enough to support this last saying if there was not another word to be said upon it. Do you ask what experience? I answer, the individual experience of all the devout of every name, and every page of the history of all the great and good men of that period.

Where is the man now living, and where is the history of the man now dead, to whom God has especially revealed any thing in the Oracles but by studying them. The students of systems have become learned in systems; and the students of the Bible, and none else, have become learned in the sacred writings. Was Newton, Bunyan, Gill, Fuller, Wesley, Calvin, or Luther, or are the myriads of preachers now praying for the same favor, led into *all* truth! As naturally might we pray for *manna* now to fall from heaven upon us, to save us from cultivating the earth, as so expect such teachings and guidings as ninety-nine hundredths of the religious of all denominations are praying for, but never finding. The Spirit, you will agree with me, teaches Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, &c. &c. alike. *Why, then, do they all continue as they were? God's Spirit imparts light only to them who read or hear the Oracles, and he blesses the labors of the diligent husbandman with the early and the latter rain; so he is blessed who devotes his energies to the written word.*

You say that the result of your inquiries was "a firm belief that without the influence of God's Spirit directly on your heart, you could not be saved." You add, "Well, sir, I sought it, as a sinner, a justly condemned sinner, and I have found it, thanks to sovereign grace?" That such is your conviction, and that you found the favor of God, I doubt not. But would not any other person, who sought with equal sincerity, have found all that you found? And if so, why do you ascribe it to a *special* grace in your particular case? The Lord promises the Holy Spirit to *every one who asks*, desiring it, just as certain as natural parents give good things to their crying children. Do only *some* of the asking children receive what they solicit from their parents? Again, let me ask, What did you find that was not before written? Any new promise, any special promise, any new light, which was not before as distinctly and as clearly proposed as God could propose it in human language? Had you not faith before you asked, and was not this faith a persuasion that God exists, and is the rewarder of all who diligently seek him? You could not have asked for any thing which you did not *before* believe God had promised to bestow. Could a child who never heard or believed that there was a diamond, ask for one? Your faith in God's favor was established before you bowed your knee! The difficulty with you was a *special* interest in it. This I know, for my experience was like yours in this particular. I desired to feel a special interest, and for this I prayed. But mark this, brother Semple, if you and I had been taught that God's philanthropy equally embraced all, and that *all* to whom the word of this salvation was sent, were equally warranted to appropriate it to themselves, this

concern for a *special interest* never could have originated. It was a *previous system* assented to, which gave birth to these desires and prayers; otherwise as soon as you believed God's promise through Jesus Christ, you would have found yourself embraced. No one in the primitive age ever made such a prayer as you and I were taught to make; no one languished then for a day or a week to be born again. All were commanded to reform, and instantly all who obeyed received forgiveness of sins. Our converts are sometimes agonizing before they are born again for months—for years. This destroys the figure, and it proves that a false philosophy has perverted us from the simplicity of the gospel.

The Spirit, you say, opens our understanding. I doubt not but all the light which shines, into our understanding on the unseen and future world, is communicated by God's Spirit. But that light shines only in the written word. To open the understanding is explained as synonymous to open the scriptures. One represents it thus: "Then he opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures." Another historian, relating the same incident, says, "He opened unto them the scriptures"—a very common mode of speaking, and one of easy intelligence. One man thus opens the understanding of another when he opens the subject to his apprehension of it.

The popular doctrine of the Calvinian school, in all its ramifications, is this, that notwithstanding all that has been done by the death of Jesus, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the preachings of the Apostles, still an omnipotent act is necessary to produce faith in God, to unveil the grace contained in the word; nay, more, that it is dangerous not to assent to this position, and not to teach it to all who inquire for the knowledge of salvation. Now this abstraction, or speculative point, is at the very root of all the moral ruins of Calvinian christendom. When I see a grain of corn, I am willing to say it is the act of omnipotence; but if any man ask me, Does God put forth an act of omnipotence in producing every grain of corn? I answer, No: he gave birth to a system that creates it, under which system human agency can produce it in millions of measures. So I reason in this case. The means are adapted to the end in both cases. But this is only "my theory," and that is yours. When we proceed to convert men we command them to obey the gospel after we have proposed it to them. At least this was the old-fashioned way.

There is one expression, more than any other, I regret to see in your letter; and that I need not inform you, is, your calling the gospel a *dead letter*—that which Paul calls *the power and wisdom of God* to every one who believes it. It is not to those who disbelieve it a *dead letter*, for it kills them—as some say, "It is a savor of death to them." Now if the gospel be a *dead letter*, how can it condemn the disobedient. *A dead man can neither kill nor save!* A dead letter can neither save nor condemn. Jesus said his word was *spirit and LIFE*. No scripture says, brother Semple, what you have said; that "it is the Spirit of God which makes it sharp and two-edged." Paul,

to whom I look up, says "the word of God is **LIVING**, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing," &c. He qualifies it not as you have done. If, again, as you say, the Spirit has revealed Jesus for six thousand years, without any written revelation, of what use is the revelation to us, and why so much concern in sending *the word* to the heathen! This looks a little like making the word of God of non-effect. But I will not press this matter until you have an opportunity to explain yourself. To conclude, I would say, brother, I can only show my faith by my works; and it is only when these works accord with what the Spirit has already said to the churches, that I or you can approve its character. I will ever rejoice to see your faith, and love, and liberality always growing abundantly. Hoping soon to hear from you I remain affectionately yours in the hope of immortality.

EDITOR.

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### EXTRACT FROM "FANATICISM."

*By the Author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm.*

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#### FANATICISM OF THE SYMBOL.\*

THE arduous part of our subject now meets us. In reviewing those phases of error which have long ago passed away, we occupy a vantage ground, and may at leisure measure the proportions of the distant object. But every circumstance of the inquiry is of another sort when it is the extant form of religion which comes to be examined, and when what we should calmly and impartially speak of, are practices, opinions and modes of feeling, regarded as excellent, or leniently dealt with as venial, by our contemporaries—our friends—our coadjutors—ourselves. \* \* \* \* \*

In contemplating the errors of past ages, no point more important presents itself, nothing which should so fix our attention as the fact that certain extravagant modes of feeling, or certain pernicious practices—the offspring of an active and virulent fanaticism, have, after a while, subsided into a fixed and tranquil form, such as has allowed them to win the approval and to secure the support of the calmest and most enlightened minds; and so to be transmitted through successive ages—accredited, unquestioned, admired. The turbulent stage of fanaticism would do the church little harm if it were not succeeded by a tame and moderate fanaticism—seemingly wise and temperate,—The parent in these instances is an ephemeron; but the progeny has had a longer term than that of the phoenix. \* \*

Nothing, or nothing favorable, should be inferred on the behalf of any system or constitution of things from its present tranquillity, or from the moderation and the wisdom that invest it; or from the accidental benefits which it may claim to have produced. The blackest superstitions have shown an exterior mildly magnificent:—

\*i. e. of the Creed,

the extravagances of personal torture have worn the garb of seraphic piety:—the Fanaticism of intolerance has shone in combination with great qualities; and the zeal of military proselytism has made alliance with substantial virtues. There is nothing, then, to wonder at, if even genuine piety and the brightest personal excellence are found to exist under a state of things which owes its origin to an impulse essentially fanatical. The question is always, not whether accomplishments and virtues and piety exist within this or that system; but simply—whether the system itself be good or evil.

The Fanaticism of the Symbol—or a malign and turbulent zeal for the honour of a creed, supposes of course, the possession of a written and authoritative canon of faith. But then this rule has to be interpreted; and the interpretation, in each instance, insensibly draws to itself those profound emotions which the sacred importance of the canon calls into play.

It does not appear that sectarian rancour, in any distinct form, had shewn itself before the time when the Jewish prophetic economy having been sealed, and the written Testimony of God consigned, in a defunct dialect, to INTERPRETERS, a field was opened to diversities of opinion, each of which challenged to itself entire, the prerogatives that attach of right to the original document. From the period when Exposition of Scripture became the business of a class of men, the Jewish community parted into sects which, in an exasperated condition, were the main causes of the ruin of the state, the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the race.

In this instance what we assume to have been *new* in the history of human nature, was not the existence or the breaking forth of the diversities of opinion; for these have disturbed all countries in all ages; nor was it the alliance of certain modes of thinking on abstract subjects with temporary and political interests; for nothing has been more common than such associations. But the novelty was precisely this—That the tremendous weight of God's sanction—truly believed to belong to the Canon of Faith, was claimed by each party in behalf of its special exposition of the rule. So fatal an assumption effected a firm coalescence of every religious sentiment with the passionate workings of self-love, pride, jealousy, and the sense of personal and corporate welfare.

Within the circle of these feelings every proper element of Fanaticism finds room, and no species of Fanaticism has been altogether so compact or so permanent. The other kinds (as we have seen) have had their hour and have vanished; this has settled down upon Religion—documentary religion, as well in Europe as in Asia, and now in America, and has become the inseparable condition of all forms of Worship.

We say every proper element of Fanaticism displays itself in the Fanaticism of the Symbol.—As for example:—The Divine Being, when so outraged as to be made the patron of a virulent faction, appears to the votary altogether under a malign aspect, and can no

more be thought of such as He is. Again, the irritation excited by opposition in matters of opinion, when heightened by a vindictive forethought of future judgment, brings with it the most peculiar species of misanthropy known to the human bosom; and an arrogance too, that far transcends other kinds of aristocratic pride. With an anathematizing Deity—an anathematized world, and himself safe in the heart of *the only Church*, the zealot wants nothing that can render him malign and insolent. \* \* \* \* \*

Thus absurd is the human mind when fairly surrendered to religious delusions. The power of the infatuation in these cases seems to result from a combination of the opposite feelings belonging to full persuasion and secret misgiving. The controvertist owes the heat of his zeal as well to firm conviction as to a mistrustful anxiety concerning the truth of his dogmas:—and the faith and the doubt are alternately attached to the authoritative document of his belief, and to his special interpretation of it. It is this very oscillation of the mind which produces the turbulence of his emotions. \* \* \* \* \*

Putting out of view then certain accessory motives which will presently claim to be mentioned, the zealous champion and propagator of a Creed has an interest to promote that deeply engages his passions. Pride and secular advantages out of the question, it is a matter of sincere anxiety with him to secure, to maintain, and to extend the pale of his party. He looks aghast at the danger of being deserted, or of seeing a host on the opposite heights. No endeavours are too great therefore which may arrest defection while it is small and feeble. Under the pressure of this solicitude it is no wonder that the defender of a Creed should avail himself of the extreme means of persuasion. Or if measures of violence are not at hand, he snatches up the weapons of spiritual hostility. And first, a strenuous endeavour is made so to identify the special interpretation with the Authoritative Canon of faith, as that whoever impugns the former shall stand declared—the enemy of God. Instead of for a moment admitting the reasonable and modest supposition that the Interpretation may perhaps contain more than the Canon will support, and that therefore caution should be used in doling out anathemas, every artifice of an elaborate sophistry is employed to keep such a supposition out of view. Nothing less than the peculiar exigency of the occasion could drive the zealot into so egregious a dogmatism, for he feels that if he were to give ground but an inch, he must forfeit his usurped right to fling the bolts of heaven. If the Interpretation be not indeed divine, it is merely human—a simple opinion; and if so, must be submitted to the common conditions of argument. \* \* \*

But factious religionism, how much soever it may have been tamed and curbed, will not fail to be encircled by wide spread impiety, and infidelity, as the direct effects of the scandal of division—Factions, moreover, benumb the expansive powers of Christianity, and prevent its spread.—They create too a universal confusion, entanglement, and perversion of religious notions. No inquiry can be calmly prose-

ented, no results of solitary meditation can be safely reported, nothing can be looked at in its native form, so long as the jealousies and the interests of eight or ten ancient and corporate factions spread themselves over the field of theology. Even those few insulated articles of Christian belief or speculation, or of abstruse science, which have not been claimed by party zeal, are often found to alarm the wakeful fears of this or that guardian of sectarism, merely because the method of argument which may have been employed in such instances is foreseen to have a bearing upon matters that are to be held inviolable.—The opinion in itself may be innocent enough; but the logic that sustains it is dangerous.—Better then, quash at once the suspicious novelty, which, though it may be good and true, is not momentous, than favour it, and so open the door to no one can say what innovations!

So poor, so timid, so feeble, so inert, so grovelling, so infatuated, is the human mind! Truth, which alone can be permanently advantageous, and which alone can reward labour or compensate losses, is looked at and listened to with eagle-eyed alarm; nor is entertained until she has protested, ten times over, that she means to rob us of nothing we dote upon.

Less than two hundred years ago—even so late as the close of the seventeenth century, this very same sectarian infatuation, this fanaticism of the creed and symbol, enthralled the physical and abstruse sciences, throughout Europe. No process of nature, no mechanic law, could be investigated or discussed apart from the interference of the fierce jealousies of rival schools. A chemical mixture could not change from blue to red, from transparent to opaque—an apple could not fall to the ground, nay, the planets might not swing through their orbits, without kindling angry feuds in colleges. Not only was the method of obtaining knowledge utterly misunderstood; but it was not believed, or not felt, that Knowledge is always the friend of man, and his coadjutor, Error, his enemy. This degraded condition of the human mind was at last remedied by nothing but the bringing to bear upon the METAPHYSIC-PHYSICS of Des Cartes and Aristotle, a method of reasoning so absolutely conclusive that resistance was found to be useless. Prejudice and antiquated jealousy did not freely yield themselves up and dissolve:—they were undermined, they fell in, and were seen no more.

Causes which need hardly be specified, have hitherto excluded from the precincts of Theology the reform that has spread through every department of natural science.—The dogmatic fanaticism which raged at the time of the Reformation, passed down uncorrected upon the political and ecclesiastical constitutions of the northern nations of Europe, and especially upon those of England, and it now firmly grasps the religious commonwealth. The violence of religious strife has indeed long died away; or it breaks out only for a moment; but no relief has yet been administered to the settled ill consequences of that delirium. So far as we are religious at all, the English people

is a nation of sects, and our theology is necessarily the theology of faction.—Not a false theology—thank God; but a theology that is confused, entangled, and imperfect, gloomy;—a theology which, while it abundantly breeds infidelity among the educated classes, fails to spread through the body of the population, and but dimly, or only as a flickering candle, illumines the world. \* \* \*

A happier destiny may sooner break upon us! But whether it does or not, it is certain that an unobtrusive power has been some while at work beneath the entire ground of our sectarian edifices—a power which must (unless arrested) inevitably in the end, bring them down to the abyss.—The philosophy of the schools sunk to rise no more when the true method of science gained its first indisputable triumph. But although the same method is not formally applicable to theology, yet the *principle* of it is so, and is actually in its incipient stage of application—or perhaps has gone a step beyond that stage.—The art of criticism and the true logic of Interpretation must restore to the church (under that guidance which is never denied when ingenuously sought) the pure meaning of Scripture.—The charm that cements petty communions will then dissolve; the excellence of Truth will be felt, and the fanaticism of dogmas will die away, when all men learn to hold in contempt every thing in religion but the ascertained sense of God's Revelation. Diversities of opinion must indeed remain so long as there are differences of intellectual and moral power; but these will engender no heat, and will produce no divisions, when all minds shall be moving on toward one and the same centre.

## REMARKS UPON THE CIRCULAR OF THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, &c.

An article appeared in the January number of the Baptist Magazine, signed "Discipulus"—and also a circular letter in the last number of the Minutes of the Baptist association, which profess to call the attention of those they address to the truth and great importance of what they term "the influence of the Holy Spirit" by which, is evidently meant to be contended for, and what ought to have been so distinguished, not merely, if at all, the simple statement or facts revealed in the Bible on this subject, (which all admit to be true and important,) but the peculiar opinions or interpretation, which those writers themselves, or others affix to these divine statements or facts, and assume as their creed; and respecting which, as such, the circular says "*This doctrine (?) you are aware we consider one of the fundamental truths of Christianity!*" the denial or perversion of which Discipulus also considers as "*more destructive than that of any other in the code of Christian truth!*" who even fears, "*such denial, is nearly connected with that fearful sin for which the lips of eternal truth hath declared that there was no forgiveness neither in this world, nor yet in the next!*" !!



This doctrine, deduced by the fallible reasoning of men, chiefly from *figurative and disconnected* texts of Scripture, and from metaphysical theories respecting man's free agency, is unhappily for its pretensions, so variously modified, and so contradictorily held by its supporters, as to be almost as incapable of being at all precisely and intelligibly defined, as it is quite incapable of being stated in the language which the Holy Spirit speaketh. It however may be generally considered as inculcating the idea,—That no man merely from the revelation which God has been pleased to give us of his will in the Bible, and which he has declared to be true and faithful, and worthy of all acceptance, and able through faith to make us wise unto salvation, could ever truly understand and believe its truths, obey the Gospel, and have repentance unto God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—without a *special supernatural* influence of the Holy Spirit, either previous to, or accompanying the word.—That, without this *special* and supernatural agency in his favor—he could no more do so, than a dead man could raise himself from the grave, without the special and supernatural agency of the Almighty: Those making this common illustration, forgetting, that the analogy fails in most essential particulars.—That in the one case, men *morally* dead in trespasses and sins—God has commanded them to repent and obey the Gospel, and has revealed the moral means, His divine truths, by which he wills and enables them to do this,—and justly condemns those who do not. That in the other case—to men physically dead—God has no where commanded them, to raise themselves from the grave, or has revealed any means by which he wills them, and enables them to do this, or any condemnation for their not doing so. This influence (considered as something quite distinct from those of the divine and moral truths the Spirit has revealed in the Gospel, to the mind and nature of man, and without which no man could call Jesus, Lord,) is defined in the circular as being “*a special influence over and above the mere influence of motives, a supernatural influence, something beyond the stated operations of divine power through the medium of second causes.*” When men talk of the insufficiency of the “*mere influence of motives,*” of the mere truths of God, &c. ; we doubt whether they have ever realized, in other than a speculative and abstract way—the nature and constitution of man, or the import of divine truths, and their adaptedness, to his nature, circumstances and sympathies—the threatenings, and promises, of the Almighty—stretching from time to eternity—so immensely important, and yet so plain, and so intelligible, as necessarily to affect the conscience, and the understanding, and to quicken every faculty of him, who duly considers their truth, and their consequences, and their author.

As a mere private, and conjectural opinion or interpretation, we would have nothing at all to say to all this; having no other *human opinion* we prefer, or would wish to oppose to it—the question with us, now, for all matters of faith, being, *not what thinkest thou, but what*

*readest thou.* But when from the most influential sources, such impracticable speculations are enforced upon the credulity and upon the conscience of the many, as being "a fundamental truth of Christianity," as being of equal validity and authority with the pure word of God, so that it is sinful and heretical even to question them, when in consequence, it is (besides other evils) made the fruitful source, of many thinking of themselves more highly, than they ought, and despising others, of ministering questions not of godly edifying, or provoking to love and good works, but of strife—of provoking to unjust accusings, and endless divisions among brethren,—it has seemed to the writer, just and expedient on the present occasion, to offer some suggestions, by which the scriptural consistency of this doctrine, and the relevancy of its alledged proofs, may be incontestibly ascertained, and to afford the opportunity for any to give the scriptural reasons, why they are forced conscientiously to regard it, as the precept of man and to prove that at the same time, they firmly believe all that the Bible reveals, respecting the personality, divinity, divine words, or operations of the Holy Spirit.

For this general purpose, as our limits prevent us entering into much detail, or into much reasoning on the subject—we shall confine our examination of the nature and merits of the doctrine, by simply and strictly testing it, with the facts and principles, which the Bible reveals on the subject to which it relates.—That Book being the only authority to which on this occasion we shall either refer or appeal. Besides rejecting this doctrine as an article of our creed, because it comprizes the mere reasoning of fallible man, which cannot be stated in scriptural language, (as every fundamental truth of the Bible necessarily may be); we consider it as being positively inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture, —In the first place, because it is opposed to the general scope of its teaching, as to all its more particular declarations, and numerous examples which unequivocally, and more or less literally reveal to us, the only way, or the nature of the means, which God has been pleased to ordain, to instruct, to illuminate—to convince and convert sinners—to quicken their consciences—to create in them faith, hope, fear and love, &c. and which, he has directed us, to hearken to, and to use, without adding to, or taking from them, that we, may also know, and do his will, and thereby enjoy the blessing, or avoid the evil which he reveals. In every case, it is revealed, that He has done this, by moral means, by the import and necessary influence of those efficient truths, which have solely originated from, and been revealed by Him—when duly regarded by the children of men as His word. In no one instance (if the Bible be authority) has he ever promised, or has he ever superadded to the authority and influence of his truth, whether conveying a threatening, promise, or command, (to make an unbeliever able, or willing to believe, and obey Him) any special, supernatural agency, of a nature, distinct from the influence of the truth revealed, or of the special providences or circumstances, which he may have

seen fit at any time to connect with the truth, to increase faith or obedience to it. Referring to the dry and wet fleece of Gideon—to the history of Joseph—to the providences which forced as it were, Jonah to be obedient—to the earthquake which alarmed the jailer—to the vision which opened Peter's heart and made him willing to go to the Gentiles—may suffice to illustrate our meaning here, respecting these the special providences of God, connected with his word of faith. And who can ever fully know, the divers ways, and kindly providences, by which the Lord may have led each of us, to consider our ways, and to attend to his messages of grace?—and yet altho' this be true, who would dare to teach as a fundamental truth of Christianity, that without this, or that, special providence—men *cannot* believe, and obey the testimony of God? This would be to make a truth, teach a falsehood. God has made his will to be known either by an immediate impulse or divine revelation to an individual—or by those specially called, and divinely instructed messengers (by his Spirit in the prophets) accompanied by indisputable credentials of their being actually delegated by him—to make known to other individuals or people His will concerning them.—In this way “God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past to the fathers, by the prophets” and to us “in these last days by his son” and He, by his apostles, who saw and heard Him “God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will.” This doctrine, as stated in the circular seems indeed, to be as derogatory to the wisdom, and authority of the word of God, as a perfect revelation to man, as it is inconsistent with the numerous examples recorded of those who *through faith*, have overcome and inherited the promises—or of those who, because when he called they refused, have justly borne the evil consequences of disregarding his warnings and despising his reproofs.—To illustrate the nature and truth of these assertions let a Christian, examine any, or all of the recorded examples of the Bible—let him begin if he will, with the promises which excited the hopes, and influenced the conduct of Adam and all the patriarchs, &c.—to the promises and threatenings which, according to their use, or abuse brought blessings, or judgments upon Israel—to the message to Nineveh when the people “believed God and proclaimed a fast,”—to the numerous instances in the New Testament, which plainly record the conversion of men from darkness to light by the influence, of what they heard, and saw of the words and works of the Holy Spirit—to the revelation of the Spirit to John at Patmos which he was to write, and send to the Churches, to influence them, if they took heed to, and heard “what the Spirit saith to the Churches.”—This doctrine not only differs with, and *adds to the word of God*, in these plain instances, but it also does so with all the particular definitions and more figurative allusions, respecting faith in the New Testament—although some of these are highly figurative, yet they are readily explained, by pas-

sages that are more plainly and literally revealed, and which they strongly illustrate. And here, we notice a method of interpretation, which the supporters of mere human opinions adopt to have any show of scriptural proof,—it is to identify the figurative and obscure passages on a subject, with their opinion, and then to make these, explain away, or add to, what is plainly, and literally revealed—the figure to explain the fact, instead of the reverse of all this—to make what is plain and literal, explain what is more obscure or figurative—the fact to explain the figure. Keeping in mind then, what we read, that as men heard, believed and obeyed God, and received spiritual blessings, just so far, does this strictly verify the scriptural definition—“that faith comes by hearing the word of God” and explain other more figurative allusions to this change—“God begets us,” but “it is with the word of truth.”—We are born again, born of the Spirit &c. but it is “by this incorruptible seed, the word of God which is the gospel”—“we are begotten, through the gospel.”—“The gospel is the power and wisdom of God, to every one that believes.” Dare we then, add to the word, and infer an omission in it,—which the consistent use of this gloss would necessarily oblige us to do and to teach as a fundamental truth expressed or implied,—That faith comes by *special and supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit*, and by hearing the word of God? or shall we correct Peter, by teaching “that we are born again of *special influences*, and by the the word &c?” or Paul’s declaration “that *special influences* &c. and the gospel, are the power and wisdom of God to every one who believes,” and thus disregard wisdom’s warning voice. Every word of God is pure, “add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” Besides, this doctrine seems necessarily to require, a phraseology respecting the Holy Spirit quite unscriptural; and to imply, a preparation, or a prerequisite of something done in us, or by us, quite inconsistent with the free apostolic gospel, proclaimed to *sinners*, without money, and without price. We can only briefly hint at these scriptural objections, and submit as a proof of their necessity and nature, the following extract from the circular, “*The first operation of the Holy Spirit in the human heart, is that of convincing the sinner of his guilt, and thus shewing him the need of a special divine interposition, to save him from deserved wrath and prepare him for the glad reception of that &c.*” but this is not all. “*In addition to this work of conviction, it is by the Holy Spirit alone, that men are regenerated and turned unto God.*”

In the second place, it is a fact, that there is not in the whole of the Bible, one passage, which reveals the sentiment contended for, nor is there an example of any Prophet or Apostle, prefacing, or in any way ever mingling with the testimony of God they had to deliver, any such doctrine whatever—as, that those to whom their message was sent, could not believe, or that they were to look for some special or supernatural agency, to prepare and to enable them

to believe and obey the word of the Lord,—nor does the Bible to authorise any, to preach such impracticable dogmas to their hearers, as now, gloss, and more or less, obscure almost every professed exhibition of the testimony concerning Jesus Christ—and which (to some extent at least,) prevents the word having free course, and induces in the professing world, presumption or despair or indifference, from the contradictory and perplexing nature of these, with the more practical exhortations to sinners (which usually accompany them) to believe and obey the gospel,—exhortations inconsistent to be taught, and incredible to be expected to be believed, or obeyed, if men can do neither without a special, supernatural power, beyond all human power to attain, and beyond the influence of every divine motive which the gospel reveals.—But this is *not* the word of faith which the apostles taught; No,—God is not revealed as a hard taskmaster, gathering where he has not strawn. His principle of condemnation under the gospel is just; it is, that light has come into the world, and men prefer darkness to light.—The gospel sounds with an inviting voice to all—to man as he is, a sinner. We have peace in believing, and this is enjoyed, from looking to the cross, and not to ourselves. God begets us to a lively hope, but it is by a divinely confirmed fact, and promises connected with it—it is by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those, who give no heed to the import, and truth of the gospel, have not the hopes or the conduct which such truths, understood and relied on, are calculated to produce. God originates the facts—gives the promises—reveals the truth—sends the glad tidings in his sovereign providence, to whom, and by whom, and when he wills. Salvation is of him from first to last—it is not of him that runneth or of him that willeth, but of God, who shews mercy, and it is His will (not man's will) that whosoever believes &c. shall be saved and whosoever believes not is condemned already, because he believes not the record God has given of his son, &c. &c. In consistency with this, the apostle speaks, “say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? or who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead? “The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, *the word of faith which we preach*; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 10.

God does not believe for us, or physically constrain us,—He morally influences us by his own divine truth. It was God who promised, but it was “Abraham that believed and it was counted unto him for righteousness; he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform,—and therefore it was imputed unto him, for righteousness; now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him, who raised up Jesus from the dead.” Rom. 4.

But thirdly, This interpretation of the circular, is not more at variance with what is plainly revealed respecting faith, as "coming by hearing the word of God"—than it is inconsistent with the facts and statements of the New Testament, respecting the Holy Spirit, as a *special gift*, being promised only to, and being given only in believers, "through faith;"

This is no question of opinion, of what thinkest thou, but of fact, what readeſt thou. It is the New Testament which teaches that "without faith it is impossible to please God," that to ask aright, we must previously "believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them, who diligently seek him."—It is our Saviour who encourages any, as children, with the promise that their *Heavenly Father* gives the Holy Spirit, to them who ask.

It is the Apostle Paul, who declares, that "we are all children of God" (how?—he does not say, by special and supernatural influences, or by a decree of fatal necessity, before the world began, but) "by faith in Christ Jesus,"—and that "*because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son, into your hearts, crying abba Father.*" Gal. 3.—It is also an apostle who says, "we are Christ's witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts v. 32. see also John vii. 30.) It is Paul who again teaches the same doctrine when he says "Christ hath redeemed us" "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*" and who consistently with this, says to the Ephesians, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. (Eph. i. 13. and see Acts xix. 2.)

Altogether in harmony with this teaching of the Apostles, and quite as inconsistent with the circular's; are all the facts and statements of the New Testament, which exhibit the order, and design of the gospel truths. An unprejudiced attention (with no previous gloss on our minds), simply to what is revealed, respecting the promise of the Holy Spirit in John xvi. and its fulfilment, in Acts ii. will suffice to confirm and illustrate this remark. We learn from these passages that the spirit was only promised to the disciples—that when thus come (in them) into the world—the Spirit was to testify of Christ,—that He accordingly did so, by revealing, and explaining what David and the other prophets wrote respecting the Messiah—and proving their accomplishment in Jesus of Nazareth, necessarily convinced\* of sin, those who had rejected his claims and had not believed in him. That the spirit testified, that Jesus was exalted, and had received of the Father, and had shed forth this, which they now saw and heard. (Acts ii. 33.)—and that therefore,

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\*See John viii. 8—46. Acts xviii. 28 for the meaning, in English, Greek, and the Bible, of the word "convince."

all the house of Israel should assuredly know, "that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ,"—*We do not read that some, rather than others; or that any of those, to whom the inspired Apostle preached, had any special gift, or any supernatural influence of the spirit in them, beyond the influence of divine truth, divinely attested and revealed equally to all, who saw and heard,—but we do read, "now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts,"* we do read, that of those who thus heard and were convicted of the truth, only to those who should obey the gospel, they heard, was any reference, or special promise of the Spirit made,—it is Peter, who proclaims to these "repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Judge ye, if *it be heresy*, thus (according to divine teaching,) to speak of the order and design of Gospel truth—to hear—to believe and to obey,—that spiritual and other blessings may be enjoyed? See John xvi. and Acts ii. in connection, and all the Acts of the Apostles, how consistently with this order, and import of Gospel truths, they fulfilled and acted on their divine commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned," and of whom we read, "they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word, with signs following." For a farther Bible explanation, of, how the Lord worked with them, and how men were influenced to believe, see Mark xvi. 16, 20. Acts iv. 29, 33. v. 12, 14, 16. xiv. 3. viii. 6, 12. ix. 35, 42, xi. 21. xiii. 12. xvii. 12. xix. 11, 17. xvi. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. iii. 6, 9. 2 Cor. xii. 12. Rom. xv. 19, Heb. ii. 3.

In this scriptural, but very general review of this subject,—(made solely for the sake of truth and for the sake of proving, that in rejecting ~~this~~ interpretation, as a fundamental truth of Christianity, we firmly believe in every revealed truth respecting the Holy Spirit.—and for the sake of giving the scriptural reasons why we dissent from the opinion of many whom we otherwise highly esteem, as the excellent of the earth, and as better than ourselves,) we have advanced or advocated no human opinion, or interpretation whatever. As we read, so we believe, and so we speak. Any, who may therefore, without the warrant of a "thus saith the Lord" denounce these things as erroneous do not oppose us—their controversy is wholly with the word of God. We do not speculate, as to what God may choose to do, in any, or every instance—we choose, not to limit the Almighty—with Him nothing is impossible, but if He be pleased to ordain means to an end, and to reveal these to us, it is our humility to believe in their efficiency—to use them ourselves, and enforce them upon others, if we would enjoy the blessing, or avoid the evil which he has been pleased to teach us, he connects with the reception or rejection of his word of grace, for "if we are wise, it is for ourselves,—if we scorn, we alone shall bear it. "The secret things,

belong unto the Lord our God, *but those things which are revealed, belong unto us* and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut. xxix. 29.

*To be continued.*

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EXTRACTS.

The following extract from a letter, just published “upon the doctrine of Holiness,” said to be by the Rev. Mr Cranswick, of the Wesleyan Methodists, will tend to shew, that the most orthodox, *when enforcing* the necessity and nature of faith, often differ as essentially with one another, as they do with them-selves at other times, respecting the speculative doctrine reviewed, in our preceding article—and (as far as ever we have done,) testify to the impracticable nature and scriptural inconsistency of such fallible, though popular interpretations.

Mr C, says—page 4—“God can and will save us in a moment *when we believe, only believe, and it shall be done. If we believe, and rely on his promise, it shall be according to our faith.—We are not to wait GOD’S time, as some say, it is unscriptural. Now, is GOD’S time, we are not to wait for power to believe, this is calvinism; If we must wait for power, we cannot believe without it; and consequently, all that do not believe, are lost because GOD did not give the power.*

But if in GOD I dare rely,  
The FATHER, shall bring the power.

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The celebrated Dr. Brown of Edinburgh, says.—“It is equally evident that a right way of feeling about God, can originate in nothing but a faith in the revelation which God has given of his character and will—why do men despise, forget and hate God? but because they do not know and believe the truth respecting him, and how is love to be established in their place, but by contemplating the divine character, no where to be met with, but in the Bible.—And how can this exhibition touch the heart, unless one understand its meaning and be convinced of its truth.”

The man who believes all that God has revealed of himself and no more, thinks about God just as he ought to do.—*From the constitution of our nature, our affections are in a great measure, governed by our belief. If I believe that a man who has it in his power, to do me much mischief is my determined enemy, I cannot help fearing him. If I believe that a man who has it in his power to make me happy is my warm and sincere friend, I cannot help trusting in him. If I do not fear the first, it is because I doubt either his power or his enmity.—If I do not trust the second it is because I doubt either his power or his friendship.*



To enter into a long discussion about the nature of faith, when it is our object to make persons believe some facts, is not much more wise than to illustrate the laws of vision, when our object is to make them look at some object. In the latter case, instead of schooling the person in the principle of the Newtonian philosophy, we would endeavour to procure light, and point out the object. In the former case, instead of involving our scholar in the depths of metaphysical discussion, we should make plain to his understanding, the principle, or fact which we wish him to believe and the evidence, on the ground of which, we would have him to believe it.—In urging men to be religious then we tell them, that they must become believers; *for there is no other way of becoming religious*; and in urging them to become believers, we call on them to attend to divine truth in its meaning and evidence, to the principles proposed to their belief, that they may understand them, for there is no other method of obtaining faith. It is indeed a *conceivable thing* that the divine being, by an influence, similar to inspiration may convey at once into the mind a knowledge of truth, and such an overwhelming impression of its evidence, as to preclude the possibility of doubt—but to expect to be brought to the belief of the Gospel, and through this belief to the possession of religion in this way, were to “cherish a hope, for which neither revelation nor reason gives any warrant.”

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“FAITH was bewildered much by men who meant  
 To make it clear, so simple in itself,  
 A thought so rudimental and so plain,  
 That none by comment could it plainer make  
 All faith was one. In objects, not in kind,  
 The difference lay. The faith that saved a soul  
 And that which in the common truth believed,  
 In essence were the same. Hear, then, what faith,  
 True, Christian faith, which brought salvation, was :  
 Belief in all that God revealed to men ;  
 Observe, in all that God revealed to men,  
 In all he promised, threatened, commanded, said,  
 Without exception, and without a doubt.”

*Pollok's Course of Time.*

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☞ An unavoidable delay on the part of the Printer, has prevented the present number of the Gleaner, appearing in its due course.