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ARTICLE I.

ECCLESIASTICAL DISCOVERIES OF THE PURITANS.

By REV. GEO. B. CHEEVER, D. D., New York.

1. *A History of the Work of Redemption, including a Church History in a method entirely new.* By JONATHAN EDWARDS, Pastor of a Church in Northampton.
2. *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with elucidations.* By THOMAS CARLYLE. New York. Wiley & Putnam.
3. *The Protector: A Vindication.* By J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE. New York. Robert Carter.
4. *Neal's History of the Puritans.* Edited by JOHN O. CHOULES, A. M. New York. Harper & Brothers.

MEN seeking God earnestly for themselves, always find him for others. This is the case both with individuals and nations. This is one reason why our blessed Lord, when his disciples returned from their novel and difficult mission with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name, simply and solemnly answered, after assuring them that Satan's power was indeed broken, Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Take heed to your own holiness and salvation, for thus only can you conquer Satan, by conquering yourselves. One of our elder poets has said that

"Only he who knows
Himself, knows more."

It may be added, that only he who *saves* himself, *saves* more. God never saves one alone, but others; and the fountain of power is through individual experience, individual baptism of the soul in fire. A man like Henry Martyn, Brainard, Edwards, Payson,

ARTICLE II.

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.

By REV. ERSKINE MASON, D. D., New York.

WHEN the Son of God was about to leave the world, he consoled his disciples, in view of his departure, with the promise of "the Comforter;" by his agency, was the end of the Redeemer's mission to be secured, His kingdom built up in the world, and the expectations He had raised in the minds of His followers, to be fulfilled. Upon this simple "promise of the Comforter" therefore, hang the hopes of a fallen world, and of every member of our lost and ruined family. If this world is ever to be delivered from the curse, and robed again in its original glory; if any being upon earth is to be renewed in the temper of his mind, and made an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, it must be through the making good of these words of Jesus Christ. Indeed the whole effect of the gospel, all the results, which are to satisfy a Redeemer's soul in view of its bitter and agonizing travail, are wrapped up in this promise of the Spirit. His is an agency therefore of vast moment and intense interest. Second to none in importance, it should be second to none in the esteem which we yield it, and in the study which we give it; and though our minds may dwell upon the wondrous manifestation of "God made flesh," upon the condescension and magnitude of his love, in clothing himself with humanity, and on our account going to the death of the cross, yet it is this promised agency which makes this manifestation appear wondrous, and brings home this love with power to the spirit. We admit the absolute necessity of the work of atonement; but we claim a necessity equally absolute, for the work of redemption. If it is true, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," it is no less true that "except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The best method perhaps of arriving at the meaning of the promise, and the nature of the agency it respects, is to turn our attention to some scenes which the Bible represents as proving the fulfilment of the promise, and to some facts which are admitted to be the results of the agency in question.

We go directly to the occurrences of the day of Pentecost. Since the departure of the Savior, the disciples had been in seclusion, remaining in obedience to the command of their master, at Jerusalem, until this promise was fulfilled, and they were endued with power from on high. It is not denied that then and there a

wondrous influence descended and rested upon them. The apostles became new men—not new in their physical endowments, or wonder-working powers, but new in their views, feelings, modes and ends of action. The day of Pentecost was indeed signalized by the exercise of a miraculous agency; nobody doubts that the scenes then enacted betokened superhuman influence; nor will any undertake to explain the results then brought about, upon ordinary principles, unless indeed, they wish to put themselves in the same category with some would-be philosophers then and there present, who, baffled in their efforts at explanation, and yet desirous of concealing their ignorance, came to the sage conclusion, that the gift of tongues was nothing but the product of intoxicating drink. No! there were superhuman endowments here. It was not in an ordinary way, that the apostles became instantly familiar with almost every language upon earth, so that the assembled thousands who had come up from different quarters of the world, could hear from their lips, each in his own language, the wonderful works of God. It was not by natural, but by superhuman means, that they could arrest disease, cast out devils, and raise the dead; God was working with them “by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will.”

It is no part of our design to underrate these endowments, or to consider them as of small moment, in the circumstances, or in view of the end for which they were given. They were essential at that time, as the crowning evidence of the Redeemer's mission, as proving that his work was finished, and that he had ascended to his throne, in accordance with his own declaration. They were essential to authenticate the apostles' mission, as the miracle-working power was essential to authenticate the claims of Jesus Christ himself. But then there was nothing new here. The change which was wrought upon the primitive disciples by the power of the Holy Ghost, does not consist solely in imparting to them miraculous gifts—these had in a measure long since been bestowed upon them by Jesus Christ, and we are told that they returned from their exercise, expressing to the Master their astonishment at the wonderful powers which they wielded; and though unquestionably they were now endowed with miraculous gifts, these did not constitute that peculiarity of the office-work of the Spirit, to which the Savior specially referred, when He promised to His disciples the Comforter to “guide them into all truth,” to “take of the things which were His and show them unto them.”

We cannot look at this scene with any degree of distinctness, without perceiving that the apostles were the subjects of a wondrous change. Their previous history up to the present moment, shows them to have been very circumscribed and earthly in their

views—men hankering after temporal dominion, to whose minds the grand idea of expiation, through the agony and passion of their Master, had been but faintly and feebly presented. Though they had been long with the Savior, had shared his confidence and enjoyed his instructions, they seem hardly to have grasped the first elements of spiritual truth; but now there seems to have been made to them a revelation of the hidden mysteries of redemption, and they appeared like men standing in the midst of a world which was new unto them, and acting in view of truths which before they had not apprehended. In the apostle Peter we discover indeed, the same constitutional energy which marked his previous history; but we cannot discover the lineaments of the man, who but a short time previous, ridiculed the idea of the death of his Master, as a thing impossible; nor among his compeers, as they exhibit the truth with a peculiar unction, and fervor, and boldness, can we find traces of the men, who but a few days since were bargaining for the chief places in Christ's coming kingdom, and striving among themselves who should be greatest. Nor is there any resemblance between those who now preach so openly Christ and the resurrection, and those who but a few months before, when the Savior was communing with them upon this very point, "kept his saying within themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean."

Nor was the change to which we refer as evidence of the fulfilment of the Savior's promise, and as giving us an insight into the nature of the agency of the promised Comforter, confined to the minds of the apostles. As we read, we discover that the Jews themselves who had rejected Christ, and whose hands might have been still reeking with his blood, were brought through the simple preaching of Jesus as the anointed of God, to perceive the atrocity of their crime, and to humble themselves in view of it, and under the instructions of the apostles, to receive as their master, one whom they had just treated as an impostor, and to identify their character, their interests and fortune, with a cause which they had given but a short time since, all their influence to crush.

These then are the naked facts upon this subject, presented to us upon the sacred page, as the evidence that the Holy Spirit has descended in accordance with the Redeemer's promise; and now we take these facts and endeavor to analyse them, in order to ascertain what light, if any, they throw upon that wondrous agency, of which they are undeniably the fruit. It is evident then, that there was no change wrought in the mental constitution or physical temperament either of the apostles, or their hearers. In every thing which goes to make up man as man, they were, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, precisely what they were before—no new facts were brought to their knowledge,

to work in them these wondrous changes. The communications of the apostles, after they were endued with power from on high, do not go one whit beyond the truths which our Savior had repeatedly conveyed to them in his instructions; while the fact which convulsed the minds of their hearers, was a fact with which they were perfectly familiar, and about which their own agency perhaps might have been concerned.

If the change under consideration, then, consisted not in new mental power to perceive truths, nor yet in the perception of any new truths, it must have consisted in new views of truths already known, and the effect of these new views upon the feelings of the heart, and the purposes of the life. We need not stop here to show what wonderful effects are often produced upon human character, what changes are wrought, not simply in the feelings and course of individuals, but in the whole aspect of society, simply by means of a fact with which every one is familiar, seen in a new light, and in relations never before supposed to belong to it. The disciples had been the constant attendants of their Master, but they had looked at every thing they learned, through the medium of their prejudices. They were carnal in their views; they knew their Master was about to establish a kingdom, and in that kingdom all their interests and hopes were identified, but it was a temporal kingdom which they regarded, and their views, their sorrows, their joys, their fears, their hopes, were earthly and sensual. But it was not so with them after the day of Pentecost. Then they appeared to understand perfectly the Master's language, "my kingdom is not of this world." They became spiritual men in their apprehensions. They saw their Master's object distinctly, and the means by which it was to be compassed. Things unseen by carnal minds, became realities to their view; and while a new world burst upon their vision, they had new elements and ends of action, moved under new impulses, and had new sources of hope and fear, of joy and of sorrow. In short, the men who before were moulded and moved exclusively by "things seen and temporal," now came under the mighty power of "things unseen and eternal."

The point which seems established from this analysis of Pentecostal scenes, is, that the office-work of the promised Comforter consists in giving new and spiritual views of truths already revealed, and in bringing the heart and life under their controlling influence; and what was needed *then* to secure these views and their results is no less needed now. We must all pass through a process analogous to that which marked the experience of the first apostles and their hearers—a process of taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto the soul, which can be originated, carried on and consummated only by the power of the Holy Ghost. We have often looked with astonishment at the fact,

that men who enjoyed the personal instructions of the Son of God, and lived upon such terms of familiarity with Him as did the primitive disciples, should yet seem unable to grasp the first elements of spiritual truth, and need a new influence from on high, to clarify their beclouded, and correct their erroneous views. And yet we, with the same instructions which they enjoyed, with the superadded advantages growing out of their communications, after they were enlightened, need as much this wondrous, heavenly, spiritual teaching, in order to understand and feel the power of well known truth, as did the apostles themselves, before the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It is a startling truth, a painful, because a humiliating truth, one which should put down every thing like the pride of human reason, and show man his absolute dependence upon God, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It is a surprising fact, going to illustrate that peculiarity of the natural mind, out of which springs the necessity of this spiritual influence of which we have been speaking, that there seems to be very little, if any, apprehension of the truths, and very little, if any, importance attached to the facts which are spread out upon the pages of God's revelation. Incidents or statements, however plain or important, when connected with religion, seem incomprehensible and devoid of interest—incidents and statements, precisely analogous to those which in other connexions are perfectly intelligible and full of wonder. The story of the Roman youth, who decided the fate of his country by venturing into single combat—and of the intrepid Greek, who went out on an expedition to steal the golden fleece from the guardianship of a sleepless dragon, furnish topics which never weary the attention, nor exhaust the interest of the natural mind; but the doings of God's people, whose confidence enabled them to subdue kingdoms, are weak and insipid; and even such exploits as those of the stripling David, are without their interest, simply it would seem, because faith sinewed his arm. The valor of piety has no charms, and achievements, however wonderful, lose their romance, if the hand of God is seen to be in any way connected with them. Surpassing as the spiritual does the natural, in all that is wonderful and attractive, yet while the former is perfectly intelligible and pleasing to every one, the latter requires the teaching of the Spirit of God to bring it home to the comprehension of any one, and invest it with interest to his mind.

There is, we all know, sensitiveness in the human spirit to the tale of philanthropy. We enshrine in our hearts the name of one, whose friendship has led him to die for another, and if that other were an enemy, whose misery alone excited compassion, no

words could express, no time could exhaust our admiration of, such disinterestedness.

And yet there is no conduct in human history which will bear a comparison with that of Christ, when he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." No one believes that the deed was ever yet done upon earth, which at all approximated the sacrifice of the Son of God ; still " He is as a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness, and having no beauty that men should desire Him ;" and the spirits which assume every form of high-wrought excitement, when you speak of human generosity, and earthly daring, are unmoved and untouched when the theme of discourse is the Redeemer's philanthropy, His amazing condescension, His unmeasured loving-kindness.

And the reason of the fact is as plain as the fact itself. The things of the Bible have no worldly glory about them. The theme of redemption gathers all its magnificence and power from the realities of a spiritual world ; and while man is carnal in his feelings, sees nothing, understands nothing, feels nothing, but what appeals to the desires and appetites of his carnal nature ; while these appetites and desires constitute the medium through which he looks at every thing, the standard by which he measures every thing, he can see nothing which must be spiritually discerned, and feel the value of nothing which cannot be measured by his standard of judgment.

You may place a man amid the mountain gorges of the Alps, but if the dense mists of the morning hang over the hill tops, he can neither see nor wonder at the mighty battlements which apparently threaten to overwhelm him ; but when the sun makes his way onward to the meridian, and dispels those mists which obstruct the view, then he finds himself at once girt round with prodigy, and looks, and wonders, and is impressed and moulded by the scene. The page of Scripture, which keeps the chronicles of the spiritual world, is crowded with the wonderful. It is made up of what is most deeply interesting and overwhelming to man as a spiritual being, and hastening on to a spiritual destiny ; but there are resting upon the whole, the mists of carnal passion, and earthly prejudices, and worldly aspirations, which must all be scattered, ere man can see, apprehend, and feel them. And it is at this point precisely, that the office-work of the Spirit of God comes in, as He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the soul.

Now we do not undertake to say, how it is precisely that the Spirit acts, or what precisely He does, when He exerts His enlightening and converting agency. But this much we do know, that whenever man becomes truly conscious that he is more than a creature of flesh ; that there is within him an undying spirit, which, in its roamings among unseen things, and its pantings after immor-

tality, shows that it sustains other than earthly relations, and is destined to another, and a nobler, than any earthly end, then the Bible becomes a new book, and its disclosures assume an aspect of wonderfulness and an interest they never had before.

The change cannot be surprising in view of analogous changes which are continually occurring among men. It is by no means an uncommon thing for a man to be arrested in a career of sensuality and crime, and to put on new forms of character, and exhibits a spirit heaven-wide of that which before belonged to him. It has resulted mainly from the perceived inconsistency between the course he has been pursuing, and the relations he sustains, and the end for which he is destined; and you can understand how the apprehension of these relations, and of this end, to which formerly he was completely blinded, throws a new aspect over every thing, causes him to see things he never saw before, and brings him under influences to which he had been previously a stranger. It has been perhaps, an awakened sense of duty, or some influence which has laid a spell upon his master passion, so that he has been brought to think; and as he has thought, he has felt what he is, what he should be, what he might be, and there has been the commencement of a new and a better life. Somewhat analogous to this case is that of the subject of the office-work of the Holy Ghost. As it is with the wind which bloweth where it listeth, of the action of which we are informed only by its effects, so with the Spirit of God. His modes are various, His means are multiform. Sometimes conscience is awakened, and the first dawns of light are seen in a sense of danger and of guilt; sometimes there is a gentle whisper to the soul in solitude; sometimes there is a peculiar power coming from the word of God in the Sabbath assembly. Sometimes, there is an effective sense of the vanity of the world, learnt from frequent disappointments, and the felt necessity of something better than an earthly portion. The mode is immaterial, the effect is the thing to be considered, and that effect in the first instance is found in destroying, or at least holding spell-bound, some controlling earthly passion or carnal desire, so that the mind sees things as they are, life wears its own serious hue, the relations of the spirit stand out in their importance to view, and the testimonies of the Bible bearing upon these relations, all have a new aspect, and bring home truths, which often as they had been heard by the hearing of the ear, were never yet apprehended by the mind. The influence of the Holy Ghost as a spirit of light, is not in itself a mysterious influence, however inexplicable it may be in the mode of its action. Its effects demonstrate its reality, as much as the results of the hurricane demonstrate the reality of the wind, though concerning it we can tell neither "whence it cometh nor whither it goeth."

In speaking of this agency however, let us be guarded against the extravagance of which some men have been guilty, in supposing that the office of the Spirit is to make new revelations to the mind. His influence, we apprehend, as a spirit of light, is but to make plain revelations which are already upon record. Our condition as those who live under the light of the gospel, is not that of a heathen, who is searching after God, if haply he may find him—not that of one who has heard no voice of the Deity except that which is echoed from the visible creation. We have a revelation. God has spoken to us, unfolding every thing it is needful for us to know, in order that we may guide our steps aright, and lay hold upon the hope of the future. We have not to say “who shall ascend into heaven for us?—who shall go over the sea for us?” The word is nigh us. Here is the book containing God’s revelation, and the question is, can we understand it so as to perceive the reality and power of its truths? To give us this understanding is the precise work of the Spirit. His agency does not consist in revealing unwritten truths, but in bringing to our minds distinctly that which is already written. The influence of the morning sun as it clears the atmosphere, and brings distant objects to view, does not terminate upon the objects, but upon the medium through which we look at them. They had the same reality, their outline was as clearly defined, before the shades were scattered as now that the darkness of night has vanished. The telescope does not give to that distant star its brightness; the microscope does not people an atom with its busy tenantry—they only help our vision to discover them. The sun in his glory, is no more a reality than the star inaccessible to our unassisted organs; the plumage of the bird of paradise is no more sparkling than the imperceptible down upon an insect’s wing. The difference is, we have an eye for the one, and not for the other. The objects which God has crowded into the domain of revelation; the spiritualities of our existence; the interests and occupations of an unseen world, are as real, as the things which we see around us—the events which are taking place in a world of sense, and the interests and occupations of our temporal existence which absorb our thoughts. But carnal prejudice, and the mists of worldly passion, the pride and self-sufficiency natural to the heart prevent our perception of them, and the Spirit of God, when he comes to discharge his office-work, does but take the truths which He has Himself indited, and show them to the soul. He does not bring them as new revelations, but He so influences the mind and heart, that the affections no longer blind the understanding, that there is beauty, and there is glory seen where all before was “without form and comeliness;” and the man who sits down to the study of the Bible, rises from it again wondering not more at what he has discovered upon its pages, than at the fact that he has so often heard, but

never understood, so often read, but never perceived. Such is the agency of the Holy Spirit, when He descends to enlighten the mind in the things of God.

Of the reality of this agency, and its absolute necessity in order to any thing like spiritual apprehension, we can never have too distinct or firmly settled ideas. We do not mean to depreciate the value of any of the external evidences of truth. We admit their importance, nay, their indispensableness; but then let us not forget, that the letter of the Bible to which these outward evidences relate, is a vastly different thing from the spirit of the Bible, which nothing but the agency of the Holy Ghost can reveal. The perception of spiritual things themselves, the faith which gives them an actual subsistence to the mind, and an actual power over the heart, is a very different thing from that assent of the understanding which is given to a logical and well arranged demonstration of their reality. I may have a full intellectual conviction of the truth of a particular statement, while the subject-matter of the statement itself may be without interest, if indeed it has any reality to my mind. Now it is not the simple perception of the fact that this Bible is the word of God, which constitutes the evidence of spiritual light; but the perception of the meaning itself of the Bible, and a felt, deep, effective interest in its communications; and this is the result only of the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Upon this influence, as promised by Jesus Christ to his disciples, is dependent the success of the gospel in the world. Aside from this, resting upon the minds of the apostles, they had never put forth any intelligent, and well-directed efforts to accomplish their Master's designs, and except as it accompanied their preaching, all their labors must have been fruitless.

What was true of the apostolical age, is equally true of our own. No mere exhibition of truth, no outward means or appliances, no system of external instrumentality, however wisely constructed and faithfully used, can, independently of this direct and special agency of the Holy Ghost, avail to build up the kingdom of Christ, or change a human being from a carnal into a spiritual man. This idea seems to be interwoven in all God's arrangements for our world. We cannot look over the history of the past, without perceiving how in every process, through which great spiritual results have been brought about, God has shown Himself exceedingly jealous of His own honor; how in compassing His ends, He has not selected any complicated or costly apparatus, such as human wisdom might pronounce competent, but has used feeble and apparently insufficient means, to develop the most glorious issues. The divine supremacy in the spiritual world, the nothingness of man in contrast with the sufficiency of God, are seen everywhere throughout the gospel; and when

its dispensation shall be finished, because its results shall have been developed, then shall the new heavens and the new earth, which are to rise upon the ruins of the old, illustrate in their every part this grand truth, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

A distinct perception and belief of this truth, a felt and controlling sense of dependence upon God's special influence, constitutes in our apprehension, a barometer to indicate the state of the spiritual atmosphere in any particular locality or association. The state of religion in any community, the vigor of Christian character and effort, the success of the gospel in accomplishing its purposes is to be estimated, not by any outward show, not by the number of outward formalities, not by any variety or extent of outward means, nor yet by appearances of great external prosperity; but by an effective pervading sense of absolute dependence upon the special agency of the Holy Ghost, as promised by the Father.

We apprehend that "the signs of the times," the indications in this way furnished, of the state of our own spiritual atmosphere, are far from being favorable. Not that the doctrine before us has been expunged from the creed of any class, in evangelical Christendom, nor that any who make pretensions to evangelical religion, deny the necessity of the special influences of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the soul; and yet we should be blind indeed to events which are transpiring all around us, if we did not see evidences of a disposition sometimes to invest second causes with efficiency, sometimes to explain the supernatural results of the Spirit's agency upon natural principles—in either case, to render doubtful, or dim, the necessity of a special spiritual influence, or reduce the office-work of the Holy Ghost to the exertion of a power in the spiritual world, not different in its nature, from that which God exerts in the natural world, upholding, directing, and controlling all things in all places of his dominions.

Now it strikes us that the early history of Christianity presents scenes, fatal in their influence to every theory which fails to bring in as their exponent a special power from on high. We know not where we shall look for a greater apparent disproportion between means and ends—a more wondrous and magnificent issue, resulting from such feeble and insignificant causes, than is presented in the preaching and its effects, of the first propagators of our faith. Take your position on some eminence overlooking the scene, where the first disciples of the Redeemer made their onset upon the world. It was the golden age—the age of all that was commanding and elevating in civilization, all that was vigorous in philosophy, and all that was beautiful in the arts. The relics of those days clearly show a wonderful enlargement of the

human mind, and attainments, serving in many respects to eclipse the boasted glory of succeeding generations. It was an age too, when religion exercised an unbounded sway; a religion indeed, of idolatry and superstition, and yet of such commanding influence as to pervade and give a cast to all governmental arrangements. It was an age when human pride was at its height, and human sensuality was rampant, when if human wisdom and human policy and human strength, had done their utmost, still human nature in a moral point of view, was deeply depressed. Against this mighty combination of philosophy and power, and sensuality and pride, Christianity arrayed itself. It could advance only by showing the folly of human wisdom, only by neutralizing human power, only by securing the crucifixion of human lust, only by trampling down human altars, and planting upon their ruins the standard of the cross. And by what means is such a result to be secured? In what way are the moral wastes of the world to be reclaimed? How is a transforming element to be infused into this mass of ignorance, and pride, superstition, and sensuality and an influence to be brought to bear upon human character, which like the power of a magician's wand, shall charm the proud into the humble, the sensual into the spiritual, the superstitious devotee into the intelligent worshipper of the living and true God? The only instrumentality which human wisdom would pronounce at all competent to such a result, or to any degree in keeping with an enterprise so magnificent, must be that of men to whom impossibilities are unknown, men of wondrous energies and power of endurance, men perfectly equipped at all points with skill and learning, and prepared to grapple with all the mighty principalities of evil. Now upon the supposition that the gospel was to achieve its results by mere human agency, such reasoning would be perfectly correct. But God, as though He would set at naught all human calculation, and give a decisive demonstration of the reality of the special influences of the Holy Spirit, constructed all His arrangements upon a principle directly the opposite. The men who, at the first establishment of Christianity, entered the lists to contend with the philosophy and learning, the pride, the superstition and sensuality of the world, were to human appearance, of all men least calculated to meet the exigencies which had called them forth. To an eye of carnal wisdom, the primitive apostles, deficient in early training and accomplishments, lacking in physical courage and energy, seem, as they go out in their insignificance to contend with the wise and the mighty, little better than a band of daring and desperate enthusiasts. Yet mark the issue. The effect of their instrumentality upon every thing which opposed the kingdom of the Redeemer, was like an effect upon the earth when an earthquake starts it. Every thing gave way before it.

The prejudice of the Jew, which had but just shown its strength in the successful plotting against Jesus of Nazareth, and the time-consecrated superstition of the Gentile yielded. Adherents clustered around the cross, and in a very short time, the influence of that cross wrought an entire revolution, triumphing wherever it went, until eventually it became ascendant in the world.

And now as we look upon this scene, what are we to make of it? How are we to explain this wondrous march of Christianity? Who that values his reputation as a man of wisdom or common sense, will pretend to solve these mysteries by the operation of the laws of natural causes and effects? We do not say the attempt at such an explanation has never been made. It has been, and the philosopher who in writing the history of "the decline and fall of the Roman empire," spent much of his strength upon this point, has only demonstrated the futility of the effort, while at the same time he has shown how hatred to spiritual religion can bring down a mighty mind to puerilities at which an idiot might almost blush. We come and look at the scene, and we can in no way understand it, except as presenting to us the fulfilment of "the promise of the Father," for which the disciples waited at Jerusalem—except as an illustration of the reality and power of the special influences of the Holy Ghost.

For ourselves, we are prepared to go farther than this. We do not look upon the scenes of Pentecost, and of the times immediately succeeding, as at all anomalous, or called for only by the exigencies of the establishment of Christianity, and the infant state of the Church; but as exhibiting the grand principle pervading all God's arrangements for building up his kingdom—types of similar scenes, which are to mark the history of the Church until the end of time, and through which the final triumph of the gospel over the world is to be secured.

The fulfilment of the "promise of the Father," the wondrous working of the Holy Spirit, not merely as an agent who pervades all nature, superintending its operations, causing the sun to shine, and the rain to fall, and the grass to grow, the mind to think, the heart to feel, and the hands to act—but as a special agent, discharging a peculiar office-work, in the exertion of an influence over and above and different from that of all means and natural laws, constitutes the sole ground of *our* dependence now, and the object of *our* hope, as truly as it did the ground of dependence, and the object of hope to the apostles, while they were waiting at Jerusalem, in obedience to the Savior's commandment.

The conversion of a single sinner from the error of his ways, the beginning of a new and spiritual life in the soul of one individual, has not indeed that attractive power, and air of won-

der and magnificence about it, which belong to a similar change, occurring in the experience and character of masses simultaneously. And yet there is as much of special work of the Spirit of God in the one case as in the other. There is as much a reality in the Divine agency, when one soul is born again, as when multitudes are stirred and moved by a mysterious influence, and thousands press together into the kingdom of God. The one event in its own nature is as striking, and in the agency which produces it, the same with the other. We can no more rationally account for the conversion of a single sinner, separate from the distinct, special agency of the Holy Ghost, than we can, separate from such agency, explain the scenes of the day of Pentecost, and of its immediately succeeding times.

The necessity of giving great prominence to this idea, and of insisting strongly upon this position, grows out of a tendency very marked, and we think very prevalent, to undervalue it, to overlook it, to dispute it. Every age of the world since time began, has its own peculiar mental characteristics; and these have manifested themselves not only in earthly plannings, and earthly enterprises, but in the religion of men likewise, giving a cast to religious views, and defining the nature and foundation of human hopes. The theology of ancient Paganism grew out of, and was regulated by its philosophy; and in every age man's religious principles have received a coloring at least, from prevalent modes of thought and feeling. It is so at the present day; and he must be a very superficial observer indeed, who does not discover, in certain habits of thought, and certain modes of reasoning, now prevalent, a tendency to explain every thing in religion independently of spiritual influence, and so shut out from view the office-work of the Holy Ghost, upon which, according to the teaching of the Bible, hang the hopes of fallen man and of a ruined world.

We live in an age when the physical sciences have attracted a very general attention, and wakened up the human mind to the interest of their study. We are busy perpetually, with the external world, torturing nature in every form, to make her disclose her secrets, striving to reduce all phenomena to something like a perfect system, and to reach the natural laws, and their mode of working, which will explain every thing. We carry our philosophy into the department of religion, and it is not at all surprising that they who have been so absorbed in the study of the material world as to overlook the reality of the human soul, should, when they come to the study of religion, find it to be nothing but a system of externals, which is to accomplish its purpose without any spiritual influence to give power to its forms.

Thus in one direction, we find that men are exalting ceremonies into life-giving agents, and transferring the work of the Holy

Spirit to a system of ritual observances. They can apprehend nothing but what strikes the eye, recognise nothing but what is tangible, and in the end, with them spiritual religion will be nothing but an outward formality.

Then on the other hand, there are those who must explain everything upon natural principles. With them there is nothing in any department of God's kingdom not to be explained by *some natural law, which is discoverable by us*; and in an endeavor to reach that law which may be brought in as an exponent of spiritual results, it is forgotten for the time being, that we live under the "ministration of the Spirit" who "works in us to will and to do." His special agency is lost sight of, or if it is brought so distinctly into view, by the plain statements of the word of God, that it cannot be overlooked, but must be recognised, then it is nothing but that universal Divine agency which pervades alike the natural and spiritual systems, and the promised influence from above, which was to work such wonders in the transformation of the world, is but an influence which is to superintend the working of natural laws, and through them bring about the promised spiritual results.

Now it should not be amiss, were it possible, to whisper a word in the ear of those who doubtless with the most upright and honest intentions, run into idle speculations upon this subject, and that word should tell them that they are not the first who have attempted to philosophize the special influences of the Spirit out of the gospel, and if they will look over the past, they will see numberless theories, wise and plausible as their own, hanging up in history, like models of the perpetual motion in the cabinets of the curious. They had their day, they cost labor, they were ingeniously put together, beautifully polished, but they were failures.

To our minds, however, this tendency of which we are speaking, assumes a more serious aspect. It seems very much akin to the efforts of the great adversary of truth, who bends the mental peculiarities of the present age to his own purposes, who takes its philosophical speculations, and not a few of its really brilliant discoveries, and converts them into machines to batter down the fortress of the Christian faith, or corrupt its fountains with deleterious infusions. And how that God, who is jealous of his own honor, and will not give his glory to another, regards this tendency, may perhaps be learned from the results which such tendencies have developed in ages of the Church which have gone by. It cannot be doubted, that if those who came after the apostles had been marked by their spirituality, and gone forth leaning upon the same "promise of the Father," which nerved the hearts and hands of primitive disciples, and secured to them such abundant

success, the page of the Church's history should have told a different tale from that which now deforms her records.

The darkness which covered our earth in those days, when the Christian religion seemed to be but a near relation of Paganism, and the heathen altar and the Christian temple differed apparently only in name, admits of a very simple explanation. Its shades began to gather, when the confessors of the early faith thought more of the deductions of human reason than of the simple verities of the word of God, and clothed themselves with the worldly dignity of sages, rather than with the meek and unambitious virtues of the Christian disciple. No sooner did the influence of the Academy supersede the plain teaching of the gospel, no sooner was unbaptized philosophy brought in, as the only true expositor of revealed truth, and the word of God forced to speak the language of human theories, than the vital principle of Christianity seemed as if it were palsy-stricken; and though this deference to human wisdom seemed to take off much that is humiliating from the doctrines of the cross, and add to the numerical strength of its professed adherents, it did so, only by perverting those doctrines themselves, and it increased the strength of the nominal, only as it increased the weakness of a spiritual Christianity. Thereafter, we find the influences of the Spirit of God very much overlooked in planning for the advancement of religion, and to a very great extent, their necessity and reality denied, while dependence for success was placed exclusively upon outward means, rites, and ceremonies; appeals to the senses took the place of appeals to conscience, and human authority was pressed into service to the entire neglect of the life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost. The result was, that in a spiritual point of view "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." The Spirit of God, grieved, seemed to have forsaken the earth, and the Church, reared for his dwelling-place, gave too evident tokens of his departure; for though it advanced in outward glory, and gathered around itself the treasures and armies and honors of the earth, yet when you look for Christianity, you find it but a lifeless corpse, drained of its life-blood, as though a vampire had fastened upon its vitals. And when afterwards we discover a lonely Saxon, unknown beyond the cloisters and precincts of his own country, catching a glimpse of the spiritualities of religion, and speaking as taught by, and in dependence upon the Holy Ghost, though he stands alone, and it seems that his voice must be drowned, yet securing a response from multitudes, you have evidence not only of the fulfilment of "the promise of the Father," through which alone such magnificent issues could have resulted from such inadequate means, but also of the great truth upon which we are insisting, that God pours out upon, or withholds from the world his blessings, according as

the reality of his Spirit's influences is admitted, their necessity recognised and felt, or their reality overlooked, and their importance undervalued or denied.

So it has been universally—whenever a darkness such as might be felt has come over the churches of Jesus Christ—whenever the gospel has seemed as though it were stripped of its life-giving power, then has “the promise of the Spirit” been forgotten, other dependencies have been introduced, spirituality has been lightly esteemed, “the form” has superseded “the power of godliness,” and moral death has walked abroad to do its work, if not wearing, at least surrounded by, the emblems and symbols of life.

We are no enemies to philosophical investigation, even when it has religion for its subject, provided it keeps within its own sphere; but of all men, we know not one more dangerous than the mere theorizer about revealed things—the man, who must reduce everything to the standard of nature, and explain everything by natural laws; because when he has finished his system, he has explained away everything which is distinctive about Christianity. He has a beautiful theory of religion, but it wants one thing—life; he has all the technicalities and forms of Christianity, but not one particle of its spirituality; he has scarcely the letter which killeth, certainly none of the spirit which maketh alive.

Blessed be God, the power of religion does not reside in its theory, but in its facts and truths. We can know the truth and influence of religion without knowing anything of its theory. The ancient philosopher who thought the sun a fixed body no larger than the hill at which he looked from his windows, derived as much benefit from its rays as did Sir Isaac Newton. I can sustain nature, in the use of appropriate food, as well as the chemist or physiologist, on some accounts perhaps better—and so I can go to the Bible, and receive its truths, upon the simple testimony of their author, and they become to me elements of spiritual life, though I understand nothing of the philosophy of a single fact or doctrine therein contained. But when I will not believe that the things which God tells me, are so, before I understand *how* they are so, then I am in danger of losing sight of what constitutes the vitality of the system, and failing to find its true law, of destroying the principles which compose it;—and this is precisely the way in which the power of the gospel is paralysed, and its successes are prevented in the world.

Let men say what they can, and theorize as they please upon this subject, the conversion of the human soul unto God, and the onward triumphant march of the gospel to the achievement of a world's redemption, is not to be explained upon any principles of mere human philosophy, or by any mere natural laws whatsoever. Every onward step which the Church of Christ takes, in

fulfilling the design of her Master ; every soul gifted with spiritual life, every community brought to obedience to the truth, will show the folly of human wisdom, as they set in a light too strong to be unnoticed, and too clear to be mistaken, this great principle of God's government—"not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

In these days, when the intellect of man is so greatly on the stretch, so full of its own power, and so confident in its own resources, while there is a manifestly growing repugnance to anything like dependence upon an invisible agency, it is well for the friends of truth to stand nobly by the doctrine of the special influences of the Holy Ghost. The experience of the past, no less than the Word of God, has taught us, that a forgetfulness or denial of this doctrine has prepared the mind for the reception, and made way for the working of the most dangerous errors. When men have been too blind to see, too infatuated to confess the necessity of special spiritual influences, God has abandoned them to the vanities of their own wisdom. The vital truths of the gospel have been lost sight of, the religion of men has become little else than a cold, and heartless, and almost heathen morality. There has been no moving among the dry bones in the valley of spiritual death, and the truth of the Bible relative to the agency of "the Comforter," has been plainly demonstrated amid the abuses and formalities of a spurious religion.

It is then upon the fulfilment of this "promise of the Father," upon the manifestation of the Spirit, that we build the hopes of the Church and the world. If ever one soul now out of Christ is brought to the experience of the power of the gospel, it must be through the special agency of the Holy Ghost. If this world is to be converted to God, it must be by copious effusions of His influence, of which the scenes on the day of Pentecost were but the types and earnest. Sad indeed will it be for the Church of God, when her members become blind, or sceptical, in reference to the "ministration of the Spirit" as the peculiarity of our age. The history of the Church of Christ puts beyond all question, not simply the necessity of the Spirit's influences, but the necessity likewise of their copious effusions. Without them, the daily, hourly movement of the Church is retrograde, while her life and energy are inseparable from her advancement. There has been, we apprehend, a growing scepticism, for some time past, as to the advantage, if not the necessity of these outpourings from on high, and the result we have before us, in a manifest leaning to mere formalism on the one hand, and in efforts to bring down religion to the mere natural effect of a natural cause on the other—a result which has furnished to doubters and unbelievers this problem for their solution:—how long, at the present rate of progress, will it be, before spiritual Christianity, which now scarcely

holds her own, shall, according to the sure word of prophecy, overspread the earth? The ages which have gone by have been signalized by wondrous outpourings of the Holy Ghost. Scarce a land upon the earth, not one blessed with the revelation of Jesus Christ, but has been more or less refreshed by these spiritual visitations; and these revivals of Pentecostal days have endowed the Church of Christ with new elements of spiritual power, or quickened into new action those which had ceased to work. It is indeed so (as President Edwards has conclusively demonstrated in his *History of Redemption*), that, by means of these special and abundant influences shed down from on high, God has established and carried forward his work in the world.

To them mainly, is religion in our land indebted for its foothold and its influence; and if they are withheld from us, we are lost. As our numbers swell, and the field of our action widens, and worldly influences become more and more rampant, vice, immorality, scepticism, and divers forms of error walk onward with strides too large, and a pace too quick to be overtaken by any ordinary means; and when the necessities of our case lead us to plead for revivals of religion, as our only hope, we feel that we are but pleading for what is embraced in the glorious promises of the gospel, whose meaning has been made plain amid the scenes where their fulfilment has been witnessed.

The posture of the early disciples, as they remained secluded in Jerusalem, according to the commandment of the Savior, was a posture of believing expectation. With their eye upon the promise of their Master, they waited in faith, and hope, and prayer, for its fulfilment, and the result showed neither a visionary faith, nor a deceitful hope, nor an unanswered prayer.

Such should be our posture now—the posture of those who believe in great things, and hope and look for great things to come; for we have the same word of our truthful Master upon which to rely. The promise upon which their faith laid hold, and which kindled their sanguine expectation, was not the promise of the Spirit for a temporary purpose, but of a Spirit, who was to abide with the Church for ever. It stands upon record now, as a warrant for our faith, and hope, and prayer; and our right to look for the effusion of the Spirit is as clear and strong as was that of the primitive disciples, previous to the day of Pentecost.

Nay, more than this, the Spirit of God is yet to do his greatest work, and magnify his power more wonderfully than ever upon the earth. The prophecy has yet to be fulfilled, when “a nation shall be born in a day.” The analogies of things, as well as the sure word of prophecy, teach us to look for outpourings of the Holy Spirit, more copious in quantity, and more frequent in occurrence, than any which have marked past ages in the history

of the Church of God. As we draw near to the consummation of all things, the full development of the results of the gospel, we may expect more wonderful spiritual achievements, and more magnificent results, than this world ever yet has seen. As the hour draws near, fixed in the unchangeable counsels of eternal wisdom, for the full triumph of Christianity, the onward movement of the Church of God will become more rapid, as the Spirit of Christ will give more abundant success to the instrumentalities of conversion. The inquiry is yet to start from the lips of wondering thousands, as they see men pressing into the kingdom of God, "Who are these that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows?"

For this, the sure word of God's testimony bids us to look, and under the influence of the hope which inspiration warrants, to pray earnestly for them. Doubtfulness as to their expediency or necessity to accomplish the great ends of the gospel, will not only repress everything like that spirit of prayer on the part of God's people, which in the Scripture is placed in connexion with them as their essential pre-requisite, but will tend to draw away our minds from the truth, that by God's Spirit alone is the gospel to be rendered successful; and lead us to place our dependence elsewhere, upon mere means or instrumentalities, the result of which will be seen, either in transferring the life and spirit of godliness to its mere forms, or in reducing the experience of the "new creature in Christ Jesus" to a mere change in the outward manifestations of the carnal man. Give up the special influences of the Spirit of God in conversion, or relinquish the hope of his abundant outpouring, and we can look for no other result.

Men may talk of new plans for doing good—may broach new theories upon the subject of the world's conversion; but it seems to us that a Christian mind should be satisfied with the "ministration of the Spirit." Living as we do, under the light of the gospel, under the reign of the Holy Ghost—that Spirit who has come into the world in the place of Christ; that Spirit, who, as he has been shed down upon the Church in time past, has quickened, and strengthened, and enlarged her, what more do we need, or can we wish for? The promise of God is enough for us; let us believe it, and in a spirit of faith and sanguine hope, let us pray and wait for its fulfilment, and we shall yet see scenes which shall prove the vanity of human theories, and show that while man's wisdom fails, God's word shall stand for ever.