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Mr. Chauncy's

SERMON

ON THE

Out-pouring of the HOLY GHOST.



1742

The out-pouring of the HOLY GHOST.

A

SERMON

Preach'd in BOSTON, May 13. 1742.

On a day of prayer observed by the first Church there,
to ask of GOD the effusion of his SPIRIT.

By Charles Chauncy, A. M.

Pastor of said Church.

Hof. 10. 12. — It is time to seek the LORD, till he come and
rain righteousness upon us.

Isaiah. 44. 3. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and
floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my SPIRIT upon thy seed,
and my blessing upon thine Offspring.



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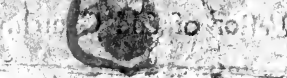


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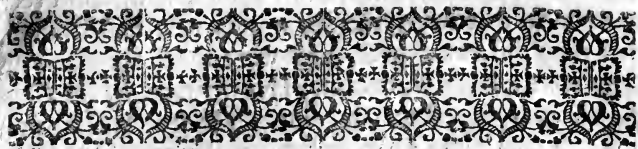


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The HOLY GHOST *poured out.*

Acts X. 45.

— On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the HOLY GHOST.




 E are presented, in the foregoing verses, with an *abstract* of an excellent Sermon, preached by the apostle *Peter*; as also an account of that *Divine power* which came on the *hearers*, even while he was preaching it. v. 44. *while Peter yet spake these words, the HOLY GHOST fell on all that heard the Word.* 'Tis observable, the HOLY GHOST fell universally upon the *auditory*. There was not a person present, neither *Jew* nor *Gentile*, *man* nor *woman*, *old* nor *young*, but he was a partaker of the HOLY GHOST. He *fell on all that heard the Word*. The following verse exhibits an account of the *astonishment*, the believing *Jews* were filled with at this event. *And they of the circumcision, which believed, were astonished.* And the more *special reason* of their astonishment is given in the next words; which was not, as we may be ready to imagine, so much the *descent* of the HOLY GHOST, as the *persons on whom he fell*. The former they

they had often been witnesses to before, it was an event common in that day; the *latter* was new and strange, what they did not expect, and were much surpris'd at. They were *astonish'd*, because, says my text, *on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the HOLY GHOST*: In which words the three following things are observable,

I. The *gift* here spoken of; viz. the HOLY GHOST.

II. The *persons to whom* he was given; and these were the *Gentiles also*, i. e. the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; both in *common*; one as well as the *other*, without respect of persons.

III. The *manner* of bestowing this gift; It was *poured out*.

Accordingly, these are the particulars we shall briefly consider, and then apply to the *occasions* of the day.

I. The first thing observable in the text is, the *gift* spoken of; viz. the HOLY GHOST.

The HOLY GHOST, or HOLY SPIRIT, as the word is elsewhere translated; — It's the name of the THIRD of the SACRED THREE. He is otherwise stil'd sometimes, by way of emphasis, THE SPIRIT; sometimes, the SPIRIT of GOD, the SPIRIT of CHRIST, the SPIRIT of *grace*, the SPIRIT of *truth*, the SPIRIT of *holiness*; sometimes, he is spoken of as the COMFORTER, the SANCTIFIER, and the like. That glorious person is pointed out, under all these appellations, in whose *name*, as well as in the *name* of the FATHER and the SON, we are *baptis'd*, and by this *instituted rite* take upon us the character of *Christians*.

Only, let it be remembred, when the HOLY GHOST is spoken of as a *gift* from GOD, we are not to understand hereby the *person*, but the *influences* of this *bless'd* SPIRIT. Not that the HOLY GHOST is nothing more than an *emanation*, *operation* or *influence*, from the FATHER. He is often represented, in the *bible*,

bible, as an *agent*; a *person*, as truly and properly so, as either the FATHER or the SON. But tho' he be a real, living, active, infinitely glorious *person*, yet when he is spoken of as a *gift*; we are to understand hereby his *influences* and *operations*.

And these are either *extraordinary* or *ordinary*.

In the beginning of Christianity, the HOLY GHOST was given to men, in an *extraordinary* manner. i. e. in *miraculous* gifts and powers. It does not appear, that the HOLY GHOST, in this sense, was confin'd to the *apostles*, or their *fellow-labourers* in the work of the Lord. The *apostles*, 'tis true, were the first, after our SAVIOUR'S *ascension* up to *heaven*, to whom the HOLY GHOST was thus given. It was upon *them* that he *descended*, on the day of *Pentecost*, in *cloven tongues* like as of *fire*, to their being enabled to speak in *various languages*; yea, and to *shew signs and wonders*, and to *work miracles*, to the *astonishment* and *conversion* of multitudes. But it should seem, as if the *gift of the HOLY GHOST*, in this *extraordinary* manner, was not the *sole* privilege of the *apostles*, or *first ministers* of the Christian religion. It rather appears to have been a *gift* bestowed upon Christians in *common*. Some of the persons, chosen from among the *people* to be *Deacons*, were thus *miraculously* endowed. 'Tis particularly recorded of *Stephen**, that he did *great wonders and miracles among the people*. And in the Church at *Corinth*, there was a great diversity of these *extraordinary* gifts; and they seem to have been *common* among the *people*. To one was given, by the SPIRIT, the word of *wisdom*; to another, the word of *knowledge* by the same SPIRIT; to another, *faith*; to another, the *gift of healing*; to another, the *working of miracles*; to another, *prophecy*; to another, *discerning of Spirits*; to another, *diverse kinds of tongues*; to another, the *interpretation of tongues*.
And,

* Acts 6. 8.

And, perhaps, there were few, in the first days of the gospel, but were endowed with some *extraordinary* gift of the SPIRIT or another.

And it was at *different* seasons that the HOLY GHOST fell upon persons, in his *miraculous* powers. Sometimes, he came upon them, even before they were *baptised*. So it was in my context. Upon *Peter's* preaching to the *Gentiles*, the HOLY GHOST fell upon *them all*. And that he fell upon them in his *extraordinary* gifts, is evident from what follows; for 'tis observed, *they were heard to speak with tongues*. i. e. with *strange* tongues, in languages they did not before understand, nor could speak. But *more commonly* the HOLY GHOST was given by the *laying on of the hands of the apostles after baptism*. An instance of this we have, in Act. 19. 5, 6. where, after a number of disciples had been *baptised*, 'tis said, *Paul laid his hands upon them, and the HOLY GHOST came on them*: And he so came on them, as that *they spake with tongues, and prophesied*. And it was the *falling of the HOLY GHOST* on persons, in his *miraculous* powers, by the *laying on of the hands of the apostles*, that put *Simon Magus* upon making an offer to purchase this *wonderful gift with money**.

Some, perhaps, may be ready to envy these *first* Christians their privilege, in being thus *miraculously* endowed; imagining, they were much better of it than *we*, who can pretend to no such *extraordinary* gifts. But what says the inspired *Paul*? Why, speaking to the Christians at *Corinth*, concerning *these very extraordinary gifts of the HOLY GHOST*, he directs them to what was far more desirable. *I shew unto you*, says he, *a more excellent way*†. And *this way* he shewed to them, was that of *Charity* or *love*. The true *love* of our neighbour, springing from *love* to God, and a principle of *faith* in *JESUS CHRIST*, is a gift far preferable

to

* Acts 8. 18, 19.

† 1 Cor. 12. 31,

to any of the *miraculous* gifts, the first Christians were endowed with: And upon whomsoever GOD bestows this gift, he does more for them, than if he enabled them to *speak with the tongues of men or angels*, or gave them *faith* so that they could *remove mountains*. This, 'tis true, might make them more eminent in their *own* as well as in the esteem of *others*; but the *former* would render them *better* in themselves, and far more *acceptable* in the sight of GOD.

'Tis worth our particular remark, the *extraordinary* gifts of the HOLY GHOST made no man the *better Christian*. They did not *sanctify* his soul, or put him in a state of favour with GOD! And if *sanctified* persons were those, on whom they were *often* conferred, yet this was not *always* the case. It was no certain argument of a man's being a good man, a sincere servant of JESUS CHRIST, that the HOLY GHOST had come upon him in his *extraordinary* gifts. The Spirit of prophecy fell on Balaam, who made *Israël to sin*, and of whom it is testified by an apostle, that he *loved the wages of unrighteousness*. And Judas, as well as the other *apostles*, had the power of *working signs and wonders*, and of *casting out Devils*: Yea, our SAVIOUR himself has declar'd, that *he will*, in the great day of judgment, *say unto many who have prophesied in his name, and in his name cast out Devils, and in his name done many wonderful works, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity**. These *miraculous* gifts were rather bestowed for the good of *others*, than the *persons themselves* who had them. *Tongues*, says the apostle†, *are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not*. They were intended as an *open attestation* to the truth of the *Christian religion*; which being now settled in the world, there is no further use of them.

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* Matth. 7. 22, 23.

† 1 Cor. 19. 22.

I therefore go on to observe,

By the *gift of the HOLY GHOST*, we are to understand, not only these *extraordinary powers*, but that *ordinary influence*, common to all ages of the Church, whereby the *work of Divine grace* is begun and carried on in the souls of men, to their being prepared in this world for the blessedness of the world that is to come.

Some, I am sensible, are for confining the *gift of the HOLY GHOST* to the *apostolic age*: But there is no reason for this. 'Tis plain from the current strain of the whole new-testament, that the *gift of the HOLY GHOST* is as necessary for persons in all *after ages*, as it was in the *first days of the Gospel*. 'Tis therefore declared in language extending to all *times* as well as *Persons**, *except a man be born of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD*; and again, † *If any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is none of his*; and yet again, ‖ *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his SPIRIT*.

Nor by the *gift of the SPIRIT*, in this Sense, are we to understand barely the *objective* influence of revealed truths, or any improvements of nature that are merely *moral*; but that immediate presence and influence of the *HOLY GHOST*, whereby a real power is communicated to the purposes of religion. This is the true meaning of those numerous texts, wherein those who are real Christians, are said to be *born of the SPIRIT*; to have the *SPIRIT dwelling in their Hearts by faith*; to be *strengthened with all might in the inner man by the SPIRIT*; to be *led by the SPIRIT*; to *walk in the SPIRIT*, and the like. By these phrases, is pointed out a sort of influence beyond what is merely *natural* or *moral*: 'Tis evidently their main scope to represent the holy *SPIRIT* as *all in all* in the business of

* John 3. 5.

† Rom. 8. 9.

‖ 1 John 4. 13.

of pure and undefiled religion; the beginner, the carrier on, and the finisher of faith, yea, and of every thing else that is spiritually good, in the hearts of sincere Christians: Nor will any thing short of this come up to the just and full import of these expressions.

Nor is it any objection against these *operations* of the HOLY GHOST, that we know not *how* he operates upon the humane mind. Men may, if they please, take occasion from hence to speak contemptuously of this dispensation of GOD's Grace; but 'tis, in true reason, no argument against the *reality* of a thing, that the *manner* of it can't be described. Who can tell how his own Spirit operates on his own body, or his own body on his own Spirit? And yet, there is nothing we are more sure of, than that they mutually operate on each other. And if it be no objection against the mutual operation of soul and body upon one another, that we know not the *modus* of their operation, neither is our ignorance as to the *manner* of the SPIRIT's operation on the hearts of Men, any objection against the thing it self: Nor is it at all incredible, that the GOD who made our souls, and is perfectly acquainted with all their springs of action, should be able to operate upon them; and this, in a way suited to their nature, and so as not to break in, in the least, upon the just exercise of their *reasonable* powers. It would argue but a low conception of the infinitely wise GOD to suppose the contrary. He that has an immediate access to our Spirits *can* certainly work upon them, and, in a *reasonable* way, influence them both *to will and to do of his own good pleasure*: And that the Divine ever-blessed SPIRIT does really thus operate upon them, and in thus doing acts the part especially assigned him in the affair of man's salvation, must be acknowledged to be the obvious sense of a great number of texts, which can't, without the greatest violence, be interpreted to any other meaning. But it will not

be amiss, if we are a little particular in explaining the gift of the HOLY GHOST, as it means this *internal operation* of his, which is common to all ages of the Church. And it consists in the following things,

1. In *convincing men of Sin*. This is the first operation of the SPIRIT upon the Sinner. Accordingly, this is particularly mentioned as one of the ends for which the SPIRIT is said to be given to men, even that he might *reprove*, or convince, *them of sin**. And this he does by awakening their attention, bringing them to consideration, and giving them such a sight of *sin* as they never had before. When the SPIRIT convinces of sin, he opens the sinners eyes, so that he sees it to be an evil and bitter thing, that he has forsaken the LORD his GOD. He has now an apprehension of sin as what is hateful to the Divine majesty, and dreadful in its effects and consequences; He has now a view of himself as an object of wrath, and heir of hell, and in danger every moment of being made miserable in that future place of torment: And from this apprehension of sin, and of his own immanent hazard as under the guilt of it, he is filled with uneasiness; bitterly reflects upon himself, and feels all that inward distress which is the result of a consciousness of guilt, an actual clear view of himself as in a state, wherein he deserves to be sent away to be made unhappy in the place of blackness of darkness.

Some, perhaps, may think, there is no need of this perception of sin, and uneasiness from a sense of guilt; but 'tis *ordinarily* necessary, as that without which there can be no such thing as a real and thorough *conversion* to God; To be sure, 'tis a matter of necessity in respect of *adult* persons, those among them particularly, who instead of being restrained from sin from their early

early Childhood, have given the reins to their lusts, and gone on adding iniquity to transgression. 'Tis seldom, if ever, that a saving change is effected in such, but 'tis preceded with bitter reflections on their past security and folly, and uneasy sensations from an apprehension of themselves as obnoxious to the Divine vengeance.

Tho' it ought to be particularly remembered here, that the degrees of distress, from a consciousness of sin and fear of wrath, are vastly various in different persons. In some 'tis greater, in others smaller; in some 'tis of longer, in others of shorter continuance; in all, that are savingly brought home to GOD in JESUS CHRIST, the concern of soul is sufficient to put them effectually upon the use of appointed means in order to their obtaining mercy; but in none, is this distress excited to so great a degree as to put them beside themselves, unless from their own weakness, or ignorance, or some faulty cause or other, which ought not to be ascribed to the SPIRIT of GOD.

And it may be worth remembering likewise, that this *conviction* of sin is a thing quite different from *conversion*. 'Tis only the *first step* towards it, a preparation of mind making way for it: Nor unless it end in this blessed change, will it signify any thing, if persons are under ever so deep distress. This should be well considered by such as may be under convictions. You may not from hence conclude your selves to be in a good state. The sight you have of sin as an evil thing, the apprehension you have of your selves as objects of wrath, and the uneasiness you may be under herefrom, are nothing more than the *tendencies* towards *conversion*. And let me tell you, there may be the *former* and not the *latter*. You may turn out shameful apostates from GOD after very serious impressions, very strong convictions, yea, and great zeal in an attendance on religious duties. O take heed, you don't
make

make a righteousness of your convictions, that you don't place them in the room of CHRIST, in the room of true Gospel repentance! Don't suffer your selves to rest in convictions! If you place your religion here, and attain no higher, they will do you no good; yea, notwithstanding your convictions, tho' they have struck you to the earth, you will certainly be excluded heaven, and be sent away to hell. Realise it, the great design of conviction is to put you upon the use of the instituted means of salvation. Their use is to shew you your need of CHRIST, to open to you the value of grace, and quicken you, with a becoming importunity, to seek GOD's face and favour: And if they are not improv'd for these purposes, they will be of no spiritual service to you. O fix it in your minds as a sure truth, that you may have even the strongest convictions, and no saving good follow upon them! And it is often thus; yea, in respect of many with whom it is thus, they are the worse, and not the better for their convictions. Sinners who have been surprized with fearfulness, under an apprehension of sin and guilt, have often turn'd out the worst of men, the most harden'd and abandon'd to all that is good. The *latter end* with them has been *worse than the beginning*. You are therefore, at present, in a critical state; and should look well to your selves, least, after having escaped the pollutions that are in the world through lust, you should turn away from the holy commandment delivered to you. But I must not enlarge,

2. Another operation, included in this gift of the HOLY GHOST, is that whereby he produces in men true *gospel faith*. This faith is much celebrated in the writings of the new testament. 'Tis every where represented as the grand *characteristic* of a *true Christian*. 'Tis indeed that without which 'tis impossible to please GOD; yea, 'tis by this, and this *alone*, that we are *justified*

justified through the LORD JESUS CHRIST, without the deeds of the law. This faith is variously exhibited to us; sometimes in metaphorical language, but more commonly in plain, easy words. And the thing intended by it, is not *meerly* an assent of the mind to gospel truths: This indeed there will be; the man who has true faith embraces the *Scripture revelation*; yea, the *whole Scheme of Christian Doctrine*, so far as he has an understanding of it, and he will have an understanding of it so far as it is absolutely necessary; But then, his faith is not a meer speculative thing, but such an inward, strong persuasion as will operate in *general* agreeably to the truths he professes to believe: In *particular*, he is so fully persuaded of the glorious things spoken of concerning CHRIST, his *person* and *mediatorial undertaking* for sinners, that he acknowledges no other SAVIOUR, nor has dependance upon any but him; yea, so clearly satisfied is he of the *ability* and *readiness* of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to be a SAVIOUR to him, of the *fulness* of *grace* and *merit* there is in him, that he ventures his *all* on him, his *soul* and his *eternal concerns*; trusting in him, and in him alone for *righteousness* and *eternal life*. He esteems himself an *unprofitable servant*, after he has done his best; and as having done no more than it was his duty to do. He counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS his LORD; yea, he counts them but dung, that he may win CHRIST, and be *found in him*, not having on his *own righteousness*, which is of the *law*, but that which is through the *faith* of CHRIST, the *righteousness* which is of GOD by *faith*.

This is the *true Christian faith*: And 'tis to make us the subjects of this *faith*, that the HOLY GHOST is *poured out*. 'Tis not the *meer* result of that *testimony* of the SPIRIT, the *evidence of miracles*, by which the Gospel has been confirmed, as a *revelation* from GOD; but

but is the produce of that *internal work* of his upon the mind of the sinner, whereby, the eyes of his understanding being opened, he has such a view of the suitability of the gospel method of salvation in *general*, and of the loveliness of CHRIST in *particular*, his all-sufficiency to be his SAVIOUR; as that he is persuaded and enabled to embrace him as such, giving himself up to him, to be instructed, governed and saved by him. The scripture is every where full in it, that this *faith* is of the *operation* of the SPIRIT. Hence 'tis particularly mentioned among the *fruits of the SPIRIT**; and is expressly spoken of, as of the *operation of GOD†*, and as the *gift of GOD ‖*. And when *Simon Peter* professed his *faith* in CHRIST; in those words, *Thou art CHRIST the SON of the living GOD*; JESUS said unto him, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my FATHER which is in heaven§*.

3. Another operation, included in the *gift of the HOLY GHOST*, is the *change* whereby men are made *new creatures*. We every where read, in the inspir'd writings; of a *Change*, which 'tis necessary Sinners should pass under, as ever they would hope, according to the tenour of the Gospel covenant; to be admitted into the coming kingdom of GOD. This *change* is spoken of under a variety of names. 'Tis sometimes called *conversion*, sometimes *regeneration*, sometimes 'tis compar'd to a *resurrection*; and sometimes to a *new creation*. The same thing is intended in all these phrases; even that change which is made in men, when they become true Christians: Not that there is any change effected in them, *physically* speaking; their natural powers and faculties are still the same: But in the *religious* and *moral* sense, they are strangely altered. There is a change wrought both in their
 hearts

* Gal. 5. 22. † Col. 2. 12. ‖ Eph. 2. 8. § Mat. 16. 16, 17.

hearts and lives; in all their inward principles as well as outward behaviour in the world. They are, as it were, new moulded and fashioned. They have other thoughts and sentiments, other springs of action, other views and aims; they are so altered as to be quite other persons, they have another temper of mind, another taste and relish, another heart and soul, and they lead another kind of life; are pious towards GOD, righteous towards men, and sober in respect of themselves.

This is the change we must pass under, in order to our being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. And 'tis to effect this change, that the HOLY GHOST is given: Nor can it be effected in any way but by his *operations* in us. It is not the produce of *meer reason*; nor of *external revelation*. It is not bro't about by the bare influence of *moral motives*, whether they are fetch'd from the *law* or the *Gospel*: No, but it is an *effect* of the *power* of the SPIRIT, working effectually in them that believe. And 'tis every where in the bible spoken of as such. This is the just import of the *metaphors*, under which this change is figur'd out to us. That of a *new creation* points our view directly to GOD as the author of conversion. If this were an easy business, a matter within the reach of men's own power, what they could accomplish by an act of their *own free will*, it would never have been set forth under this similitude. To *create* is the known prerogative of GOD: And the first thing most obviously occurring to our minds from this resemblance is, that the *new creature* is the *workmanship* of GOD. The same thought is suggested from the metaphor of a *resurrection*, under which this change is sometimes spoken of. *Raising the dead* bespeaks the agency of GOD. 'Tis therefore natural, and almost unavoidable, when we read of conversion under this figure, to conclude it to be a work beyond the power of man, and as requiring a *Divine power* to effect it.

But besides *metaphors*, there are *plain texts* to our purpose. Says the inspired Paul, treating of this matter, * *We are HIS workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS to good works.* And we find the blessed GOD himself bespeaking his people, by way of promise, in such terms as those, † *A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.* The like promise we have again ‖, *And I will put a new heart within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh.* 'Tis as plain, from these and many other texts that might easily be mentioned, as words can make it, that the change signified by *conversion* or the *new creature*, is the work of GOD ; his work by his *holy SPIRIT*, which he gives to men to effect this change in them.

But some, perhaps, may be so curious as to ask how does the HOLY GHOST produce this change in men ?

And to such the answer is, this is one of those things, concerning which we know but very little : Nor ought our ignorance, as to the *manner* of this production, to be esteemed the least objection against the truth of the thing. We know not the *manner* in the *natural* ; and why should it be thought strange if we know not the *manner* in the *spiritual* creation ? The methods of operation, in the *Kingdom of grace*, and in the *Kingdom of nature*, are both alike secret and mysterious : And we have no more reason therefore to object against the *former* than the *latter*. 'Tis no argument against the formation of children, that *we know not how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child* ; neither is it of any validity against the formation of the *new man*, that we know not precisely the *way and manner* in which the *Divine SPIRIT* exerts himself in

* Eph. 2. 10.

† Ezek. 36. 26.

‖ Chap. 11. ver. 19.

in the production of this *spiritual workmanship*: They are both fearful and wonderful.

Thus much indeed we know in general, that in *new making* men, the *Divine SPIRIT* acts in, and upon them, in a way suited to their nature *as Men*, in a way that agrees with their character *as moral agents*. He so manages the matter, as that they are changed into *new men*, in a method perfectly harmonizing with their several powers, so as that they oppose not one another, but are preserved in due dependance and subordination to each other. *Light* is commanded to shine into the *understanding*, the enlighten'd *understanding* directs and governs the *will*, and the *will* the several *affections* of the *soul* and *powers* of the *body*: But to say *precisely* how the HOLY GHOST enlightens the *mind*, and then captivates the *will*, and then preserves the *affections* and *passions* in due harmony, and conducts the *life* in the way of holiness; these things, I say, are difficulties in this dispensation of grace: And as they are such, the less we puzzle our selves or others about them, the better. The thing is certain, Men are sometimes *new made*; and when they are so, 'tis as evident from the Scripture, that 'tis GOD by his SPIRIT, that *new makes* them. Let us see to it, that we be in the number of those who are *new creatures*, and as to the way and manner in which it pleases GOD to bring this about, we need not be at all concerned about it. To go on,

4. Another thing, included in this *gift of the HOLY GHOST*, is his *exciting sincere Christians* to, and *assisting* them in, the practice of their duty, to their *increasing in grace*, and *persevering therein unto the end*. There is need of the HOLY GHOST not only to turn men from the power of sin and Satan unto GOD, but, when they are thus changed, to stir them up to activity in the work of GOD and their Soul's salvation, and

to assist them in it. If left to themselves, the best Christians, those that are fullest of faith and holiness, and every other grace, would soon lose their vigour: nor without the continual aids of the *Divine SPIRIT* would they be able to honour *CHRIST*, and adorn their profession by a conversation becoming the Gospel. The *HOLY GHOST* therefore is given to them, to excite good motions in them, to animate their resolutions, to quicken their graces and assist them in the exercise of them, to their running the way of *GOD'S* commandments with strength and vigour, with chearfulness and delight. This is certainly the language of Scripture upon this head. Hence that prayer of holy *David*, * *Quicken me according to thy word!* and again, † *Quicken thou me in thy way!* And hence also those pious acknowledgments of his, ‖ *Thy word, i. e. as enliven'd by thy SPIRIT, hath quickened me.* And again, § *I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me.* And the *HOLY GHOST* is said to dwell in the hearts of good Christians; and they are represented as led by the *SPIRIT*, and as walking in the *SPIRIT*. The plain meaning of all which texts is, at least thus much, that the *HOLY GHOST* is given to good men to be their excitement in duty, their continual help in the practice of it.

And 'tis owing to the same presence and influence of the *HOLY GHOST*, that they are enabled to grow in grace, and in a conformity to the image and example of their Saviour; to be more weaned from this world, and prepared for a better.

In one word; 'tis owing to the same influence still, that they are kept from falling, and preserved through faith unto salvation. And indeed, such are their indispositions within, and such their temptations without; such is the subtilty of Satan, such the snares

of

* Psalm 119. 25. † ver. 35. ‖ ver. 50. § ver. 93.

of the world, and such their own weakness, that it could not be expected, but they should draw back to perdition, were they not under the special and continual guidance of the HOLY GHOST: And to this it is always attributed in Scripture, that they are preserved unto CHRIST's heavenly kingdom. Hence the *apostle* speaks of them, * as those who are kept by the power of GOD, through faith, unto salvation. Hence also that *Doxology* in the *Epistle of Jude*, † Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding Joy, to the only wise GOD our SAVIOUR, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

5. Another thing contained in the gift of the HOLY GHOST is support and consolation under sufferings and afflictions. Frequent mention is made of this in the writings of the new Testament. When the *apostle Paul* sought to GOD for grace, in a time of great trial, that was the answer of GOD to him, ‖ My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. And hear how this same *apostle* triumphs over difficulties, and all manner of sufferings, in the power of this grace of the SPIRIT of GOD. § Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, for CHRIST's sake. And others also have been strengthened, with all might, to all long suffering, according to the glorious power of the SPIRIT of JESUS CHRIST, which has been given to them. It was eminently thus, in the first days of the Gospel, with the Confessors and Martyrs for the name and cause of CHRIST. The strength of GOD was visibly perfected in many of these, who, being weak, were yet made strong to suffer for his sake. To what else can it be ascribed, that they were enabled to en-

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* 1 Pet. 1. 5. † ver. 24, 25. ‖ 2 Cor. 12. 9. § ver. 10.

counter so many deaths, with so much calmness and patience, with so much chearfulness and holy rejoicing? How else can it be accounted for, that they should be ready to give themselves up to be *tortured, not accepting deliverance*; that they should be willing to undergo *the tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment*; that they should submit to be *stoned, to be sawn asunder, to be slain with the sword*; that they should be content to *wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*: I say, to what can it be attributed, that they should be willing to submit to these sufferings, and be able to go through them with courage, and patience, and even joy, but to this, that they were *divinely* assisted? The power of the SPIRIT of JESUS CHRIST was with them, supporting, encouraging and strengthening them; And to this it was owing, that they were both willing and able to suffer any thing for the honour of him, who had loved them, and died for them. And the same power of the same SPIRIT is ready to be with us, under all the tryals and sufferings, we are called to pass through, in the course of providence. The same blessed SPIRIT, which was given to them is promised to us also; and 'tis now often seen, that he is a support and comfort, in a glorious degree, to sincere Christians, in proportion to what they are called to endure; yea, and such is the sense they sometimes have of the consolations of GOD, that they are able to exult, in the midst of the heaviest tryals, in the language of the holy apostle Paul, * *Blessed be GOD, even the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the FATHER of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation. For as the sufferings of CHRIST abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by CHRIST.*

6. Another

6. Another thing contained in this *gift of the HOLY GHOST*, is that *inward joy*, which Christians are sometimes the subjects of. This *Joy* is therefore particularly mentioned as one of the *fruits of the SPIRIT**. And Christians are sometimes spoken of as *having Joy in GOD†*, as *rejoicing in hope of the glory of GOD‖*, yea, as *rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory§*. And they are represented, as praying to GOD *to fill them with all joy and peace in believing***, and as *giving thanks to GOD, who causeth them to triumph in CHRIST‡*: And the *peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding*, is promised to them, *to keep their hearts and minds thro' CHRIST JESUS‖‖*. The obvious import of all which texts is, that there is such a thing as *inward peace and pleasure*, which sometimes rises to such a height in the hearts of sincere Christians, as to cause them to exult and triumph in GOD: Nor is this *Joy* the effect of meer nature; neither does it result from the *sole* exercise of the mind, either upon it self, or the truths revealed in the Gospel, but is the *produce* of the HOLY GHOST, which is *given* to them. That of COMFORTER is therefore the *Style*, in which this blessed SPIRIT is sometimes spoken of in Scripture §§. And because it is by the HOLY GHOST, that GOD *comforteth* his people, he is therefore called the GOD of *consolation*‖*.

But to prevent our falling into mistakes about this *Joy*, 'twill be necessary to observe here, that when ever it is the *genuine fruit* of the SPIRIT, and not a *counterfeit*, the foundation of it is laid in a *faith* that *purifies the heart, and purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD*. Hence that of the apostle, *§ *For our REJOICING is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of GOD, we have our conversation*

* Gal. 5. 22. † Rom. 2. 11. ‖ v. 22. § 1 Pet. 1. 8. ** Rom. 15. 13. ‡ 2 Cor. 2. 14. ‖‖ Phil. 4. 7. §§ Joh. 14. 16. *‖ Rom. 15. 15. *§ 2 Cor. 1. 12.

versation in the world. And very observable to the same purpose is that exhortation of this same apostle.* *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself.* The way to true Joy is a religious and impartial examination into the frame of our hearts, and the course of our actions, and if our Joy springs from a clear discernment of these as conform'd to the tenour of the Gospel covenant, we may hope it is the produce of a divine influence: Whereas, if it is a sudden flash only, and arises we know not how, nor upon what it is bottom'd, 'tis much to be suspected; to be sure, no great stress should be laid on it. For 'tis to be remembred, there is the Joy of the hypocrite as well as of the good Christian; there is a Joy that is the effect of *nature* as well as *grace*. Such was the Joy of the *stony ground bearers*; such was the gladness, with which *Herod* heard *John Baptist* preach; and such was the *taste of the word of GOD, and of the powers of the world to come*, which the *Jewish apostates* were partakers of †. In all these persons, there was the passion of Joy, and it arose, probably, in some of them, to a considerable height; but yet, was nothing more than a *sensitive passion*, the result of the workings of meer animal nature. And this, it may be feared, is the *only Joy* of many others: It certainly is, of all those, who have *Joy without faith*. Men may pretend what they please, but if they are not possess'd of *faith*, that faith I mean, which is a living principle of grace in the Heart, and will evidence it self to be so by its genuine influence on the life, their Joy is only a *fire of their own kindling*; and tho' they *walk in the light of their fire, and in the sparks which they have kindled*, yet may they, notwithstanding, *receive this at the hand of GOD, they may lie down in sorrow.*

And

* Gal. 6. 4.

† Heb. 6. 5.

And as this Joy, if it be produced by the SPIRIT of GOD, will spring from *heart-purifying faith*, so will it make those who have it *humble*. They'll be for exalting GOD, and abasing themselves. An illustrious example of this we have in the great *apostle* of the *Gentiles*. No meer man, it may be, ever more abounded in Joy than he; and yet, who more filled with humility? *By the grace of GOD*, says he, * *I am what I am*. And again, † *I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me*. And comparing himself with his *fellow-labourers* in the work of the LORD, that is his language ‖, *I am the least of the apostles, and not meet to be called an apostle*; yea, he speaks of himself §, *as less than the least of all Saints*. And this humble frame of soul is ever a concomitant of true spiritual joy and *consolation* in the LORD. It disposes persons to entertain a low thought of themselves. So far are they from boasting of their own goodness, that they wonder at the grace of GOD, in taking notice of such unworthy creatures as they are. They are not of the Spirit of the *Pharisees* in the gospel, who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*: On the contrary, that is a just representation of their true temper, *in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than themselves*.

Moreover, this Joy, if it be of the HOLY GHOST, will observe, at least so far as it is under his guidance, a *just decorum* in the *way* and *manner* of expressing it self. It won't be ostentatious, discovering a forwardness to show it self in such methods as are out of the way, and carry the face of a *desire to be seen of men*. It will chuse rather in *private* to vent it self in acknowledgments of praise to GOD, than in the *streets*; and *public places of concourse*: This is too like the *Pharisees*, who *lov'd to pray in the corners of the streets, that they*

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might

* 1 Cor. 15. 10. † Gal. 2. 20. ‖ 1 Cor. 15. 9. § Eph. 3. 8.

might be seen of men: Nor does it seem so congruous a thing to behold this *joy* operating in LAUGHTER. 'Tis, in its nature, a sober, rational satisfaction and delight; and is conversant about the most serious and awful matters. A disposition to *laughter* seems therefore to favour too much of levity, to be an appendage of this Joy. 'Tis indeed too sensual a mode of expressing so Divine a passion, and approaches too near to the way, in which the men of the world express that joy, which has the things of time and sense for its proper object: Nor does it discover that awe and reverence, that holy fear and caution, with which this Joy ought always to be mixt, as it has to do with the infinite majesty of heaven, and the everlasting concerns of our souls.

In fine, it deserves our further consideration here, that the *passionate* part of this Joy, the *sensible* working of it, is widely different in different persons, according to the different turn of their natural tempers. Some are of a ductile make, their passions soft, and apt to carry them into transports. And if persons of this moveable disposition are more sensibly affected, than others of a firm and steady frame of mind, 'tis no other than might be expected: But, perhaps, a settled, permanent composure and delight of soul, arising from the testimony of a good conscience, is the most desirable sense, in which we can be possess'd of the joys of religion; at least, in ordinary cases: To be sure, whoever have this peace of GOD, this joy of the LORD, they are blessed persons, tho' they know not the meaning of those raptures some others may experience; and the state of mind they are brought to, they may assure themselves, is an effect of the HOLY GHOST, which has been at work in them.

7. The last thing, the time will allow me to mention, as contained in *this gift*, is the *witness of the SPI-*

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RIT. That is to say, that influence of the HOLY GHOST whereby he satisfies good Christians of their adoption into GOD's family, and interest in the promises of the Gospel covenant. The holy apostle Paul is very exprefs in taking notice of this instance of the SPIRIT'S operation. Hence he applies to those, who are led by the SPIRIT, and are the Sons of GOD, in that language, * But ye have received the SPIRIT of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, father. Parallel whereto are those words of his, in his Epistle to the Galatians †, And because ye are Sons, GOD hath sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON, into your hearts, crying, Abba, father. But the most observable text to this purpose, is that in Rom. 8. 16, 17. The SPIRIT it self beareth witness with our Spirits, that we are the children of GOD: And if children, then Heirs, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST.

Some, perhaps, from this text, may expect an immediate whisper from the SPIRIT, or some secret extraordinary impulse, assuring them, they are the children of GOD. And I deny not but the HOLY GHOST can, if he pleases, in this way, make it evident to a man, that he is an heir to the inheritance of the Saints in light: But this does not appear to be the way of the SPIRIT'S witnessing; and it may be dangerous for persons to ground their hopes of heaven upon meer impulses and impressions: Especially, will this be dangerous, if they set up these things in the room of the written word, or depend upon them in opposition to it. Multitudes have by degrees come to this, and dreadful have been the delusions they have been betrayed into. They have even mistook, not only the workings of their own imaginations, but the suggestions of Satan, for undoubted dictates of the HOLY GHOST.

This witness of the SPIRIT is always agreeable to the Scripture, and lies principally in two things. First,

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* Rom. 8. 15.

† Chap. 4. ver. 6.

in producing in us the disposition of GOD's children, which is done in the work of regeneration, whereby we are form'd to a Divine likeness, and made, as it were, living images of our FATHER in heaven. And then, *secondly*, in helping us to see in our selves this filial frame and temper of Soul, and so to see it as from hence to be clearly perswaded of our interest in the rights of the Sons of GOD. The *first* of these is the proper Gospel evidence to the privilege of *adoption*; the *second*, that by which it is made *evident to us* that this privilege is *ours*; and by both is compleated the *witness of the SPIRIT*, that influence of his, whereby we are assured that we are GOD's children.

Let me add here, and I may do it with the greatest boldness, that where there is not a *work of grace* in the heart, it can never be witnessed to a man, that he is a child of GOD; for he is not: And by whatever impulses, impressions, or revelations, he is made to believe that he is, he is certainly under the influence of a heated imagination, or a spirit of delusion. The Divine SPIRIT, as Mr. HENRY observes, "witnesses to none, the privileges of children, that have not the nature and disposition of children"; No, but he "testifies our adoption, as Mr. BURKITT's words are, by evidencing to us our sanctification. And all this, as he adds*, is done, not by sudden impulses, and immediate inspirations, which is the *witnessing* of the SPIRIT, *Enthusiasts* pretend to, but the SPIRIT *witnesses* in a way of argumentation. Thus, whoever repents, believes and obeys the Gospel, says the Scripture, shall be saved; but the SPIRIT helps us to see that we do so, and accordingly enables us to infer and conclude that we shall be saved."— But I am sensible I have been too long in explaining to you, what we are to understand by the *gift of the HOLY GHOST*.

* BURKITT in loc.

I therefore hasten, to the next observable in the text, viz.

II. The *Persons* to whom the HOLY GHOST is said to have been given; and these were the *Gentiles also*, i. e. both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the one as well as the other, without respect of persons.

The *Jews* were formerly the people of God, in distinction from all others. The LORD was their God so as he was not the GOD of other nations. He had selected them out of the rest of the world, to be instructed, conducted and blessed by him beyond any other people: They are therefore called a *chosen generation*, a *peculiar people*; and to them, as the apostle speaks, *pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the giving the law, and the covenant, and the promises of GOD*. And they had a high conceit of themselves, on account of this distinction, GOD had made between them, and the other nations of the earth; encouraging a hope, as if it would always continue: Nor could they be reconciled to the thought of an enlargement of God's covenant, so as to bring *others* upon a level with *them* in regard of the favour of GOD, and the happiness of heaven. The *apostles* themselves; and this, even after the death and resurrection of CHRIST, were too much under the influence of this *Jewish Spirit*. And it was, in an extraordinary manner, by a vision from heaven, that *Peter* was *shewed not to call any man common or unclean*. And it was upon his preaching, in consequence of this Divine revelation, in that strain, *I perceive of a truth, that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him*; I say, it was upon *Peter's* preaching in such language as this, that GOD owned the truth of what he delivered, by a miraculous effusion of the HOLY GHOST, even while he was preaching, upon all his hearers promiscuously, both

Jews

Jews and Gentiles. And it was this *pouring out of the SPIRIT* upon the *Gentiles* in common with the *Jews*, that was the occasion of the *astonishment* we read of, in the former part of the verse, in which is the text. The *Jews* could not tell what to make of it, to see that *GOD* took as much notice of the *Gentiles* as of them: It was a mighty surprize to them; yea, there was scarce a greater stone of stumbling to them, than the calling of the *Gentiles*. This was a *mystery hid in GOD from ages and generations*, and not made manifest to the *Saints* until now*. We of the *Gentiles*, who were *aliens from the common-wealth of Israel*, and *strangers from the covenant of promise*, and *far off from GOD*, were now made nigh by the blood of *CHRIST*; for he is our peace, and hath made both *Jews* and *Gentiles* one, having broken down the middle wall of partition between us, and having preached peace to us who were afar off, as well as to them that were nigh. And my text is a standing glorious evidence of an *Equality* between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, in regard of the gift of the *HOLY GHOST*. For he was given to both these sorts of persons, without distinction: Nor is there, as to this matter, any respect of persons with *GOD*. He puts no difference between *Jew* and *Greek*; but is rich to all that call upon him: And whoever the persons be that do so, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, whether they be *bond* or *free*, *male* or *female*, they shall, without regarding the one any more than the other, have granted to them the gift of the *HOLY GHOST*. It is promised equally to all the varying kinds of sinners, and they have all equal encouragement to apply to the father of mercies for it. They are all *one in CHRIST JESUS*; He came equally to be a *SAVIOUR* to them all, and he is equally ready to impart of his *SPIRIT* to them all, to fulfil in them the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work

* Eph. 3. 9. Col. 1. 26.

work of faith with power. But I must go on to the last thing taken notice of in the text, *viz.*

III. The *manner* of bestowing this *gift of the HOLY GHOST*. It was *poured out*. *i. e.* GOD was pleased to bestow it largely and plentifully. He so bestowed it, as that they were filled with the SPIRIT; as that they were *all* made to partake of this *gift*. Like a plentiful shower of rain, the HOLY GHOST came down upon the *whole assembly*, he fell upon every person present; they had each one a sensible perception of his influences, and were enabled herefrom to *speak with tongues, and magnify GOD*. The *miraculous* gifts of the HOLY GHOST, were those especially, in which he was now *poured out*; but 'tis probable, he fell likewise, in a plentiful manner, in his more *ordinary* influences; and that numbers were enlightned and humbled, and put, at least, under a hopeful prospect of being converted and saved. To be sure, the HOLY GHOST was thus *poured out*, in the first days of the Gospel. *i. e.* in his *graces* as well as *gifts*; to the ends of *faith* and *sanctification*, as well as to enable men to *shew signs and wonders*. Hence, when the *apostle* is speaking of *regeneration*, as accompanied with *justification*, and a *hope of eternal life*, he attributes it to the HOLY GHOST *shed, or poured out, on us, abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST, our SAVIOUR**.

And this *manner* of giving the HOLY GHOST, the *pouring him out*, the bestowing him on great numbers of persons, as well as in large and abundant measures, is one of the things particularly prophesied of, as what should be the glory of *Gospel-times*. The texts to this purpose are very observable. Says GOD himself, Isa. 44. 3. *I will pour out my SPIRIT upon thy seed, and my blessing on thy offspring*. And again, Zach. 12. 10.

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* Tit. 3. 6.

I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the SPIRIT of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for a first born. And yet again, Joel 2. 28. *It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my SPIRIT upon all flesh.* These texts, to be sure, the two last of them, principally look forward to Gospel times; and they had a marvellous accomplishment in the first days of Christianity; not only in the miraculous gifts, with which multitudes were then filled, but in the *graces* of the SPIRIT, they were enabled to live in the exemplary exercise of, to the astonishment of all beholders.

But, perhaps, these prophecies may look forward still, and point our view to those times that are yet to come, when the *little stone cut out without hands, shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth; when the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high; when the blindness that has happened to Israel shall be removed, and the fulness of the Gentiles come in; and the new heavens, and the new earth be created, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

For my self, I am not ashamed to own, I am one of those who look, according to the *promise of God*, for a far more glorious state of things, both among *Jews and Gentiles*, than has ever yet been seen; a state of things, wherein *he that has the key of the bottomless pit shall lay hold on the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and satan, and bind him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled:* The effect whereof will be that *universal prevalence of faith, love, peace, and all those christian Graces, which transform*

transform Men into a likeness to God, and make them happy in the participation of the fruits of his favour.

And to this happy state of things do these prophecies, which speak of the pouring out of the SPIRIT, finally look: Nor will they have their full completion, till the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the seas. When the set time for this will commence, is a secret the FATHER hath kept in his own breast: And 'tis known only to him; what instruments and means he will make use of in bringing to pass this great event; but whatever the means or the instruments are, the work will be chiefly his: It will not be accomplish'd by their might, but by the power of the SPIRIT of the LORD of hosts; his SPIRIT poured out upon the world, in such abundant measures, and upon such vast multitudes, as has been hitherto unknown. This pouring out of the SPIRIT therefore is what we should pray for, as that only which will be effectual to the setting up GOD'S KING upon his holy hill of Zion, so as to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. But I must now proceed to the

APPLICATION. And;

i. Let us take occasion, from what has been offer'd, to examine each one of us, whether the gift of the HOLY GHOST has been poured out upon us. This is a matter it very nearly concerns us all to enquire into. For if any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is none of his. He is no disciple of CHRIST; he has no interest in the favour of GOD, nor in the merits of the SAVIOUR; he is yet in his sins, a child of wrath, and an heir to Hell. Can you then be too solicitous to know, whether you have this gift, which is a matter of such everlasting importance? You may come to a comfortable satisfaction as to this from what has been discours'd.

You will easily collect thence, wherein this gift does not consist; that it does not lie in *visions*, and *revelations*, and *Trances*. None of these things are mentioned any where in the bible, as such evidences of the SPIRIT in us, as will argue our belonging to CHRIST JESUS: Nay, even in the days of the Apostles, they were no proof of a real good character. Persons, in those times, might *see visions*, and *shew signs*; yea, and *cast out Devils*, and *do many wonderful works*, and after all be doom'd to a *departure from CHRIST*, to *dwell with devouring fire*. The gift of the HOLY GHOST, in a sense that will denominate you the *children of GOD*, and *Heirs to heaven* lies not in things of this nature; but in those *internal operations* that are common to all *good Christians*, and have been to in *all ages*, and in *all places*, from the days of CHRIST.

Would you know, my brethren, whether the HOLY GHOST has been *poured out* upon you, so as that you may conclude your selves to be interested in CHRIST, and in such a state as that you may expect the salvation of your Souls, you may, by the help of grace, come to a good hope of this, by asking your selves such questions as these.

What have been my *perceptions of Sin*? Have I ever had any sorrowful reflections in my breast, at the thought that I am a sinner? Has a sense of sin been grievous to me? Have I had upon my mind a consciousness of guilt? Have I had a view of my self as exposed to the wrath of almighty GOD, and been in concern hereat, and inquisitive how I might escape? If you can't say thus of your selves, you have reason to be afraid of your condition. You, to be sure, have reason to be so, who han't been under restraints from sin, but have *walk'd in the way of your own hearts*, and *in the sight of your own eyes*, *adding iniquity to transgression*. Is it reasonable to think such sinners, as you are, should be brought to a right mind, without severe and bitter

bitter reflections on your selves? 'Tis not possible, you should have a just conception of your selves, and of the real truth of your character, and not be in deep anxiety of Soul: Nor may you imagine, you have been sav-
 ingly chang'd from a state of sin to a state of grace, if you have had no remorse of conscience, no uneasiness in your breasts on account of your sins, no fear of the Divine majesty, nor of the vengeance of the eternal world. Such, whose case this is, have upon them the sad marks of being to this day in *the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity*. And oh! of how many, may it be feared, is this the just character! Are there not multitudes *at ease in Zion*, who have upon their minds no concern about their sins, no fear of the Divine wrath; but are going on calmly and quietly in the broad way to death and hell? If there are any here present, whose consciences tell them, they are the men, let me beseech you, as you love your souls, and would not be the destroyers of them, to bethink your selves. Whether you will believe it or not, you are, as sinners against the God that made you, the proper objects of hell, and nothing keeps you out of that place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, but the patience of a provoked God, which may even this day come to an end with you. And is this a condition to be easy in? O be convinced of your danger! You are certainly in circumstances of amazing hazard: O realize it to be so! and bow your knee to the God and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, beseeching him, with a becoming importunity of soul, to have mercy upon you. Your help is only in God, through JESUS CHRIST. O cry mightily to him! He may hear from heaven, and convert and save you.

But if upon inquiry you should find, you have been under uneasy sensations from a consciousness of sin and guilt, rest not satisfied with this; but go on and inquire, how these *perceptions* have operated, what has

been the effect of them. In themselves, *convictions* are no sufficient evidence of a good state. You may have roared out by reason of the disquietness within you; and yet be at a distance from GOD and grace. Don't be content that you have been under awakenings, but examine into their issue. Have you herefrom seen your need of CHRIST? Have you repaired to him as the SAVIOUR of undone sinners? Have you been enabled to place your trust in him, and in him alone for righteousness and eternal life? Are you become *new men*? Have you experienced that change, which will denominate you the children of GOD, and born from above? Be critical in your inquiry into this matter. Is the change you have passed under, a change only in your affections? Is it nothing more than a little outward reformation? Does it lie only in an attendance on *sermons* and *lectures*? Or is it indeed a change from the power of sin and satan, a change into the likeness of GOD? Have you, in truth, been made partakers of the *Divine nature*? Have you been transformed, by the renewing of your mind, into the image of CHRIST JESUS? Unless the Image of the Devil has been detaced in you, and you have been really chang'd into a resemblance to the blessed GOD, and his SON JESUS CHRIST, notwithstanding all your other experiences, be they what they will, and as many and as great as they will, you are yet in your sins; you are yet in such a state, as that if you should go out of the world without a further change, you would certainly miss of heaven, and be sent away to hell.

And let me tell you, if you have indeed been *renewed in the spirit of your minds*, it will shew it self in your *lives*. The change that has been wrought in you will have an influence upon your whole outward conduct and behaviour. You will leave off former sins, and put in practice neglected duties. As the grace of GOD teaches, you will deny ungodliness, and worldly

lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godlily in the world. You will attend the duties of piety, become men of prayer, the devout worshippers of God, in the closet, in the family, and in the place where he records his name. You will keep under restraint your passions of wrath, and anger, and hatred; you will abstain from all filthy talking and jesting: And as for the gross acts of uncleanness and intemperance, they will not be so much as named among you. In fine, you will do to others as you would they should do to you. You will put away lying, and speak every man truth with his neighbour. You will be fair and equitable in your treatment of mankind; honest in your dealings; faithful to your promises: All clamour and evil-speaking, you will lay aside; with all slandering, back-biting, tattling and tale-bearing: And you will (as the elect of God) put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as God for CHRIST's sake forgiveth you. And above all these things, you will put on *charity*, which is the bond of perfectness. In one word, there will be an amendment of your carriage in all the *relations* you sustain. You will be better husbands and wives; better parents and children; better masters and servants: You will be better neighbours, better friends, better subjects; yea, you will be better in every *station*, and in every *condition* of life: Nor otherwise may you think you have been renewed after the image of him that created you. Let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous: He that committeth sin is of the Devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil; Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Some, perhaps, may think these things of no great importance; but deceive not your selves, impose not

on your own Souls; the work of the SPIRIT, where-ever it is savingly wrought, will have an influence upon the *whole man*, not only the *heart*, but the *life*: And 'tis a vain thing, in any man, to pretend he has the SPIRIT, in his saving influences, if, in his *outward life*, he is habitually unconformed to the Gospel. Where-ever there is true faith, that faith, whereby we are *justified freely of GOD's grace, without the deeds of the law, thro' the redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST*, there will be a holy life: And if our faith does not express it self this way, 'tis that *dead faith*, the apostle *James* speaks of, which is of no account with GOD: And notwithstanding such a faith, a man may perish; yea, if he has no better a faith, he certainly will perish: The mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

These are the things, my brethren, by which you are to make tryal of your selves, whether the HOLY GHOST has been *poured out upon you*. And a number of you, I trust, have reason, upon the tryal, to say, it has been so with you: Yea, the SPIRIT himself, I would hope, has *witnessed with your Spirits*, that you are the *children of GOD*; and if children, then *heirs*; *heirs of GOD*, and *joint-heirs with CHRIST*, to the *inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*. And if, from this testimony of the SPIRIT, with that of your own conscience, you are filled with peace, and enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory to be hereafter revealed, you are happy among men! You have within you the just grounds of a holy joy, and 'tis no wonder if you are glad: You, if any persons on earth, have reason to rejoice. Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous! and again I say, rejoice: Yet, let your joy be mixt with a becoming caution. Rejoice with trembling! Be not high-minded, but fear. — Take heed, you be not elated with pride. — O let humility, in all the lowly expressions of it, be ever the attendant of your joy!

And

And let not those be too much discouraged, who have not this joy of assurance. You may not from hence conclude that the SPIRIT has not been *given* to you. Assurance, however desirable; yet, is not *essential*. A man may be a sincere Christian without it: Yet, let me call upon you, not to rest satisfied while in uncertainty about the state of your souls; but to *give all diligence*, as the apostle exhorts, *to make your calling and election sure*. Think no pains too much, if, by any means, you may come to *know* that the SPIRIT dwelleth in you. 'Twill be a spring of comfort to you, all along in life, through all the varying conditions of it; and 'twill make even the thought of death pleasant to us. But 'tis time that I draw towards a close; and this I shall do by only adding in the

2. Second place, That we have reason from what has been said, to be seeking to GOD for the *out-pouring of his SPIRIT*.

This is the design of this day's solemnity; nor will any one object against a thing so reasonable as *supplication* to GOD for the *gift of the HOLY GHOST*.

This is a *necessary* gift; that indeed without which nothing else will be effectual to our having that temper of mind formed in us, without which we shall never be qualified for an admission into the coming and eternal kingdom of GOD. We may not be sufficiently apprehensive of it, but 'tis a certain truth, 'tis only by the SPIRIT of GOD, sin can be rooted out of our hearts, and the dispositions of holiness implanted there. No means, nor instruments, will of themselves be able to effect this. It can be accomplish'd by no power, but that of the *divine SPIRIT*. And is it then a needless thing to make our prayer to GOD for his SPIRIT? There is nothing we can go to him for, that is a matter of greater necessity.

And

And prayer upon this occasion is the more proper, as it's the way we are directed to in the bible, in order to our obtaining the SPIRIT. Our SAVIOUR has commanded us to ask this gift of our heavenly FATHER*: And GOD himself has said, he will be inquired of by his people to bestow it upon them†.

And O what encouragement have we to pray for the holy SPIRIT! Our SAVIOUR promised, before he left the world, that his SPIRIT should abide with his Church for ever; and has expressly declared, that *if we ask, we shall receive; if we seek, we shall find; if we knock, it shall be opened to us*: Yea, he has condescended to argue with us, to convince us of the readiness of our heavenly FATHER, to give us his holy SPIRIT, if we suitably seek to him herefor. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly FATHER give the holy SPIRIT to them that ask him* §? We who are parents know the working of our bowels towards our children: We feel within our selves, tho' we are evil and sinful, a strong propension to hearken to their cry; and if we are sometimes unable, we are never unwilling to bestow upon them those good things, they ask of us, which we know are needful for them: And shall we suspect that goodness of our heavenly FATHER, in compare with which, the tender mercies of men are cruelty? Shall earthly, selfish, sinful parents give good gifts to their children, and shall not our FATHER in heaven much more give his holy SPIRIT to them that ask him? 'Tis unreasonable, 'tis base and ungrateful to harbour in our minds the least doubt or hesitation as to this matter. For he is GOD and not man; and therefore infinitely more kind and merciful than the most tender-hearted parents on earth.

Having

* Luk. 11. 9. † Ezek. 36. 39. ‡ Luk. 11. 9. § Luk. 11. 13.

Having therefore such strong encouragement, let us prostrate before the throne of GOD, and pray to him for the *out-pouring of his SPIRIT.*

Let us pray, that he may be *poured out* upon the Church of CHRIST in general; that there may be a revival of true primitive Christianity. Religion, it may be, was never at a lower ebb, in the professing world, than at this day. 'Tis indeed, in general, notwithstanding what GOD may be doing, in here and there a particular place, in a sad, decay'd, languishing, and almost dead condition. To be sure, it is so in regard of the *real power of Godliness*, in the room of which has been introduced, and taken place, meer form and external appearance, a thousand superstitions and fopperies; and what is worse than all, a spirit of tyranny, whereby these things have been bound upon the consciences of men, to the eating out the very bowels of true vital Christianity: Yea, by far the greater part of the nations, who call themselves the people of GOD, as professing subjection to him through JESUS CHRIST, have, in a dreadful degree, corrupted his worship, and perverted his truths; teaching for Doctrines, the commandments of men, and bowing the knee to *saints* and *angels* together with CHRIST, and making use of *them* as well as *him*, for *mediators* and *intercessors*: Nor may it be expected, they should ever be in a better state, till GOD shall work powerfully and generally upon the hearts of men, by his holy SPIRIT. We have such a passage as that, * *Until the SPIRIT be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field; and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.* You observe, the *pouring out of the SPIRIT*, and the *wilderness becoming fruitful*, are connected with each other. The Church of GOD will never be recovered out of that desolate, barren condition it is in,

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but

but by the *plentiful effusion* of the SPIRIT; and when ever it shall please GOD thus to *pour out his SPIRIT*, it shall revive and flourish, and be as the field which the LORD hath blessed. This is what we should pray for; and it should inspire our prayers with faith and fervour, to consider the many promises, which seem, in their ultimate intention, to look forward to the *last days*; some of which, I have already mentioned to you.

Let us pray likewise for the *pouring out of the SPIRIT* upon our nation: Nor did they ever stand more in need of prayer for this blessing, than at present. There are, it is to be hoped, a good number still left, of whom it may be said, they are *good men, and full of faith and of the HOLY GHOST*: But for the nation in general, it never was, perhaps, in a more corrupt and degenerate state, than at this day. The truths of GOD were never more disowned; the revelations of GOD were never more disbelieved; and the ways of GOD were never more deserted, for the ways of sin which lead to death and hell. The language, in which the holy GOD address'd to his people *Israel* of old, may pertinently be applied to them, * *Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! for the LORD hath spoken: I have nourished, and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. Ah! sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers; they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the holy one of Israel to anger, they are gone backward.* We cannot more properly express our regards to them than by our prayers to GOD, to *pour out his SPIRIT* on them, to their effectual humiliation and repentance: And the more fervent we are in our supplications for this mercy, the more shall we discover a true christian affection for them.

Let

Let us pray also, for the *out-pouring* of the SPIRIT upon our land. There is room for prayer in this respect. A concern, I am sensible, has been generally awaken'd in the minds of people, in one place and another: And it has, I trust, been of spiritual advantage to many; who, it may be hoped, have been either *savingly converted* to GOD, or *enliven'd* and *quicken'd* in the work of religion, and their soul's everlasting salvation. There are, I doubt not, a number in this land, upon whom GOD has graciously *shed* the influences of his blessed SPIRIT; and we ought to be thankful for what of the SPIRIT, we have reason to hope there is among us: But there is yet need of prayer; and the more so, as so many things have arisen among us, which are a dishonour to GOD, and may have a tendency greatly to obstruct the progress of real and substantial religion. Alas! what unchristian heats and animosities are there in many places, to the dividing and breaking in pieces of churches and towns? What a spirit of rash, censorious, uncharitable judging prevails too generally all over the land? What bitterness and wrath and clamour, what evil-speaking, reviling and slandering, are become common; and among those too, who would be counted good christians? How alienated are many ministers from each other, and how instrumental of hurting rather than promoting one another's usefulness? What prejudices are there in the minds of too many people against the *standing ministry*, tho' perhaps as faithful a one as any part of the world is favour'd with? And how general is the disposition they discover to flock after every *weak* and *illiterate* EXHORTER, to the contempt of their *pastors*, who have spent, it may be, the most of their days, in faithful services for their souls? How heated are the imaginations of a great many, and into what excesses do they betray them?

These

These and such like things, it is too evident to be disowned, are grown too common, not in a single place only, but in most places throughout the country. How they may appear to some others I know not; but to me, I confess, they afford no comfortable prospect. I can't but think it is now a *special season* for prayer. Let us unite in our cries to the GOD, who dwelleth on high. — Let us pray for a *general effusion* of the SPIRIT upon the *land*; and that he may come down, not only as a Spirit of *humiliation* and *sanctification*, but as a Spirit of *wisdom*, that so they who are *zealous* may be *prudently* and *knowingly* so; and they who are *pious* exemplarily so, adorning the doctrine of GOD their SAVIOUR in all things, and cutting off occasion from them who might be glad of occasion to speak evil of them.

In fine, Let us the people of GOD, who usually worship in this place, *pray* for the *out-pouring* of the SPIRIT upon *our selves* more particularly. Blessed be GOD, we are not wholly without the influences of his SPIRIT. Some, we trust, have had experience of his operations on their souls. The LORD increase their number! The LORD grant, that the SPIRIT may fall from on high on the whole congregation! Let us pray that it may be so; that the HOLY GHOST may be *poured out*, both upon *Pastors* and *people*, upon high and low, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, old and young, to the revival of the things which remain and are ready to die.

This is the blessing we are come to ask of GOD. O let us be importunate in our cries to him for it! Let us pray with an importunity that shall pierce even heaven.

And let us not think it enough that we join together in the *public prayers* of this day; but let us go on with our *prayers*. Let us each one pray to GOD by *our selves*, and with *our families*: And let us pray, and cease not. And

And while we pray for the SPIRIT, let us beware of every thing that may have a tendency to prevent his influences being shed upon us. Let us be upon our guard against all sin, and those sins in special, by which GOD may be provok'd to withhold from us his blessed SPIRIT. Let us take heed, that we don't harbour prejudices in our minds against the SPIRIT, his *office* and *work* upon the hearts of sinners: And while we are ready to give to the divine SPIRIT the honour of those *operations* that are truly *his*, let us maintain a care that we don't reflect disgrace upon him by making him the author of those things, which are unworthy of him: The SPIRIT may be dishonoured both these ways; and perhaps he has been as much reproach'd by the *latter* as he has been slighted by the *former*.

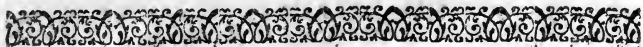
We should also be diligent in our attendance on *all means*, especially *the word preached*. *Sabbaths* must be observed. — GOD must be waited on at his *house*; his *worship* regarded; his *word*, in the *ministry* of it, attended to, GOD is often present by his SPIRIT, when the *word* is dispensed. We read in my text of many upon whom the HOLY GHOST fell, while they were *bearing the word*. And 'tis observed of the *Galatians*,* that they *received the SPIRIT by the beareng of faith*, i. e. the preaching of the *word of faith*, the Gospel of CHRIST. But then, you must not think, that *bearing of Sermons* is all that is necessary. You must so hear as to find time for *meditation*, *self-examination*, and a serious *self-application*. And you must come to hear without any previous bias upon your minds, without prepossessions and prejudices against either the *word*, or the *dispenser* of it. You must come with minds open to conviction, willing to receive the truth, as it

* Chap. 3. 2.

is in JESUS; otherwise the best preaching in the world will be of no service to you.

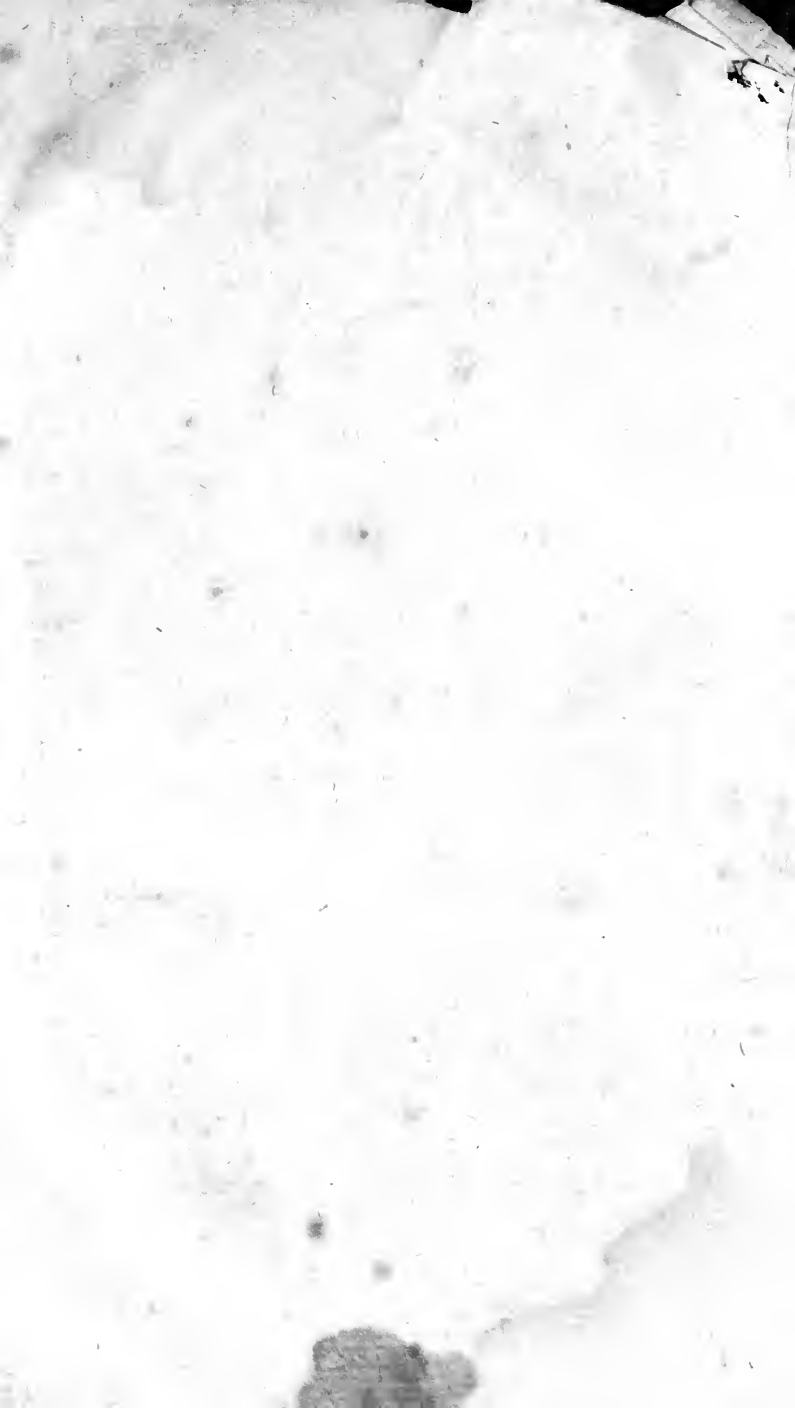
In a word, you must make it the great business of your lives to obtain the influences of the holy SPIRIT. This, you must esteem, the main thing; and here you must lay out your chief strength. This must be your continual care. You must make it your main business; subordinating your other affairs to this which is of the greatest importance.

And if it shall please GOD to *pour out his SPIRIT* upon us, then shall we remember from whence we are fallen, and repent and do our first works; then will the work of religion prosper among us, sinners be awa-ken'd, humbled and converted, and saints be quicken'd and enliven'd. Then shall we flourish like the palm-tree, and grow like the cedar in Lebanon, and being planted in the courts of our GOD, shall bring forth fruit, even till old age, to shew that the LORD is upright: Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant for the sake of CHRIST JESUS, to whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN.



F I N I S.





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