

# Complete Works

OF

# Rev. Thomas Smyth, D. D.

EDITED BY

REV. PROF. J. WM. FLINN, D. D.

NEW EDITION

WITH BRIEF NOTES AND PREFACES

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH IN LAST VOLUME.

VOLUME VI.

---

Columbia, S. C.

Reprinted by The R. L. Bryan Company.

1909.

C 1349.3



Harvard College Library

FROM

Augustine T. Smythe  
Trustee of  
Rev. Thomas Smythe

## EDITORIAL NOTE.

Dr. Smyth's Complete Works comprised in these volumes are published under written instructions left by him. The cost of publication is paid by a fund which he provided.

The Editor's work has been confined mainly to proof reading and to occasional recensions of the printed text. The works are re-issued not for the general book-market, but for donation to public libraries.

J. WM. FLINN

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be proficient, fully equipped for every good work.*

*This is a faithful saying if ANYONE desires oversight, he desires a good work.*

The Holy Spirit, as an omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely wise Being, undoubtedly may cause His direct and personal presence to be evident to the soul. This He did to Prophets, Apostles, and other holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Even they, however, appear to have had at first difficulty in assuring themselves that it was the Lord who spake to them, as in the case of Samuel, Gideon, and others.

While, however, some such communication of Himself appears to be necessary to the very supposition of the inspiration of supernatural truth, yet, now that He has completed the volume of inspiration, the Holy Spirit does not produce this assurance by any sensible or audible voice; nor by the communication of any truth to the mind - nor by dreams or visions - nor by emotional excitement and "bodily exercise which profit nothing."

The Holy Spirit produces assurance in the hearts of believers now, in all ordinary cases, and in reference to all ordinary truths and duties, only through the instrumentality of His word, His ordinances, and those holy affections, principles and desires, which by His personal and direct operation He implants within the soul.

We have ourselves made extensive research into this question, and so far as we have done so, have found—beyond the writers of the Methodist Church, and we need hardly except even them—an undeviating uniformity of views. In no one writer have we found the doctrine of the Reviewer that "a supernatural CONVICTION OF DUTY, wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evidence of a true vocation to the ministry"—sustained.

Any such immediate, direct, and self-evident operation of the Holy Spirit, convincing an individual of his duty to enter the ministry is, so far as we know, universally regarded by all judicious writers, as unwarrantable, unattainable and delusive. Indeed, the same views as we have maintained, are advanced, for substance, by our most orthodox divines.

No duty is obligatory upon the conscience of a christian that is not made binding by the Word of God, since the Scriptures" thoroughly furnish unto every good word and work."

Assurance—Witness of the Spirit  
and  
The Call to the Ministry.

---

DISCOURSES BY  
REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.,  
of Charleston, S. C.

---

[*Extracted from the Southern Presbyterian Review.*]

## THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

1. *A Treatise on Assurance*, by the Rev. THOMAS BROOKS, Preacher at St. Mary's, Fish Street Hill, London, Author of *Mute Christian, &c. &c.* London, 1810.
2. *The Forgiveness of Sin and the Possibility of Attaining a Personal Assurance of it*, by Rev. S. EAST, Birmingham. Glasgow, 1847.
3. *The Witness of the Spirit with our Spirit*, by Rev. AUGUSTUS SHORT. Being the Bampton Lecture, for 1846.
4. *The Doctrine of the Direct Witness of the Spirit*, by FREDERICK A. ROSS. Phila., 1846.
5. *What Constitutes a Call to the Gospel Ministry, in the Biblical Repertory*, for 1831. p. 196.
6. *The Necessity of a Divine Call. Ch. II. of the Christian Ministry*, by the Rev. CHARLES BRIDGES. Fourth Edition. London, 1835.
7. *Necessary Call to the Ministry. Ch. III. of the Christian Ministry*, by J. EDMONSTON, a Wesleyan Minister. London, 1828.
8. *On the Call of a Minister of Jesus Christ to the Sacred Office. Ch. IV. of EADE'S Gospel Ministry.*
9. *What is a Call to the Ministry? Tracts of the American Tract Society. Vol. 9, p. 333, and vol. 10, p. 285.*
10. *The Use of Preachers, and How to Obtain More*, by the Rev. A. A. PORTER. Charleston, 1848.
11. *A Call to the Ministry—What are the Evidences of a Divine Call? in the Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*, 1841.
12. *A Discourse on Theological Education, and Advice to a Student*, by GEORGE HOWE, D. D. New York, 1844.

The works at the head of this article cover the whole extent of practical, personal, and experimental piety, with special relation to one department of christian duty.

Assuming the fact of man's inherent depravity and conscious guilt, salvation from the power and the curse of sin becomes the most interesting and momentous of all possible inquiries—its attainment the chiefest of all possible blessings—and the assurance of its possession the most unspeakable of all possible enjoyments. Without this assurance, the very magnitude of the interests at stake would only render the anxiety of the mind the more intolerable—our own relation to God more fearful—and our indisposition to, and incapacity for, duty more hopeless. Salvation being provided for guilty man, the assurance of its

actual enjoyment must be conceived as a part of its gracious provision, both as a ground of hope and love towards God, and as a constant and effectual spur and motive to self-denying obedience. And in proportion as any duty is arduous and responsible, such as assurance of obligation and acceptance becomes necessary to zeal, energy and success. The ministry, therefore, being confessedly the highest sphere of christian activity, and the most momentous of human instrumentalities, demands for its warrant, motive and support, the most satisfactory assurance that it is undertaken in accordance with the will of God, by His authority, and under the promise of His all-sufficient and ever-present help and guidance. And the fact is, that just so far as ministers have been men of sincere, ardent and devoted piety, have they given all diligence to make their calling and election to this high and holy office sure and satisfying.

The christian ministry is the principal human instrumentality and means which God is pleased to use in carrying on the grand design of His wisdom, love and goodness towards His church and people.

Every minister, therefore, in order to be satisfied that he is not a "thief and a robber," laboring without divine authority, divine instruction, divine assistance, divine acceptance, and divine success, must enter in at the door of Christ's ordained appointment. That door is a divine call, mission, commission, and authority, approved by God the Father,—issued by God the Son,—and signed, sealed, and witnessed by God the Holy Ghost.†

As the ministry is the highest, most responsible, and most arduous christian calling, and also that in which a christian may best promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls, to disobey the call of God and to neglect or reject it, must

\*Matt. 28: 19; Act 10: 41-42; Eph. 4: 11-16; 1 Cor. 1: 17-31; 2 Cor. 5: 18-21; 1 Cor. 3: 9. See Mr. Porter's Use of Preachers, § 4, p. 6-8.

†See 1 Cor. 12: 28-29; Rom. 10: 15; Heb. 5: 4-5; Exod. 28: 1; Numb. 1: 50; Deut. 10: 8, and 33: 8, comp. with Exod. 19: 6; Heb. 9: 6, and 1 Pet. 2: 5-9; Matt. 10: 1-7; Mark 3: 14; Luke 9: 1-2, and 10: 1-2; Acts 13: 2; Gal. 2: 7; Col. 4: 17; Acts 20: 28; Heb. 13: 17-24. Here would be pertinent all the passages in which the numerous titles of ministers are given, and which all imply special designation and authority. Also all the passages which define their special qualifications and duties, such as 1 Tim. 3: 5; 1 Peter 5: 2-3; 1 Tim. 4: 14-15; 1 Tim. 4: 2; 1 Tim. 2: 25; 1 Cor. 12: 15, and 9: 16-17; Heb. 13: 17, &c. &c. 1 Tim. 5: 7-21; Titus 1: 5, 9, 10.

See Eade's Ministry, p. 218. &c. Bridge's, p. 93.  
Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry, Part I, ch. 4, p. 66, &c. London, 1654, 4to. Edmonson's Christian Ministry. Mr. Porter's Sermon, § 5, p. 8-9. Palmer on the Church, vol. 1, p. 165-167, where he gives the testimony of the Reformers. The Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry, London, 1654, where the necessity of this call is largely proved, p. 68-115.

involve the deepest criminality and incur the heaviest infliction of divine wrath. **And while, therefore, an assurance of their call is all important to those who have entered upon the work of the ministry, THE ASSURANCE THAT THEY ARE NOT RESISTING AND SHUTTING THEIR EARS AGAINST A DIVINE CALL TO THIS WORK, is equally important to those who have hitherto "taken their ease in Zion."**

Our present object then, will be to inquire into the nature of assurance: the manner of the Spirit's witness in giving and preserving this assurance: and the special nature of that call by which any man is required, and therefore warranted, to enter upon the preparation for, and the actual discharge of, the work of the Gospel Ministry.

In doing this, some reference will be made to views already presented in this work, and upon which—in consistency with the free and open character of the work, and in the exercise of the most exalted estimation of the author of those views—we will freely animadvert. The discussion will, it is hoped, lead to a more careful examination of this subject, and to the adoption of opinions as remote from that low and carnal policy which derogates from the work and glory of the ever blessed spirit, as they are from such a standard of experience as will necessarily create distress and difficulty in the minds of those who are most sincere and conscientious. For the sake of those who wish to examine this subject for themselves, we have given in the Notes the chief authorities we have consulted on the various points, and with which, therefore, general readers need not trouble themselves.

#### I. WE INQUIRE THEN, IN THE FIRST PLACE, WHAT IS

#### ASSURANCE?

Assurance is freedom from care, anxiety or fear—a firm, confident, and sure belief of what is the object of our faith and hope. It is based upon evidence, and is thus distinguished from that counterfeit assurance, which is a groundless reliance upon one's own ability, opinion or character. Assurance may be an occasional feeling or an habitual state of mind.

Assurance, then, may be defined to be, *the certain knowledge of the reality of that of which we are assured.* It is a conviction produced by evidence. The certainty of this conviction is characterised by the nature of the evidence on which it is based, and may therefore be said to be of different kinds or degrees, in all cases, however, conveying that kind or degree of certainty which is sufficient to warrant the most undoubting confidence and the most unhesitating obedience.

In this discussion we assume that there is a God, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.\*\*

We assume further, that God's veracity is necessary and immutable, so that whatever is in evident accordance with His will, whether this is made known in His works, His laws, His gifts, His providence, or His word, is and must be certainly true. The ordinary course of nature, therefore,—the constitution of our senses as organs of our minds,—the faculties by which the mind receives, compares and reasons upon ideas,—and the intuitive and necessary beliefs or perceptions to which we are thus led—in other words the reason and the understanding††—these are all pledges of God's veracity and channels of God's divine communication. In knowledge and understanding we are made like unto God "so that it is in His light we see light." "He would not practice a mockery upon us by giving us constitutional beliefs at variance with the objective reality of things, and so as to distort all our views of truth and of the universe. We were formed in his image intellectually as well as morally; nor would He give us the arbitrary structure that would lead us irresistibly to believe a lie."‡ "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."\* And hence, whatever results from this natural constitution of our minds cannot but be true, and that which is contrary to it cannot but be false.† "These inbred principles of natural light," as Owen says, "do sufficiently and infallibly evidence themselves to be from God." We may, therefore, have a demonstrative, infallible, or certain knowledge, of everything, which, in the proper exercise of our natural powers we know to exist, since in these "God reveals Himself," as really and as certainly as in His word.‡

Further, as the testimony of others is a means of acquiring knowledge which God has made it natural and necessary for us to use,§ it is equally evident that the knowledge founded upon competent human testimony is certainly true. For although

\*\*See on this foundation principle of the intuitive reason, some beautiful thoughts in Morell's Lectures on the Phil. Tendencies of the Age, Lond., 1848, p. 36, 37, Lect. i, all.

††See Morell's Lectures on the Phil. Tendencies of the Age; Lecture ii, on Individualism, p. 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 81, 82, and p. 69, 71, and p. 111, 132, 133, 136, 142, 168, &c.

Dr. Chalmers' Posthumous Wks., vol. 1, p. 2, 3.

\*See Morell's Lectures, p. 138, 140.

‡See Dr. Owens' Wks. vol. 3, p. 245, 246, 329, 325, and The remains of the reverend and learned John Corbet, Lond., 1684, p. 77, &c., of certainty, also Halyburton's Wks., p. 506, 517.

†Owens' Wks., vol. 3, p. 326.

§This is one province of the understanding as distinguished from the reason. See Morell's Lectures as above, p. 75, 82, 86. See this in this innate tendency, to repose confidence in the testimony of others, p. 103, Lect. iii.

men are fallible, and their testimony is fallible in itself considered, yet there may be such a combination of rational evidence, as to make it certain, that in the particular cases to which it refers, such testimony cannot be false, but is certainly true; because, in these cases, men could neither be deceived nor disposed to deceive. And this certainty is not moral but natural, being based upon the constitution of things and the veracity of God.||

It follows, further, that since the Scriptures present innumerable evidences founded upon the exercise of our own minds, and upon the testimony of others, which cannot but be received as true, we may have certain knowledge that the Scriptures are true, and are what they claim to be—the inspired and infallible word of God. The contrary supposition implies the want of certainty in all the processes of thought, judgment and conviction, which God has himself given, and is therefore contradictory to the very nature of God and man.\*\*

Further, in the use of the same faculties and of all the means necessary, we can attain to a rational and assured certainty of what the Scriptures contain.\* Our capacity to understand a book, does not depend upon the author or the origin of its contents, but upon our means of arriving at the certain meaning of its language.† To say, therefore, that because the Bible is an infallibly true book, we cannot understand it without an infallible human teacher to instruct us, is to destroy the foundation upon which its infallible evidences rest; to reason in a self-contradictory circle; and to make a series of infallible teachers necessary *ad infinitum*—in order that we may infallibly understand what each infallible teacher teaches, which is absurd.

It is further evident, that while we may *naturally* and *certainly* know that the Scriptures are God's inspired and infallible word, and what they teach, that nevertheless we may not be able *naturally* to perceive the whole truth of what is contained in the Scriptures, to receive and act upon them cordially, or to feel their power to produce saving and sanctifying impressions. Just as we may naturally believe in God, and yet not love and

||See Corbet's Remains.

\*\*Owens' Works, vol. 3, p. 349, 350, 351, 354, 356, 239, 241, 245, 249, 327, 329. Works of Rev. Thos. Scott, vol. 2, p. 25, 290. Dr. Jamieson's Reality of the Holy Spirit's Influence, Edin., p. 68, 115, 75, 76. Halyburton's Works, 514, 532, 530, 535, 545. Bellamy's Works, vol. 2, p. 504, 509. Haldane's Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation, vol. 2, p. 458, and generally all the works on the Evidences of Christianity and of the Bible. See also Confessio Helvetica Posterior in Niemeyer's Collection, p. 459. Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 4, p. 263. Life of Halyburton, by himself, p. 162, recent edition. Taylor's Spiritual Christianity, Lect. 1, and Edin. Pres. Review, June, 1848, p. 52.

\*Owens' Works, vol. 3, p. 379, 380, 499, and ch. 9, p. 502; and Buchanan on the Spirit, p. 99, 101.

†Halyburton's Works, p. 505, 506, 525, 526. Owens' Works, vol. 3, p. 351, 353, 357.

enjoy Him—so we may naturally be convinced of the truth of the Bible and understand its doctrines, and yet not love or enjoy them. They may even appear to be contrary to our reason, because so entirely above it, and so entirely opposed to the bent and current of our passions and pursuits. We may have a knowledge of subjects, and yet not of their relations and true bearings.‡ When the Apostle James says, “even the devils believe and tremble,” he undoubtedly admits that they may assent to all the truths or propositions contained in the Scriptures.§ The true import and power of Scripture depends “not upon the literal induction of the words, but upon the spiritual sense we attach to them, upon the religious intuitions they may serve to express—in a word, upon the whole state of the religious consciousness of the interpreter.” “The real essential meaning varies immeasurably, according to the conceptions which lie under the words.”\*

God, therefore, may undoubtedly accompany the Scriptures with such an illuminating influence, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, as to impart to them a supernatural evidence, and thus, give assurance to the mind that “they are in the truth the word of God,”—that their doctrines are holy, just and true, and that they are “the power of God to the salvation” of the believing soul. That God *can* thus work in the hearts of men, and in this way present to them spiritual evidences as unknown to the natural mind, as light is to the blind, who will dare to deny? That God *will* do so, we know certainly by His promises and declarations, contained in that very word of whose infallibility we are already assured. That such influences *are imparted*, man is enabled by consciousness and his other faculties certainly to determine. And that such inward evidences of the divine truth, power, and efficacy of the Scriptures, are not only *attainable*, but are actually *attained*, every true believer proves to himself by his own experience, and to others by his life and conduct.†

The influences of the Holy Spirit, when thus exerted upon the mind, enabling it experimentally to know that the doctrines of Scripture are from God, produce that spiritual confidence which is more commonly called among theologians by the term assurance. This differs from natural assurance, not in its nature or exercise, nor in the faculties of mind by which it is exercised, but only in the nature of the evidence by which it is

‡See Locke Hum. Underst., B. 4, ch. 3.

§See Dr. Candlish on the Atonement, p. 154.

\*Morell's Lectures on the Phil. Tendencies of the Age, p. 91. See also p. 115.

†Owen, vol. 3, p. 310, 358, 289, 290, 333, 141, 410, 417, 433. Halyburton's Works, p. 517, 527, 535, 536, and p. 165 of Life and Locke's Hum. Underst. B. 4, ch. 18, § 3 and § 14.

produced, and the power by which that evidence is presented. That evidence is the conscious exercise of such gracious affections, holy principles and spiritual operations, and such a perception of the self-evidencing truth and power of Scripture doctrines, as are in Scripture attributed to the Holy Spirit, and which imply a divine Author, as certainly as the Scriptures themselves, or the other works of God. When, therefore, we are conscious of these exercises, we have assurance of that to which they testify,—the facts are ascertained by the evidence.\* “Hereby we know that we are of the truth,” and “that these things are true,” and hereby the Holy Spirit beareth witness to our spirit, and guides us into all necessary truth.

It is further evident that, as in its nature, saving assurance is analogous to natural assurance, so like it, it is of different kinds and degrees. As it regards the truths and doctrines of the Scriptures, it is *the assurance of the understanding*; as it regards the testimony of God concerning Christ and salvation through Him, it is *the assurance of faith*; as it regards the glory of the future inheritance, it is *the assurance of hope*; as it regards our particular occupation in life and our obligation to undertake and to discharge any particular duty, it is *the assurance of conscience*, “making our calling and duty sure;” and as it regards our outward condition, health, suffering, and affliction, it is *the assurance of comfort*, enabling our patience, confidence and resignation, “to have their perfect exercise,” “so that in whatever state we are we may therein be content.” “All these are diversities of operations” of one and the same spirit working in us, to will and to do according to God’s good pleasure, and thoroughly furnishing the man of God for every good word and work.

In all these cases, the object of which we are assured is external to us, and these kind of assurances may be denominated *objective*. But as it regards our own personal interest in Christ and salvation through Him, the evidence is not outward in the word, but inward in the heart, and this kind of assurance, which may be denominated subjective, is *the assurance of salvation*†—or, as it is called, the reflex exercise of saving faith, the assurance of sense, or the assurance of experience.

These distinctions, like those of the various functions or powers of the mind—which is one and indivisible—will obviate difficulties, if we carefully remember that the difference exists not in the principle, but in its application. The ONE principle of saving faith operates in various ways, as it acts upon, and

\*See Dr. McLeod’s True Godliness, p. 134, 145, 165. See The Morning Exercises, vol. 5, p. 631-632, where it is shewn by Traill to be grounded, not upon internal light, nor upon authority, as the Romanists teach, p. 612, but upon evidence, p. 618-619.

†See Dr. Williams.

acts through, the different faculties of the mind. In the understanding it produces saving knowledge—on the will, an actual appropriation of the Saviour and all His benefits to the soul—on the conscience, that true repentance, which shall never need to be repented of—on the affections it becomes love—on the active powers, holy obedience—on the desires, hope, and on the whole soul, that godliness which is great gain.\*

These distinctions will enable us to understand how the old Divines regarded assurance as essential to the very nature of saving faith in its primary and direct exercise. Viewed in reference to the evidence upon which it rests, saving faith consists, as all will admit, in receiving, with absolute confidence and trust, the testimony of God concerning Christ—in complying with the commands, invitations and promises of God—in confiding in the ability, sufficiency, and willingness of Christ as a Saviour, and in looking for the all-sufficient grace of the Holy Spirit to regenerate, sanctify and comfort the heart. This assurance of faith is, it will be perceived, altogether *objective*, and regards the outward evidence of salvation, and warrant of our faith, and was therefore carefully distinguished by these Divines from the reflex assurance of faith, or what they termed the assurance of sense, which is *subjective*, and regards the internal evidence of a personal possession of Christ, and an interest in him.†

This two-fold assurance of faith—the direct and the reflex—regards different objects. The former relates to the doctrine and the latter to the grace, of faith—the former to the foundation and the latter to the exercise, of faith—the former to the root, and the latter to the flower—the former to justification, and the latter to our knowledge of it as a sense of adoption—the former to our actual belief, the latter to our knowledge of having believed. The former is the direct act of faith on Christ

\*See Dr. Candlish on the Atonement, p. 147, 148.

†See the Marrow of Modern Divinity, Boston's long Note on p. 144-157, 20th ed. Berwick, 1811, and p. 160, 163. From the multifarious evidence adduced, this would appear to have been a distinction common to the Reformers, to the Westminster Divines, and to our standards, see p. 147-154. See also Robertson's History of the Atonement Controversy in Scotland, 1846, p. 29, 69, &c. See Zanchii Opera, Tom. iii, De Fide. p. 7, 4. Dr. McLeod's True Godliness, p. 244, 169. "Thou hast, I say, a lively faith, both in that direct act whereby it justifieth, and also by a prudent observation of the work in thy soul—thou dost believe by faith that thou art justified by faith, thou hast also the attendant companion upon faith, that Christian hope," &c. Wks. of Bolton, vol. 4. p. 32, 33. See also Dr. Candlish on the Atonement, p. 148, 149-156, where he affirms the doctrine—shews that the difficulty arises from the nature of language which is always reflex, whereas faith is direct—and shows the essential agreement of Dr. Bellamy, Hervey and Anderson, and their apparent contrarieties. See also Luther and Melancthon, as quoted in Scott's continuation of Milner's Ch. Hist., vol. 1, p. 45, 46, and vol. 2, p. 240, 275, Calvin's views in do., vol. 3, p. 543, 550, and especially p. 549, or his Instit. B. iii, C. 11, § 7, 15, 16, 17, and Milner's own admission, p. 546.

and his righteousness, the latter is the reflex light of this faith in the heart.\* The former cannot admit of doubt, while the latter is not inconsistent with many and frequent doubts. The former is the way of salvation, and the latter, of comfort; and the only way to secure, restore, or strengthen the latter, is by the former.†

The assurance of faith is the exercise of the mind, in actually receiving and resting upon Christ. The assurance of sense or experience, is the joyful confidence that we are in a state of gracious acceptance with God, from an examination of the work of God in our own souls.‡ The former is necessary and invariable, and of the very essence of saving faith, while the latter is desirable, is a privilege, and may and ought to be attained,§ but is manifested in different ways, and given in very different degrees to different believers.||

Assurance, therefore, implies a spiritual understanding of divine things, communicated by the Holy Ghost, which is supernatural and divine, and in the production of which the soul is entirely passive and recipient. Previous to its reception, the soul had no such spiritual understanding, and of course in the reception of it, it could have none. The greatest number of believers, therefore, know neither the time, or place, or manner, of their conversion, the change being wrought in many, doubtless, at a very early period of life.\*\* It is only when the spiritual understanding is imparted, spiritual things become perceptible in their power and glory to the soul, giving it an assurance of their certainty; and it is only then, that holy affections, principles, and desires are produced, so as to constitute the sure ground and evidence of our personal interest in Christ. Assurance, therefore, is rational, and founded on argument, although the argument is immediate, and the evidence intuitive.††

II. This leads us to inquire in the second place, HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT IMPARTS THIS ASSURANCE TO THE SOUL, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, HOW THE SPIRIT WITNESSES TO THE SOUL.

\*See Marrow of Divinity, p. 292, Note, and Rutherford, as quoted on p. 293.

†See Dr. McLeod's True Godliness, p. 199-203.

‡Dr. McLeod's True Godliness, p. 91, 92, 169, 224. Scott's Wks., vol. 1, p. 478, 5, 6, and vol. 2, p. 297. Ridgley's Body of Divinity, vol. 3, p. 263, 266, 267. How this is to be done, see Marrow of Divinity, p. 234. Owens' Wks., vol. 14, p. 112, 113, and vol. 6, p. 128, &c. East on, p. 65, 98, 118, 148, 149. See also the Morning Exercises, vol. 5, p. 613, 627.

§See the works by Brooks and East. Shepard's Sound Believer, p. 159, in opposition to the Romish view, see p. 159, 162, and to the Armenian view, p. 161, 178, 190, 227. Bryson's Real Christian, p. 120, 123.

||East on Forgiveness, p. 64, 161.

\*\*Ridgley's Body of Divinity, vol. 3, p. 263. Philip Henry blamed those who laid stress on such knowledge, which he thought with many was impossible. See Life and Works, by Sir K. Williams, p. 12.

††Works of Jonathan Edwards, (Williams' edition,) English, vol. 4, p. 193, and Morell's Lectures on the Phil. Tendencies of the Age, p. 30, &c.

## WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit, as Scripture teaches, works in the heart *personally*, and not merely through certain laws or agencies;—*directly*, and not through any intermediate cause;—*instrumentally*, in, by and with His word, His ministers, His ordinances, and every other means of affecting the mind and heart;—*rationally*, in accordance with our nature, as free, rational and accountable beings, so that while He gives origin to every holy principle, thought, determination, desire and obedience; “these,” as Bishop Butler says, “He performs *in us, with us and by us,*” so that while they “proceed from Him, they are still our desires, our counsel, and our work.” †

The Holy Spirit, as an omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely wise Being, undoubtedly *may* cause His direct and personal presence to be evident to the soul.\* This He did to Prophets, Apostles, and other holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. † Even they, however, appear to have had at first difficulty in assuring themselves that it was the Lord who spake to them, as in the case of Samuel, Gideon, and others.\*\*

While, however, some such communication of Himself appears to be necessary to the very supposition of the inspiration of supernatural truth, § yet, now that He has completed the volume of inspiration, the Holy Spirit does not produce this assurance by any sensible or audible voice; nor by the communication of any truth to the mind;—nor by dreams or visions;—nor by emotional excitement and “bodily exercise which profit nothing.” The Holy Spirit produces assurance in the hearts of believers *now, in all ordinary cases, and in reference to all ordinary truths and duties, only through the instrumentality of His word, His ordinances, and those holy affections, principles and desires, which by His personal and direct operation He implants within the soul.* || These are the means he is pleased to employ;

†Bartlett's Memoirs of Bishop Butler, with some previously unpublished matter, p. 525; see also Charnock's Works, vol. 5, p. 209, 219, &c. Buchanan on the Holy Spirit, p. 98. See also Hosea 11: 4, and Life of Philip Henry, p. 44.

\*Halyburton's Life, p. 159.

†Halyburton's do., p. 159. Owens' Works, vol. 3, p. 235, and Corbet's Remains, p. 89.

\*\*Locke, B. 4, cap. 19, § 14. Dr. Jamieson's Reality of The Spirit's Work. p. 227, 228.

§Owen says, he cannot tell by what infallible tokens inspired men might know assuredly they were not imposed upon, “for these are things whereof we have no experience.” See his opinion quoted approvingly also in Halyburton's Works, p. 511. Owen on the Spirit, 13: 2; do. 1, § 10, and Works, vol. 3, p. 296.

||The Word of God is the instrument, and the Spirit the agent. He only teaches and applies what is in the Bible. Buchanan on the Holy Spirit, p. 95, 184. Halyburton's Works, p. 531, 532, 534, 536, 539, and Memoirs of his own Life, p. 158-168. Owens' Works, vol. 3, p. 353, 321, 349, 350-352, 235, 239. Rutherford's Trial and Triumph of Faith, Sermon. xiv., p. 145.

—to which He has limited his influences;—and by which He gives evidences to ourselves and others, that we feel and act, "not after the flesh," but under the direct guidance of the Spirit.\*\*

We *saveingly* believe in the Scriptures, not because of any private voice, whisper, or suggestion from the Spirit, separate from the written word, suggesting to our mind that they are the word of God. Such an internal testimony would be delusive, as it has ever proved to be, and would itself stand in need of testimony\*—it would imply as many distinct reasons for believing as there are believers, and it would imply that no one is under obligation to believe the Scriptures unless he has received this internal testimony.

We *saveingly* believe the Scriptures, therefore, to be the word of God, solely because of that evidence they give of the authority, veracity, wisdom and holiness of God, by which they were dictated. The *capacity* to discern this *evidence* is given by the Holy Spirit, but the evidence itself is in the Scriptures, and while the Holy Ghost is the author of that spiritual capacity by which we perceive and appreciate the evidence, it is the evidence and not the capacity which gives us the assurance of faith.†

In like manner it is by the Holy Spirit we are *enabled* to perceive the grace and glory of Christ, as He is set before us in the Gospel, as an almighty, all-merciful, all-sufficient, and all-willing Saviour, and to receive and trust in God's commands, promises, and invitations concerning Him—but it is the actual exercise of faith, hope, and peace, in *believing* these things, by which an assurance of faith is enkindled in the soul. The assurance rests not upon the spiritual capacity imparted by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, but upon the evidence and warrant of

\*\*Owens' Works, vol. 3, p. 309, 413, 410, 421, 422. See also the Memoirs of Rev. James Hogg, of Scotland. Edinburgh, 1846, p. 90-91. He lived in the 17th century.

\*See Owen, vol. 3, at p. 421 and 422: "we persuade men to take the Scripture as the *only rule*, and the holy promised Spirit of God, sought by ardent prayers and supplications in the use of all means appointed by Christ for that end, *for their guide*." "If we shall *renounce the Scripture*, and the instruction given out of it unto the Church, by the Spirit of God, betaking ourselves unto *our own light*, we are sure it will teach us nothing, but either what they profess, or other things altogether as corrupt."

†"The Holy Ghost gives a spiritual sense of the power and reality of the things believed—strengthens against temptations to unbelief, and in other ways confirms our faith—but the ground of our faith is the truth of God manifesting itself in Scripture." See this subject fully argued in Owens' Wks., vol. 3, p. 299-310, &c., 312-334, how the Scriptures give evidences of their truth, p. 334-344. See also Halyburton's Wks., Nature of Faith, p. 531, 532 and 534, 535, 539, 543, 545. Lord Barrington's Wks., vol. 1, 169, 178, vol. 2, p. 225, 230. See also Rutherford's Trial and Triumph of Faith, Sermon. xiii, p. 136, Edinb. 1845. Winslow on the Spirit, p. 269. Dr. Jamieson's Reality of the Spirit's Works, p. 41, 42, 46, 111, 238, 257.

personal faith, and hope, and joy, which by that capacity we actually perceive in the word and feel in our hearts.\*

In the same manner it is by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to continue and to grow in grace, to live, and walk and triumph by faith; but our abiding assurance of faith and hope, and joy, does not arise from the spiritual capacity, which may be really strong while sensible feeling may be torpid or asleep, but it is by the sustaining, comforting, and enlivening power of graces in actual exercises, that this assurance is maintained.

In the same way, it is by the Holy Ghost, imparting to us "His own holy wisdom in that spiritual-mindedness, which is the spirit of power and of a sound mind," that we are enabled to discern between good and evil, truth and error, duty and disobedience, what is really *good* for us, and what is pleasing to us, what we would approve and enjoy hereafter, and what would seem to be immediately desirable, and are thus enabled to acquiesce in the divine will, to bear and to do what God pleases, to deny ourselves, to be active and devoted, to enter upon or continue any course of life, and, generally, to be "thoroughly furnished for every good work," so as to please God in all our ways. But it is in the actual experience of these things, in actual finding ourselves so directed, qualified, fitted, strengthened, sustained, satisfied, convinced, and blessed—that we have an assurance that we are doing God's will in that way in which He would have us to "serve the Lord."

The Holy Spirit, therefore, does not *ordinarily* make Himself known and felt in producing within us the capacity to believe, to know, to undertake and to do what He wills, but he makes Himself known in, by, and through the exercise of this capacity when we actually understand, know, will, and do. What the Holy Ghost imparts is a new principle, capacity, or disposition called "*spiritual*," because it is a participation of His holy nature. This principle is unknown to us naturally, imparted to us while passively recipient, and unfelt by us until we find it in actual exercise within us. It is demonstrated by its conscious exercise and effects. These are entirely different from, and above, any natural exercise of our faculties of mind. They must, therefore, have originated without us, and have been imparted to us.† And as only like can produce like, such a spiritual capacity and such spiritual exercise must prove their author to be the Holy Spirit. This theory do, although we are altogether ignorant and unconscious of the time, place, and manner in which this principle was imparted and is still sustained in the soul. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it

\*Edward's Wks., vol. 4, p. 343. Winslow on the Spirit, 275.

†See Edwards, vol. 4, p. 343, 105, 108, 109.

cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The meaning of this passage—which is the most direct and intentionally didactic on the subject of the Spirit's operations in the whole Bible—is evidently this. "The Holy Spirit is imperceptible and incomprehensible in the manner of His operations, but is clearly and incontrovertibly discerned in the effects produced by Him. The time and manner of His working are hid from us and inappreciable to our faculties, but His power and divinity are demonstrated by the work he accomplishes.† "Christ means," says Calvin, "that the movement and operation of the Spirit of God is not less perceptible in the renewal of man than the motion of the air, but that the manner of it is concealed."\*

†The word wind may be interpreted variously, as it has been, by referring it to the Holy Spirit, to man's spirit, or more properly to the wind, but the design of the analogy—to point out the truth that as a cause which is hidden and unperceived, and beyond our cognizance, may be demonstrated by its effects, so may the Holy Spirit be known by His effects, while unknown in the actual production of them—this we say is most evident, and has been admitted, as far as we can find, by all reputable commentators and critics. Bishop Butler has elaborated the argument in a discourse on this text, preserved and recently published by Mr. Bartlett, in his Memoirs of Bishop Butler, London, 1839, p. 517, 520, 223, 524, 526. "Homini renati per spiritum actiones conspiciuntur admirabiles, ORIGO IPSA LATET." Poole's Synopsis. See also Poole's Annotations. The Westminster Assembly's Annotations, Bloomfield's Critical Digest and Greek Testament, Kuinoel, Koppe, &c. &c. Lampe, in his invaluable work on John, sustains the same view unhesitatingly, Tom. 1, p. 579, 580. See on the Analogy 1, K. 19: 11, 12. Cant. 4: 16; Ezek. 37: 11; Acts 11: 21; Pa. 29: 5; Is. 35: 5; Ps. 89: 16. On the doctrine, see 1 Cor. 12: 11; Rom. 11: 34; Eccles. 11: 5; 1 Cor. 2: 11; 1 John 2: 29; 1 John 3: 7-10, 14, 24; 1 John 4: 13, and 5: 19, &c. &c. As quoted in Bartlett's Memoir of Butler, 520, and 525, Butler says: "The work of Regeneration carries great resemblance to what is observed of the wind: for, as there we gather its blowing from its sound, and other effects, though we do not see the blast, nor its rise and passage, nor are acquainted with the cause that sets it on; so may a child of God know he is such, by the effects and characters of that relation; though he do not see the Spirit that renews him, though the operations, by which he is renewed, be such as fall not under the observation of his outward senses, nor is perhaps his own mind conscious to many things by which that change is wrought in him." "If, as hath been said, it act upon us by the outward ministry of the word, by the inward dictates and reasonings of our minds,—if the effects only of his working be visible, but the manner of it imperceptible, &c."

The Dutch Annotations, ordered by the Synod of Dort, and "published by authority," 2 vols. Fol. London, 1657, take the same view, and on Rom. 8: 16, have these words—"witnesseth together with our spirit, which observeth the evidences of our being the children of God, which our spirit by the Spirit of God finds in itself." Of exactly similar import is the explanation given in the Westminster Assembly's Annotations and Diodati's in loco.

Bishop Heber, in his Bampton Lectures on the Holy Spirit, also shews, that while the Holy Spirit and His work are undistinguishable by our faculties, the reality of His operation may be known from his precept and the perceptible effect. See p. 330.

Bishop Bull is very strongly of the same opinion. See Harmon. Apost. Diss. Post. as quoted in Williams' Def. of Modern Calvinism, p. 31, 32; and also in Richard Watson's Works.

\*See Commentary in loco.

"The Spirit itself, therefore, bears witness with our spirit,"† and gives assurance of duty, and obligation, not by any immediate suggestion or impression, accompanied by a kind of internal light or noise;—nor by any distinct enunciation, in any way, of what is truth or duty in the case; not, in short, by way of *assertion*, but by way of substantial evidences and proofs. The Apostle here, as in other places, (e. g. Rom. 8: 15, and Gal. 4: 6,) declares the fact that the ever-blessed Spirit, "THE COMFORTER," does actually witness with our spirits, and imparts to them the spirit of adoption, but *how* or in what manner the Spirit operates, this the Apostle does not attempt to define here or elsewhere. We are, however, taught in many passages that it is by the results—the fruit, earnest, seal, and impress of the Spirit, we are assured of His saving work in our souls, and of our saving interest in the Redeemer. (1 John 2: 3, and 3: 23, 24; 1 John 4: 12, 13, and 5: 1, 9, 10, 11, &c.)‡ The Holy Spirit produces in our hearts those divine graces, qualities, desires, convictions, zealous endeavours, and holy actions, which are the genuine evidences of His working and demonstrations of His power. He shines upon His own work thus produced, invigorates and strengthens it, and by bringing these principles into lively exercise, He assures our hearts of His will and of *our* duty. The Holy Spirit testifies to our spirits, convinces, satisfies, and removes all occasion of anxiety or fear. There are, therefore, two witnesses concurring in their testimony—"our spirit," that is, our mind or conscience, and the Spirit of adoption, (*πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, v. 14). Both concur to the production of assurance: The one operates in the way of accurate examination of the state of the soul, the claims of duty and obedience, and the disposition and fitness of the soul in reference to them, in the light of the precepts, promises, and directions of God's word. The other gives efficiency to these efforts, by enabling the soul to discern in itself a mind and temper correspondent to what the word requires, and by imparting an assurance of God's favor and approbation, and of our being in the path of duty. "How this is done we cannot

†Rom. 8: 16. See on this passage, in relation to the views of Calvin and the Reformers. Scott's Continuation of Milner's Ch. Hist., vol. 3, p. 548, 549, and 543-550. See a most explicit passage against all direct, sensible communications as fanatical, in the Formula Concordantiæ, in Hase's Libri Symbolici, vol. 2, p. 672.

The particle *δυν* in this passage, "*ad nos laborantes refertur*," says Beza.

‡See Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 24-30, and p. 30-36, where he gives proof from Doddridge, Scott, Henry, and other Commentators. Many others will be referred to in these notes. Indeed, with the few exceptions, we specify, the testimony of Commentators is altogether against this theory. Pearson on the Creed, and Dr. Barrow, both state the fact without attempting to explain the rationale.

fully understand, any more than we can understand how He produces any other effect in our mind."\*\*\*

The foundation of this argument is laid in the ultimate truths already specified,—the infallible truth of what is made known by the proper exercise of whatever faculties and capacities God imparts and the power of God to communicate spiritual impressions to the soul. "The spirit of man which is in him, knows the things of man," 1 Cor. 2, 11. The renewed heart or "reason," has received a spiritual principle by which it can intuitively discern and judge spiritual things. By this "Spirit" we understand God's will as revealed in the Word, feel what is there promised, and exercise faith, and love, and obedience to God's will. Now of all this we are consciously assured, and cannot be deceived. The veracity of God is pledged for its certainty, and "our own hearts have confidence toward God." Such spiritual exercises are the fruits and evidences of the Spirit, and are given in that Word—of which He has given us assured certainty—as infallible way-marks of His presence and of His will concerning us. And as our "spirits" assure us of the exercises themselves—the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and purposes—so do these exercises demonstrate the purpose and will of the Spirit concerning us. He is "the Spirit of truth," and cannot lie, (John 14, 17, Tit. 1, 2)—"He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," and can "guide into all truth" and unto all duty, (1 Cor., 2, 10)—He is Lord and God, and worthy of infinite and implicit credit. His testimony, therefore, while it is secret and inexpressible, (Rev. 2, 17, 1 Pet., 11, 8, 2 Cor., 12, 4), inconstant, variable, and various in its sensible manifestations, is nevertheless certain and infallible, silencing objections, scattering temptations and removing all scruples.\*

On the other hand, our veiw[s] and feelings as evidenced by our spiritual consciousness, and judged by our spiritual understanding,† are not carnal and selfish, but have supreme regard to God's glory; are firm and abiding in their character, (Eph. 1, 13); give us settled purposes and hopes; lead the soul upward in the "cry" of earnest prayer;‡ fill it with love to God, and with willing and earnest desires of new obedience; lead to the diligent use of appointed means; are not presumptuous and confident, but anxious, and often scrupulously doubtful; sustain

\*\*Hodge's Commentary in loco. See also Dr. Mason's Disc. on Assurance of Faith, in Works, vol. 1, p. 325; and Sermons, by Dr. Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh. Appendix on Assurance of Faith.

\*See Forty-Six Sermons on Romans, ch. 8, by Thomas Horton, D. D., Lond. 1674, Fol., p. 246.

†John 1, 12, Gal. 4, 6-14, 1, John 5, 10, Eph. 1, 12, Acts 15, 8, 9, 1 John 4, 16, 2 Cor. 1, 12.

‡Calvin seems to place the witness very much in this and in boldness to call God Father. See his commentary in loco.

us under difficulty and hindrances; give a comfortable and abiding hope, persuasion, or joy; and thus, as well as by many other modes and operations, bear a sincere and infallible testimony to our hearts, that they are not the delusions of Satan, or the imaginations and desires of our own spirit. § From this double testimony we have doubled assurance—the best assurance of the best blessing—“a witness with a witness indeed.” “Our rejoicing is this—even the testimony of our conscience,” (2 Cor. 1, 12). “He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself,” (1 John 5, 10,) “his conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost,” (Rom. 9, 1).

Such is the doctrine, as we have seen, of the Westminster Divines, and such, unquestionably, is the doctrine of the Westminster standards, as adopted by our own Church. This will be found at length in the chapter “on the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.” (Conf. of Faith, ch. xviii.) and more succinctly in the Larger Catechism, (Q. 80, 81,) where it is said that “such as” *already* “truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the ruth of God’s promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the premises of life are made, and “then” bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace.” In the chapter in the Confession, it is taught that “hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions, that they are in the favor of God,” &c. The hope of the believer, however, “is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope,” *such as suggestions and extraordinary impulses*, “but an infallible assurance,” &c., (as above) “attained unto in the right use of ordinary means.”

The Holy Spirit, therefore, in bearing His testimony, and in inspiring assurance, does not operate independently of Scripture by an inward light, as the Quakers teach.\* Neither does He do so by an immediate suggestion of the truth,—accompanied by more or less excitement,—that any individual is saved, is pardoned, is adopted, or is called by God to any particular privilege or duty. This is the view entertained by the Methodist Church, and by some others out of that Church.

The testimony of the Spirit, says Mr. Watson, † “is a direct testimony to, or an inward impression on, the soul, whereby the Spirit of God witnesses to my Spirit, that I am a child of

§ See a Commentary on the Romans, by Rev. Thomas Wilson, Lond., 1627, Fol. Edn. second, in loco.

\* See the subject in this view ably handled in Dr. Wardlaw’s Letters to the Society of Friends. Glasgow, 1836.

† See his Institutes in Wks., vol. ii, p. 255, Eng. Ed.

God; that Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that I, *even I*, am reconciled to God."

"That a *supernatural conviction of duty*," says the writer in this Review,\* wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evidence of a true vocation to the ministry, seems to us to be the clear and authoritative doctrine of the Scriptures."

"The certain knowledge of God," says Barclay, "can be obtained by no other way than the inward, immediate manifestation and revelation of God's Spirit, shining in and upon the heart, enlightening and opening the understanding." And this manifestation he teaches to be independent of the Word, and to convey truths new and otherwise unknown.†

Now that the Spirit cannot impart such a witness or call, except in the way of actual inspiration, accompanied of course with miraculous attestation,—and that in all ordinary cases He does not in fact do so, we firmly believe.

1. Scripture no where warrants the opinion that He does.
2. Scripture, on the contrary, leads us, as we have seen, to an opposite conclusion. And if, therefore, it is not a DIVINELY ATTESTED FACT, that the Spirit does so operate, no graces, or convictions, or opinions, can make it a fact.‡
3. Such a witness, or call, carries with it no impress or evidence by which it can be traced to the Holy Spirit. Such suggestions, and such excited emotions, *might* arise, and often *do* arise from the operation of the mind itself, when the imaginative faculty has been long or deeply excited by sympathy, anxiety, or hope. Of they *might* be awakened by the delusions of Satan. They imply, *necessarily*, no divine impressions. They exert no holy, divine, or supernatural influence. They are not grounded upon any word or promise of God. They are, therefore, a most unwarrantable ground of evidence, and can lead to no true and abiding comfort.§

Such suggestions are not *evidence* at all—they neither prove their own origin nor the fact they assert. They may, or may not, accompany saving and holy influences, but in themselves, they can only delude the mind with a false and groundless hope. It is only when the Holy Spirit gives such evidences as *proves* the truth of what is believed, that He is said to witness with our Spirit.\*\* Then *alone* He imparts an evidence, or seal,

\*See Southern Pres. Review, No. 3, vol. 1, p. 143, 144.

†See Apology for the Quakers, p. 19, 20, and Wardlaw, p. 43, 44.

‡See Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 39.

§See Edwards' Works, vol. 4, on the Affections, p. 131, 132, and Stoddard as there quoted.

\*\*See Edwards' do., p. 133, and Heb. 2: 4; Acts 14: 3; John 5: 36; John 10: 25; 1 John 5: 8.

or earnest—such as God alone *could* impress, and by which therefore we cannot be deluded.†

4. Such suggestions are in contradiction to the facts already established, that the testimony of the Spirit regarding truth, duty, and privilege, is limited to the word, and that it is rational and given in, through and by, our faculties.‡ The former is necessary to guard against endless error and delusions, and the latter that we may be led by “the cords of a man,” and have the witness within ourselves. Such suggestions, however, supersede and set aside the Scriptures, open up the way for every delusion,§ and are incapable of any rational evidence.

5. It cannot be said that such suggestions are intuitively believed, by the reason, and that they are, as they then would be, infallible, for they relate to what is supernatural and beyond the range of our natural reason; nay, they relate to things of which it is positively declared that “the natural heart receiveth them not, neither can it know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Such suggestions cannot, therefore, be based upon the veracity of God, as evidenced in our constitution, and they are not warranted as we have seen by that veracity, as it is made known in His word. The understanding of spiritual and heavenly things, implies a spiritual capacity,—and the witness of the Holy Ghost, implies the existence of that “*Spirit*” within us, to discern, and of the work within us, which is to be discerned.

6. Conscience|| cannot attest the divine author of such suggestions, because its office is the enforcement of truth or duty, and not their discovery, and because, as a natural power, it can only act naturally, and must have a rule by which to decide, and marks by which to determine. The convictions of conscience presuppose knowledge of the truth or object, of whose truth or nature it can otherwise tell us nothing.

7. Neither can consciousness\* give such an attestation, since it can neither witness to what is past or future, nor to the *nature* of what is present. Consciousness only testifies to existing impressions or states of thought and feeling. It testifies, by intuitive belief, to what is in the mind itself, to states of mind, but not to objects external to it. The feeling, and the object which causes it, are entirely different and distinct. Mere feelings might be supposed to arise spontaneously, were it not for another intuitive and primary law by which we refer them

†2 Cor. 1: 22; Eph. 1: 13; Rev. 2: 17, and 7: 3; and Edwards *do.*, p. 133, 134, 136, 137. See also p. 343, and 2 Cor. 5: 5, with the context in Rom. 8: 16, as alluding to support under great trials.

‡See Halyburton's Works. Nature of Faith, p. 525, 523.

§See Southern Presb. Review, *do.*, p. 145, 146, 135.

||See Southern Presb. Review, *do.*, p. 135, 139, 146, 153.

\*See Southern Presb. Review, p. 146.

to *some* object as their source. But whether this object is immediate or remote, bodily or spiritual, real or imaginary, we come to know in the exercise of other intuitive laws of mind in which the mind is active and not passive. In this way we recognize objects and determine their nature.†

8. A voice or suggestion can only make an impression on the soul. It cannot, however, lead either through consciousness or conscience, to the knowledge of its source or of the nature of that source. It remains, therefore, that the understanding should take up the impression or suggestion and bring it "to the law and to the testimony," knowing that if not warranted by this, "there is no truth in them."‡ But the understanding cannot act until the mind has been already supernaturally renewed, and gifted with power to discern spiritual things. It is only when so renewed and guided by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the mind can apply the tests of the word and the tests of its own experience, and thereby know what is truth and duty. For, supposing the mind to exist in a state of blank spiritual unsusceptibility, and supposing truth to be then communicated to it in words, what effect could these words produce in such a mind?§

This is the only rational way of receiving the Spirit's testimony, and that testimony or witness is, as we have seen, given in accordance with our rational powers. It is not then the *working* of the Spirit of which we are conscious, but the *result* of that work.\* "We do not see, or hear, or feel the Holy Spirit working within us, but we are sensible of what is wrought within us.\*\* There is neither a light, nor a voice, nor a felt stirring within, but there are convictions, and feelings, and desires, and the sensible graces which in Scripture are attributed to Him. The part which our own Spirit performs is, that with the eye of consciousness we read what is in ourselves—with the spiritual mind we read and clearly understand what is in the word, and feel its application to ourselves—by this also we discern the lineaments of truth or grace, or qualification for duty impressed by the Spirit upon our hearts. By the Holy Ghost also we are sustained in making a firm and confident application to ourselves, and a firm and confident conclusion respecting ourselves. And thus we are led by a most rational process and a most rational demonstration to a

†See Mill's Logic, p. 34, 35.

‡The Reviewer admits that the word gives three sources of proof, by which such suggestions are to be tested. See S. P. Review, p. 146-152.

§See Morell's Lectures on the Phil. Tend. of the Age, p. 135-137.

\*See Dr. Chalmers' Lecture on Romans, upon ch. 8: 2, 16. in Works, vol. 24, p. 63. Bates' Works, vol. 4, p. 318.

\*\*See Dr. Chalmers' do., where he illustrates from the analogy of the wind, of vegetation, and from the parable of the seed springing up we know not how, &c., p. 64, and from which we quote.

most rational conclusion,† and “that not by a tardy or elaborate argument, but with an evidence and a directness as quick and powerful as intuition.” “Thus there is no whisper by the Spirit distinct from the testimony of the word. Thus there is no irradiation, but that whereby the mind is enabled to look reflexly and with rational discernment upon itself. And hence, there is no conclusion, but what comes immediately and irresistibly out of the premises which are clear to me, while they lie hid in deepest obscurity from other men. And all this you will observe with the rapidity of thought—by a flight of steps so few, as to be got over in an instant of time—by a train of considerations strictly logical, while the mind that enjoys and is impress with all this light is not sensible of any logic,—and yet withal by the Spirit of God.”\*

9. Such suggestions are transient and variable, and are incapable, therefore, of giving abiding comfort, or habitual guidance, since, instead of imparting assurance, they foster doubt and pave the way either for great presumption or great distress, according to the natural habit and temper of the mind. “The word that I have spoken,” says Christ, “the same shall judge you in the last day.”† John 12: 48. If, then, “we would judge ourselves” by this sure and all-sufficient testimony, “we should not be judged,” and “we should not be condemned with the world.” Our testimony and our judgment would be firm and abiding, and not driven about by every wind of doctrine, or made subservient to the state and condition of our feelings. But if sensible evidence of the direct and present influence of the Spirit is required, as a ground of comfortable assurance and hope, then, even when such feelings *are* present, we cannot possibly decide whence they come or whither they go; and when the saving fruits of the Spirit are beclouded, the heart is left without any anchor, and is overwhelmed with every fearful doubt.\*\*

†Halyburton's Works, p. 523. “I observe that this light or objective evidence whereon faith is bottomed, has no affinity with, but is at the furthest removed from enthusiastic impulse or imaginations.

1. This is not a persuasion without reason. Here is the strongest reason, and the assent hereon passed leans upon the most pregnant evidence.

2. It carries no contradiction to our faculties, but influences them each in a way suitable to its nature and condition.

3. Yea, more, none of our faculties in their due use do contradict, or at least, disprove it. Whereas enthusiastic impressions are irrational.

4. This is not a persuasion, nor a ground for it without, or contrary to the word, but it is in evidence of the word itself, that by it we are directed to attend to, and improve.

5. Yea, it is what our other faculties in their due use will give a consequential confirmation to, as we have heard.”

\*Dr. Chalmers' Lectures on Romans, p. 68, 69. See also Mills' Logic, p. 4, 5. Halyburton's Works, p. 523, 524.

†Brooks on Assurance, p. 98, 111, 112.

\*\*See Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 48, &c.

10. The witness of Spirit can not be sensible, otherwise it would be felt in the case of regenerated infants, children and youth. But so far from this being the case, many of the most devoted and eminent christians can give no account of the time or manner of their conversion or other spiritual changes. § The same argument will apply to God the Father and the Son, to Angels and to Satan, who must all on such principles evidence their peculiar operation by peculiar impressions. ||

11. Such suggestions conflict with other tests of the Spirit's witness laid down in the written word. The evidences of a divine call to saving faith, or to any particular duty, such as the ministry, is made subject in the word of God—1st, to the evidence of its fruits, and 2d, to the judgment of those who are authorised to decide upon character and fitness. Now, can we believe that God would embody the infallible evidence of His call in a state of mind and feeling of which the recipient can give no account to others, nor any *rational* account whatever—an evidence which *might* be produced by the natural powers of the mind, or by Satanic influence—and to which *might* be opposed the authorised determination both of God's people, of God's officers, and of God's rule of judgment by outward fruits.\*

12. Such suggestions are, to say the least, impracticable and useless. It is admitted on all hands, that they are and may be delusive; and that they are incapable of proof to others. They are, therefore, useless to God, who can discern the heart;—to their possessor, because he cannot certify their origin to himself or others;—and to others, because to them they are altogether inappreciable.\*

13. Such operations of the Spirit must be either uniform or false. They must be uniform, because the Holy Spirit is the source of "that wisdom from above," by which we are directed in the choice, pursuit, and successful discharge of *every* calling in life—of every duty, and in every emergency. What is necessary in one case, is proportionately necessary in all, and a witness, therefore, which is only applicable in one case, cannot be divine, but must be illusory. †

14. Such evidence of the guiding influence and direction of the Spirit is contrary to the great mass of holy witnesses in

§ Buchanan on the Spirit, p. 223; and Owen, vol. 2, p. 283, 482, 492.

|| See Halyburton's Memoirs, p. 157.

\* See Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 40.

† The direct testimony of the Spirit is claimed by Mr. Wesley, the Quakers, and others, as peculiar to them. This, however, would prove that the doctrine cannot be that laid down in the Bible, since it would limit the testimony of the Spirit to a small portion of those who give positive evidence of His saving, sanctifying, and comforting influences. See Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 36, 44.

every age of the Church, and is not, therefore, likely to be correct.

Mr. Watson's authorities† in support of his views, utterly fail. They all of them express their belief in the FACT of the witness and influence of the Holy Spirit, but they do not profess to believe in the self-evidencing manifestations of the Holy Spirit, nor in the direct and immediate suggestion of any fact or truth concerning our spiritual condition—nor in any other of his peculiar views.\* With all our industry in making a somewhat extended research, we cannot find any writer beyond the Quaker or Methodist denomination, either patristic, Reformer, Puritan, Westminster Assembly, either European, English or Scottish, who adopt these views. That our assurance is, in all cases of a saving nature, produced by the direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, is undoubtedly the received opinion of all Orthodox Divines. A few are willing to admit, that when it pleases Him, the Holy Spirit may and does shed abroad in the soul, an illuminating influence, giving very perceptible and unusual experience,† but this they believe is done not by way of suggestion, independent of the reading or hearing of the word, and independent of our graces, convictions and feelings, but on the contrary, in, by, and through these. The established doctrine of divines we believe to be, that all such assurance is produced by the Holy Spirit shining upon His own word, His own ordinances, and His own work in the soul, and thus giving that "demonstration of the Spirit," which is more conclusive and certain than even mathematical reasoning.§

†See given in his *Institutes Wks.* xi. vol., p. 269, &c., and in his *Life of Wesley*, Wks. vol. 5, p. 178, &c.

\*By interpreting them in his own way, Mr. Barclay makes the same writers and others also teach his peculiar views. See *Apology*, p. 23, and *Wardlaw*, p. 45.

†These are Owen, Halyburton, Horton, Haldane, and in one passage, Mr. Brooks. The *real* and full sentiments of these authors, however, we have had and will have, occasion fully to present.

§These authorities have been mostly given in the previous references upon the various topics. Some others are here added. Short, in his *Bampton Lectures*, enumerates among "the enthusiastic pretensions," condemned by the whole body of the Church, "special impulses, and extraordinary illuminations of the Spirit, for the personal assurance of salvation and comfort of the christian," p. 166, 165, &c. He quotes in proof of the position that the Church of England has ever denied "the necessity of a sensible illumination or impulse, whether instantaneous or otherwise, for assurance of salvation," p. 173. A number of authors and a great number of selections from the *Homilies*, see p. 166, 171, and p. 231-237. See on the doctrines of the Church generally, from the beginning, p. 153-171, and on the true principles as laid down by that Church, p. 171-175. The object of the work is to illustrate the witness of the Spirit, in the various manifestations of christian piety. On the doctrine of the Church of England, see also a *Summary of Faith and Practice*, by Dr. Burrow, vol. 2, p. 4, 12, 37, 38, 40, 42, 79, 80, 93, 88. See Melancthon and Luther, as quoted in *Scott's Continuation of Milner's History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 45, 46, and his own views also, and in vol. 3, p. 543-550. See quotations from the *Fathers*,

15. Such evidences is contradicted by facts, which, upon the supposition of its truth, are perfectly astounding and inexplicable.

1. It is found to be in readiness *just in proportion* to the demand made for it as a prerequisite to any office or duty in any christian community.

2. It is found to be most confident where the judgment of others is most contradictory to it.

3. It is found associated with doctrines the most opposite and contradictory in different portions of the same body, (e. g. the Quakers,) and in different bodies.

4. It is found sustaining the same individuals at different times, in the inculcation and assertion of doctrines the most palpably contradictory to each other, and to the word of God.

5. It is bodily claimed by many, who, nevertheless, have proved utterly incompetent and unworthy. Swedenborg alleged that he was constantly under this immediate guidance of the Spirit.

16. If the Holy Spirit testifies to a fact not evidenced and propounded in the Scriptures, then whatever He thus testifies, must be as infallibly true as the Word of God itself. But it is affirmed that the Spirit testifies to the teaching of Romanists, Prelatists, Quakers, Irvingites, and innumerable sects, who all teach what is contrary to the Bible and to each other. The Spirit, therefore, only testifies to what He has made known to the Word.

17. If the Spirit, by immediate and supernatural suggestion, imparts the knowledge of one fact or truth, He can impart the knowledge of all. And if the importance of the subject or duty makes this *necessary* in one case, then it is necessary in all, since all are of unspeakable importance and involve everlasting consequences, (Math. 5, 18, 19). Thus would the Scriptures be set aside as unnecessary, since, if texts may be pleaded for such suggestions, as it regards some truth or duty, they may be pleaded also for "all truth" and duty.

and views of many Divines in the Synod of Trent, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 275, 276, 283. See the articles of the Synod of Berne, A. D. 1532, quoted in *do.* vol. 3, p. 249, and Calvin's views and others fully, at p. 543-550. Flavel's Wks., vol. 6, p. 402, 403. Bayne on the Ephesians, Lond., 1643, Fol. p. 142. Wks. of Rev. William Bridge, vol. 5, p. 167. Howe's Wks., vol. 1, p. 450. Williams' Defence of Modern Calvinism, p. 31, 32, 35. Bellamy's Wks., vol. 2, p. 503. Haldane on the Atonement, Ed. 2nd, p. 111, 157. Serle's *Horæ Solitariae*, vol. 2nd. Hurrion's Wks., vol. 3, p. 312. Doddridge's Lectures, 4to p. 452. Waterland's Wks., vol. 10, p. 502. Bates' Wks., vol. p. 318. Winslow on the Holy Spirit, p. 239-243, 265, 300, 269-275. Bellamy's Wks., vol. 1, p. 455, vol. 2, p. 291-296, to which the reader is particularly referred. Dickinson's Marks of Saving Faith, see given in Tracts of the American Tract Society. Also the importance of distinguishing True and False Conversions, by Rev. Seth Williston, given in Tract No. 165, of *do.*

18. If the testimony of the Spirit given by supernatural and direct suggestion conveys the truth of any proposition or fact, then this truth or fact was either already in the Scriptures, or in existence, or else such a testimony is incredible, since God never required the belief of a proposition or fact which was not already true, nor does the Spirit ever testify to a fact which has not been already established. He first works, and then testifies to his own work.\*

19. If it is said that this testimony of the Spirit is only by way of impulse or feeling, or shining, or voice, and not by the statement of any truth or fact—then we reply as before, that these constitute no evidence at all, and witness nothing.

Finally we remark, that such a testimony of the Spirit cannot be admitted, because its advocates are led to adopt positions, which we believe to be contrary to Scripture, and to fact, and to each other.

Mr. Watson, who has very ably and extensively written upon the subject, says we cannot love God, until we are assured by this witness of His Spirit, that He loves and is reconciled to us, since He alone knows the mind of God, and He alone can tell us that God loves us.† But we have seen that until we actually possess and exercise a spiritual mind, we cannot discern spiritual things, and cannot, therefore, either know or love God spiritually. He thus “puts us,” to use his own words, “upon the impossible task,”‡ of knowing God before we are savingly enabled to do so, which is absurd.

To know that it is the Spirit of God who speaks to us, on any occasion and in any manner, we must have some criterion by which to judge of His speaking, and so on ad infinitum. But when a spiritual capacity has been imparted, and spiritual things are understood and felt, and the Holy Spirit gives clearness to the outward evidence and power to the inward principle, then is the heart able to stand fast and rejoice in hope, and while the manner in which these gifts are bestowed is unknown, this spiritual mind enables us to love God in Christ, from whom they all proceeded.

The argument that “love to God directly implies a knowledge of His love to us.”§ is therefore in one sense true, and in another untrue. Objectively or doctrinally, as it regards certain evidence of God “being in Christ reconciling sinners unto Himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them,” it is true. But it is not true, that to love God we must have a personal, direct attestation made by the Holy Ghost to our minds,

\*See Dr. Candlish on the Atonement, p. 153, 154, and Bellamy there quoted.

†Works, vol. 2, p. 214, 215, and vol. 2, p. 262, 263; vol. 4, p. 300, 301.

‡Do. do.

§Works, vol. 4, p. 300.

that God has pardoned and adopted us. This is not faith, but sight and sense;—it makes this testimony and its fruit precede justification,† whereas the Apostle makes this “peace with God” to follow justification; (Rom. 5: 1,) and to witness to this peace, therefore, before justification, would be to testify to what is not the fact;—it makes faith our work in consequence of this witness, whereas it “is the gift of God,” and the first fruit of the Spirit;—it implies that there cannot be faith where there is not already assurance;‡ and yet, Mr. Watson says, “the faith that *brings* us into this state of “comfortable assurance,” must maintain us in it;§ thus, in one place making faith *precede* justification;|| and in another making assurance, which is an exercise of faith, precede faith.\*\* The error, we conceive, lies in denying to faith the *instrumental* connexion with salvation, attributed to it in the word of God,†† and in making special love the ground of faith,‡‡ instead of God’s warrant in the Gospel, made plain to us by the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, “whose work is one,” and who in enabling us to exercise faith, thereby produces at the same time saving faith, hope and joy.\*

We agree with Mr. Watson, in believing that the Holy Ghost not only witnesses with, or in our spirit, but to our spirit;\*† but when he makes the Holy Spirit give “witness to the great fact that our sins are forgiven,”\*‡ &c., he makes *necessary* to saving knowledge what he admits the text on which he founds his doctrine may not require,\*§ which Scripture never asserts, and which we have shewn can never be proved to ourselves or to others. In fact, Mr. Watson admits that the *manner* in which this truth is communicated by the Holy Spirit, cannot be described, and is different in different individuals;\*||—that it is open to the greatest delusions;—that it requires the fruits of the Spirit to test this test and make sure this assurance;†\*—that it is *necessary*, and that *always*,‡‡ and yet that it conveys no certain assurance of final salvation,†§ or of any permanent security;—it is according to him a direct witness of *adoption*

†See vol. 4, p. 293, where this is taught.

‡See vol. 4, p. 301.

§Do., p. 303, and vol. 2, p. 248, and vol. 6, p. 259, 264.

||Vol. 11, 255.

\*\*Do., p. 249; vol. 4, p. 293; vol. 11, p. 255.

††Vol. 11, p. 262-264.

‡‡Do., p. 267.

\*See this admitted in do., vol. 11, p. 267.

\*†Works, vol. 292, and vol. 11, p. 261, 262, 255, 257.

\*‡Do., do., 293, and vol. 11, 262, 263.

\*§Works, vol. 11, p. 260.

\*||Works, vol. 4, p. 301; vol. 11, p. 257.

†\*Do., vol. 4, p. 295, 305.

†‡He admits also that this witness must be in accordance with the various modes in which it is represented in Scripture.

†§Works, vol. 4, p. 303, and vol. 5, p. 175.

and pardon, and is yet only "a comfortable persuasion or conviction," and "does not necessarily imply the absence of all doubt." §§

Such are some of the difficulties in which this theory involves its most skilful advocates. It leads ultimately to the endless circle—that we know that our feelings and convictions are saving, because of the direct witness of the Spirit assuring us that we are saved; and we know that this assurance is the testimony of the Spirit, and not of our own minds or of Satan, because of the fruits to which it leads. |||| And this theory, at the same time, substitutes an inward suggestion and experience of our minds for the only divine warrant given for our faith in the word and testimony of God.\*\*\*

On both sides of this question, therefore, of the witness of the Spirit, there are dangerous errors to be avoided—errors of excess—and errors of defect:—the error of the Sadducees who denied the doctrine and necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence, in order that we may in any measure and as it regards any duty—will and do what is holy and pure;\*—the error of the Pelagians who reduce the proffered help of the Holy Spirit to mere natural capacity, or the knowledge imparted by revelation;—and the error of the Semi-Pelagians,† who attribute to man's ability the preparation of the heart, and who teach that the grace of willing and acting is given in consequence of this preparation.‡ So much for the errors of defect. But on the other hand, there are errors of excess which are as carefully to be avoided:—the errors of all, who, like Montanus, claim the special guidance and direction of the Spirit, to complete and perfect the doctrine and order of the church;§—the error of all, who like various sects at different periods of the church, claimed for themselves the illapses and illuminations of the Holy Spirit for guidance, instruction and ability to preach;—the erroneous assumption also of the Romish church, in claiming the exclusive possession of the Holy Spirit for authenticating and interpreting inspired writings, and for imparting all heavenly grace;—and, finally, the error of erecting as a standard of experience and a test of sincerity, a sensible manifestation of the personal and direct operation of the Holy Spirit, as is unwarranted and unrequired by the word of God. While such a standard may accord with the remarkable experience of a few, it is adapted to throw doubts, darkness and difficulties,

§§Do., vol. 11, p. 254.

||||See Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 46-52.

\*\*\*See do., p. 52-61.

\*See Short's Bampton Lectures, p. 194, 137, 145, 139.

†Do. do., p. 141, 150, 141, 144, 148, &c.

‡Do. do., p. 142.

§Do.

if not absolute despair, in the way of the heavenly conscientious and sincere, while it offers no obstruction to the self-confident, hypocritical, or presumptuous, and which, therefore, can do only harm, and that to God's dear and most tender-hearted and spiritually minded children.

But to our doctrine on this subject of the witness of the Spirit, there is one objection not yet noticed, and which has been deemed of insurmountable difficulty. It is urged strongly by Mr. Watson, and by the Reviewer, and is this: If the witness of the Spirit is to be gathered from the conformity of our experience, and character, and motives, to those described in the Scriptures as the work and operation of the Spirit, then the witness is in fact not that of the Spirit at all, but is only the witness of our own spirit.\*

Now to this objection we have several replies.

1st. This objection does not give us credit for believing and teaching as truly as the objectors can, the direct and personal operation of the Spirit in the production of every holy principle, capacity, feeling, desire and purpose, and also in upholding, strengthening, and confirming them. What we deny, is not the direct and personal operation of the Spirit, but the *sensible and self-evidencing nature* of this *process* as a necessarily required test and evidence of the reality of what is thus produced. We believe in the necessity and fact of the Spirit's operation—we deny the capacity to discern the time and manner of His operation.

2dly. The term "*witness*," is itself metaphorical, and can only be explained, therefore, by what is taught elsewhere of the nature and incomprehensibility of the divine operations.

3dly. The analogy of language and the actual usage of Scripture sustain the interpretation, that by the term "*witness of the Spirit*," is to be understood, the effect produced by the Spirit—the testimony given by Him in those graces of which he is the only possible author,—and this view is sustained as admissible by the construction and the context of that passage in which the words are used, (Rom. 8, 16.)† The objection, therefore, is founded upon a view of this passage, which is not necessary—nor sustained by the general doctrine of Scripture.

4thly. The testimony of our spirits to any thing within the range of our capacity, is founded on the veracity of God, and is therefore infallible, and hence the testimony of that "*Spirit*," which is "*the gift of God*," *imparted* for the very purpose of spiritual discernment, must be infallible, also,

5thly. This inward infallible testimony is rendered more assured by the infallible evidence and test of the outward word,

\*See Watson's Wks, vol. 4, p. 295, 300, and vol. 11, 255, 256, 257.

†See Stuart's Commentary in Edward's Works, vol. 4.

made plain and applicable to us by the infallible teaching of the Holy Spirit. Nor is this reasoning in a circle. We are *conscious* and therefore certain of a spiritual capacity. The infallibility of this consciousness we assume, though "we cannot tell whence it cometh." And in the exercise of this capacity we discern the truth in the word and its application *to us*, and the actual existence of that grace which is there ascribed to the Holy Spirit, wrought *in our hearts*, and are therefore intuitively led to attribute that grace—whether it comforts, or directs to duty—to the Holy Ghost.

6thly. Scripture and reason both warrant us in saying, that those spiritual views, feelings, desires, and principles which could not be produced by our natural powers, and could only be imparted by the Holy Ghost, are a direct and literal witness given by Him to our "Spirits"—speaking more loudly and incontrovertibly than if we actually heard a voice from the upper sanctuary. Nay, so assuredly are these spiritual views, the witness of the Spirit, that in Scripture they are actually denominated the Spirit,\* (John, 3: 6, Rom. 8: 5, 1 Cor. 2: 14, and 15: 49, 2 Cor. 5: 17, Gal. 4: 19, &c.)

In the language of Scripture and reason, therefore, these fruits of the Spirit are the Spirit Himself, witnessing with our spirits, and demonstrating that "He who hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." "But how and in what manner He works these effects we know not any more than how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. Therefore it is called a hidden life, (Col. 3: 3,) being in this respect unknown even to spiritual men, though they are themselves the subjects of it."†

The nature of the ministerial call depends upon the nature of assurance and the witness of the Spirit,—of both which it is an eminent exemplification. Having, therefore, endeavored to state the doctrine of Scripture on these subjects, we are now

\*See Howe's Wks., vol. 2, p. 60, 61, and vol. 5, p. 8, 9, 12, who gives several arguments in proof. Also the Marrow of Modern Divinity, p. 295, 296, 297.

The Spirit witnesses to his operations already existing, and not by or in the operations, whether they are faith or hope, or a conviction of duty. See Shepard's Sound Believer, p. 231-237. Horton's Discourses on Romans, ch. viii, p. 245, 247. See also John, 14, 23, 21. Before He seals He writes. He renovates before He consoles, and qualifies before He calls. See also Brooks on Assurance, p. 214, 215, 216.

†Burkett on the N. Test., on John 3, 8, Lond. Fol. 16th edition, p. 235. See him also on Rom. 8, 16, p. 428. The Spirit witnesses, he says, "by laying down marks of trial in the Scriptures, by working these graces in us, and by helping us to discover this work in our souls . . . which testify by reflecting upon them," &c.; "all this He does not by way of impulse, &c., but in the way of argumentation." Haldane on Rom. 8, 16, strongly insists that the witness of the Spirit is distinct from this—that it is immediate, and that it is felt—but *how* it is felt, he admits, cannot be explained. And what is thus witnessed, he makes to be "the revelation of a truth consonant to the Word of God, and made to the believer in that blessed book."

prepared, without farther introduction, to lay down what we believe to be the doctrine of Scripture, concerning the Call to the Ministry, directing our readers to some of the most accessible works in which this subject is specially discussed. A call to the ministry, like all other saving influences, must, as we have seen, be imparted by the Holy Ghost, and an assurance of His having given it, must be imparted to the soul, in order that it may become effectual and operative. The Holy Spirit must impart those qualifications of natural fitness which are essential, in order to prepare for, or to engage in, the work;\*—He must open up the way for such a course of preparation;—He must give ability and success to our endeavors;—He must inspire the heart with that desire for the work, which cannot be satisfied without the utmost effort to carry it into execution;—He must give the singleness of heart and purpose, which looks only to the glory of God and the salvation of souls;—He must bestow that "spirit of wisdom, of power, and of a sound mind," which alone can lead to that prudence which will give offence to no man, and to that boldness, which will contend for the truth if needs be, even unto blood;—He must open a wide and an effectual door to the individual called for an entrance upon this high calling;—He must, therefore, dispose the hearts of his appointed officers to ratify His call, and the hearts of his people to attest the fitness and capacity of the individual so called to edify and instruct;†—He must crown his labors with a saving and sanctifying blessing to them that hear;—and He must continue to uphold, direct, instruct, and comfort his servant while engaged in his arduous labors. The whole work of the ministry depends, therefore, upon the Holy Ghost for *its* authority, and for *our* obligation and fitness to assume it.

The term call is a metaphor,‡ referring both to the command or summons by which a person is verbally invited and directed to any duty, and to the vocation or employment to which he is summoned. It is, therefore, that command—addressed to any individual through His word, by the Holy Ghost,—to engage in any work or duty, or to enjoy any privileges and blessings. It is used in the Scriptures generally for every state and condition of life to which any one is destined by God—for which He gives the requisite capacity and qualifications, opening the way for an entrance upon it—and blessing and supporting those who engage in it. The Holy Ghost is represented as the efficient agent in carrying out, in reference to every individual, the *providential* purposes of God, as well as the dispensations of

\*Owens' Works, vol. 20, p. 400. Princeton Review, for 1831, p. 199, &c., where these are well stated.

†1 Tim., 3: 1. Titus 1. 1 Peter 5: 1-2.

‡Dr. Jamieson's Reality of the Spirit's Work, p. 293.

His grace.† To every such state, condition and duty, whether in the family, the church, or the commonwealth, the Holy Spirit calls, and his people are called; and hence, these employments are termed callings, or a man's vocation.‡ A call, therefore, is necessary to the proper discharge and enjoyment of any business or occupation, and this call is the more clear and evident, in proportion as the duty is peculiar, responsible, and attended with temptation and difficulty.§ A christian is, therefore, to expect such a call, and a comfortable persuasion or assurance of duty in all that he undertakes.||

The terms call and calling are, however, most generally applied to the commands and invitations addressed to sinners by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, and through the preaching of the truth, and to the effectual application and power with which the Holy Ghost makes them "the power of God to their salvation," sanctification, and devotion to His service.\*

In all cases the calling of God is two-fold, *outward* in His word and providence, and *inward* in those qualifications and desires which enable the believer to judge of his calling.\*\* These inward qualities, fitness and desire, are given by the Holy Spirit, and wherever they exist, prove that the person is chosen by God, and fitted and called to the work for which they qualify.

Now, so it is with regard to the work of the ministry—which is a part of the great field of christian work and duty to which the Holy Spirit calls, and for which He fits and prepares. The call to this work is also external and inward. The *external call* to the ministry, is that testimony, command, precept, promise and invitation of the word, which makes known the duty and the privilege of the christian ministry, together with all other means by which the mind is led to feel, to understand, and to become personally sensible of this duty. The *internal call*, is that supernatural influence, communicated by the Holy

†See Bishop Heber's Bampton Lectures on the Holy Spirit; Owen on the Spirit; Hurrion on the Spirit; Buchanan on the Holy Spirit, &c. 1 Cor. 7: 24. Eph. 4: 28. 1 Peter 4: 10. Gal. 5: 13.

‡On this subject the old divines are full, though now the term call is more commonly restricted in books to the effectual or saving call of the Gospel, or to the call of the Ministry.

§Perkins' Works, Fol., vol. 3, p. 61; vol. 1, p. 64; vol. 2, p. 50. See Commentary on Revelation by the celebrated James Durham, author of the "Sum of Saving Knowledge," 4to., Glasgow, 1788, p. 78. No man, he teaches, ought to become an author without such a call, and every one may know that he has it, p. 77-79. See also Bucani Theol. Institut., Geneva, 1612, p. 492. Bayne on the Ephesians, Fol., London, 1643, p. 4, 350. Hildersbram on John, chap. 4, Fol., 1632, p. 238-240. Works of Rev. William Bridges, vol. 5, p. 75-77.

||That he may ascertain this and how, see Perkins, vol. 2, p. 159, &c. Corbet, in his Remains, makes a state of continence or single life one of these. See p. 231-236, &c.

\*It often means chosen, as in Rom. 8. 28. 1 Cor. 1: 2. 1 Cor. 1: 1. Rom. 1: 6. Isa. 48, and vol. 3, p. 67, Calvin's Trans., soc. ed.

\*\*So teaches Calvin; see Institutes, vol. 2, p. 591-592; the terms there used are the universal and the special call.

Ghost, by which the soul is freely persuaded and enabled to obey the command, to believe the promises, to desire the privileges, and willingly undergo the self-denial and the labor of the christian ministry.‡

This *combined* call to the ministry, that is, the outward and the inward call, are in the present state of the church, *ordinary*,—that is, it is effected according to the general order laid down in the word, and established in the church,—and is not *extraordinary*;—and it is also *mediate*, that is, it is made through the coopération of men, and not directly and solely by God.\*

In both aspects of the ministerial call, the only efficient and authoritative source from which it flows, is the triune covenant Jehovah, by whom the church has been constituted, and more especially God the Son, in the exercise of His sovereign dominion over the church through the Holy Spirit.† The ultimate AUTHOR of the ministerial call is, therefore, the Triune God, and the proximate author, the Holy Ghost.

The ESSENCE of the *external* call is found in the whole doctrine, precept, promise, and order concerning the ministry laid down in the word of God; and the essence of the *internal* call, consists in the operations of the Holy Ghost, by which we are persuaded of the duty; led to desire it; endued in some measure with spiritual fitness for it; and made willing to undertake it.§ Of these “gifts that are in Him, which are given by the Holy Ghost,” every one is and must be conscious; of their conformity to what the Spirit in the word has promised and made necessary, he may be and is convinced; and being sensible that he is actuated by no avaricious, ambitious, or worldly motives, but by a sincere spirit of love and obedience to God, and a desire to edify the church and proclaim the Gospel for the encouragement of sinners, he is assured, by a conviction more or less powerful, that he has the witness of the Spirit with him, that he is called of God to the work of the ministry. Under his guidance, a spiritual application of the command to preach the Gospel, gives to the soul a relish for the holy and divine work commanded; an adoring view of the sweet and wonderful grace of Christ, in instituting and entrusting it to men; a sense of the all-sufficiency of Christ to fulfil His promise in enabling us to discharge the duty; and a conviction of our title to, and interest in, the work prescribed.

‡See Stapfer, vol. 1, p. 363, &c.

\*See Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry, p. 116, where the Provincial Assembly of Westminster Divines (the authors of this work,) make supernatural endowments and evidence necessary to an immediate call, and deny its present existence. In confirmation, they there quote Chemnitius, p. 120; Zanchius, p. 120; Gerhard, p. 121; Luther, 122; Zuingle, p. 123, 124.

†See this very fully developed in Eade's Gospel Ministry, ch. 1.

§See Bucani Theol., p. 492; Edwards' Works, vol. 4, p. 124, 125, 127.

A conviction of a call to this work, arising from an audible voice, or an immediate suggestion is, for the reasons already given, a blind call, not founded upon the truth in the word, but upon what is within the power of imagination, or of Satanic influence to produce. Such a call is, therefore, either a gross delusion, or, if from God, it is the *accompaniment*, but not the *essence* of the call. Such suggestions or sensible signs are not, therefore, to be expected or trusted in—first, because they are extraordinary and unwarranted; second, because they are beside and independent of the Scriptures; and, thirdly, because they do not necessarily imply, or require, or produce, those holy desires and qualifications which are spiritual, supernatural and divine, above nature, and altogether beyond the power of Satanic influence.\*

The EVIDENCE of an *external* call to the ministry, is the possession of the natural qualifications fitting for it—and of those spiritual and acquired habits which are laid down in the word as actually necessary. And the evidence of an *internal* call is the conscious exercise of these qualifying graces and gifts, with a conviction more or less free from doubt, assuring us that they were given by the Holy Spirit, and that by them God testifies to the personal application of His command to our souls.

The OBJECT which a heavenly call to the ministry presents to our minds, is in both cases Christ, the head and legislator of the church, whose ministry it is; by whom it was given; by whom it is directed and sustained; and for whose glory it was and is maintained.

The GROUND OF WARRANT of this call, or authorized engagement in the ministry, is the command, institution and promise of Christ, making this office permanent in the church, calling men into it, and securing to them assistance in it.

The NECESSITY for such a call, is founded upon the supernatural and divine ends contemplated by the ministry—the glory of God and the salvation of men—which can only be secured by divine appointment, divine warrant, divine authority, divine assistance, and divine blessing.

The ACCEPTANCE of a call to the ministry, is the actual submission of the whole man,—body, soul and spirit,—to the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to His command to preach the Gospel, looking to Him for grace and help to fulfil it; an actual entrance upon that course of study which is necessary to prepare for the work;—and the actual discharge of its duties, when so prepared. In this act, the soul looks neither to itself, nor to the effects which are to follow, but only to the word and to Him who there speaks.

\*Edwards' Works, vol. 4, 127, 128, 130, 131.

The END aimed at in a call to the ministry, is not our glory, honor, or comfort, but the glory and honor of the Triune God, as in Christ Jesus He is reconciling the world unto Himself, through the Gospel preached unto them.

The LIFE and POWER of a call to the ministry, consists in an abiding conviction of the divine authority, glory, and infinite importance of the work; of our fitness in some measure to discharge it; of our single and sincere desire to glory God in it; and of His presence, comfort and blessing in the work. THIS is "that secret call of which," as Calvin teaches,\* "every minister is conscious before God, but has not the church as a witness of it; I mean, the good testimony of our heart, that we undertake the offered office neither from ambition, nor avarice, nor any other selfish feeling, but a sincere fear of God and desire to edify the Church. This, as I have said, is indeed necessary for every one of us, if we would approve our ministry to God. Still, however, a man may have been duly called by the church, though he may have accepted with a bad conscience, provided his wickedness is not manifest. It is usual also to say, that private men are called to the ministry when *they seem fit and apt to discharge it*; that is, because learning, conjoined with piety and the other endowments of a good pastor, is a kind of preparation for the office. For, those whom the Lord has destined for this great office, he previously provides with the armor which is requisite for the discharge of it, that they may not come empty and unprepared." Thus reasonably speaks this immortal man.

We have ourselves made extensive research into this question, and so far as we have done so, have found—beyond the writers of the Methodist Church, and we need hardly except even them,†—an undeviating uniformity of views. In no one writer have we found the doctrine of the Reviewer, that "a *supernatural conviction of duty*, wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evi-

\*Institutes, vol. 3, p. 87, chap. 3, B. 4, sec. 11.

†Mr. Edmonson, one of their writers, in his Treatise on the Ministry, represents the call of the Holy Ghost as being *sensibly* felt, but when he explains *how* this is experienced and proved, he says it is "the inclination of the heart," (p. 78,) "which inclines and draws such persons as are fit to take upon them," &c. He refers to Mr. Fletcher, of whom Mr. Benson says, "he was pressed in Spirit to exhort others to seek after the same blessing," "and there can be no doubt in the mind of any one," says Mr. Edmonson, "who knows the character of that great man, that his *pressure of Spirit* was the work of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Edmonson makes the call, therefore, subject to evidence and tests, and in quoting as proofs, Luther, Gilpin, Walsh, and Dr. Leland, only Gilpin *alludes* even to any thing like an *immediate* voice, and he, as well as the others, judged by the effects and results, of the reality of the supposed operation of the Spirit. See p. 65, 71, 74, 80-85.

dence of a true vocation to the ministry"—sustained.† Any such immediate, direct, and self-evident operation of the Holy Spirit, convincing an individual of his duty to enter the ministry is, so far as we know, universally regarded by all judicious writers, as unwarrantable, unattainable and delusive.\* Indeed, the same views as we have maintained, are advanced, for sub-

†On the dangers resulting from making marks necessary, which are not so made in that word, and of erecting them into tests. Edwards' Works, vol. 4, p. 349, 350, and Ross on the Direct Witness, p. 64, &c.

\*As to the Reformers, we believe they unanimously concurred in placing this call inwardly in a pious and otherwise qualified mind, and outwardly, in what the Augsburg Confession calls "a canonical and regular ordination." See the Article in the Apol. for the Augsburg Confession, Article xiv., in Hase's *Lybri Symbolic*, vol. 1, p. 204, and in the Conf. itself; see p. 13. See again authorities from the Reformers to the same effect in the same author, p. 150; also, p. 11, 144, 156, and 554 and 353, 294, 499. See the views of the Reformers treated of in full by Voetius, in his *Politice Ecclesiasticæ*, Tom. 3, 529, 530, 535, 539, &c.

See also Palmer on the Church, vol. 1, part 1, chap. 8. Lazarus Seaman, a member of the Westminster Assembly, has fully examined into this subject, in his "Vindication of the Judgment of the Reformed Churches concerning Ordination," Lond. 1647. He there shows, that according to them an *internal* call is evidenced by gifts and the people's acceptance, p. 5, and p. 2, Prop. 2, with the proofs, and p. 26, 51. He quotes Zanchius, p. 4, and other Reformers, at p. 14, 28, 29. See also Turretine's Theol., Tom. 3, p. 235, 238, 240, 241-246; Maastricht Theol., vol. 2, p. 788; De Moor's Commentary on Markii Medull, Tom. 6, p. 282-284. See further Bucani *Institutiones Theol.*, Geneva, 1612, locus 40, 2; Wollebius's *Christian Divinity*, London, 1856, second edition, p. 218. Pictet's *Christian Theology*, Book 6, chapter 7, p. 448, 446, &c. Spanheim is very strong; see Works, Fol., Tom. 3, p. 791. Stapfer's Theol., vol. 1, p. 363, 432, and vol. 5, p. 36. As to the English Reformers, see in addition, Burrough's Summary of Christian Faith and Practice, vol. 2, p. 370, &c. The opinions (taken from all works of authority in that church) are given; see p. 80, 82. Crammer, p. 400-404; Jewell, p. 410; Nowell's Catechism, p. 412, 419. The *Reformatio Legum*, p. 421. The Forms of Ordination, p. 31, 32, 96, 97. The Collects, p. 93, &c. The Articles, p. 98. See also Hooker's View at The Homilies, p. 37, 38. The Collects, p. 93, &c. The Articles, p. 98. See also Hooker's View at length in *Eccl. Polity*. Bridges on the Christian Ministry, illustrates the doctrine we have stated from Bernard, Quesnel, Calvin and others. See p. 93-103.

As to the Scotch Reformers and Divines, see the Books of Discipline of that church.

As to the Puritans, see the works of Anthony Burgess on John, p. 497. Hildersham on John, chap. 4, p. 261.

As to the Westminster Assembly and its divines, see "The Divine Right of the Gospel Ministry," by the Provincial Assembly of London, 1654. The work of Lazarus Seaman, as above. The *Pulpit's Patronage*, by Rev. Thomas Ball, London, 1656, 4to. The works of Rutherford and Gillespie. Baxter's *Five Disputations on Ch. Gov.*, London, 1659, 4to. *Disp. 2*, p. 109-266. Owens' Works on the Hebrews on chap. 5, vol. 4; vol. 3, p. 38, and in his general works; vol. 19, p. 39, &c., and p. 53. Corbet's Remains, 63-86. See also Owen's Works, vol. 20, p. 400. Here Dr. Owen especially discusses the subject. He shows that there are first, prerequisite qualifications, p. 400; second, an outward call by the church, p. 403, 404; third, inward indications of the mind, given by God; see p. 401-403, &c. See also a Plea for Scripture Ordination, by Rev. James Owen, 2d ed., Lond., 1707, p. 7.

See also Andrew Fuller on the Ministerial Call and Qualifications in Works, vol. 5, p. 207. Bishop Hopkin's Works, vol. 1, p. 495, 496. His interpretation of John 20: 22, 23, as referring to "nothing else but their solemn mission to the ministry," deserves attention, p. 497, 498. Short's Bampton Lectures, p. 209-211.

stance, by our most orthodox divines. "In God's ordinary calls" "to the Gospel Ministry," says Dr. Owen,\* "there is the same sovereignty, though somewhat otherwise exercised. For in such a call, there are three things: 1. A providential designation of a person to such an office, work, or employment. When any office in the house of God, suppose that of the ministry, is fixed and established, the first thing that God doth in the call of any one thereunto, is the providential disposition of the circumstances of his life, directing his thoughts and designs to such an end. And were not the office of the ministry in some places accompanied with many secular advantages, yea, provisions (for the lusts and luxuries of men) that are foreign unto it, this entrance into a call for God thereunto, by a mere disposal of men's concerns and circumstances, so as to design the ministry in the course of their lives, would be eminent and perspicuous. But, whilst multitudes of persons out of various corrupt ends, crowd themselves into the entrances of this office, the secret workings of the providence of God towards the disposal of them, whom he really designs unto his work herein, are greatly clouded and obscured. 2. It is a part of this call of God, when he blesseth, succeedeth and prospereth the endeavors of men, to prepare themselves with those previous dispositions and qualifications which are necessary unto the actual call and susception of this office. And hereof also there are three parts. First, An inclination of their hearts in compliance with his designation of them unto their office. Where this is not effected, but men proceed according as they are stimulated by outward impressions or considerations, God is not as yet at all in this work. Secondly, An especial blessing of their endeavors for the due improvement of their natural faculties and abilities, in study and learning, for the necessary aids and instruments of knowledge and wisdom. Thirdly, The communications of peculiar gifts unto them, rendering them meet and able unto the discharge of the duty of their office, which in an ordinary call is indispensably required as previous to an actual separation unto the office itself. 3. He ordereth things so, as that a person whom he will employ in the service of his house, shall have an outward call according unto rule, for his admission thereunto. And in all these things, God acts according to his own sovereign will and pleasure."

To all this the objection will, we know be presented, that as the work of the ministry is especial and extraordinary, and not an ordinary duty, the call to this work must also be extraordinary, immediate and direct from the Holy Ghost.

But we can see no force in the objection:

\*Owen, vol. 24, p. 38.

1. In the first place, the work of the ministry is only one department of that wide field of christian obligation, effort and usefulness, which is under the direction and control of the Holy Spirit, into which, as we have seen, He calls, and for which He qualifies.

2. The whole work and operation of the Holy Spirit is conducted upon a uniform plan—so that, however various the field, the work, or the effect to be produced—it is one and the same Spirit that worketh all, in all, and by all. The manner of this working of the Holy Spirit in one case, will therefore be His manner in all ordinary cases; and if that manner in one case is secret and unknown, and only evidenced by the state produced, and not by the operation producing it,—then this will be the manner in all cases.

3. This view is sustained by the analogy between the work of the ministry and every other christian work, and between the call to the ministry and the call to every other duty and privilege.

In regard to all such cases, there is no difference in the NATURE of the duty, but only in its *degree* of importance.\* All spiritual duties depend alike upon divine appointment and divine assistance. Entire consecration to God is the spirit and principle of all piety, and entire devotion to Him and to His service, is the full and perfect manifestation of piety. The obligation to this entire consecration of all our powers and efforts to the promotion of God's glory in the salvation of men, arises from our relation to God in Christ, and rests, therefore, equally upon all men. As it regards any *particular duty*, the obligation springs from the command of God in His word; and the qualifications for it are to be *determined* by that word, while they can only be *imparted* by the Spirit. **In all cases, our knowledge of duty arises from the Scriptures;** in all cases saving and sanctifying impressions come through them; and in all cases the Holy Spirit is the efficient agent in opening the understanding to perceive and the heart to obey. The Word of God is, therefore, in all cases the guide to duty, the standard of duty, and the warrant of duty. And when our own hearts testify to the existence within us of the qualifications prescribed in that word for any office or duty; of the dispositions it requires; and of the desire and willingness it demands; then, that word assures us that these are the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, and that having given them, He has thereby fitted us for, and called us to, the duty in question.†

\*See this analogy admitted in the Southern Presb. Review. No. 3, p. 143, 144.

†The divine influence, says Eade, in his truly spiritual and admirable work on The Gospel Ministry, is known not by direct, immediate intuition or knowledge, but, first, by its influence and results in the partakers; and

No duty is obligatory upon the conscience of a christian that is not made binding by the Word of God, since the Scriptures "thoroughly furnish unto every good word and work." This word, therefore, is the *external* call to any work. And its call is as general and as extensive as the field of christian duty, and includes within its range every specific requirement.\* The *internal* call is in every case the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul, by which this external call is made to commend itself to the heart, and to produce an internal compliance with it.†

The application of passages of Scripture enforcing any *particular* duty—as for instance that of the ministry—is in accordance with a general rule pursued by the Holy Ghost, in His illuminating and saving operations. In such cases the truth is special, the duty special, and the application special, but the power by which an application is made, and the manner in which it is made, is in all cases analogous.‡ Truths referring to special persons and to special cases, are, therefore, as a universal rule, only accompanied by special illumination and enforcement in the case and circumstances designed.§

The ministry, however, is no more special as a privilege and duty than the christian calling, or than any other particular christian duty.|| All are permitted and bestowed by sovereign goodness. The proper discharge of all is beyond mere natural ability and capacity. All are unwarranted, except to those specially called to undertake them. As is the case with all other christian duties, therefore, the ministry depends upon divine appointment; its qualifications are measured by divine requirements; fitness for its discharge proceeds from the divine bounty; obligation to use the gifts thus bestowed is created by the divine command; and the sense of *individual* responsibility, is an inference from our actually possessing these gifts wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, and from our opportunity of engaging in the work.

The ministry is an instituted and permanent means of grace and "labor of love." And as the Holy Ghost instituted and ordained it, so He continues it to the end of time, by an ordi-

second, in the qualities ascribed to it; see p. 99, 223, 208, 215, 216, 303. At the same time, he dwells constantly on the truth, that the call to the ministry in all its parts is certainly from the Holy Ghost, as its efficient cause, root and fountain. See p. 304, 309, 312, 323, 324, 351.

\*See Turretine, Tom. 3, p. 240.

†See Bellamy's Works, vol. 2, p. 537, 538.

‡Halyburton's Works, p. 543.

§Jamieson's Reality, p. 23, 84.

||For instance, the office and work of Deacons, Elders, Teachers, Professors, Missionaries, Evangelists, &c. &c. On the doctrine of the general calling of Christians, in reference to all duty, see also, in addition to the authors already quoted, Baxter's Works. Index, term Calling.

nary and regular method of procedure.\*\* The ground of a call to it, is found in the whole doctrine of Scripture, concerning the nature and necessity of the office, and the obligations to fulfil it.\* This doctrine is general and unlimited in its application, except to persons of the female sex, or of natural incapacity, or such as are destitute of the required qualifications to whom it does not apply.† The ability to apply this doctrine of the ministry to himself individually, and to assume the actual discharge of its functions, is the result of its special application by the Holy Ghost to his soul, which application is to be sought and secured in this, just as it is in every other case of christian privilege and duty.‡

To make a call to the ministry depend, therefore, upon a direct and immediate suggestion of the Spirit, constraining an individual to engage in this work, is to teach that the Scriptures are not the only infallible guide to duty, and that they are not able "THOROUGHLY TO FURNISH FOR EVERY GOOD WORK," since the ministry is expressly described as "A GOOD WORK;"—it is to teach that God immediately, directly, and independently of His own Word, which is perfect as a rule of duty, reveals and imposes duty; it is to teach God does this through evidence, which opens up the way to the greatest possible delusion, and which is incapable of certain authentication;§ it is to substitute for an authentic and infallible directory and rule of duty one that is variable, uncertain, delusive, indeterminable,—one which even Mr. Gurney admits only *mature* christians can discern, and which *all* admit, must be tested by the only sure test, and proved genuine by its subsequent results:—and unless, therefore, this evidence of a ministerial call is resolved essentially into the combined testimony of the Word, its saving application and effects, and the secret but effectual operation of the Spirit leading to a comfortable persuasion of duty, it is *vitally* different from what we must believe to be rational, scriptural, and attainable.|| The Scriptures no where promise such a call, and no where give rules by which to ascertain and determine it.††

On the contrary, while the person claiming such sensible evidence of his call, may be himself deceived,—and while no other individual on earth can ascertain or test its existence, God, by express appointment, has made it the duty of his people and of

\*\*See Hurrion's Works, Vol. 3, p. 304, 305, 306.

\*See Owen's Works, Vol. 3, p. 352, 351, 239, 240, 248, 297, 296, 299.

†Do. do., vol. 20, p. 406, 419-421.

‡Do. do., vol. 3, p. 352, 239, 240, 299.

§See Dr. Wardlaw's Letters to the Society of Friends, p. 328, 329, 330, 332, and Durham on Revelation, who shows that the supposed impulse of the Spirit is no sure sign, p. 72, 73.

||See Dr. Wardlaw's Letters to the Society of Friends, p. 337, 341, 345, 350.

††See do. do., 342, 343, 371.

his officers to judge of the call to the ministry *in every case*, by tests which must supersede and set aside any inward impression whatever, if not in accordance with them. Were then such a direct and sensible call necessary, God would thus be made to require evidence of a divine call from the individual who seeks the ministry, which is beyond the possible scrutiny of the parties whom He has nevertheless appointed judges of His call, and distinct from, and often perhaps contradictory to, the evidence which these judges are required to demand.

Nor is this the only absurdity implied in such a theory of the ministerial call, for as the ministry can only be delegated to such as are authorized by Christ, His people and officers must have as certain evidence that Christ has called the individual as the individual himself. And, hence, if a conscious, supernatural, and direct call is necessary to him, it is equally necessary to them; and this is true as it regards Ruling Elders and Deacons, just as much as in the case of Ministers, all being alike of divine appointment and divine calling. But can we believe that God would subject either the individual or his church to such uncertainty and painful contrariety; or, that He would place the evidence of a call to such a duty as that of the ministry in a state of feeling which enthusiasts have ever been ready to claim; which is found to exist just in proportion to the demand made for it; which is found generally as strong in calling to the preaching of error as to the preaching of the truth; which becomes stronger the more erratic and changeful its subject becomes, (e. g. Montanus, Swedenborg, § Joe Smith, &c. ;) which is wholly unnecessary to the clear and certain determination of duty; which is dangerous and delusive to the individual and to others; and which, while it encourages the self-confident and presumptuous, discourages or repels the humble, the conscientious and the sincere?\*

For ourselves, we must regard such a supposition as derogatory to God, to the Holy Ghost, to Scripture, to reason, and to the ministry itself.† And when we know that a mediate call and appointment to the ministry, through the instrumentality of men, is expressly declared by God himself to have been nevertheless determined efficaciously and purposely by the Holy Ghost, and to have been the gift of Christ,‡ (Acts 20: 28; Acts 13: 2 and 4; Acts 14: 23; and 1 Tim. 4: 14,) we may well shrink back from originat-

§He had no doubt of his sincere call by immediate suggestion of the Spirit. See *New Englander*, Oct., 1847, p. 500.

\*On the lawfulness of this argument, see *Southern Presb. Review*, No. 2, p. 136, 147.

†See *Wardlaw's Letters*, *ibid.*, p. 49, 50, 53. See also *Durham on Revelation*, p. 69, and *Hooker's Eccl. Pol.*, B. 5, chap. 57, sec. 9.

‡See all the passages requiring a regular order of introduction by a Presbytery, and *Durham on Revelation*, p. 68. See also 1 Kings 19: 19, where Elijah is made to call Elisha.

ing or imposing tests of duty which may keep back many from this work to the injury both of themselves and of the church. § For, let it be borne in mind, that while it is true, that to enter the work of the ministry uncalled is presumption, it is equally and emphatically true, that to refuse to enter it when called—however feebly that call may be expressed, if given at all—is dangerous rebellion. || “The communication of gifts unto men,” says Owen, “is ordinarily accompanied with a powerful and effectual inclination of the minds of men to undertake the work and engage in it, against those objections, discouragements, oppositions and difficulties, which present themselves unto them in their undertaking. This is so, I say, ordinarily, for there are more instances than one, of those who, having the word of prophecy committed unto them, instead of going to Nineveh, do consult their own reputation, ease, and advantage, and so tack about to Tarrish. AND THERE ARE NOT A FEW, WHO HIDE AND NAPKIN UP THEIR TALENTS, WHICH ARE GIVEN THEM TO TRADE WITHAL, THOUGH REPRESENTED UNTO US UNDER ONE INSTANCE ONLY. BUT THESE MUST ONE DAY ANSWER FOR THEIR DISOBEDIENCE UNTO THE HEAVENLY CALL.”

The Holy Spirit, as has been seen, is pleased to carry on His operations in and by His own word, and in and by our faculties. The only other point to be noticed, and on which we think the Reviewer's theory most seriously wrong, is that He does this *instrumentally*. He works in and by *means*. This He does in perfect consistency with His sovereign, free and divine character, as the Lord and giver of spiritual life and power—“the Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.”\* The use of means on the part of the Holy Spirit in nature and providence, and in the ordinances and other instrumentality employed in working out saving results, is no more inconsistent with the divine prerogatives and glory of this ever blessed agent in one case than in another.

According to the general opinion of writers, therefore, the distinction between the *extraordinary* call of prophets and apostles, and the *ordinary* call of ministers under the established order of the church is, that the former was generally (for it was not always and certainly so†) immediate, direct and independent of the word and of existing officers, while the latter is always mediate, that is, through and in conjunction

§Biblical Repertory, 1831. p. 197, 199-205, 208, 209.

||Owen, vol. 24, p. 238.

\*See Perkins' Works, vol. 3, p. 483. Heber's Bampton Lectures, p. 326, 327, 334, 328: “In no part of the divine word is this influence represented as operating or taking effect, except in connection with the employment of means.” Henderson on Inspiration, p. 52, &c.

†1 Kings 19: 19.

with, the instrumentality of man.‡ The use of means in leading to this call, has reference to the internal as well as to the external call, and to the evidence of that call as appreciable by ourselves and others. The Holy Ghost employs such means, in order to influence a man's views preparatory to his engaging in the work, by leading him to think of it, to desire it, and to shape his course of life and study with a view to it; and they affect also his final conviction of duty, and his actual determination to engage in the work itself. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit's operations are also, it is to be remembered, different in different individuals, so that what is the evidence of a sincere guidance to the work of a minister in one case may not be in another. The circumstances of the case, and the character and condition of the individual, will diversify the character of the Spirit's operations, and the nature and degree of that evidence by which they are attested, and hence individuals in "*desiring* this office," are not to look for all *possible*, or even for all *desirable* evidence of the Spirit's work leading them to it, but only for that degree of evidence which is *sufficient*. And who will deny that one clear mark of such a call, specified and imparted by the Holy Spirit in his own word, is sufficient, however it may be clouded with doubts?\*

The call to the ministry, therefore, is not less connected with, and dependent upon human instrumentality, than a call to any other christian duty. The obligations requiring it, taken in connection with the express limitations of the word of God, as it regards sex and fitness, is general, resting primarily upon the whole church, and secondarily, upon every member of the church not thus specifically excluded from it. Means must, therefore, be used by others and by themselves, and pre-eminently by parents and pastors, in order to ascertain the will of God concerning the children and youth of the church.

In calling persons into the christian ministry, there is a great work to be done by the church. The commission of Christ is general, and is made specially and savingly applicable through the instrumentality of the church to whomsoever the Lord our God shall call.† The christian ministry was given by Christ to the whole body of the church, and the entire doctrine concerning it was, and is addressed to that church. Believers generally, therefore, are under obligation to see to it that this ministry is perpetuated and maintained, and to use every proper means to secure this end. Hence, they are bound to "pray the

‡See Turretine, Tom. 3, p. 241.

\*See Dr. M'Leod's True Godliness, p. 152-166, 174, 167, 199, 201-211.

†See Presbytery and not Prelacy, the Scriptural and Primitive Polity of the Churches, p. 72-88. See Owen's Works. Turretine, Tom. 3, p. 235, 239, 245, 246.

Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest." But they must do more than this, or they are verily guilty concerning this matter. Prayer without effort is presumption. The nature of the ministry—its necessity—its design—its permanence—its qualifications—its obligations and demands—these all constitute a part of what Christ has taught, and what concerns His glory, and these, therefore, must constitute a part of the teaching of the church. All these things ought to be diligently enforced, and brought before the minds of her youth, and before the minds of parents and instructors. Parents out to dedicate their children to God and to the work of the ministry. They ought to study the natural bent and gifts of their children, and when they see a hopeful capacity for this work, they ought to train up such children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, with a special view to the ministry.\* Timothy, among Apostolic preachers; Origen and Athanasius, among the Fathers, and a host of the most burning and shining lights of every age, have been thus consecrated and trained up for the ministry.† A call to the ministry is often given in infancy, and is manifested by the bent and inclination of the mind, and implies in all cases, so far as is necessary, a call to those studies and pursuits which will fit and prepare for the actual discharge of the ministry,‡ not being primarily but only ultimately to the work itself. The ministerial call, is primarily a call to diligent preparation for the work, in order that those qualifications which are the result of supernatural grace, or of human industry, may be sought, and by God's blessing, obtained. And the latter class of qualifications, not being now miraculously bestowed, such diligent preparations and study, as Durham teaches, is in every case, absolutely and by evident divine appointment necessary.§ Where, therefore, the Spirit truly calls any man to the work of the ministry, it may be laid down as a certain rule that He leads to all preparatory means necessary for it.||

Hence, pastors and elders should carefully look out among their youth for such as give evidence of natural fitness for this work; and in addition to the teaching of the pulpit, they ought to bring the subject of the ministry before their minds and advise them to pursue a course of study in reference to it, if

\*See Perkins' Works, vol. 1, p. 759. For parents to neglect this duty, as it regards every calling, he makes a positive sin. See also Owen's Works, vol. 3, p. 339, 340.

†See De Moore's Comment. on Mark. Tom. 6, p. 282, 283. Mr. Porter's Discourse, p. 14.

‡De Moore, Tom. 6, p. 282.

§On the Revelation, p. 216.

||Do., p. 72, 73, and Dr. Howe on Theol. Education.

peradventure God may open up to them an effectual door of entrance.†

The church is under special obligation to use diligently all the means and agencies appointed in the word and by the church, to "commit this ministry to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," and "to lay hands suddenly on no man," but first to train them up under her own direction in the schools of the prophets in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they may be "proved," and "thoroughly furnished for his good work." Such was not only the doctrine but the practice also of the reformers, and of our venerated fathers. And it is still the universal practice, as it regards the calling of deacons, ruling elders, Sabbath school teachers, professors of theology, &c. who are all called to their work and persuaded to enter upon it—not because they seek the office, and urge their call and fitness for the work, but because the church, judging that they are competent, calls them to the work, and by moral suasion "compels them" to engage in it.

"It were useful to the church,"\* says Durham, "and conducing exceedingly for the clearing of entrance to the ministry, that there were some choice and way of trial, both of such as might be presently found fit to enter the ministry, and also of others that might be advised to study in reference thereunto; and that it might not be left unto men themselves alone, whether they will offer themselves to trial in reference to that charge or not. For so many may, and no question do, smother good gifts, which might be useful, thereby prejudging the church thereof, who, by this grave, convincing, and (ere it fail) authoritative way, might be brought forth, and would more easily be made to yield thereunto, when the burden thereof were not wholly left on themselves; whereas, now, partly from shame and modesty, partly from custom and undervaluing of the ministry, none ordinarily, who otherwise have a temporal being or any place, do betake themselves to this calling: and it is hard to say, that either none such are gifted for it, or that such gifts should be lost." . . . . . "There is no question but the church might call a member, upon supposition of his qualifications, to trial and (being found conform to what was supposed) might appoint him to the ministry; and that member ought to yield to both, from that duty that lyeth on every member in reference to the whole body, which is to be preferred to any particular member's interest:" . . . . . "And seeing all incorporations and commonwealths have this liberty to call and employ their members, without respect to their own inclina-

†Do., and Greenham's Works, Fol. 1605, p. 24, 726.

\*Durham, 73, 74, 75.

tions, so as it may be most useful for the good of the body ; this which nature teacheth, and experience hath conferred in them, cannot be denied to the church, which is a body and hath its own policy given to it by Jesus Christ for the building up of itself. This way is also agreeable to Scripture, and to the practice of the primitive times:"..... "By all which it appears like the Apostolic way to enquire for men that may be found qualified for the ministry : and also, that shunning or repining to enter the ministry in any person found qualified for it, and thus called to it, hath never been supposed as allowable by the Apostles ; but it was looked upon as a duty for those that were so called to obey, as it was the duty of others to enquire for such. To this also may that exhortation of Peter relate, 1 Peter 5:2, "Feed the flock of God which is amongst you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly," &c. whereby it would seem, that he is pressing obedience from those that were called, that willingly they should undertake the oversight of God's flock. Which words, if well considered, would pinch exceedingly a tender conscience of any man, if a call were thus pressed upon him. And indeed, if it were at men's option arbitrarily to refuse such a call, the directions that are given to people and ministers for searching out, calling and ordaining such, were to no purpose, for thus they might all be frustrated." ..... "This is also the established doctrine of our church in the first Book of Discipline, in that head that concerneth prophesying and interpreting Scripture, whereof these are the words, 'Moreover, men in whom is supposed to be any gift, which might edify the church, if they were employed, must be charged by the ministers and elders to join themselves with the session and company of interpreters, to the end that the Kirk may judge, whether they be able to serve to God's glory and the profit of the Kirk, in the vocation of ministers, or not. And, if any be found disobedient, and not willing to communicate the gifts and special graces of God with their brethren, after sufficient admonition, *discipline must proceed against them*, provided that the civil magistrate concur with the judgment and election of the Kirk ; *for no man may be permitted as best pleaseth him to live within the Kirk of God* ; but every man must be constrained, by fraternal admonition and correction, to bestow his labors, when of the Kirk he is required, to the edification of others. Which, if it were zealously followed, might, by God's blessing, prove both profitable and honorable to the church."

Such means, used by pastors, elders and parents to press upon the minds of youth the nature and obligation of the ministry, do not as some object in any degree conflict with the sovereign purpose and intention of God, because they only pre-

sent to the minds of the young a work which God has appointed—the requirement and duty God has commanded—and the promise which God has imparted. And as it is only in God's name this is done, so it is only to His Spirit all parties look for ability to make these means effectual.\* In using such instrumentality in the calling of His ministers, God eminently displays His sovereignty, dignifies His church and people, glorifies Himself by making use of His creatures, and at the same time secures the order, harmony, efficiency, and perpetuity of His church. And that God is pleased with such efforts on the part of his church and people, appears from the fact, that many of the most eminent ministers in ancient times, as for instance, Chrysostom and Ambrose, and among the moderns, as in the case of Calvin, were led to enter the ministry, through the urgency of ministers.† The case of Mr. Durham, to whom, as has been said in connection with Professor Dickson, "The sum of saving knowledge" is attributed,‡ and who was in his day a burning and shining light—may be given as an illustration of the practice of the Scottish church at that day.§ "His call and coming forth to the holy ministry, says his biographer, was truly remarkable, which was this: The Scots army being to engage with the English army in sight, he judged it meet to call his company and soldiers, (for he was in the army,) to prayer before the engagement. And as he was beginning to pray, it happened that the Rev. Mr. David Dickson, Professor of Divinity, then at Glasgow, came riding by the army, who seeing the soldiers addressing themselves to prayer, and hearing the voice of one praying, drew near and lighted from his horse, and joined with them, who was so much taken with Mr. Durham's prayer, that after prayer, Mr. Dickson called for the captain, and having conversed with him a little, he did solemnly charge him, that so soon as this piece of service he was engaged in was over, he should devote himself to serve God in the holy ministry, for to that he judged the Lord called him. But though as yet Mr. Durham had no clearness to hearken to Mr. Dickson's desire, yet two remarkable providences falling out just upon the back of Mr. Dickson's solemn charge, served very much to clear his way to comply with Mr. Dickson's desire." . . . . . "Accordingly, in pursuance of his resolution, he very quickly after went to Glasgow, and studied divinity under Mr.

\*See Turretine, vol. 1, p. 458.

†See also the case of Elijah, 1 Kings 19: 19.

‡Formerly bound up with the Confession of Faith, as it is still in Scotland.

§The work to which his life is prefixed (on the Revelation) is introduced by Baillie and Carstians. See p. 8, 9. Mr. Dickson was himself six years a Professor before he was appointed a Minister. See Select Writings of, vol. 1, p. 8.

Dickson, then Professor there, and made such proficiency in his studies, that in a short time (being called thereto) he humbly offered himself to trials, anno 1646, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Irvine to preach the Gospel."

Equally striking and confirmatory of our views, is the testimony of Halyburton, as given in his own Memoirs, in the chapter on his entrance into the ministry: "It was," says he,\* "like hell once to entertain a thought of preaching to others what I did not believe myself; but now things began to alter, and the Lord led me on to that which I declined before; and I find the steps of his providence about me in this matter do deserve to be remembered by me. 1. My mother did devote me from my childhood to this work, and often expressed her desire to lend me to the Lord all the days of my life, to serve him in the Gospel of his Son. This has often had its own weight on my spirit. 2. The course of my studies had looked that way;" . . . . . "He brought me under a lively sense of that forcible tie that was hereon laid on me, to lay out myself in any way that he should call me to be serviceable to him; and I was made to think that I should be the more happy the more directly my work should look that way. While like Peter, I was musing sometimes on these things, about the month of April, 1698, two ministers were sent to my great surprise, from the Presbytery of Kirkaldy, urging me to enter on trials: I did altogether decline the proposal, because I had no reading, wanted the languages, and had been much diverted from study." "The ministers continued to solicit me, and press home their desire; but while I stood out against their solicitations, though not without some secret struggle, and doubting whether in so doing I might not be declining duty, I began to observe the Lord raising a storm against me;" . . . . . "While I was in this case, Mr. Riddel did, May, 30, come to the Wemyss, and, after much converse and many reasonings, charged me to try and have thoughts on my text, and then do or stand off, as the Lord should clear duty; which I did consent to. But after this, I still did shift and decline, and could not think of a compliance; and then December 28, Provost Ramsay wrote earnestly desiring me to take the charge of my Lord Maitland." . . . . "Having at Mr. Forrester's earnest desire, undertaken a homily in the new college, which I was to deliver next week, I took time to consider of it: and after that I had, on Feb. 28, 1699, delivered my discourse on Job 28: 28, I went to visit my acquaintance, worthy Mr. Shiels, who did urge me to enter on trials, with that gravity and concern that had more weight on my spirit than all that had been spoken to me." . . . . "The Presbytery

\*Memoirs, Part 4, chap. 1.

of Kirkaldy, March 16, 1699, urged me to try a common head, and if I was not, after that, clear to proceed, promised to leave me to my choice; whereupon I consented, and delivered it April 20, when I accepted of a text." &c.\*

If, then, it is manifestly the duty of parents, pastors, and elders to use efforts to bring the subject of the ministry to the proper consideration of such as appear to be suitable for it—it is manifestly the duty of all those who have reason to think they possess in any degree the necessary qualifications for the work, to examine into its claims upon them, and God's purpose concerning them. Hence, the office of the ministry is declared by the Apostles, (1 Tim. 3: 1,) to be "a good," a useful, and an honorable "work." "He who desireth it," that is, reaches or stretches out towards it,—he who longs after and tries to gain this office, (for which he the Apostle lays down the social, moral, and ecclesiastical qualifications,) is commended by the Apostle.† In his word, God in effect says to every one whom he has suitably qualified, "Whom shall I send, who shall go for us?" and to this they should be found replying: "Then said I, here Lord am I, send me." He who

\*Investigation will shew that these examples are not exceptions to a general rule, but are themselves illustrations of it. We have noted some to which we will refer, selecting that very valuable history of the Reformers' Puritans, and other eminent English divines, Middleton's Evangelical Biography, 4 vols., 8vo. Ecolampadius changed his designed profession of law for that of theology, "being led and guided thereto by love of the truth," which he had been led to embrace. (Vol. 1, p. 86.) Zuingle appears to have been early designed and trained for the work, (vol. 1, p. 100.) Bilney abandoned the law when converted to the truth, and devoted himself wholly to the study of divinity, (vol. 1, p. 104.) Such was the case with Frith, (p. 123.) with Tindale, (p. 128.) with Lambert, (p. 139.) with Urbanus Regius, (p. 145.) with Capito, (p. 148.) Grynaeus, (p. 149.) Myconius, (251.) Bucer, (264.) Hooper, (317.) Bradford, (353.) Justus Jonas, (374.) Latimer, (378.) Ridley, (403, 404.) Peter Martyr, (500.) Calvin and Jewell were both early devoted to the ministry, and on receiving the truth, began to preach it. Knox was led to the ministry by the bent of his inclinations, (vol. 2, p. 133.) and on conviction of the truth, became a Protestant minister, (p. 134.) Such was Gilpin's history also, (p. 192 and 196.) Ussher, from infancy, had a fondness for study, and gave up a paternal estate in order to pursue divinity, vol. 3, p. 313. Bishop Reynolds was also early inclined to the work and prepared for it, (p. 424;) and Manton, (429.) and Herbert, who refers his call to God, "who put into my heart," he says, "these good desires and resolutions, (p. 56, 54, 50, 49.) Sibbes entered the ministry as soon as converted, (vol. 3, p. 70.) Bishop Hall was from infancy devoted to the ministry, and educated for it, (vol. 3, p. 352.) So was Charnock trained, (445, 446.) Owen was diverted to the ministry from other pursuits, as soon as he received a spiritual change, (462.) So also Jacomb, (vol. 4, p. 314.) Leighton was educated for the work, (vol. 4, p. 487.) This was the case with Baxter, (p. 16, 17.) with Flavel, (48.) P. Henry, M. Henry, Burkiitt, Harvey and Watts, (see p. 110, 240, 241, 265.) Doddridge, without assistance, could not have entered the ministry, (283.) Davies was devoted to this work before his birth, and then trained for it, (341.) So with Whitfield, (419.) &c. &c.

†See all the Commentaries on this passage. See also Hooker's Eccl. Polity, B. 5, ch. 77, sec. 13; Perkins' Works, vol. 1, p. 759. Gresham's Works, p. 24, 726.

cherishes an inclination to this work, with a proper sense of its nature, and of the necessity of seeking it in that way of orderly preparation and trial which God has ordained, manifests a commendable spirit,\* and need not hesitate to act upon his desire, for says Owen,† "There are invariable rules to try men and their ministry at all times, whether they are sent of God or not. The doctrine which they teach, the ends which they promote, the lives which they lead, the circumstances of the seasons wherein they appear, will sufficiently manifest whence such teachers are." A desire for the work of the ministry, if sincere and directed to the glory of God, is placed by the Rev. Robert Trail, among the leadings of God in calling to the ministry, which call he considers as made clear, when this desire leads to diligence in the use of all the means of attaining fitness for it, and to some edifying success in it. "So that, indeed a man ordinarily can never be so well confirmed, in the faith of his being called of God, until he make some essay in this work." (1 Tim. 3: 10.)‡

Every young man, therefore, not naturally incapacitated, is bound to investigate this subject. The ministry is a good and glorious work—it is a most worthy object of desire—it is a work which all are bound in some way to uphold, maintain and elevate, and it may therefore be the duty of such a young man or such a man even if of mature years, to do this by becoming ministers themselves. This question every individual must examine and decide in the fear of God. They must ascertain the *natural* qualifications for it, and examine whether they possess them. They must inquire into the *special* qualifications laid down for it by the Apostle, and see how far they may hope to attain them. They must consider the *duties* of the ministry, and examine how far they can hope willingly to discharge them. They must look at his *trials*, and "examine themselves" how they can hope to bear them. They must analyze its *motives*, and ascertain how far they are actuated by them. They are to pray, to read, to take advice, and in *every other way*, according to the Scriptures, to seek by "doing God's will to know the mind of the Lord." **NO YOUNG MAN IS GUILTY WHO HAS NOT DONE ALL THIS OR MORE.** If he has done all this, and then finds himself conscientiously excluded from the work, by natural providential, or any other *certain* hindrances, then, and **NOT TILL THEN**, can he rest satisfied that he "may sit down and take his ease in Zion." But, if a young man has

\*See Turretine, Tom. 3, p. 238. Dutch Annotations. Diodati. The German Bible, and Tonson's Bible, with Notes.

†On the Hebrews.

‡See his Discourse on the Ministry in the Morning Exercises, vol. 3, p. 202, 203. See Dr. M'Leod's True Godliness, p. 167.

never considered this subject, and its claims upon his attention;—if he has *taken it for granted* that he cannot serve God in this work;—if he has *made light* of the whole subject, and regarded it as unworthy of his investigation;—and if he has considered the work itself as beneath his ambitious aspirations; then may the curse of God rest upon him and upon his whole course of life, “because he came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the mighty.” That many do thus suffer, because of their unwillingness to hear, and answer God’s call to this work, made to them in his word and providence, we verily believe. That many, who ought to “prove their own selves,” whether or not God would have them to enter the ministry, “care for none of these things,” and are heinously guilty before God, we verily believe. That inadequate views of the true dignity, honor, and importance of the ministry, and of its paramount claims, above all other kinds of service, to an ample and sufficient support, encourage this indisposition on the part of many to think of the ministry as a business for life, we also verily believe. And that all views which foster this Gallio spirit are necessarily and very fatally injurious to the church and to the individuals themselves, and are therefore most earnestly to be deprecated and contended against, we do also most earnestly believe.

In conclusion, let us say, that if in this condition of the general christian mind in reference to the subject of the ministry and its paramount obligation, God makes it evident by putting the desire into their hearts—that he “has chosen the poor of this world,” and called them to this “good work”—then most firmly do we believe that IT IS THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY of the church to encourage and sustain them;—to rejoice that the Lord of the harvest has sent them into his vineyard;—to rejoice in being permitted to coöperate with Him in preparing and fitting them for the work;—and to feel assured that God can still glorify himself, by selecting, as his ambassador, the more humble members of his church. “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. (1 Cor. 1: 25-29.)





