

Sam: 7/10/70
Regeneration, and the Testimony of the
S P I R I T.

Being the Substance of

TWO S E R M O N S

Lately preached in the Parish Church of *St. Philip,*
Charles-Town, in SOUTH-CAROLINA.

Occasioned by some erroneous Notions of certain Men who call
themselves *Methodists.*

By ALEXANDER GARDEN, *M. A.* Rector of the
said Parish.

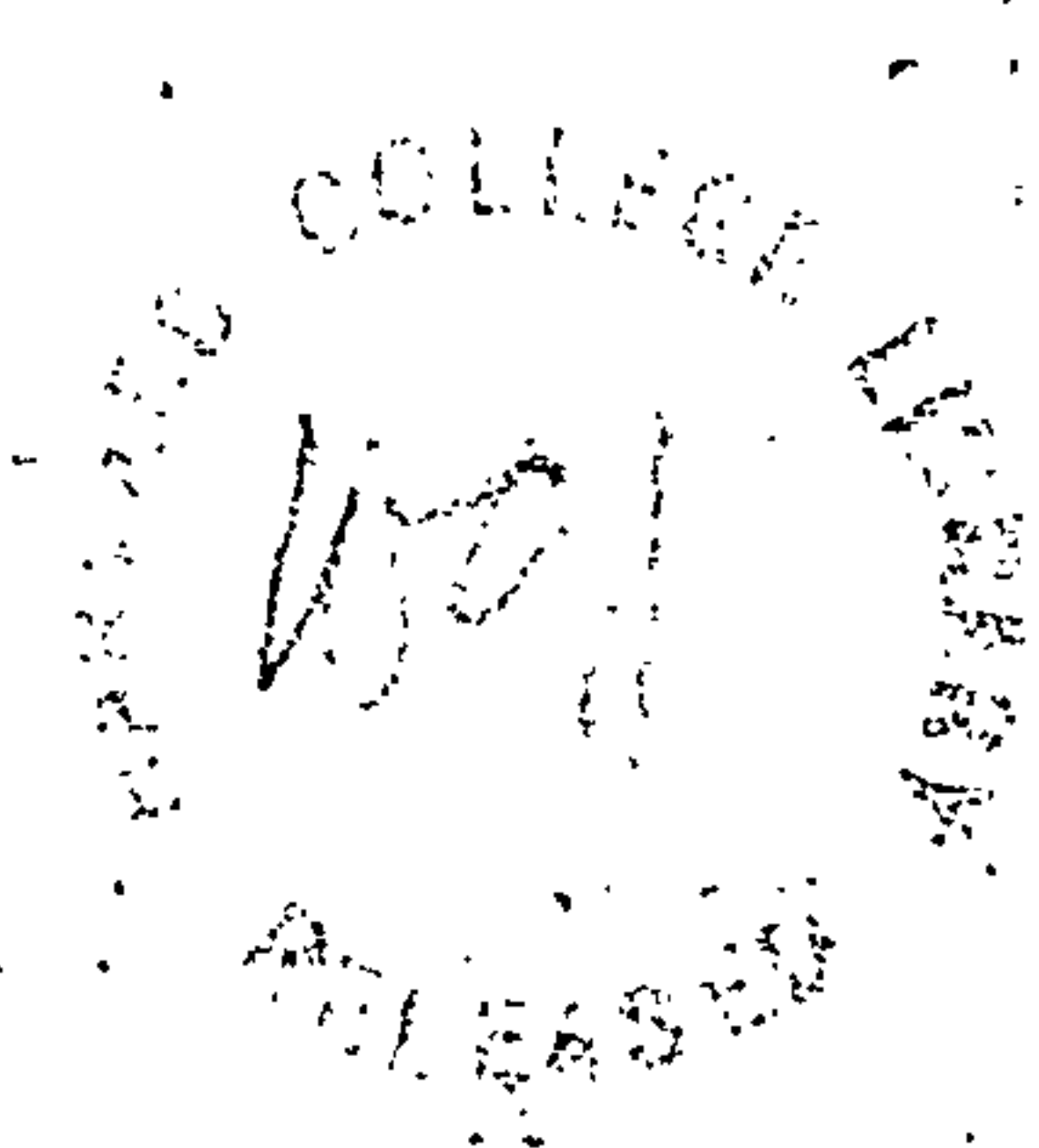


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The Mary ...
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To the Inhabitants of the Parish of St.
Philip, Charles-Town.

My dear Brethren,

THE following Pages contain the whole Substance of two short Discourses you lately heard from the Pulpit, and which I now put into your Hands from the Press, to guard you against the Puzzle and Perplexity of some crude Enthusiastick Notions, which so much prevailed about the same Period of the last Century, and are now revived and propagated by Mr. Whitefield and his Brethren Methodists. They were preached midst the Sound of that Gentleman's Voice in your Ears;—that enchanting Sound! The natural and alone Cause, which produced all the Passion and Prejudice, that prevailed 'mong some (the weaker some indeed) of you, in his Favour, against them and every thing else that opposed him; and which would equally have produced the same Effects, whether he had acted his Part in the Pulpit or on the Stage. No Proposition in Euclid more demonstrable to me, than that, not the Matter but the Manner, not the Doctrines he delivered, but the Agreeableness of the Delivery, had all the Effect upon you, and as naturally as any other Effects in Nature are produced by their proper Causes. Take away this Cause, no more Multitude after the Preacher! His Discourses will then appear what they really are, viz. a Medley of Truth and Falshood, Sense and Nonsense, served up with Pride and Virulence, and other like sawcy Ingredients. Thus, I say, you heard the Contents of the following Pages from the Pulpit, 'midst that inchanting Sound in your Ears, exciting your Passions, and foreclosing your Understandings against them. They opposed, and breathed only Persecution and Slaughter against that Angel! That Seraphim! The wondrous

wondrous WHITEFIELD! — *And therefore away with them; they must be unregenerate Words, not fit for regenerate Ears or Understandings. But Patience, my Brethren; — a little While; and your Passions subsiding, they may find Access to your Understandings, and by God's Blessing, answer the End for which they were, and now are designed.*

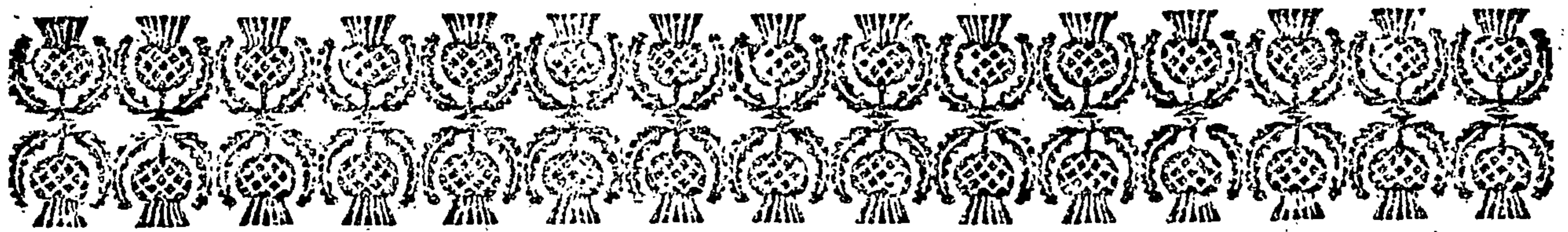
If I have acted a mistaken Part in opposing Mr. Whitefield, as I trust and am daily more and more confirmed I am not; yet sure I am, that I have acted an honest and faithful one, to the best of my Capacity and Knowledge; not as pleasing Men, but God who trieth our Hearts. Had I consulted with Flesh and Blood; — consulted my own Ease, and how to avoid that Storm of Wrath, Obloquy, and Reproach I sustained from the zealot Party amongst you; I needed only to have acquiesced in the wild Scene without Opposition, and suffered the Delusion to have taken such Course and Event as might happen. But how then could I answer either to God, my lawful Superiours in his Church, or to my own Conscience?

No, my Brethren, you are the Flock lawfully committed to my Charge, of whom the Holy Ghost has made me Overseer; and therefore am I jealous over you with a Godly Jealousie. I saw the Wolf a coming; — a vain, visionary Creature! Who would fill your Heads with Visions and new Revelations, — with speculative perplexing Notions of Justification, irresistible Grace, effectual Calling, Perseverance, Assurance, Predestination, or, absolute, eternal Decrees of Election and Reprobation; and therefore saw I it my Duty, not to flee, but to rise up in your Behalf, for your Safety and Defence.

My Hearts Desire, and Prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved. This is my Heart's Desire, this my earnest Prayer, this the End of all my Care and Labours among you, who am

*Charlestown,
Nov. 24. 1740.*

*Your most affectionate and
humble Servant in Christ,
ALEX. GARDEN.*



ROM. VIII. 16.

The Spirit itself [Gr. the same Spirit] beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD.

FORSAKING the *ordinary* Ways and Means of attaining the Knowledge of our Religious Duty, *viz.* Natural Reason and the *written* Word of God; and substituting in their Place our own *Conceits* of *immediate* Revelations, by certain *Impulses, Motions, or Impressions* of the *Holy Spirit* on our Minds, without any rational objective Evidence, or clear and sufficient Proof; — this is proper and direct *Enthusiasm*, in the bad Sense of the Word to which it is now commonly restricted. And of all *Religious* Maladies, this is the most desperate and hardest to be subdued. If the Case be *Atheism, Paganism, or Deism*, it is still within the Reach of all the Arguments and Conclusions of natural Reason, and which have been often, in such Case, practised with Success; or if the Case be *Judaism, Mahometism or Popery*, it is within the Reach of all the Arguments and Conclusions of Reason and Revelation also; — but if it be *ENTHUSIASM*, it is out of the Reach of *all these*, the alone Means in human Power, wherewith to attempt a *Remedy*. For if once Men be *settled* in this Way; when once they come to place *strong Conceit* or *Imagination* in the Chair of Reason, and to subject the *standing* Oracles of God, to the fancied *immediate* Revelations of his *Holy Spirit* to them; they straight assume the *Airs of Infallibility* upon you. If you'll hearken to *their Dictates*, it is well; but if

if not, what have *they* to do with your *carnal* Reasonings, or Senses of Scripture? For they have God himself *speaking* inwardly to their Souls; *immediately* teaching, and *infallibly* leading them into all Truth; — and this they are as sure of, as of *seeing* the Light, or *feeling* the Heat of the Sun, at Noon-day.

How high soever their *Claims* or Pretences may rise in Process of Time (as often they do, to *Prophecy* and *Working of Miracles*) yet commonly they begin at *Regeneration* or *the New-Birth*, and *the Testimony of the Spirit* with their Spirit, that they are the *Children of God*; that is, *regenerate* or *born again*. — But are not these right and justifiable Claims? Are not *Regeneration*, and this *Testimony of the Spirit*, Scripture Doctrines? Out of all Dispute they are: But then not in the *same* Sense or Meaning, as *they* conceive and insist upon them.

They conceive and insist upon *Regeneration*, to be an immediate, *instantaneous* Work of the *Holy Spirit*, wrought inwardly on the Hearts or Souls of Men, *critically* at some *certain* Time, in some *certain* Place, and on some *certain* Occasion; and by which the whole Interiour is at once, in a Moment, illuminated and reformed; the Understanding open'd, the Will over-ruled, and all the Inclinations, Appetites and Passions, quite alter'd and turn'd from Evil to Good, from being corrupt and vicious, to being pure, virtuous and holy.

Moreover they farther insist, that *before* we *feel* this great Work wrought within us, our *Faith* and *good Works* shall avail us nothing. We may ever so firmly *believe* the Gospel, and *practise* all the Religious and Moral Duties it enjoins; — we may carefully attend the *outward Ordinances*, of *publick* Worship, Preaching, and Sacraments, nor ever neglect our *Closet* and *Family* Devotions; — we may fast, and pray, and give Alms, both in publick and private; and touching the *moral* Duties of Justice

Justice and Honesty, Temperance and Chastity, or any other, behave ourselves blameless; and yet alas all to no Purpose! Except we *feel* this *specifick* Work of Grace wrought in us, we are still in the very Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity.

Finally they teach and insist, that in this *Act* or Work of *Regeneration*, we are *wholly* and *absolutely passive*, as a Clock or Watch is under the Hands of the Artificer.

This is their Doctrine of *Regeneration*. — And as to the *Testimony of the Spirit*, always accompanying this great Work, they affirm it to be, by certain *Motions, Impulses* or *Impressions*, inwardly on our *Hearts* or *Minds*, as plainly and distinctly *felt* and known, as those of the *Wind*, or other material Thing, outwardly on our *Bodies* are.

And now, if to *these Doctrines* you demur and object, that you do not apprehend them sufficiently grounded in the *Holy Scriptures*, or ever taught by the *Catholick Church* of Christ in any Age: — The Reason is, they'll answer you, because you are an *unregenerate* Person; — you have not *the Spirit of God dwelling in you*, by which alone the Things of *the Spirit* can be discerned; but you see and judge of *spiritual* Things, only by the Eyes of your *carnal* and corrupt Reason. — That this must be your Case, they'll insist, is plain; for that, as by the *Indwelling of the Spirit* in themselves, they know and *feel* the Truth of *these Doctrines*; so if you enjoyed the same Benefit with them, and which is the *common Privilege* of all true or regenerate Christians, then and in such Case, you would needs *see as they see, feel as they feel, and act as they do*. — Sure a compendious Method to stop every Mouth; shut out all the Powers of Argument and Reason; and so build up *Popery* or *Mahometism*, or any other Delusion or Imposture you please!

And

And thus having briefly stated the Doctrines of *Regeneration*, and the *Testimony of the Spirit*, according to the *Enthusiastick* Turn or System; — we proceed (according to our Measure) to state these Doctrines, as contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, and agreeably taught by the *catholick* Church of Christ in all Ages, and particularly by the Church of *England* at this Day. And this, by explaining the Words now before us, under these two distinct Inquiries.

I. What is meant by this Phrase, — *the Children of God*.

II. What is meant, by *the Spirit bearing Witness with our Spirit*.

I. What is meant by *the Children of God*.

Nothing can be more plain or obvious throughout the *inspired* Writings, than that the Things of God are therein taught by way of *Analogy*, or Allusion taken from natural Things common and known amongst Men. — Thus respecting the *Point* in Hand; (1) As among Men, we are in the most appropriate Sense, *the Children* of those, from whom we immediately derive our Being by *natural* Generation; so *the whole Family in Heaven and Earth* deriving their Being from God by *Creation*, he is thence stiled their *Father*, and they his *Sons* or *Children*. (2) As among Men, Parents *naturally* take Care of, and provide for the Support, Safety, and Happiness of their *Children*; so the Support, Preservation, and Happiness of *all Things* depending on the good Providence of God, he is thence also stiled the *Father of all*, but more *appropriately* of his *intelligent* Creatures. (3) As among Men, *Children* generally partake of the *natural* Temper and Disposition of their Parents, and as brought up under their Authority, Example, and Tuition, do generally obey,

obey, imitate, and copy after them, in their *moral* Conduct; so, in Allusion to this, they who *partake* of the *Divine Nature*, in the Frame, Temper, and Disposition of their Minds, and agreeably obey God, and always act and behave with strict Conformity to his Example and sacred Laws, are called *his Sons*, or *Children*.

Now in all these Respects were our first Parents *the Children of God*, in their State of Innocence. They were *his Children* by Creation, the immediate Workmanship of his Hands; he *formed the Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils, &c.* and the *Woman* he immediately *formed out of the Man*. They were *his Children* also, with respect to his provident *Care* for their Support and Happiness. He placed them in the Garden of *Eden*; — he gave them all the Fruits of the Garden for their Food or Sustenance, except of *one Tree* in the Midst of it; — he personally conversed with them, ordered and directed them, and constantly communicated *Lights* and *Graces* sufficient for them. Finally, they were the *Children of God*, as *Partakers of his Divine Nature*; — *after his Image in Righteousness and true Holiness*; loving him, and him alone, with most intense, pure, and ardent Love, and agreeably obeying his Voice, following his Example, and in all Things conforming to his Will, and *moral* Attributes.

Thus, I say, in all *these* Respects, were our *first* Parents the *Children of God*, in their State of Innocence; but, alas, how *tragically* was the Case altered by their *Apostacy*! For no sooner were they seduced to *disobey* the Voice of God, and transgress his positive Law, by eating the forbidden Fruit, but a certain *Degeneracy* overspread their *whole* Being, their Bodies and their Minds. By the very Act of *Disobedience*, they *ceased* being the *Children of God*, ceased his *moral* Image and Resemblance, and became the *Children of their Seducer*; whole

Voice they obeyed, whose Example they followed, and whose Works they chose to do. By *judicial* Sentence they are doomed to Labour, and Sorrow, Pains, Diseases and Death. But howsoever it were;—whether the *noxious* Quality of the Fruit *poisoned* their Constitution, and that the Sentence was only *declarative* of that natural Effect; or that the threaten'd Penalty was inflicted immediately on the Sin; however it were, I say, certain it is, that *immediately* on the Fact committed, and *before* Sentence pronounced, they perceived a great Alteration in both Parts of their Being. — Their Bodies *naked*; — a sure Token of their Mortality! Their *Minds* filled with Shame and Terror; — *they hid themselves, from the Presence of God, 'mongst the Trees of the Garden.*

Thus are our *first Parents* to be considered, as fallen into the *same* State with the *Apostate Angels*; and in which they must have remained *for ever*, had not the *infinite* Wisdom and Goodness of God interposed, and provided for their *Recovery*.

Now of these *two* Things must their *Recovery* plainly consist, *viz.* *Pardon* and *Regeneration*. For, as they were thus *fallen* from being the *Children of God*, to be *Children of Satan*; from their *Original* State of Perfection and Innocence, into a State of Sin and Degeneracy; the Case is plain, their Sin must be *pardoned*, and they must be *re-generate* or *new-born*, so as to recover their first State, and become the *Children of God* again. — And lo, the glorious *Provision* of infinite and eternal Wisdom, Love, and Goodness, for both these! The glorious *Provision*, both for the *Pardon* and *Regeneration* of the *Apostate first Parents* of Men; *viz.* the *Second Man*, Christ, *the Lord from Heaven!* Christ *the Lord their Righteousness!* — *made unto them Wisdom, and Justification, and Sanctification, and Redemption!* Christ, an *immediate* Attonement for their Sin; *Slain from the Foundation of the World*; and
an

an *immediate* Principle of *Regeneration* or new Life in them, by the Influence of his *holy Spirit* ! An *immediate* Attonement for their Sin (their Apostacy or *original Sin*) by which it was pardoned, so as not to be imputed to Death eternal ; — An *immediate* Principle of *Regeneration*, by which all the evil Effects or Consequences of it, the Degeneracy and Corruption of their Nature it had occasioned, might be gradually done away : And thus an *immediate* and ample *Provision*, by which they are actually *restored* to such a State of Pardon and Reconciliation, as *Life and Death* are once more *set before them*, once more put in their Choice and Power ; — *Life* or Salvation again secured them on the easy Terms of Faith, Repentance, and renewed Obedience ; and *no* Death or Condemnation to be inflicted, but on their *actual* refusing these Terms, their future *actual* Sins or Transgressions only ! Lo then, I say, the wondrous Work of the infinite *free Love*, *free Mercy*, and *free Grace* of God in *Christ Jesus*, to the Apostate Human World ! No sooner entered the Evil, but supervened the Remedy also. No sooner was the *first Adam* seduced by the Wiles of that old *Serpent*, the Devil and Satan, into Ruin and Misery ; but lo, the *second Adam*, the Lord from Heaven, *the Seed of the Woman* is promised and *applied* to bruise that *Serpent's* Head, and to repair all the Damage he had done !

And thus our *first* Parents restored to a State of *Pardon* and *Reconciliation*, they begat Sons and Daughters. — And here, tho' I receive no Man to doubtful *Disputations* on the Point of *Original Sin* ; (a Point fully debated, but not agreed, amongst the most learned Christians) yet cannot but recommend it to *such Men* as carry this Point so high, as to insist on all of *Adam's* Posterity being born *half Brutes*, *half Devils*, calmly to consider, that our *first Parents* had no Posterity, begat *no* Sons or Daughters, in their absolutely *fallen* or *apostate*, but in their *restored*

or *Redemption State* only. And therefore, if their *Posterity* not existing but in their Parents *Loins*, were involved, whether by *Imputation* or otherwise, in their *Original Sin*; 'tis but *Parity* of Reason that not existing but in their *Loins* 'till after their *Parents* were restored to a *Redemption State*, they must be included in the *same* Restoration also.—If the *Original Sin* or *Apostacy* of our *first Parents* was pardoned *in Christ*; in him it must be pardoned to their *Posterity* also: If *in Christ* a Principle of *Regeneration* was implanted in our *first Parents*, by his *Holy Spirit*; in their *Posterity* must the *same* Principle be implanted by the *same* Spirit also: In a Word, if *in Christ* our *first Parents*, before they begat Sons and Daughters, were restored to such a State, as their *Damnation* should wholly depend on their own *actual* Sins or Transgressions, then must the State of their *Posterity* be the *same in Christ* also.—And thus is *Christianity* indeed *as old as the Creation*.

But however our *first Parents* were *thus* restored to a State of *Pardon* and *Salvation*; yet not *so*, but their Sin was still imputed to *many* great and fore Evils; or rather many natural evil Effects still remained, which the provided Remedy was only *gradually* to reach, and *conditionally* to subdue; *viz.* *Bodies* naked; that is, subjected to many Miseries, Toils, Labours, Pains, Diseases and Death;—*Minds* depraved, weak, ignorant, and incumbered with all the Lusts and Appetites of frail and *mortal Bodies*; exciting the Passions, overbearing the Judgment, and swaying the Will and Affections in their Favour.—And in this State or Condition, they *begat Sons and Daughters* after their *own Image*; that is, of the *same* Frame, State and Condition with themselves, and to whom they derived all these temporal Evils, as Conditions of their Nature.

And this miserable Legacy entailed, their *Sons and Daughters*, alas! were not careful to diminish, but greatly enlarged,

enlarged. They found out many Inventions, and daily corrupted themselves more and more, by their actual Transgressions, so as by the Days of *Noah*, it repented God at his Heart that he had made them, and therefore sent he a Flood and swept them off the Face of the Earth, *Eight* Persons only excepted. Nor did the *Offspring* of those Persons long continue a better Behaviour. — They quickly also corrupted themselves into all sorts of Idolatry and Wickedness; so as the whole human Race (the *Jews*, by Means of constant Revelation, in some Degree excepted) soon became such as *St. Paul* describes them (*Rom. 1.*) *Worshippers of the Creature*; — *Haters of God*; — *given up to vile Affections*, — *to a reprobate Mind*; — *full of all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, &c.* And (elsewhere) as *without God in the World*; — *past Feeling*; — *dead in Trespasses and Sins*.

And this being the real State or Condition of the human World, when *Christ the Redeemer* personally appear'd in it, to take away the Sins of it, and bring it out of that *Darkness into his marvellous Light*; from that *Power of Satan unto God*; here opens a more full and clear Idea of *Regeneration*, or what is meant by *born again*; — *born of God*; — *Sons or Children of God*; — *the new Man*; — *the new Creature*, and such like figurative analogical Terms, used both by *himself* and his *Apostles*. For, Mankind having thus corrupted themselves; — thus degenerated into such surprizing Degrees of *Darkness*, as not only to become *Worshippers of the visible Host of Heaven*, nay of *Birds*, and *four-footed Beasts*, and *creeping Things*, nay of *Stocks and Stones of the Earth*; but even (the Case of our *Indian Nations*) to be without any *Deity or Divine Worship* at all; and into such Degrees of *Vice and Wickedness* as are not fit to be named. Mankind, I say, having thus corrupted themselves; **THE CHANGE** from this miserable *Pagan*, to the blessed

blessed *Gospel* State; — from *Pagan* Darkneſs, to *Gospel* Light; — from *Pagan* No-Religion, or Idolatrous Religion of *Sight*, to the Religion of *Chriſt*, a Religion of *Faith*; — from *Pagan* Pravity, evil Diſpoſitions, and Hardneſs of Heart, to *Gospel* Contrition, Repentance, and true Holineſs; — from *Pagan* Death in all Manner of *actual* Vices, Treaſures and Sins, to *Gospel* Life of Virtue, Purity, and Righteouſneſs: THIS CHANGE, I ſay, muſt be ſuch as was altogether new, and unknown to them; and of which, therefore, our *Bleſſed Lord* himſelf and his *Apoſtles* choſe to convey the Notion or *Idea*, by the Reſemblance to a natural *Birth* or *Creation*; the alone Reſemblance in Nature by which it could be beſt conveyed to the *Pagan*, natural, or carnal *Mind*. For,

THIS muſt be A CHANGE (not a *Physical*, but *moral* Change) of the WHOLE, both *Inward* and *Outward* Man. The whole *Inward Man* muſt be transformed by the *Renewing* of the Heart or *Mind*: The *Underſtanding* muſt be enlightened; the *Will*, the *Affections*, and *Inclinations* muſt be turned from their ſenſual, earthly and devilish *Byaſs*, towards the *Things* of *God*, Heavenly and Holy Things. This is indeed the grand and eſſential Change, with which that of the *outward* Man is inſeparably connected, and on which it wholly depends. For, as out of the evil *Treasure* or *Diſpoſitions* of the *Heart* proceed evil Things, *Murders*, *Adulteries*, *Fornication*, *Thefts*, *false Witneſs*, *Blasphemies*, &c. ſo out of the good *Treasure* or *Diſpoſitions* of it, proceed good Things, *Bleſſing our Enemies*, *Feeding the Hungry*, *Cloathing the Naked*, and all other ſorts of charitable, virtuous, and good Things, whether *Words* or *Actions*. Thus, I ſay, the main, eſſential, and firſt Change in the Caſe muſt be that of the *Inward* Man, the *Heart* or *Mind*; — from the evil *Treasure* of *Ignorance* and *Neglect* of *God*, to the good One of the *Knowledge* and *Love* of him; — from

from the *evil Treasure* of Pride, Self-Righteousness, Malice, Revenge, Covetousness, Sensuality, Uncleaness, &c. to the *good One* of Humility, Self-Denial, Brotherly Love, Charity, Meekness, Patience, Forgiveness, Contempt of the World, Purity, Temperance, &c. And agreeably as the *inward Man*, the *evil Treasure* of the Heart is *changed*, so will the *outward Man*, in all his Words and Actions, be necessarily *changed* also; and on that *former*, must this *latter* Change altogether depend.

Now of all this the *Pagan*, natural, or carnal Mind can conceive no immediate or direct Idea; because a Thing of which it has no Experience; because,

Chiefly a Work, not of its *natural*, but, of *Almighty Power*. I say *chiefly*. Not the *absolute, sole, or instantaneous*, but the *gradual co-operative* Work of God's *Holy Spirit*, for Mankind, *in* them, and *with* them as *moral Agents*. And this Work, in the ordinary and established Method, consists of these two Branches.

1. His standing Revelation of the *Law* and the *Gospel* promulged to the Human World, and written for their Admonition; *to open their Eyes, and bring them out of Darkness into that marvellous Light*; — for *Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*.

2. His blessed *Aids* and *Influences* (in fuller Measure conferred now under the *Gospel* Dispensation, in the *Divine Ordinance* of *Baptism*) *indwelling* or *abiding* in them; — *first*, Breathing, as 'twere, on their corrupt, stony, *dead Hearts*, a Breath of *new Life*, preparing them to receive *the good Seed of the Word*; — *then*, watering *the good Seed sown*, that it may *take Root downward, and bear Fruit upward*, may *spring* and gradually *grow up, first the Blade, then the Ear, then the full Corn in the Ear*; — in a Word, *gently Co-operating*, assisting, striving together with them, throughout the whole Course of their Lives, that they may *grow in Grace*; advance
from

from *Strength to Strength*, from lower to higher Degrees of Knowledge, of Faith, of Renovation of their Minds, of Virtue, of Righteousness and true Holiness towards that Perfection which is attainable in this present State, of becoming *the Children of God*, by Adoption, *regenerate* or *new born*.

Thus, my Brethren, the Work of *Regeneration* is not the Work of a *Moment*, a sudden *instantaneous* Work, like the *miraculous* Conversion of *St. Paul*, or the *Thief* on the Cross; but a *gradual* and *co-operative* Work of the *Holy Spirit*, joining in with our *Understandings*, and leading us on by *Reason* and *Persuasion*, from one Degree to another, of Faith, good Dispositions, Acts, and Habits of Piety. “ So that (as speaketh * a divine Au-
 “ thor) in the *Renovation* of our Natures, we cannot cer-
 “ tainly distinguish what is done by the *Spirit*, from what
 “ is done by our natural *Reason* and *Conscience* co-opera-
 “ ting with him. This indeed we must certainly know,
 “ that in this blessed Work, the Spirit is the *main* and
 “ *principal* Agent;—that, *without him we can do nothing*;
 “ — that, *he is the Author and Finisher of our Faith*;—
 “ and who *worketh in us both to will and to do of his good*
 “ *Pleasure*: But still we must no less know also, that he
 “ doth not work upon us as a *Mechanick* upon *dead Ma-*
 “ *terials*, but as on *living* and *free* Agents, that *can* and
 “ *must* co-operate with him; that he doth not renew us
 “ whether we will or no, but takes our free *Consent* and
 “ *Endeavour* along with him;— and that unless we do
 “ *concur* with him, we shall for ever *remain* and *perish*
 “ in our Sins, notwithstanding all the Aids and Graces
 “ he affords us.”

Thus, I say, is this of *Regeneration* a Work of the Holy Spirit, *in* us, and *with* us; commencing in *fuller*
 Measure

* Dr. Scot's *Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 81.

Measure *in us*, in our *Baptism*, and gradually co-operating *with us* throughout the *whole* Course of our Lives; — including *all* the Means, *all* the Steps; *all* the Degrees by which we are recovered from *Darkness* to *Light*; from *the Power of Satan* unto *God*; — including *Faith*, *Repentance* and renewed *Obedience* in all the Branches of *Christian Duty*; — and finally, including also that farther and final Refinement or *Renovation* of our Natures, by the Power and *Spirit* of God, at the *Resurrection*. For, tho' the *Gospel* of free Mercy stipulates to reward with eternal Life, *such Degree* of Regeneration as our Natures will admit of in this present State; yet as *that Degree* is below *unsinning* Perfection, and nothing below *this* can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; therefore in the *Resurrection*, all the Infirmities and Imperfections that adhered to us, shall by the Power and *Spirit* of God, be purged out and done away. Our *Bodies* shall be *spiritualized*, so as this corruptible shall put on Incorruption; — Our *Souls*, in all their Powers and Faculties, shall be farther refined and improved; and in a Word, the whole Man advanced to Perfection and Glory. And here, and only here shall terminate our *Regeneration*, in the full Sense and Latitude of the Scripture.

To the *Law* then (my Brethren) and to the *Testimony*; — search the *Scriptures*, and the agreeable *Interpretations* of the *Catholick Church* in all Ages; if they speak not after this Manner; — if they speak not according to this Doctrine we have now taught, then reject it, as only the private Opinion of a weak and fallible Man: But if they do thus accordingly speak, why then will you be amused with *dark* and *vain Words*? Why will you be carried away with so strange a *Wind of Doctrine*, as persuades to the Belief and Expectation of a certain happy *Moment*, when, by the *sole* and *specifick* Work of the *Holy Spirit*, you shall at once (as 'twere by *Magic Charm*) be *metamorphosed*,

morphosed, stript of your *old* Nature and cloathed with a *new*? Why carried away, I say, with so strange a *Wind of Doctrine* as this, which can blow only from *enthusiastick* Heads, and can serve only to scare and hurry you into *frantick* and *convulsive* Fits of *Religion*, which must terminate either in *Bedlam*, or *Deism*, or *Popery*, or at least in such a Manner as to prove hurtful to true Religion, its real Interest and Concerns?

Thus having endeavour'd to satisfy our first Enquiry, we proceed to

II. The *second*, viz. What is meant by *the Spirit bearing Witness with our Spirit*.

Few Words are used in Holy Scripture in so many various Acceptations as the Word *Spirit*; but besides the first and principal one, denoting the *third* Person of the ever blessed *Trinity*, 'tis used more especially in these three. 1st, To signify the Nature, Genius or Disposition of Persons or Things. 2^d, The Gospel in general, as containing the standing Dictates, Doctrines, or Directions of *the Spirit*. 3^d, It is put for the Fruits or Effects of it.

I. The Word *Spirit* is used to signify, *the Nature, Genius, or Disposition of Persons or Things*.

Thus when the Disciples would have called for Fire from Heaven on the *Samaritans*, in Imitation of *Elias*, Christ tells them, *they knew not what Spirit they were of*. They knew not, that they were not under the *Legal*, but *Gospel* Dispensation. A Dispensation of quite *another* Nature and Genius than that of the *Law*. Under the *Law*, they that scoffed at or insulted a *Prophet*, he had Commission to call for wild Beasts, or Fire from Heaven to destroy them. But quite the reverse under the *Gospel*. — They that revile, insult and crucify Christ, are by him prayed for, and commanded to be taught, and if possible brought to *Repentance*. *He came not to destroy Mens Lives,*

Lives, but to save them. — And agreeably thus also the *Apostle*, in this Chapter, comparing the *Legal* and *Gospel* Dispensations, calls the one the *Spirit of Bondage*, and the other of *Adoption*. He calls the *Law* the *Spirit of Bondage*, it being of such an austere *Masterly* Nature or Genius, as obliging all under it, to the hard Performances of *Circumcision*, and many other outward Rites and carnal Ordinances, which were not of a *moral* Nature, or of any intrinsick Worth or Goodness; and obliging to these, on severe Pains and Penalties; — the very Condition of Bond-Servants, — do this or be beaten; — a *Yoke* which could scarce be born. But the *Gospel* he calls the *Spirit of Adoption*, as being of a Nature and Genius quite different, gentle and Fatherly; — drawing us with the *Cords of a Man*, the Bands of Love and Affection; not binding upon us the heavy Burdens of positive or arbitrary Commands, delivered with the Terrors of Mount *Sinai*, Thundrings and Lightnings, Blackness, Darkeness, Tempest, and the Noise of a Trumpet; but affording us *Fatherly* Counsels or Admonitions, by the Mouth of the meek and humble *Jesus*, — rather advising than commanding us such Things as we cannot but see and approve as agreeable to our rational Nature, and necessary towards our own Well-being and Happiness. And moreover promising us *Aid* and Assistance, in performing them, together with the Reward of eternal Life on the Performance. — And in *this* Sense of the Word, ought the *Apostle* to be understood throughout this Chapter, and particularly in the *Text*, thus accordingly paraphrased by the learned *Hammond*. — “ And this Manner of God’s
“ Dealing with us under the Gospel, is a sure Evidence
“ to our Consciences on God’s Part, if our filial Obedi-
“ ence be a like Evidence on ours, that we are *more* than
“ Servants, the highest that legal Obedience could pre-
“ tend to, even *Sons of God.*” But,

2d. The Word *Spirit* is used to denote the *Gospel* in general, as containing the standing Dictates, Doctrines and Declarations of the *Spirit*. Thus the Phrases, *walking* in the Spirit, *abiding* in the Spirit, *living* by the Spirit, *being led* by the Spirit, &c. is *walking*, *abiding*, *living*, *being led* in or by the *Gospel*, the standing Rules and Directions of the *Spirit*. — And agreeably thus *witnesseth* the Spirit with our Spirit, whether we be the Children of God; viz. by the *Testimony* of the standing Laws of the *Gospel*, on the one Hand, and that of *our own Consciences*, whether we have obeyed or disobeyed them, on the other. — If on a fair and impartial *Comparing* our Lives and Conversations, with the Laws and Rules of the *Gospel*, our Conscience *bear Witness* of the Agreement, and that, with St. Paul, *in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity*, we have *had our Conversation in the World*; — if thus, I say, on the *Comparison*, our Conscience testifies a full Agreement of our Lives with the Laws and Rules of the *Gospel*, the *Gospel* *testifies* and declares, that we are *the Children of God*: But if on such *Comparing*, our Conscience *testifies* the contrary, then testifies and declares the *Gospel*, that we are *not so*. — But whereas the Conformity or Agreement of our Behaviour to the Rules of the *Gospel*; the Dispositions of the Heart as well as the Works of the Hands; must derive *chiefly* from the Influences, Aid, Assistance, or Co-operation of God's *Holy Spirit*; therefore

3d. The Word *Spirit* is used to signify *the Fruits and Effects* of it. Thus 'tis used in all those Passages, in which the *Holy Spirit* is said to be given *in Measure*, or *without Measure*; to be *poured out* on Men; to be *quenched*, and the like: All which evidently relate, not to the *Person* of the *Holy Ghost*, but to *his Fruits and Effects* only. — Now inclusive of both the two last Senses, consists the *Testimony of the Spirit* here asserted in the *Text*; and which

which renders it compleat, absolute, and certain ; and besides which none more so, ever was given, or shall be given Mankind to the End of the World : *wiz. the Fruits and Effects* of the Spirit, Faith, Repentance, good Dispositions of the Heart, and good Works of the Hands ; compared with, and certified by the Gospel. For as the Dispositions of our Hearts, and Works of our Hands, can only appear to be the *Fruits of the Spirit*, as they appear agreeable to the Laws and Rules of the Gospel ; so their appearing thus agreeable, certifies, that they are the genuine *Fruits of the Spirit*.

This, my Brethren ; *this* I say, ever was, now is, and ever will be, the most compleat, sure, and certain *Testimony of the Spirit*, that Men can have, *with their Spirits*, that they are the *Children of God*. Such it ever was, even to the *Apostles* themselves. For neither were the *Gifts of Inspiration and Miracles*, without the other *Fruits of the Spirit* in their Lives and Conversations, sufficient Evidence, that they were the Children of God ; — *but*, saith St. Paul, *I keep under my Body*, (that is, labour, thro' Grace, to subdue my carnal Lufts and Appetites) *lest when I have preached to others* (notwithstanding all my Inspiration and Miracles) *I myself should be a Cast-away*.

And as this is the most perfect, sure and certain *Testimony of the Spirit*, so there is no Dispute, but every one must be CONSCIOUS, whether, or how far he has, or has not *this Testimony*. And as this *Consciousness* may in some Sense be called FEELINGS ; let the *Methodists* honestly say ; — either they mean something more, by their boasted FEELINGS, than this *Consciousness*, or they do not : If they mean some thing more, then without rational objective Evidence, 'tis but the constitutional Workings of their own passions ; — if they do not, then is all their affected Cant about their FEELINGS, especially running them into Cloud and Darkness, but
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mere *designed* Trick or Artifice, wherewith to amuse the Populace, and serve some dark Ends; because these FEELINGS of *Conscience*, are not only admitted, but easily explained and understood by *every* Christian. For,

Must I not *feel* (be conscious) how my *Heart stands disposed* or inclined in all the Branches of my *Christian Duty*, whether *towards God*, my *Neighbour*, or *myself*; — Must I not *feel* (be conscious) whether, *towards God* I stand *disposed* to believe in him, to love him with all my Heart, with all my Mind, with all my Strength; and in Consequence of *this Faith and Love*, to draw near unto him with my willing *Tribute* of Homage, Praise, and Thanksgiving, at *all Times*, and in *all* the Methods of *Worship* and Devotion; — to put my whole Trust and Confidence in him, as my good and bountiful *Father*, tender and compassionate *Redeemer*, and gracious *Sanctifier*; — to honour him in all Things, his Name, his Word, his Ordinances; — and in Sum, to perform all acceptable Service to him?

Towards my Neighbour; — Must I not *feel*, (be conscious) whether I'm *disposed in my Heart*, to love him as myself, and to do unto him, as I would, he should do unto me; — not to injure, hurt, or grieve him in *Word* or *Deed*; — have no evil Speaking, Lying, or Slandering on my *Tongue*, no Fraud, Injustice, or Oppression in my *Hands*, against him; — but on the Reverse, to shew him all Acts of Kindness, good Nature, Charity and Beneficence in my Power, whether respecting his *Soul*, his *Body*, *Goods*, or *Name*.

Towards myself; — must I not *feel* (be conscious) whether I'm *disposed in my Heart*, to Sobriety, Temperance and Chastity; — to keep under my *Body*, and bring it into Subjection; subdue its inordinate Lusts and Appetites, and refrain from all Excess; — from Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness, and all Manner of Whoredom and Uncleaness? Must

Must I not *feel* (be conscious of) I say, all these or like *good Dispositions* of my *Heart*? And if so, how much more when brought forth into *Action*?

How much more must I *feel*, when I *actually* do *believe* in God, and *love* him with all my *Heart*, and all my *Soul*; when I *actually* do *draw near unto him whom* thus *my Soul loveth*, and *seek his Face continually*, in all the *Methods of Worship and Devotion*;—when I *do* with *Delight come into his Gates with Thanksgiving*, and *into his Courts with Praise*; am *thankful unto him*, and *speak good of his Name*;—when my *Closet Retirements* are frequent, and always sweet and refreshing;—when I prefer his *Law* to all other *Studies*, and agreeably *meditate on it Day and Night*; and in a *Word*, when his *Honour and Glory* is the *chief End and Aim* of all my *Thoughts, Labours and Pursuits*? Thus also,

How much more must I *feel* (be conscious) when I *do* *actually love my Neighbour as myself*, doing unto him, as I would he shou'd do unto me;—when I have no evil *Speaking, Lying, or Slander* on my *Tongue*; no *Acts of Fraud, Injury, or Oppression* in my *Hands*, against him; but on the contrary, shew him all *Acts of Brotherly Kindness, Charity and Beneficence*;—when ignorant, I *instruct* him;—when in *sinful Courses*, I *rebuke and admonish* him;—when hungry, I *give him Meat*;—when thirsty, I *give him Drink*;—when naked, I *cloath* him;—when a *Stranger*, I *take him in*;—when sick or in *Prison*, I *visit* or *come unto him*;—in a *Word*, when I have *ministred* to his *Wants or Necessities*, as *Occasions offer'd*, and to the best of my *Power*?

Finally, how much more must I *feel* (be conscious) when I *do* *actually keep under my Body*, and *restrain* all its *inordinate Lusts and Appetites*;—when I *abstain* from all *carnal Excesses*; from *Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness*, and all sorts of *Lasciviousness*

ness and Uncleanneſs; and when in all Things I am ſober, chaſt and temperate in my Life and Converſation?

Thus my Brethren, muſt not all of us *feel* or be *conſcious* of theſe and the like good *Diſpoſitions* of our *Hearts*, and *Works* of our *Hands*; and moreover all the *Joy*, *Peace*, and *Comforts* that naturally reſult from theſe; — O *what Peace* have they that love thy *Law*! — My *Rejoicing* is this, ſaith St. Paul, *even the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience*. And as we muſt all neceſſarily *feel* or be *conſcious* of theſe, ſo let us know aſſuredly, that they are not the *Produce* of *Fleſh* and *Blood*, but of *the Spirit* of our Heavenly Father, *aiding*, *aſſiſting* and *co-operating* with us; and therefore his ſure and certain *Teſtimony*, *that we are the Children of God*.

Now, if *theſe Fruits* and *Effects* be the alone certain *ordinary Teſtimony of the Spirit*; — and our *Feelings* or *Conſciouſneſs* of theſe (*viz.* the good *Diſpoſitions* of our *Hearts*, and agreeable *Conduct* of our *Lives*, together with the *Joy*, *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of *Mind*, thence naturally ariſing) be the only true *Feelings* of his *ordinary Influences* or *Operations*; — if theſe Things be ſo, as according to the *Scriptures*, they manifeſtly are; then what can our *modern Teachers* mean, when they talk of *Impulſes*, *Motions* and *Impreſſions*, liken'd to *Pulſations of an Artery*, to *hot Water*, or the *Motions of a Fœtus in the Womb*? If they mean the *ſame* as we have now taught, then why will they talk in another, or rather in an *unknown Tongue*? This can but puzzle and amuſe, and therefore can be of no good Deſign. If their *Meaning* be *different*, it can be known, I dare ſay, only by themſelves; nor otherwiſe by themſelves (as they offer no ſort of rational *Proof* or *Evidence*) than as Men know the *Meaning* of their own *Fancies*, or the *Reveries* of a diſordered *Imagination*. Would they be content quietly to enjoy their own *Feelings*, no one would diſturb them in the

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Enjoyment; — but if they will be *running* about the World with their *Feelings*, and telling us, that, tho' they cannot explain or make us conceive *them*, we must yet have the *same* Feelings in *ourselves*, or we *cannot be saved*; — and if to Objections made to this, or any other *their* Doctrines, they will only reply, that their *Motto* is, *Answer him not a Word*; — this I conceive to be not only *amusing* but *Insulting* of Mankind, instead of *Teaching* them.

What *Opinions* soever Men may have to offer, which they conceive of *Importance* in Matters of *Religion*; if they will offer them with *common* Modesty, (not to say *Christian* Humility) submit them to a fair *Trial* or *Examination*, — and according to the *Apostle's* Rule, be ready always to render the *Reasons* of them with *Meekness* and *Fear*; they not only ought, but will always be heard and considered by all sober and serious *Christians*. But if instead of this, they will be throwing out their *Opinions* with *Sybilline* Rage and Fury, — *running a Muck* (it I may so speak) on Mankind with them, and cramming them down their Throats with *Anathema's*, *Hell* and *Damnation* at the End of them, on all that will not *impliciteley* receive them; in this Case, I say, be we sure, that such are either Men of *enthusiastick-Heads* or *Emissaries* of Rome. This were easy to demonstrate, but I chuse to detain you no longer, than to expostulate a few Things concerning your tumultuous *Assemblies*, * Preacher and Doctrines.

What went you out, my Brethren, to see, or rather to hear? Any *new* Gospel, or Message from Heaven? Why, no? but the *old* one explained and taught in a *new* and *better* Manner. But what are the Doctrines you have

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heard thus taught and explained? Why, the Doctrines of *Regeneration?* — of the *Gift of the Holy Ghost*, or the *Spirit within?* — and of *Justification by Faith only*.

As to the Doctrine of *Regeneration* you have now heard it, as contained in the *Scriptures*, in the various Phrases, *born anew*; — *born of God*; — *Sons or Children of God*; — *the new Man*; — *a new Creature*, &c. and taught by the *Christian Church* in all Ages; *viz.* that 'tis a Work of the *Holy Spirit*, commencing more especially in our *Baptism*, or entering into the *Gospel Covenant*, (by which *Infants* are regenerate and fitted for the *Kingdom of Heaven*) and thence *co-operating* with us, 'till we arrive at *the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*. — Thus, I say, you have heard *this Doctrine* now taught and explained; but in another or different, tho' *not new Manner*, you have heard it from your famous *Preacher*. In another and different Manner I say, tho' *not new*, but the *same* with *other modern Enthusiasts*, you have heard it taught by him, *viz.* not as a Work of the *Holy Spirit*, regenerating *Infants* in their *Baptism*, nor as *co-operating*, aiding, or assisting only in the future Course of our *Christian Warfare*: — But as an *absolute, immediate, instantaneous Work*, — darted in upon us like a *Flash of Lightning*, as upon *St. Paul*; enlightening the *Understanding*, influencing the *Will*, the *Affections* and *Inclinations*, and in a *Word*, changing the *whole Man* into a *new Creature*, in the twinkling of an *Eye*, or a *Moment of Time*. — You have heard this *Doctrine* vehemently asserted; but how have you heard it *proved* or maintained? You have been amused with the *miraculous Conversions* of *St. Paul*, *Zaccheus*, the *Taylor*, and the *Penitent Thief*; but what are they to the Purpose? Can any good Inference be drawn from those *miraculous Cases*, to what must be the *ordinary and common Case of all Christians*? No, my Brethren, such

such Inference would be idle and absurd: Nor may *Christians* now-a-days conclude, that because *St. Paul* or any others, were converted in a *miraculous* or extraordinary Manner, that therefore that of their own Conversion also must be the same; no more than *ordinary* Ministers of the Church may conclude, that because the *Apostles* were endued with the *Gift of Tongues*, they must therefore be endued with the same also. — But what farther Proofs or Arguments were offered by your *Preacher*, in support of this Doctrine? Why, Proofs and Arguments are all *carnal* Things: — He is *sure* the Doctrine is true, he *knows* it, he *feels* it, and they are all *damned* who will not *believe* it; and if these will not do, you may go look for *Proofs* and *Arguments* where you can find them; — He is a *special* Messenger *sent forth* from God, and therefore not bound to give Proofs or Reasons of his Message.

Moreover you have farther heard, that in this Work of *Regeneration* we are *intirely* passive, as meer *Machines* under the Hand of the Maker: Can do nothing in it or towards it, more or less, of any Sort or Degree whatsoever. — Now in this Case, suppose one of you go to this *Gentleman*, and ask him; “ Sir, *What must I do to be saved?* I find myself an *unregenerate* Person; — “ without *Regeneration* I cannot be saved; what then in “ such Case must I do to be saved?” Must he not answer, “ That the Question was impertinent, for that “ he had already taught you, that you *can do nothing* “ at all; — nothing that can avail towards the Work “ of your *Regeneration*, without which you cannot be “ saved?” Should he bid you, “ fast and pray, or read “ the Scriptures, or frequent the Ordinances of God, or “ give Alms, &c.” all these *are Works*; and therefore bid-

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ding you *do* these as of any Avail, would be an express *Contradiction* to his Doctrine.

Beware, my Brethren, this is an arrant *Jumble* of *Contradiction* and *Confusion*, either calculated by a *Romish* EMISSARY, to distract and confound weak Minds; or the Produce of a warm, frantick, *Enthusiastick* Brain.

We know *Rome* has her *Seed* and *Harvest* Missionaries. Her *Seedsmen* sow INFIDELITY and ENTHUSIASM, to distress and unsettle weak Minds, often to *Distraction*; and then appear the *Harvest Men*; to *heal* their Wounds, and *gather* them home into the *Bosom* of their *Mother*, from whom they had gone astray.

— But to judge most favourably in the present Case, and that the *Preacher* is honest and in earnest, he's certainly got into the Wilds of *Enthusiasm*. Will he *defend* his Doctrines? No. — Will he *reason* with you, or rationally *answer* your Objections? No. How then? Why, *he has the Spirit*, and that must *answer* all Objections. — If a Man comes to me and tells me, “ That he is come from God to assure me, that *next Friday* I shall appear at the Bar of Christ ;” — if he will raise any one from the Dead, or give Sight to one that was born blind, I will believe him : But if on my demanding the *Credentials* of his Mission, he should only tell me of certain *inward Motions, Impulses, or Feelings* he had of the Spirit, I shou'd neglect the Message, and *pity* the Man. Alas! — My Brethren, we have had enough of such *Pretenders* and *Pretensions* to the Spirit! — Look back to the *Oliverian* Days, — what Ruin and Desolation *such Pretenders* brought upon the Kingdom! How did they swarm throughout the Nation! A *Parliament*; — even an *Army* all Saints, Preachers, spiritual and regenerate Men! And yet alas, how were they *divided* and *subdivided* by the Spirit into a 1000 Sects, Sorts and Divisions, 'till nothing but

but *Confusion* as a Cloud covered the whole Face of the Land.

Beware therefore, my Brethren, of such Pretensions ; — of the old Story over again ! How *intoxicating*, how *fascinating* Things are an agreeable *Voice* and *Manner* of speaking ? The only Excellencies of this *Preacher*. Take these away ; — put his Discourses into the Mouth of an *ordinary* Speaker, I dare say, no one would step out of his Way to hear them.

In this Particular therefore, my Brethren, be on your Guard. Suffer not your *Passions to be moved*, but as your *Minds are instructed* ; And run not away with the *agreeable Voice* of the *Preacher* in your Ears, for the *Soundness* of his *Doctrines* in your Understandings.

And the God of all Grace, who hath called us to his eternal Glory by Jesus Christ, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To whom be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.



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