

ARTICLE IV.

ON A CALL TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

The first number of the current volume of this *Review* contained an article on this subject written by the undersigned. In the next number there appeared an article reviewing the former and earnestly controverting some of the positions it was designed to maintain. The "Remarks" of this reviewer appear to demand some notice from me; and the importance of the subject and of the questions it involves will justify further discussion.* In attempting this I ask permission, in order to avoid inconvenient and awkward circumlocutions, to write in my own name. This will perhaps be allowed me the more readily in view of the fact that the reviewer made so free a use of my name, and devoted his article almost entirely to an attack on my positions.

* It should be stated here that this reply of Dr. Porter was delayed for a considerable time by his ill-health. Since it went into the Printer's hands the sad intelligence has reached us of his death. Our readers will peruse with deep and affecting interest what probably was the last important labor performed by our brother with his pen.—[EDS. REVIEW.

It will be greatly to be regretted if the discussion of this subject should degenerate into a personal controversy between individuals. If this should be the case it will not be my fault. In my article I endeavored, as far as possible, to avoid even an allusion to the views of any one by name. I wish it had not become necessary for me to do otherwise now. I shall seek, however, to write with the meekness and patience and fairness which become me, and which the matter requires, earnestly imploring the gracious presence and power of the Spirit of God, which the reviewer affirms that I disparage and deny.

The reviewer did not intend to be unfair in assailing the article reviewed or to misrepresent its positions. He is not capable of doing so designedly. But he has undoubtedly had the misfortune of falling into both these errors, and in a multitude of instances. These are so numerous that it will be impossible to specify all of them, and the reader must be trusted from those which may be pointed out to discover the others if he cares to take the trouble. There are two misapprehensions, however, which appear to run through the article and to lead to many of the cases of unfairness and misrepresentation alluded to.

In the first place, the reviewer seems to confound a real, present, personal, gracious agency of the Divine Spirit with that which is direct and immediate; to recognise no distinction between them, and to suppose that when the latter is denied the former is also rejected. It is impossible otherwise to account for the objections he sometimes advances against the article reviewed and the manner in which he represents its positions. If, in any respect, I differ from the ancient faith of the Reformed Church as to the office and work of the Holy Ghost, I do not know what it is. If the views of the article reviewed are inconsistent with that faith, in any particular, I am blind to the fact. It affirms repeatedly that all things in the Kingdom of our Lord, from the least to the greatest, are administered, by the Holy Spirit; that when he employs means and instruments in the execution of his work, the power and the efficacy thereof are not theirs but his, and whatever gracious and saving effects attend the use of them, are to be ascribed not to them but to him. The reviewer charges that article with denying the action of

the Spirit in several respects for “the sole purpose” of taking “out of the Spirit’s hand any *direct* part in calling men into the ministry, and to diminish also his *direct* influence in regeneration and sanctification;” and that furthermore the design of it all is to exalt the Church and the Word “at the expense of the Spirit.” P. 315. The simple truth is that the article so accused maintains a real personal agency of the Spirit in the call, and it does not deny “all direct and immediate action of the Spirit in the call,” as is affirmed p. 314. It only denies *one kind* of direct and immediate action of the Spirit therein, viz.: a direct and immediate communication of God’s will in the matter. To what extent, if any, the divine Spirit in a call to the ministry puts forth on the soul an immediate and direct influence, similar to that exerted in regeneration and sanctification, and described by Dr. Thornwell in the quotation from his sermon on “the Gospel, God’s Power and Wisdom,” as that by which he “puts the soul in a condition to receive the truth,” I have not discussed or assumed to determine. That is not the point in question. I do not know one orthodox theologian who goes further than I will in the most devout belief of the real, present, personal agency of the blessed Spirit, and of his direct and immediate agency on the souls of men in this sense and in this manner. But I do not believe that in the present dispensation of the Lord’s kingdom there is any direct and immediate communication by the Spirit, of knowledge, either of doctrine or of duty. This is the question in dispute. I believe, that in a call to the ministry, the Spirit leads the one called to a knowledge of his duty by the ordinary means and instrumentalities. The reviewer holds that the Spirit makes that duty known to him by a direct and immediate act; which, if it means anything at all different from my view, means that this is done not in the use of means but by an immediate revelation.

This is as good a place as any to notice the accusation of the reviewer against my article as teaching that “the call must not be regarded as other than *natural*.” “This word ‘natural’ may not be used by Dr. P., but he certainly condemns the term *supernatural* in reference to the call,” p. 313. Where, and

when? This charge, so positively and “certainly” made, was so astonishing that I read the article over twice with the special purpose of discovering in what part of it I had given ground for such an assertion. There is none whatever. The truth is, I carefully avoided the use of that word “supernatural” in one way or another, for the reason that it is so liable to be misunderstood, and carries, to so many minds, meanings so different, vague and undefined. The reader will probably agree with me that the effort of the reviewer to explain its meaning, with the aid of Dr. Thornwell, does not accomplish much. I am willing to take either sense of the term he furnishes us, and to say that in that sense I hold the call to be supernatural; and there is nothing in my article inconsistent therewith.

Further, if I had condemned the use of the term *supernatural* in reference to the call, the reviewer might have extended the same charitable interpretation to me which he did to Bannerman, pp. 331, 332. And, in this connection, it may be profitable to quote the testimony of that author in his work on Inspiration, pp. 229, 230. He there speaks of “the ancient doctrine of the Church, that the operations of the Spirit of God are to be separated into the supernatural in the department of miracle and inspiration—the special or extraordinary in the department of grace—and the common or ordinary in the department of nature.” “These ancient distinctions, deep and well laid in the truth of the things, which theologians of every shade have recognised, are not to be done away by a play upon words, or a shifting of terms, because it may happen that things that differ are spoken of under the same language employed in different senses.”

If Bannerman is correct in these statements, and the reviewer will no doubt admit them, then if I had condemned the use of the term *supernatural* in reference to the call, I would have done so in most excellent company and a plenty of it. According to these distinctions I “certainly” do condemn it.

There is now a more current and popular use of this term, which includes the second distinction noted by Bannerman. In this sense all evangelical Christians hold the call to be super-

natural, as they do all the ordinary dispensations of the Spirit, and I "certainly" agree with them.

In the second place the reviewer appears to confound "conscience" and "consciousness," and the testimony of consciousness with the testimony of conscience or a conviction of duty. This confusion seems to run through his entire article, to give rise to his most earnest and excited objections to my views, and to be the ground of one of the four main arguments he advances against them. Over and over again, in a variety of terms, he accuses me of denying that one called can have any certainty, or assurance, or settled conviction, or testimony of his own conscience, that he is called of the Spirit, whereas I have done nothing of the kind. The fact is I affirmed the contrary, pp. 73-79. And the intelligent reader, by examining the places in my article referred to by the reviewer as giving ground for his objections of this kind, will find that what I ascribe or deny to *consciousness*, the reviewer misapplies to *conscience* and a conviction of duty. It will not be expected of me to give here an explanation of the difference between these two. I took care to guard against confounding them and not to say *conscience* when I meant *consciousness*. The reason for this lies in the fact that the theory of a call which I oppose and the reviewer adopts and defends necessarily makes it to depend on the *consciousness* of the individual as the faculty by which it is known and recognised. The call is direct and immediate, by the Spirit making, known to his consciousness that he is called. The conviction of duty, the testimony of *conscience* that he is called, is not the call, or a part of it. It is the result and consequence of the call, Conscience cannot tell him that it is his duty to enter the ministry until he has come to know that he is called. The reviewer himself tells us that this conviction of duty, this testimony of conscience, is one of the *evidences* of a call. It is not therefore the call itself, or one of its constituent elements. And yet one of his chief objections to the article he reviews is that by "making too little of the individual's convictions of his own direct and special call, both the call and the ministry are disparaged," p. 296. Now it was not at all the design of that

article to discuss the *evidences* of a call, or to make much or little of any one or other of them. Its subject was the *nature* of a call. The question was, What is a call to the ministry, what constitutes such a call, or *how* does God call men to that work? The criticisms of the reviewer on this point are therefore altogether aside of the question. If it had been my aim to present the *evidences* of a call, possibly I might have had enough to say of the importance of the testimony of conscience, of a conviction that one is called by the divine Spirit, to satisfy the reviewer and to show that on this point I and the two writers whom he defends, are not so wide apart after all. There is no question as I understand it, about this conviction, the necessity of it, or the strength of it—but as to the way in which it is arrived at, how it is produced. The theory of the reviewer affirms that it is the result of and follows an operation of the Spirit making known to the individual directly and immediately the will of God and designating him to his own consciousness to the work of the ministry. The theory I advocate teaches that the knowledge of the divine will is communicated to him through means and instrumentalities; and the consequent conviction of duty, of a divine call to enter the ministry may be just as clear, strong, assured, settled, and certain in this case as in the other.

This failure of the reviewer to apprehend the distinction of “consciousness” and “conscience,” explains the otherwise unaccountable fact that he could write, p. 297: “Thus the claim of having a settled conviction in his soul, that the fearallest of all trusts is laid on him by Christ . . . such a conviction is held up by Dr. P. as identical with that claim to inspiration made by fanatics.” “Dr. P. insists that any such testimony as that of a conviction which claims to be the Spirit’s work, and to be recognised as such by the man’s conscience, either is a Satanic delusion, or carries us at once into the region of such delusions. Whoever claims to have such convictions is an enthusiast and a fanatic”—all this, and much more like it, is a most unfair, though doubtless unintentional, misrepresentation. And it is the only foundation for the charge which follows it of a “denial of the spiritual and internal element in the call” and a “low,

rationalistic depreciation of that element as fanatical and dangerous."

It seems incomprehensible how any one who read the article so severely criticised, can affirm that it denies a "spiritual and internal" element in the call, or that there is a real, personal, spiritual agency of the Spirit. As was explained in that article, the question is not as to the fact, the reality, or the degree of that agency, but as to the *nature* of it. That article maintained the view that the Spirit brings the person called to a knowledge of his duty through means; the reviewer holds that the Spirit makes his duty known to him by a direct and immediate operation. And if to reject the idea that the Spirit does directly and immediately communicate to men any knowledge of doctrine or of duty in the present economy of the divine kingdom, is indeed a low and rationalistic view of his work, then must I in truth plead guilty to the charge. For in fact I do reject that idea and regard it as "fanatical and dangerous."

The reviewer correctly says that the heart of this question is as to the part of the Spirit in the matter of the call, and he devotes a large portion of his article to an attempt to prove that I have erred not only on this point, but as to the work of the Spirit in general. It is impossible to follow him through all the labyrinth of what seem to me to be his misapprehensions and misrepresentations in this part of his article. Let the exact points of difference and dispute be clearly understood and kept in mind. The reviewer holds that, under the present dispensation of our Lord's kingdom, the Holy Spirit does by a direct and immediate operation communicate to men the knowledge of truth, of doctrine, or of duty: and this of truth not contained in the written Word of God. P. 314, *seq.* He specifies at least two particulars so made known—a call to the ministry, and the fact of our sonship with God. Now I explained in the article reviewed, that I understand the terms "direct and immediate" to exclude the use of means. This is the plain, well known and accepted sense of the words. And if the Spirit of God makes known to any one a doctrine or a duty directly and immediately, this is a *revelation*. If not, what is it? and what *is* a revelation? Further,

I took the position, that if God communicates his will through means and instruments to any one in such a way as to impart to his *consciousness* (not to his conviction merely, but to his consciousness,) the assurance that it is God teaching him, this again amounts to a revelation, is a revelation. I cannot understand it as anything else. God sometimes made known his will to patriarchs and prophets by means of an audible voice, but in some way, unknown to us, this was with infallible evidence to them that it was God speaking to them. This was a revelation. The reviewer says, p. 311, "*revelation*" "signifies the immediate and direct communication of God's will to men which is contained in the Scriptures." "Dr. P. would insinuate that it is never used properly except in this strict sense, and that there is in fact no other communication of God's will to men, except by and in this written Word of Revelation. But the Scriptures teach us that the Word itself cannot convince, or convert, or sanctify men; and that the inward supernatural teaching of the Spirit is required in order to any saving knowledge of the truth." "God reveals himself, therefore, not by the Word only, but by the Spirit and the Word." "*Revelation* therefore signifies, in a wider sense than that given above, any communication of his will which God makes to men. And the question between us and Dr. P., is whether or not God can and does communicate, or reveal, his will to those whom he calls into the ministry by any direct teaching of the Spirit. We affirm that he can and does, and Dr. P. denies."

Several remarks need to be made on these quotations. The Scriptures contain the things revealed, and I do indeed hold, with all sound theologians, that there is no revelation of God's will, no revelation properly so-called, other than, or in addition to, the written Word. The enlightening grace of the Spirit is needed to enable men rightly to understand and apply and obey the written Word. But in this teaching of the Spirit he reveals nothing more than what is written, and the effect of his teaching is only the efficacious and saving knowledge and use of the Word contained in the Scriptures, and in this I have always supposed intelligent and orthodox Christians are agreed. I do not believe

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that there is “no other communication of God’s will to men except by and in this written Word of Revelation.” He may make known his will by many indirect means and instruments. He does so, for example, sometimes by his providence; so also by the ordinary preaching of Christian ministers. When a father teaches his child that God forbids him to lie, God is using this means to instruct the child in the knowledge of his will. But none of these methods of communicating his will can be called *revelation* without confounding all sense of words. And it cannot be said with any propriety that “any communication of his will which God makes to men” is a “revelation.” The reviewer admits, and so do I, that if God communicates his will “by any direct teaching of the Spirit,” this is a revelation properly so called. The reviewer holds that God actually does this in a call to the ministry.

On p. 315, the reviewer says that in my “zeal to overthrow the doctrine of a supernatural call,” I “would like to prove that the Church herself is competent to make her selection of men, and each man whom she calls able, through the Word, to decide his duty, without any direct aid of the Holy Spirit.” I never said or dreamed that this could be done without the grace and guidance of the Spirit. Most expressly and repeatedly I affirmed that the aid of that blessed agent is needed, and is granted. Why did the reviewer put in that qualifying term “*direct*”—“*direct aid*”? I believe in his real, present, personal, and if the reviewer please, supernatural aid. I admit even *direct* aid in Dr. Thornwell’s sense of putting the soul in a condition to receive, discern and accept the truth; but in the reviewer’s sense of an immediate revelation of God’s will, certainly not; and few beside the reviewer, I think, will admit that.

In reference to the reviewer’s argument from the admitted fact of a direct act of the Spirit in *regeneration* not much need be said. The old writers were accustomed to include under this term the whole work of Effectual Calling, which all who know the Shorter Catechism, know to comprise several distinct parts. Later writers sometimes apply this name “*regeneration*,” to one of those particulars, to that, viz., described in the Catechism, as

"renewing our wills"—to the change of our moral nature, or the creation of a new heart. This is the direct action of the Spirit distinguished by Dr. Thornwell, and of which it is said in a note to the article reviewed, that it does not communicate any knowledge of truth or duty. This is evident from the very nature and description of it. It is that part of the work in which the Spirit prepares the soul to receive the truth. It is an act of *power*, and not of teaching. It is an act of creation, not of instruction. Hence, as Dr. Lodge *says*, as quoted by the reviewer, "it affords no place for the use of means." And while all orthodox theologians hold that this act of regeneration is by the direct and mighty power of God, I know of none who teach that, in the work of effectual calling, the sinner is taught by a direct and immediate operation of the Spirit. They all hold with our Confession of Faith, that for this the Word of God is the indispensable *means*. The appeal of the reviewer to the regeneration of infants, idiots, and the insane, is wholly irrelevant, as the question turns on the *ordinary* dispensations of divine grace, and not those which are extraordinary.

I have nowhere affirmed that the Scriptures are the *only* means used by the Spirit in calling men into the ministry, or in his other acts of administration of the divine kingdom. I affirmed indeed the very contrary, as any one can see. Pp. 84, 85. I do indeed believe, that for the clear and complete fulfilment of his work in the sanctification of his people and their instruction in duty, he always makes use of the Word, and I do not know any one who disputes this.

The reviewer says, pp. 315, 316, "It is simply that he may magnify the Word. But why exalt the honor of the Word as against him who gave the Word?" "It is labor lost to strive at the protection of the glory of the Word as against the Holy Ghost." These remarks are simply gratuitous. I have done nothing of the kind. While I maintained the use of means by the Spirit in a call to the ministry I ascribed all the glory of every gracious work to the Holy One himself. All the honor and glory of the Word are his. And it may be well to refer the re-

viewer to that testimony, Psalm cxxxviii. 2, "Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name."

In what the reviewer has to say, pp. 316, 317, in reply to the position that the Scriptures are the only and sufficient rule and guide of duty, there is somewhat of a mere play on words. He admits them to be the only rule of faith and practice, but denies that they are a "guide." We might say, a rule is a guide. This is its use and purpose. Every one, however, except the reviewer, no doubt understood that I did not exclude the agency of the Spirit using the Word to guide his people. He enables them to understand and apply the Word to the various circumstances and duties of life, guiding them by the Word. If when the reviewer says, "Yet we do need, and in the goodness of God we have a guide whose secret inward monitions are made directly upon our hearts and conduct us in the way we should go," he means immediate suggestions as to our duty, I do not believe it, and regard such a belief as fanatical and dangerous—as I hope, before I am done, to convince others who may take the trouble to follow this discussion through, if not the reviewer himself.

The argument of the reviewer derived from the communication of gifts for ecclesiastical office, is one of the most singular in the whole article. (Pp. 317, 318). He specifies, for example, eloquence, energy, prudence, and what Dr. Thornwell calls the characteristic qualification for the ministry, "the unction from on high." He says "each of these is manifestly the immediate gift of the Spirit." In regard to all but the last, every one else will no doubt say they are partly the result of the nature and constitution of the individual, and partly acquired by the training and teaching by which the providence and Spirit of God form the character and ability of men. The idea of the reviewer would evidently classify them with those miraculous gifts bestowed on the first Christians, but which no one believes in now. In regard to the "unction from on high," we cannot well argue about that until we understand and are agreed as to what it is. If it means an abundant measure of the Holy Spirit present in the soul of the preacher and going forth with his ministrations, as I

suppose it does, then I submit that there are means which we are encouraged to use in order to obtain that precious gift.

I am not so fortunate as to possess a copy of Dr. Hodge's Theology. But in regard to the instances mentioned, of Bezaleel, Aholiab, Joshua, David and others, it seems to be a very simple and natural view to take, if we believe that, so far as their gifts and abilities were not miraculous, they were acquired by appropriate means and training. Bezaleel and Aholiab either had miraculous gifts, or endowed by nature with capacities suited for the purpose they acquired their skill as artisans in the ordinary way. The probability is, that their wonderful skill was due partly to both of these. Joshua had a long and excellent training under Moses. So had David before he ascended the throne,) of Israel, under the providence of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The reference to Owen's Discourse on Spiritual Gifts, in regard to this point, by the reviewer, is singularly unfortunate. A correct exhibition of what Owen does say in the very passage appealed to, will show that the reviewer wholly mistakes him. I will give his exact words so far as is necessary

"It remains only that we inquire how men may come unto or attain a participation of these gifts, whether ministerial or more private. And unto this end we may observe: 1. That they are not communicated unto any by a sudden *afflatus*, or extraordinary infusion, as were the gifts of miracles and tongues, which were bestowed on the Apostles and many of the first converts. That dispensation of the Spirit is long since ceased, and where it is now pretended unto by any, it, may justly be suspected as an enthusiastic delusion." (Yet this would seem to be the reviewer's opinion as to the way in which these gifts are attained). "2. These gifts are not absolutely attainable by our own diligence and endeavors in the use of means, without respect unto the sovereign will and pleasure of the Holy Ghost." (The reader will observe that Owen says, "not *absolutely* attainable, without respect to the sovereign will of the Holy Ghost." He goes on to show that whatever may be our natural abilities and diligence we cannot attain them without the special grace of the

Spirit, "who worketh in all persons severally as he will.") And then he adds, "Yet I say 3. That ordinarily they are both attained and increased by the due use of means suited thereunto as grace is also, which none but Pelagians affirm to be absolutely in the power of our own wills." He then proceeds actually to enumerate the means by a due use of which these gifts may be both attained and increased. It appears therefore that Owen teaches exactly the contrary to that which the reviewer understood him to teach.

The reviewer says, I offered no proof that these gifts are bestowed on us in the use of means and instruments, and he supposes I could not offer any. I really did not, and do not now suppose any proof on so simple and plain a point is needed. Every passage in the Scriptures which teaches us to seek for all the gifts and abilities which we may lawfully acquire, and by which we may serve and glorify our divine Master, is such a proof. Directly to the point is that in 1 Cor. xii. 31, "Covet earnestly the best gifts;" xiv. 1, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy;" xiv. 12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."

The reviewer argues, that inasmuch as we admit a direct and immediate agency of the Spirit in the soul in regeneration and sanctification, it cannot be fanatical and dangerous to hold that the call to the ministry is also direct and immediate. But the direct and immediate agency of the Spirit pleaded for in the two cases is wholly different in nature and kind. In the former case, it is the direct exercise of divine power and might put forth to change the moral nature, and we believe it because the Scriptures plainly teach it. In the latter case, the thing contended for by the reviewer, is the direct and immediate revelation of the will of God to the individual, and we do not believe it, because the supposition of any direct and immediate revelation, in addition to the Scriptures, is contrary to their own testimony and to the faith of the Church, and is "fanatical and dangerous."

Let us re-state the theory of a call to the ministry defended by the reviewer. It affirms that the duty of the individual is

made known to him directly and immediately by the Spirit, in an inward communication of the will of God to his soul. It cannot be denied that this is a revelation, properly so called. This is what we all understand and mean by a *revelation*. The reviewer accepts it as such. He affirms revelations in the call to the ministry, and in the witness of the Spirit to our adoption. And on p. 317, he appears to extend these to other cases. He says: "We do hear his voice saying to us. This is the way walk ye in it." His "inward monitions are made directly upon our hearts and conduct us in the way we should go."

In the article criticised by the reviewer, it, was said in objection to this theory of the call, that it opens a wide and dangerous door to fanaticism, superstition, and blind enthusiasm; brings the matter within the region of human fancy and imagination and of Satanic influence; and places the evidence of the call in a state of feeling which prevails among the ignorant and deluded. I do not see how any one tolerably well informed on the subject can question this. Belief in inward and direct impressions, suggestions, monitions, impulses, voices and revelations from the Spirit, has characterised fanatics and enthusiasts and mystics from the beginning, and though not confined to the ignorant and superstitious, has prevailed generally among them. It can be found now in abundance among that class—multitudes of them who pretend to receive these immediate impressions and suggestions and revelations. And if we admit the truth and reality of them in a call to the ministry, or at any other point, evidently we have opened a door for their indefinite encouragement and extension.

In this connection it should be noted, that on p. 319, the reviewer grievously misrepresents me. He says that I affirm, that "to hold that the Holy Ghost ever puts forth a direct and immediate agency on the souls of Christians in ordinary times is a sign of ignorance and the result of ignorance." He refers to p. 87, of my article, as the place where this sentiment is to be found. No such statement is contained there. The truth of the matter is, that in the place referred to I was speaking of the, terms "direct" and "immediate." In reference to these words the remark is made, that in addition to their usual and technical

meaning, they are also “properly applied to that peculiar agency of the Spirit which he exercised of old in communicating his will, the knowledge of truth, or of duty, as in the case of the patriarch prophets, and apostles.” Then it is said, “Such an agency as this” (of course *this peculiar* agency just spoken of) “has been held by some to be put forth by the Spirit in the souls of Christians in all ordinary times and for many purposes, but commonly held only in proportion to the ignorance of those who advocate it, or their inability to apprehend truth and to express it with accuracy, exactness and discrimination.” That is what I did say, and I am willing to let it stand, and to stand by it, and to let the whole history of the Church be my witness. I said this view of the Spirit’s agency has been “commonly” held in proportion to the ignorance of those who advocate it—“commonly,” not universally; and that leaves room to except from the charge of ignorance the reviewer and a few others.

Before we leave this point in regard to direct and immediate impressions, impulses, suggestions, convictions, monitions, voices, or whatever their advocates may call them, I beg the patience of the reader while I present the testimony of some of the highest authorities in the Church. And we begin with Owen, referring to the very same works of his to which the reviewer appeals, but the design and meaning of which he appears to misapprehend in a very remarkable manner. My edition of Owen is not the same as that of the reviewer, and I have not been able in all cases to verify his quotations. One mistake of his has already been noted. On p. 319, there seems to be another. He says, “Owen, in his ‘Reason of Faith,’ describes the assurance of faith as the work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to believe by a supernatural, immediate revelation of his mind unto us.’ ” On this, it is to be observed that this work of Owen does not treat of the assurance of faith about which the reviewer is speaking, but of our faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God. Further, the only place in this treatise which I have been able to find that appears to be the one referred to by the reviewer has a totally different meaning from that which he gives too it. By the change of one little word, it is made to say what Owen never said or

meant; if this is the passage quoted. In the first chapter of this work, Owen says:

"That which I shall *first* inquire into is, the way how, and the ground whereon, we come to believe the Scripture to be the Word of God in a due manner."

"With respect unto the first of these inquiries whereunto the present discourse is singly designed, I affirm that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to believe the Scripture to be the Word of God, or the supernatural, immediate revelation of his mind unto us."

If this is the passage referred to, and I can find no other resembling the reviewer's quotation, the reader will observe that he misapplies it to the assurance of faith; omits that which the Spirit enables us to believe; and by substituting the preposition "by" for the conjunction "or," wholly changes Owen's meaning. Owen says the Spirit enables us to believe the Scripture to be the Word of God, *or* to believe the Scripture to be the supernatural, immediate revelation of his mind unto us. The reviewer makes him say the Spirit gives a supernatural, immediate revelation of his mind to us.

Owen immediately follows his statement with this: "Some, upon a mistake of this proposition, do seem to suppose that we resolve all faith into private suggestions of the Spirit, or deluding pretences thereof."

The quotation of the reviewer from this treatise of Owen on p. 306, has no reference whatever to a call to the ministry. It is in regard to "the faith whereby we believe the Scripture to be the Word of God," as any one can see by looking at the original.

Let us now hear Owen's real testimony as to the point before us. In his Reason of Faith, chapter 4, he says:

"But the matter and subject of the revelation we treat of is nothing but what is already revealed. It is an internal revelation of that which is outward and antecedent unto it; beyond the bounds thereof it is not to be extended. And if any pretend unto *immediate revelations* of things not before revealed, we have no concernment in their pretences."

"Since the finishing of the canon of Scripture, the Church is not under that conduct as to stand in need of such new extraordinary revelations. It doth indeed live upon the internal gracious operations of the Spirit, enabling us to understand, believe and obey the perfect, complete revelation of the will of God already made, but new revelations it hath neither need nor use of; and to suppose them, or a necessity for them, not only overthrows the perfection of Scripture, but also leaveth us uncertain whether we know all that is to believed unto salvation, or our whole duty, or when we may do so; for it would be our duty to live all our days in expectation of new revelations, wherewith neither peace, assurance nor consolation is consistent.

"It hath so fallen out, in the *providence of God*, that generally all who have given themselves up, in any things concerning faith or obedience, unto the pretended conduct of immediate revelations, although they have pretended a respect unto the Scripture also, have been seduced into opinions and practices directly repugnant unto it; and this, with all persons of sobriety, is sufficient to discard this pretence."

In the preface to his discourse on "The Causes, Ways and Means of Understanding the Mind of God, as Revealed in his Word," he says:

"By what ways and means he hath provided for the assurance and security of all men, in things of their eternal concernment, and what are those acts of his wisdom and power and grace, which he exerts for that end, viz., that they may both believe the Scripture to be his Word, and understand his mind revealed therein, both according unto what is required of them in the way of duty, so as in both they may be accepted with him, is the design of this and the other forementioned discourse to declare."

The following noble passage in the first chapter of the same work will command the admiration of every reader, but no one will accuse Owen of a "low and rationalistic" view of the work of the Spirit:

"It is the fondest thing in the world to imagine that the Holy Ghost doth any way teach us but *in and by our own reasons* and understandings. We renounce all *enthusiasms* in this matter, and plead not for any immediate, prophetical inspirations. Those who would prohibit us the use of our reason in the things of religion, would deal with us as the Philistines did with Sampson—

first put out our *eyes*, and then make us grind in their mill. Whatever we know, be it of what sort it will, we know it in and by the use of our reason; and what we conceive, we do it by our own understanding: only the inquiry is, whether there be not an especial work of the Spirit of God, *enlightening our minds* and enabling our understandings to perceive and apprehend his mind and will revealed in the Scripture, and without which we cannot do so."

In the third chapter, explaining the texts 1 John ii. 20, 27, he says:

"There are but two ways whereby the Spirit teacheth us, nor can any other be conceived. The one is by *objective*, the other by *subjective* revelations; for he teacheth us as a 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation.' The first way of his teaching is by immediate inspiration, communicating new, sacred truths from God immediately unto the minds of men. So he taught the prophets and apostles and all the penmen of the Scripture.

"His other way of teaching is, that we have insisted on, viz., his enabling us to discern, know and understand the mind and will of God as revealed in the Scripture, or as declared in any divine revelations."

The intelligent reader need not be told that, by "*enthusiasts*," Owen and other old writers mean, persons who claim to have immediate communications from the Holy Spirit, to receive direct impressions, suggestions, impulses, voices, monitions, and revelations: and that he and all orthodox interpreters understand by the spirit of revelation, and the teaching of the Holy Ghost given to Christians, that gracious illuminating work whereby he enables us to understand and apply the written Word of God. This is the "*subjective revelation*" of which Owen speaks, and nothing more.

Few men have ever lived, who, by reason of their great learning and abilities, their personal attainments in piety, and their opportunities of observation, were so competent to judge of this matter, as President Edwards. He writes of it often most earnestly. He had seen the danger and evil fruits of the idea, that Christians now receive direct and immediate communications

from the Spirit, and he frequently refers to it. I will give some of these passages, and they are full of wisdom and instruction.

In his work on the "Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God," Section 3, we find the following

"Some of the true friends of the work of God's Spirit have erred in giving too much heed to impulses and strong impressions on their minds, as though they were immediate signification from heaven to them, of something that should come to pass, or something which it was the mind and will of God that they should do, which was not signified or revealed any where in the Bible without those impulses. These impressions, if they are truly from the Spirit of God, are of quite a different nature from his gracious influences on the hearts of the saints; they are of the nature of the extraordinary *gifts* of the Spirit and are properly inspiration, such as the prophets and apostles and others had of old: which the Apostle distinguishes from the grace of the Spirit." 1 Cor. xiii.

After showing that these things are not to be expected now, he remarks:

"I would therefore entreat the people of God to be very cautious how they give heed to such things. I have seen them fail in very many instances, and know by experience that impressions being made with great power, and upon the minds of true, yea eminent saints even in the midst of extraordinary exercises of grace, and sweet communion with God, and attended with texts of Scripture strongly impressed on the mind, are no sure signs of their being revelations from heaven. I have known such impressions fail in some instances, attended with all these circumstances. They who leave the sure word of prophecy which God has given us as a light shining in a dark place-to follow such impressions and impulses, leave the guidance of the polar star to follow *a Jack with a lantern*. No wonder, therefore, that sometimes they are led into woeful extravagance."

In his work on "Religious Affections," Part 3, he discusses at length the difference between any direct impressions, suggestions, and monitions of the Spirit, and his gracious teaching, enlightening, and leading work in the hearts of his people; showing that the former are not gracious and spiritual, are not

to be expected by them, and that the pretence of them has always characterised heretics and fanatics. He says:

"From what has been said, it is also evident that it is not spiritual knowledge for persons to be informed of their duty, by having it immediately suggested to their minds, that such and such outward actions or deeds are the will of God. . . . Such suggestions have nothing of the nature of spiritual light. . . . Thus there was no spiritual light in Balaam, though he had the will of God immediately suggested to him by the Spirit of God from time to time, concerning the way he should go, and what he should do and say."

"It is manifest therefore that a being led and directed in this manner, is not that holy and spiritual leading of the Spirit of God, which is peculiar to the saints, and a distinguishing mark of the sons of God.

"Thus the children of God are led by the Spirit of God in judging of actions themselves, and in their meditations upon, and judging of, and applying the rules of God's holy Word.

"But this leading of the Spirit is a thing exceedingly diverse from that which some call so; which consists not in teaching them God's statutes and precepts that he has already given; but in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward speech or suggestion. . . . They do not determine what is the will of God by any taste, or relish, or any manner of judging of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done; there is no such thing as any judgment or wisdom in the case; whereas in that leading of the Spirit, which is peculiar to God's children, is imparted that true wisdom and holy discretion so often spoken of in the Word of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are higher than a glow worm."

Further on he enumerates a multitude of fanatics and heretics, ancient and modern, who held to the doctrine of immediate suggestions and impressions of the Spirit, and then remarks:

"It is by such sort of religion as this chiefly that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light; and it is that he has ever most successfully made use of to confound hopeful and happy revivals of religion from the beginning of the Christian Church to this day. When the Spirit of God is poured out to begin a glorious work, then the old serpent, as fast as possible, and by all means, introduces this bastard religion and mingles it with the true, which has from time to time soon brought all things

into confusion. The pernicious consequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we see and are amazed with the awful effects of it and the dismal desolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this bastard comes in, there is danger of its doing as Gideon's bastard Abimelech did, who never left until he had slain all his threescore and ten true born sons, excepting one, that was forced to fly. Great and strict therefore should be the watch and guard that ministers maintains against such things, especially at a time of great awakening; for men, especially the common people, are easily bewitched with such things; they having such a glare and show of high religion; and the devil hiding his own shape, and appearing as an angel of light, that men may not be afraid of him, but may adore him."

In his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, 1740," Part 4, we find the following:

"And one erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner now in these days to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation, and to make known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do by impressions that he by his Spirit makes upon their minds, either with or without texts of Scripture; whereby something is made known to them that is not taught in the Scripture as the words lie in the Bible. By such a notion, the devil has a great door open for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded, and established in the Church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have his word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them where he would and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to bring the Bible into neglect and contempt. Late experience has shown that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as a book that is in a great measure useless.

"This error will defend and support all errors.

"This great work of God has been exceedingly hindered by this error; and until we have quite taken this handle out of the devil's hands the work of God will never go on without great clogs and hindrances. But Satan will always have a great advantage in his hands against it, and as he has improved it hitherto, so he will do still; and it is evident the devil knows

the vast advantage he has by it, that makes him exceeding loath to let go his hold.

"And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure Word of God that we have in such abundance, and such clearness, now since the canon of Scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have anything added to them by impulses from above? Why should we not rest in that standing rule that God has given to his Church, which the Apostle teaches us is surer than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the Scripture speak more to us than it does?" Or why should any desire any higher kind of intercourse with heaven than that which is by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?"

Referring to the notion of "some that follow impulses and impressions," that they are following the guidance of God's Word and make the Scripture their rule, because the impression is made with a text of Scripture, he says:

"This is quite a different thing from the Spirit's enlightening - the mind to understand the precepts or propositions of the Word of God, and know what is contained and revealed in them, and what consequences may justly be drawn from them, and to see how they are applicable to our case and circumstances; which is done without any new revelation, only by enabling the mind to understand and apply a revelation already made.

"If a person has anything revealed to him from God, or is directed to anything by a voice from heaven, or a whisper, or words immediately suggested and put into his mind, there is, nothing of the nature of grace merely in this; it is of the nature of a common influence of the Spirit, and is but dross and dung; in comparison of the excellency of that gracious leading of the Spirit that the saints have. Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do, and when he had done one thing, then directed him what he should do next; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit for a considerable time. There is a more excellent way that the Spirit of God leads the sons of God, that natural men cannot have, and that is, by inclining them to do the will of God, and go in the shining path of truth and Christian holiness, from

a holy and heavenly disposition, which the Spirit of God gives them, and enlivens in them, which inclines them and leads them to those things that are excellent, and agreeable to God's mind . . . And so the Spirit of God does in a gracious manner teach the saints their duty; and teaches them in a higher manner, than ever Balaam, or Saul, or Judas were taught, or any natural man is capable of while such. The Spirit of God enlightens them with respect to their duty, by making their eyes single and pure, whereby the whole body is full of light. . . And thus the Spirit of God leads and guides the meek in his way agreeably to his promises; he enables them to understand the commands and counsels of his Word and rightly to apply them."

"But to return to the head of impressions and immediate revelations. Many lay themselves open to a delusion by expecting direction from heaven in this way, and waiting for it: in such a case it is easy for persons to imagine they have it. They are perhaps at a loss concerning something, undetermined what they shall do, or what course they should take in some affair, and they pray to God to direct them, and make known unto them his mind and will;; and, then, instead of expecting to be directed, by being assisted in consideration of the rules of God's Word, and their circumstances, and God's providence, and enabled to look on things in a true light, and justly to weigh them, they are waiting for some secret, immediate influence on their minds, unaccountably swaying their minds, and turning their thoughts or inclinations that way that God would have them go, and are observing their own minds to see what arises there, whether some texts of Scripture do not come into the mind, or whether some ideas, or inward motions and dispositions do not arise in something of an unaccountable manner, that they may call a divine direction. Hereby they are exposed to two things.

"First, they lay themselves open to the devil, and give him a fair opportunity to lead them where he pleases : for they stand ready to follow the first extraordinary impulse that they shall have, groundlessly concluding it is from God.

"And, secondly, they are greatly exposed to be deceived by their own imaginations; for such an expectation awakens and quickens the imagination; and that oftentimes is called an uncommon impression, that is no such thing; and they ascribe that to the agency of some invisible being that is owing only to themselves."

These testimonies may be thought sufficient, but I wish to introduce a more modern witness, and to meet more expressly the

reviewer's plea, that the Scriptures do not teach any particular individual his own personal duty to enter the ministry, and therefore a direct and immediate intimation of God's will is necessary. I have remarked that I do not possess Dr. Hodge's Theology; but I have an excellent representative of his views, and those of the old reformed Theology in general—Dr. A.A. Hodge's admirable Commentary on the Confession of Faith. The reviewer may not accord to this work the honor of a standard authority, but the author is a very good representative and witness, and his arguments speak for themselves. I quote from his comments on a part of the 6th Section of the 1st Chapter of the Confession, which is as follows:

"The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men."

Most persons would suppose this testimony of our Confession, of itself, sufficient and conclusive. It affirms that the whole counsel of God, *concerning all things* necessary for man's *life*, is either found in the Scriptures or may be learned from them, to which *nothing is* to be added at any time, whether by new revelations or traditions. The reviewer insists that something more is necessary. But let us hear Dr. Hodge's comments:

"This Section teaches the following propositions: 1st. The inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a *complete* rule of faith and practice; they embrace the whole of whatever supernatural revelation God now makes to men, and are abundantly sufficient for all the practical necessities of men or communities. . . . As a matter of fact, the Scriptures do teach a perfect system of doctrine, and all the principles which are necessary for the practical regulation of the lives of individuals, communities and churches.

"No new revelations of the Spirit are to be expected now, because he has already given us a complete and all-sufficient rule . . . As a matter of fact, no pretended revelations since the days of the apostles have borne the marks, or been accompanied

with the "signs" of a supernatural revelation. On the contrary, all that have been made public—as those of Swedenborg and the Mormons—are inconsistent with Scripture truth, directly oppose the authority of Scripture and teach bad morals; while private revelations have been professed only by vain enthusiasts, and are incapable of verification.

"Nevertheless a personal, spiritual illumination by the power of the Holy Ghost, is necessary in every case for the practical and saving knowledge of the truth embraced in the Scriptures. This necessity does not result from any want of either completeness or clearness in the revelation, but from the fact that man, in a state of nature, is carnal and unable to discern the things of the Spirit of God. Spiritual illumination differs from inspiration, therefore in that it conveys no new truths to the understanding, but simply opens the mind and heart of the subject to the spiritual discernment and appreciation of the truth already objectively presented in the Scriptures.

"While the Scriptures are a complete rule of faith and practice, and while nothing is to be regarded as an article of faith to be believed, or a religious duty obligatory on the conscience, which is not expressly or implicitly taught in Scripture, nevertheless they do not descend in practical matters into details, but laying down general principles, leave men to apply them in the exercise of their natural judgment in the light of experience, and in adaptation to changing circumstance, as they are guided by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit."

If any apology is needed for the number and extent of these quotations, let it be remarked, that there are a good many indications that views are spreading among us in regard to the agency of the Holy Spirit, in no small degree tainted with the odor of the old and dangerous mysticism and enthusiastic errors, and if they are not speedily corrected there is no telling to what they may grow.

The reviewer earnestly objects against the remark found in the note, p. 77, of my article, that the subject of the direct action of the Spirit on the soul in regeneration and sanctification, is not conscious of it, only of its results and consequences. He connects with this an implied denial, which he finds on p. 73, that when the Spirit produces a conviction of duty in the soul of any man by the ordinary means, he ever

imparts to the consciousness of the individual an assurance that it is the work of the Spirit. The reader will note that I said "consciousness," not conscience, or conviction. I admit and believe that the Spirit may produce a certain and assured conviction and belief that the work is his. But if this fact be made known to the consciousness of the man, that is a revelation. He may have such evidences and proofs of it as assure him of the fact, but to be conscious that it is the Spirit working in him is another matter.

And as to the direct action of the Spirit on the soul in regeneration and sanctification, who is there that has ever been conscious of that? Who has ever felt that mysterious touch of the divine power on the soul? Of its effects and consequences, of the light and faith and peace and joy and love that follow, multitudes have been conscious, but of that divine act itself, who and when? The nature of it precludes the consciousness of it in the part of the subject. It is an act of creation. Is the creature, or can he be, conscious of the creating act? It is the imparting of life-can there be consciousness-of the life-giving power? It is a new birth-has the child consciousness of its birth?

The reviewer makes this point the ground of an accusation so grave and serious, and follows it up with so heavy an array of quotations, not one of which has any bearing on the question, that I must refer to some authorities to show that I am not alone in my error, if it is one. And first, let us take Owen. In his work on the Spirit, Book 3, Chapter 1, on the subject of Regeneration, he says:

"And great variety there is also in the perception and understanding of the work itself, in them in whom it is wrought, for in itself it is secret and bidden, and is no other ways discoverable but in its causes and effects."

And in reference to its effects, he adds:

"In the minds and consciences of some, this is made known by infallible signs and tokens. Paul knew that Christ was formed and revealed in him. So he declared that whoever is in Christ

Jesus ‘is a new creature—that is, born again—whether they know it to be so themselves or no. And many are in the dark as to their own condition in this matter all their days, for they ‘fear the Lord and obey the voice of his servant,’ (Christ Jesus), and yet ‘walk in darkness and have no light.’ ”

In reference to sanctification, in Book 4, Chapter 2, speaking of the holiness wrought in believers by the Spirit, he says:

“It is not immediately discernible, either by themselves in whom it is, or by others that make observation of it. It lies only under the eye of him by whom it is wrought; only by the fruits and effects of it is it made manifest.”

On p. 321, the reviewer refers to Owen’s exposition of Eph. i. 17-19, as sustaining his views. But he seems to misapprehend what Owen means by “an internal, subjective revelation.” He does not intend by this expression any such revelation as the reviewer contends for in a call to the ministry and the witness of adoption. Owen himself explains it in the place referred to, “But there is an *internal, subjective revelation* whereby *no new things* are revealed unto our minds, or are not outwardly revealed *anew*, but our minds are enabled to discern the things that are revealed already.” The kind of revelation advocated by the reviewer, Owen would call an “*immediate, external revelation*,” as any one will see who will read him enough to understand his phraseology.

On the same page also, the reviewer says Owen teaches “that it is not simply the effects of the Spirit’s operation we are conscious of, but his own indwelling itself.” I have read the place referred to twice over and I cannot find any such statement in it. There must be some mistake here. Owen does indeed hold with others that the Spirit himself, and not the effects of his operations, is the seal, unction, and earnest given to his people, but nowhere can I find that he teaches that they are directly conscious of his presence within them. And if this is held by any one, it is a question of wonder how many Christians there have been, and are, whose consciousness so testifies.

Let us now introduce another witness whose majestic presence has not yet appeared in this discussion, but who is worthy to

stand in any company—Chalmers. In his lecture on Romans *viii. 16*, he says:

"How shall we ascertain that upon us there has been the fulfillment of that promise which is unto faith—even the Holy Ghost, who is given to as many as shall believe? In reply to this, it is most important to observe that his work is visible, but his working is not so. It is not of his operation that we are conscious, but of the result of that operation. We do not see the wind, though we see the impulse and the direction which it gives to many sensible things. And neither can we tell of the Spirit's agency on a human soul, though the impression which he has made upon it may be quite palpable. We do not see him at work, though we may see the workmanship which he leaves behind him. . . . The Spirit may not be felt in his access to the soul, but his fruits may be recognised in the now holy and heavenly affections of the soul. There is neither a light, nor a voice, nor a felt stirring within, to warn us of his presence; but there may now be a goodness, and a righteousness, and a truth, in the heart which give testimony to his power."

This will do, and I desire to recommend this admirable lecture, with its wise and sober and scriptural views, to any who may be troubled and distressed by the doctrine of the Spirit's witness held by the reviewer.

I will add one more authority on this: *Outlines of Theology*, by Dr. A. A. Hodge, Chapter 26:

"The Holy Ghost, by an exertion of creative power, changes the governing disposition of the heart in a manner inscrutable, and by an influence not apprehended by the consciousness of the subject." "Regeneration is never a matter of direct consciousness to the subject of it."

On this point, the reviewer appeals to the "Systematic Theology" of Dr. Charles Hodge. I have to take the quotations here just as he gives them, but I could not wish for anything more or anything different. He quotes Dr. Hodge as distinguishing "mysticism, which claims immediate communication of divine knowledge and divine life from God to the soul, independently of the ordinary means," from "the doctrine of spiritual illumination as held by all evangelical Christians..."

there is need of an inward, supernatural teaching of the Spirit producing what the Scriptures call ‘spiritual discernment.’ ”

What this spiritual illumination and discernment are, as held by orthodox Christians, has been shown by preceding quotations from Owen, Edwards and Dr. A.A. Hodge. Dr. C. Hodge, as quoted by the reviewer, explains the difference of mysticism from this as consisting in three particulars: “1. Mystics have new revelations; 2, through no use of the means of grace; and 3, instead of the Word, their minds are filled with their own imaginings.” Now the objection to the reviewer’s theory is, that as far as it goes it is identical with mysticism. He expressly affirms as much. On p. 316, he says: “Surely we need not stagger at the doctrine of the sovereign Spirit’s immediately operating on the soul of believers to communicate the knowledge of truth and duty.” On pp. 319, 320, in reference to the witness of the Spirit to our adoption, he says: “But the Spirit is not tied to the means, and he sometimes sees fit to act immediately. It is an immediate act of the Spirit when he witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, for it is not the Word he uses. Our own particular election and salvation is not written in the Word. What the Spirit testifies with our spirits is something they cannot learn themselves from the Word, something the Word does not contain.” “Now, if the Spirit sometimes witnesses directly and immediately to believers that they are the children of God, and they can know that it is he that assures them, why should it be held a thing incredible, either that he can and does move on the heart, communicating a direct and special call to the ministry, or that the heart moved on can and does recognise the Spirit in that operation?” On p. 325, the reviewer quotes with approval, from another, this language: “The testimony of the Holy Ghost (to our adoption) is not inferential, it is direct and immediate. The Spirit supernaturally testifies to the believer that he is a child of God. The Word does not declare that this man, A. B., is a child of God; the Holy Spirit testifies to this man, A. B., that *he is a child of God.*”

Manifestly we have in these statements the general characteristic of mysticism as stated by Dr. C. Hodge, and two of the

three points in which mysticism differs from the common evangelical faith. They affirm the immediate communication of knowledge from God to the soul independently of the ordinary means—and 1, new revelations; and 2, through no use of the means of grace.

On this point, let the reader also consult Turretin, Locus 15, Quæstio 4, Section 54, where he explains the difference between the doctrine of “immediate grace,” as taught by the orthodox, and that of enthusiasts, and it will be found difficult to distinguish the views of the reviewer from those ascribed to those errorists. That entire “Quaestio” is worthy of study, and the reader will see that Turretin repeatedly affirms that the “immediate” action of the Spirit is never without the *Word*.

In regard to the witness of the Spirit, the reviewer must be aware that the view he adopts has never been generally received by Calvinistic theologians, and he is not warranted in founding an argument on the assumption of its truth. The Reformed theology has always been chary of adopting it, and often has opposed it most strenuously. It is sufficient to quote in reference to it the testimony of Dr. A. A. Hodge, in his Commentary on the Confession of Faith:

“The sense in which this witnessing of the Holy Spirit to our spirits is to be understood, has been much debated among theologians.

“Some have maintained that the passage teaches that the Holy Spirit, in some mysterious way, directly reveals to our spirits the fact, that we are the children of God, as one man immediately conveys information to another man. The objections to this view are, that Christians are not and cannot be conscious of any such injection of information from without into the mind, and that, as far as such testimony alone is concerned, we would be unable to distinguish certainly the testimony of the Spirit from the conclusions of our own reasons, or the suggestions of our own hearts. An expectation of such direct communications would be likely to generate enthusiasm and presumption.”

In, the quotations of the reviewer from Dr. C. Hodge, “as to our being conscious of the inward workings of the Spirit,” there

is nothing to sustain his views, but the contrary. Dr. Hodge says “the nature of these experiences, and of the way in which they come and go,” and their “character,” *prove* that they are due to the Spirit of God. But this is not consciousness. It is inference and reasoning and proof. We know it to be the work of God by a process of logic, and not by consciousness. This appears further, by the illustration used by Dr. Hodge. He says “God reveals himself as distinctly in the workings of our inward nature, as he does in the outward world.” How does he reveal himself in the latter? Not to our consciousness. That would be absurd. But to our reason. We perceive, in the outward world; workings, the nature and character of which compel us to infer that they are of God. So we perceive by consciousness, workings, in our inward nature, bearing such characteristics as *prove* them to be a divine work. This is the irresistible conclusion of reason, but to say that we are *conscious* that they are the work of God, is absurd. Consciousness furnishes the materials for the inference, but not that itself.

It has seemed proper and necessary to devote a great deal of space to this part of the discussion in hand having reference to the nature of the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is a vital matter. On the one hand lie the perils of what the reviewer calls “low, rationalistic views,” and on the other those of a high mystical and fanatical doctrine. It has been my aim, in reply to the criticisms of the reviewer, to show that he has not correctly apprehended my views on this subject, and that they are in accord with those of evangelical theologians of the highest authority. What I have to say further in reply to his strictures, will have more variety and less prolixity.

Neander's Views.—The reviewer objects that, in regard to the nature of a call to the ministry, I followed in the footsteps of this “great Lutheran Church-historian.” In the introduction to my essay, it seemed to be proper to present the general principles received by orthodox Christians as to the nature and constitution of the Christian Church. In doing this I was compelled to follow very closely the line of thought and remark pre-

sented by Neander in one of his histories, just as he had followed other writers on the same subject. To guard against the suspicion of mere plagiarism, I referred to Neander with the remark that his ideas on that subject had long been the common property of the Church. And where and by whom are these principles questioned? They are briefly these: That the Church of Christ is a community, consecrated as a whole and individually to the service and glory of their divine Master; that every member of it is called to do all he can for the prosperity and extension of the Church and the glory of Christ; that whatever gifts any one possesses or can acquire, which can be profitably used for these ends, he is bound so to employ them ; and that the gifts which any member of this community may have acquired by the grace and providence of the Lord, determine the kind and measure of the work and service he is called to render in the Master's kingdom. These are not Neander's views. They are the plain teachings of the Scriptures; they surely are, and always have been, the views of all true and enlightened Christians from the beginning. I do not know any who deny or even doubt them.

Now, indeed, it seems to me that these general principles do enable us to settle the question as to the nature of a call to the gospel ministry,—what constitutes such a call, who are called to this work. It does seem to me that, followed out to their natural and necessary consequences, they lead to and establish the views upon this question which my article presented. If we accept those principles we must accept their results. But it does not upset one or the other to say they are Neander's views, and that he is an unsafe guide.

And here I must notice an instance of unfairness on the part of the reviewer in this connection. In language quoted by the reviewer himself, I had said that the Spirit by bestowing "suitable qualifications and abilities" for the work of the ministry on any one, indicates his divine will that that one should perform that work, and thereby designates him both to himself and the Church to that office. Thereupon the reviewer with much emphasis goes on to say: "Thus the ability to preach, as the Church shall be

satisfied that a man possesses it, without any inward conviction of his own that he is called to the work, for that is rather a bad mark—a sign of a fanatic, being a claim to special revelation—this ability to preach, recognised by the people, is all the call any minister needs!” “Every one able to preach is called equally and alike, and equally and alike the Church ought to call all such into the ministry.” Now all this, including the inward conviction, the bad mark, the fanatic, etc., is unauthorised by anything in the article reviewed. But the point to be specially noticed is, that I am represented as saying, that an “ability to preach” is “all the call any minister needs.” “The ability to preach” is put forward in the place of my own language, viz., “suitable qualifications and abilities” for the office of the ministry. “To be “able to preach” is only one of them. What the gifts and qualifications which are required for the ministry, are, was a question expressly excluded from my discourse, p. 85, as not contemplated in its object.

In this connection, it is fit to notice the reviewer’s reply to the argument founded on Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Titus in regard to the appointment of bishops or presbyters. This reply is made up of three points. The first is: “These passages are not a description of *preachers as such*, but of bishops or presbyters or rulers, made overseers however by the Holy Ghost.” The answer to this is, that we have no minister whose work is only to preach; that the description certainly includes those elders who are called to labor in the Word and doctrine, as well as those who rule; and, that if these passages were not intended to rule and guide the Church in the ordination of ministers of the gospel, then we have no instructions upon that subject in the Scriptures at all. As to the reference to Paul’s account of his own ministry, it need hardly be said that he was “called to be an Apostle,” and the question in hand is the call of a minister of the gospel. The second point of the reviewer here is, that “the theory opposed by Dr. Porter does not hold up a settled conviction wrought by the Spirit in the candidate’s soul as one of his qualifications for office,” but as one element of three which demonstrate the call of God. But the reviewer

holds, and he must hold, that the call of God, and that just such a call as he advocates, is the indispensable qualification, condition or requisite, or whatever he may please to name it, for the office. Whatever view of the call we take, we must hold to this. Now the argument the reviewer is trying to meet was, that the Apostle, giving particular and detailed instructions as to what persons are to be admitted to the office of bishop, says not one word about such a call of the Spirit as the reviewer advocates and holds to be indispensable. This is left untouched by this point of his reply. In enumerating the qualifications required, Paul omits entirely the one affirmed by the reviewer to be most essential—not the “conviction” of a call, which has nothing to do with the matter here, but the call itself. But, thirdly, the reviewer replies, “we turn Dr. Porter’s argument against, himself; these two passages . . . say nothing about any sort of call at all, whether from the Spirit, or from the Church alone without the Spirit.” But let us see. The theory I advocated is, briefly, that gifts and qualifications for the office, constitute the call to it; in bestowing by his providence and grace such as are suitable for the discharge of the office, the Lord indicates to the person himself and to the Church that he is called to the office; or rather these are the call. Now in these passages the Apostle teaches us what these necessary gifts and qualifications are: that is he tells us what constitutes a call, what is a call, and whom the Church should therefore call and ordain to the office. We find here therefore precisely all the elements of a complete call to the ministry, viz., the possession of the needful gifts and abilities for its duties bestowed by the providence and Spirit of God, and instructions to the Church actually to put such into the office—both the *material* and the *formal* call according to Owen’s phraseology—but of a call according to the reviewer’s theory, not the remotest suggestion.

There is a point, in this connection, derived from the reviewer’s own statements which seems to be fatal to his theory. In regard to *the call* itself, not the *conviction* of a call, which the reviewer properly distinguishes from the call, and regards as one of three necessary evidences of it—this call he affirms to be “direct

and immediate, impressed on the heart by God himself," and made known by "the direct and immediate teachings of the Holy Ghost," p. 314: "He can and does move on the heart, communicating a direct and special call to the ministry," and the heart so moved on "can and does recognise the Spirit in that operation," p. 320. This call, as the reviewer argues at length, is known and recognised by the consciousness of the individual. He tells us that the fact of this call is confirmed by *three* elements of proof; first, the conviction of the individual himself; secondly, the judgment of some congregation; and thirdly, the judgment of the Presbytery. Now it would appear manifest from the reviewer's own statements, and from the very nature of the call which he affirms, that it must be *at once known and perceived by the individual*—else what becomes of his labored argument to prove that the subject of it is *conscious* of it? of the affirmation, that it is impressed on the heart by God himself, and that it is communicated directly and immediately by the Spirit to the soul of the one called? and what becomes of the emphatic remark, p. 291, "He might just as well deny *that God calls*, as deny that the called man *hears and knows that it is God who calls him*." Now mark, on p. 304, he says "his theory does not assert that the individual's convictions *are always first in the order* of the three elements which evince the call." And on p. 233, "We may not only as individuals signify to any man our impressions that he has the needful gifts and graces and call;" but "a Presbytery may of their own motion signify to any man that they consider him to be called." "The individual's convictions do not necessarily precede those of the Church." I would like to know how all these things are possible; how they can all stand together. How can a Presbytery, or any one else, know that one is called, before he knows it himself, according to the reviewer's doctrine of a call? How dare a Presbytery go before the Spirit and signify to any that they consider him called? The reviewer cannot say that the Spirit has called and the Presbytery perceived the evidences of it, before the individual himself has perceived and heard it; for he affirms that this divine call is perceived by consciousness, impressed on the heart, made known

immediately by the Spirit, and that we might as well deny that God calls, as to deny that the man hears. And on p. 314, in explaining Dr. Thornwell's views, he appears for the moment to regard it in this light himself: "The terms *direct* and *immediate* relate to the question, whether the Church and the Presbytery can certify to any man that he is called, unless he have the inward persuasion of his own conscience also?" This implies that they cannot. But how it is consistent with the statements of p. 233, is not for me to say. On this last page also we find the following, which look as if in a moment of forgetfulness the reviewer unconsciously saw and admitted the truth: "A whole church may urge any man whom they desire to undertake this work." "The call from God is indicated in the being called of the Church."

Owen's Views.—The reviewer objects, first, to the fairness and correctness of the representations I make of Owen's opinions on the call, to the ministry; and, secondly, to the weight I ascribe to his authority. I must decline to argue the question, whether I have fairly represented the views of this author, and refer any one who cares to know to the works of Owen himself. As I did not however specify the place where he speaks of the *material* call and the *formal* call, I here refer to his "Discourse of Spiritual Gifts," Chapter 7, first Paragraph: Sermon on Eph. iv. 8, and Sermon on 1 Cor. xii. 11. These admirable sermons, among other good things and great principles, clearly present the view of a call to the ministry which I have advocated. In the latter, he announces the fundamental principle of the whole matter in these terms: "That gifts are the foundation of all church work, whether it be in office, or out of office." "Spiritual gifts are the foundation of office, which is the foundation of work in the Church, and of all gospel administrations in a special manner, according to the gifts received."

In regard to the weight due to Owen's authority, the reviewer surely knows that the title "prince of theologians" was given to him long ago, by those more competent to judge of his merits than I, and has been accorded to him by very many, themselves

masters in Israel. And as to the influence which his views of church order may have had on his opinion in regard to this matter, I do not think an idea can be found in his writings in respect to the power and place of the Church in relation to the ministry to which a Presbyterian will not assent. Besides, he discusses the question of a call to the ministry, not only from the side of the Church, but from the side of the Spirit. His "Discourse of Spiritual Gifts" is intended to prove that the Spirit makes *ministers of the gospel*, and to show *how* he makes them. The venerable Dr. McGill, a competent judge, in a recent admirable article on a question of church order, appeals to Owen's authority, and styles him "the greatest light in the 17th Century."

Calvin's Views.—The reviewer says that I "would fain explain away" Calvin's statement in regard to the call to the ministry. I only warned those who, like the reviewer, are caught by the mere sound of a word, not to be misled by the term "*secret call*" used by Calvin on this subject, and pointed out the fact that he himself explains his meaning in the use of it, and that in a sense entirely different from the one in which the reviewer would have us understand it. And for the correctness of these suggestions any one may examine the language for himself. By the secret call the reviewer means a direct and immediate act of the Holy Spirit making known to the individual his duty. "I mean," says Calvin, as translated by the reviewer, "the good testimony of our heart, that neither from ambition, nor avarice, nor any other base motive, but out of a true fear of God, and desire to edify the Church, we undertake the offered office." The reviewer pays no attention to Calvin's statement a few lines further on, which shows not only his own opinion, but that which prevailed in the Reformed Church: "It is even common to speak of private persons as called to the ministry, who appear to be adapted and qualified for its duties." I am willing to let Calvin speak for himself.

His Example.—I had remarked that the known circumstances and history of Calvin's ministry, give no place to the theory of a

call which I opposed. The reviewer tells us that but little is known “about Calvin’s call and ordination.” And yet he labors very earnestly to prove that he was called to preach “by a mighty supernatural conviction from the Spirit of God in his heart.” How does the reviewer know *that*? The attentive reader will observe that all the reviewer’s statements and arguments in this case, only prove that Calvin was powerfully *convinced* that he was called of God to this work—something I never thought of doubting. Of course this conviction was an “*inward* conviction,” as the reviewer calls it. There is no other kind of conviction, I believe. But that is not the point. The question is, *how* was that conviction produced in Calvin’s conscience? The theory of a call, maintained by the reviewer, affirms that it must have been by the supernatural, direct and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. I affirm, that well known facts and circumstances in the history of the case show that the Spirit produced that conviction, not directly and immediately, but through the agency and instrumentality of Calvin’s fellow-Christians, and especially of Farel. Look at the facts which are known in regard to his preaching in Paris, before he went to Geneva. He says himself of his work there: “I began to look for some retreat, and some way of escape from the crowd; but I was so far from accomplishing my wish that, on the contrary, all my hiding-places became like public schools.” Now can any one believe that *then* he was conscious of a direct and immediate call to the ministry by the Holy Ghost? Who can believe that of John Calvin? He was not the man, with such a consciousness in his soul, awful and overpowering, to shrink from the work, and seek a retreat and hiding-place. And it is manifest from his own statement, that it was the call and the urgency of the people that convinced him of his duty and compelled him to perform it. Follow him to Geneva. He was there seeking for a place of retreat, for his “coveted retirement,” as the reviewer himself expresses it. Let no man tell us that he was doing so, and all the while carrying in his secret soul the consciousness of a direct and immediate call to the ministry by the Spirit of God. We cannot think this of John Calvin. He intended to stay but

one night in Geneva, called to see Viret, was, recognised by Du Tillet and Farel; and then *through the solemn adjurations of Farel* he was convinced at last of his duty—that God called him to stay. If the well known facts and history of the case do not prove this, nothing can be proved. Calvin himself says, “I was at last retained at Geneva, by Master William Farel,” and as quoted by the reviewer, “the terrible threatenings of William Farel, which were as if God had seized me by his awful hand from heaven.” The reader will remember, that the question is not whether Calvin was convinced of his duty, nor whether he was called of God to the work, nor whether this conviction was wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit; but *how* did the Spirit produce it. The theory of the reviewer teaches that he produced it *by a direct and immediate agency in the soul of Calvin, known and recognised by his consciousness*. The view I advocate, teaches that the Spirit produced this conviction in Calvin’s mind *through the agency of Farel*, by Farel’s adjuration and threatenings. What do the well known circumstances and history of the case prove? It is remarkable that the reviewer himself expresses the truth of the matter, when he says, p. 301, that Calvin “gave himself up to the will of God interpreted to him through Farel.” This is indeed surprising. It is all I contend for.

Further, we have a letter from Calvin to Du Tillet, dated “20th October, 1538,” in which he replies to the latter as to *the lawfulness of his call*. But not one word does he say about the consciousness of a call by the direct and immediate agency of the Spirit; much however in regard to the arguments of his brethren, who said to him: “You, who are endowed with such gifts, with what conscience can you decline the ministry which is offered to you.” He tells Du Tillet, “I had seriously pondered the question of setting about the gaining of a livelihood for myself in some private station.” Can we believe that he did so with that awful consciousness the reviewer insists on? He also says to Du Tillet, that he had stated to his brethren the reasons which deterred him from accepting their call, and then adds: “When that was to no purpose, I concluded that I had no

alternative in such a state of perplexity, *but to follow that which I thought was pointed out to me by the servants of God.*" It is scarcely necessary for me to give italics to that last clause, to call attention to the support it gives to my view.

And now, on the whole, I think the reader will agree with me, that the well known circumstances and history of the case authorise me to "adorn my argument" with the "illustrious name" of "the great Genevese."

The case of John Knox.—I hesitate to say anything about this. The "well known circumstances and history" of his entering upon the work of the ministry so evidently support the view of the call which I advocate, that it looks like trifling to comment on them. It is impossible to make them plainer. There is no intimation at all that the Holy Spirit called him to the work by a direct and immediate act communicating to him a knowledge and conviction of his duty, as the reviewer's theory requires. The facts, as he himself states them, show that God brought Knox to a knowledge and sense of his duty to enter the ministry through the means and agency of Rough and other Christian friends. He yielded to this conviction forced upon him by their arguments and appeals with great reluctance and hesitation. Would that have been so with John Knox any more than with Calvin, if he had been conscious of a direct and immediate call by the Holy Spirit? Who can believe that? It is significant that the final appeal which overcame his scruples was in connection with a sermon by Rough, insisting "on the people's power to call whom they would." This is a doctrine the reviewer will not receive, but it appears to have been held by the Presbyterian Calvinistic reformers of that day. McCrie says: "I have little doubt that he (Knox) looked upon the charge he received at St. Andrew's as principally constituting his call to the ministry." The reviewer remarks upon this "McCrie means of course that this charge constituted his *external* call." But what right has he to put this gloss on McCrie's language? Had the Holy Spirit called Knox to the ministry *before* Rough and the others urged him to enter it? Most certainly, according to

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the reviewer's theory, they could not dare to insist on it, if he was not called. But on p. 291, the reviewer says "he might just as well deny *that God calls*, as deny that the called man *hears and knows that it is God who calls him*. It is a clear contradiction in terms to say that God calls and commissions a man to preach his Word as his ambassador, and yet deny that he makes known to the individual that he does call and commission him." And on p. 295, in explaining and defending Dr. Thornwell's statement, he says Dr. Thornwell "had in his mind an operation of the Spirit, similar, that 'mighty, invincible' one by which he draws sinners to Christ. But Knox himself, when his brethren urged him to undertake the ministry "resisted all their solicitations, assigning as his reason that he *did not consider himself as having a call to this employment*." It is evident that God made known to Knox, the fact, that he did call him by means of Rough and the others. The Spirit brought him to a knowledge and conviction of his duty through their instrumentality, and not by a direct and immediate act communicating to him a knowledge of it.

The case of Haliburton.-This is if possible still plainer. It is sufficient to say that, in his Memoirs, Part 4, chapter 1, with the fulness and detail of analysis for which he is remarkable, he gives himself an account of the reasons and influences which brought him into the ministry. He enumerates *twelve* particulars. There is not among them the remotest suggestion of any such direct and immediate operation of the Spirit as the theory of the reviewer affirms. They consist almost entirely of providential circumstances, and the exhortations and urgencies of his friends and the Presbytery. At the end of it all, he says: "As the Lord did, by the formerly mentioned conduct of providence respecting me, remove my scruples and clear my mind; so by his countenancing me in my first appearances, not only by supplying me for the work, but making it successful towards the awakening of some, and comforting of others, did not a little confirm and encourage me." Thus did the Lord make known to Haliburton his duty, his call to the ministry, not by a direct and

immediate operation of the Spirit, according to his own testimony. He is a good witness.

It is apparent that, in this part of his review, the writer lost sight of the point in question in this discussion. All along, in connection with the cases of Calvin, Knox, and Haliburton, he labors to prove that they were brought to a conviction that they were called of God to the ministry. That I never denied, nor the importance of it in the case of every one who enters the sacred office. The only questions between us are, *how* does God call, and *how* does he bring men to a knowledge and conviction of their duty in this matter. On p. 311, the reviewer says: "The question between us and Dr. Porter, is, whether or not God can and does communicate, or reveal, his will to those whom he calls into the ministry, by any direct teaching of the Spirit. We affirm that he can and does, and Dr. Porter denies." I think I have never denied the "can,"—his *power* to do it. Surely I have not so far forsaken "the doctrine both of the Scripture and of our Standards." But I do hold that, in the ordinary vocation of ministers, God communicates to them his will through the means of his providence, the Scriptures, and the Church, and not by the *direct* teaching of the Spirit, nor by *revelation*, in any proper sense of the terms. If the reviewer had kept this question clearly before him he would have saved both himself and me a great deal of trouble.

Dr. Thornwell's Views.—I have purposely postponed this point to the last, on account of a reluctance to discuss it, which I will not disguise—a reluctance springing from reasons which I do not care to mention, though the consequence be that some will misunderstand them.

The reviewer charges me with "misapprehension and consequent misrepresentation" of the views of Dr. Thornwell. The fact is, I did not attempt any formal and regular discussion or representation of Dr. Thornwell's views. After stating as clearly as I could the real question to be considered, and the sense in which I understood the terms "direct and immediate" to be used, I remarked that I "do not indeed know that any among

us *really hold*" that a call to the ministry, by the divine Spirit, is direct and immediate in that sense; but that some "do *appear* to adopt this theory." Afterwards I quoted some expressions from an article written by Dr. Thornwell, and from two other writers, to show that some do appear to adopt it. The truth is I have always been in doubt as to the real meaning of Dr. Thornwell in those expressions. I am more in doubt now than ever, since reading the article of the reviewer. Dr. Thornwell's language appears to teach the theory I oppose. What it does teach, what he meant to affirm by it, seems to be very uncertain. The reviewer gives us two interpretations of Dr. Thornwell's views, one of them his own, and the other from an intimate friend of Dr. Thornwell, and an accomplished theologian, and they are so different as to set all afloat the question as to the true sense of Dr. Thornwell's language. First, the reviewer tells us, p. 295, "He speaks of a 'supernatural conviction of duty wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost;' but proceeds in 'the very next sentence to show that he had in mind an operation of the Spirit similar to that 'mighty invincible' one by which he 'draws sinners to Christ.'" But on p. 325, the correspondent called in to aid in expounding Dr. Thornwell's meaning, tells us, "Dr. Thornwell thought that the call to the ministry is analogous to the witness of the Holy Spirit, which he held to be direct and immediate.' " But now the operation of the Spirit in the "witness," as explained both by the reviewer and his correspondent, is so different in nature and kind from that he puts forth in the "mighty and invincible" work by which he draws sinners to Christ; that if his agency in the call to the ministry is similar to the latter, it cannot be analogous to the former. I do not suppose there are any of us more competent to explain the real meaning of Dr. Thornwell than these two, and if they differ so widely, I may be pardoned, if I say I do not know what he meant. I can only say what his language *appears* to mean.

Again on pp. 313, 314, the reviewer, in reference to the terms *direct* and *immediate*, tells us Dr. Thornwell meant *two* things by them: "It is evident that Dr. Thornwell used them to sig-

nify, *first*, that the call is *specific*, of this particular man, to this specific work." "A *second* sense in which these terms are used by Dr. Thornwell, is the sense of there intervening as a medium between the conscience of the called and him who calls, *no human agency*." "The call is to be direct and immediate, impressed on the heart by God himself, and not interpreted to the individual only by other men." On p. 327, the correspondent also tells us that the language has two meanings. "In fine, what I conceive Dr. Thornwell to mean, is this: *First*, that the call is *supernatural*, in the sense that it originates with God, and not in the processes of the believer's experience, or in the agency of human beings, either as individuals or as organisations; and, *secondly*, that the call is *immediate*, in the sense that it is directly from God by immediate impressions made upon the man's own mind, and is not dependent upon the testimony of other men, nor derived from any special deliverance of the Word." The incongruity of these two expositions is evident, and the reader will probably think that neither of them, nor both of them taken together, is as intelligible as Dr. Thornwell's own statement. The latter of them has the fault of introducing into the explanation one of the very terms to be explained. It tells us "the call is *immediate*, in the sense that it is directly from God by *immediate* impressions made on the man's own mind." And when two such doctors disagree, a humble disciple may consider himself free to form his own opinion. I understood the language in question, as seeming to mean that, in the call to the ministry, the Holy Spirit communicates a knowledge of his will and the man's duty, directly to the latter, and not through the use of any means or instruments or other agency whatever. Does it not appear to mean that? Is not that what the reviewer understands by it? Indeed is not that the theory of the call adopted by the reviewer?

In a letter quoted by the reviewer, Dr. Thornwell himself says: "My friends sometimes charge me with a spice of fanaticism." And if my article, either expressly or impliedly made such a charge, surely it might be allowed without offence or pre-

sumption. Those who knew him, know well with what kindness meekness, and respect, he was accustomed to receive objections to any of his views from the humblest of his brethren, and they will not doubt for a moment that he loved and honored the friends who charged him with fanaticism no less on that account. It was my privilege to be counted among the number of his friends; his memory is as hallowed in my heart as it can be in that of the reviewer; but I do not think it a wrong to that memory to differ from him now, as I did sometimes when the world was blessed with his presence.

The reviewer quotes largely from Dr. Thornwell's discourse on the Personality of the Holy Ghost. I read that discourse twice over just before writing the article which called forth my reviewer's attack—and read it with delight, admiration, wonder, and some doubts—doubts as to whether I correctly understood the true meaning of some parts of it, and whether I could adopt all of its statements in their apparent sense. It seemed impossible to do so without striking from the number of God's children some, many, of the devoutest and holiest Christians the world ever saw. And it seemed equally impossible to reconcile them with the views of other great and eminent teachers of the Church. They can be accounted for, if indeed we must understand them in their obvious meaning, only on the supposition that, as the greatest and best men are liable to do, he was inclined to make his own experience a standard for others and the interpreter of truth.

And now in conclusion, I desire to ask a few questions: Can one called to the ministry have the "assurance" of his call, the "settled conviction," "the mighty supernatural conviction," which the reviewer insists on, *before* some Church has called him, and the Presbytery has approved? Does he need any other evidence of his call than the *consciousness* that he is called by the Spirit, which the reviewer affirms? Can he have any better or higher evidence of it? Can he dare to surrender that evidence for the judgment of others? Can others know or believe that he is called *before* he is himself conscious of this direct and imme-

diate call by the Spirit? If so, *how* has he been called? *What* is his call? What are the *evidences* of it? If the Lord by his providence and Spirit has bestowed on any, gifts and qualifications suitable for the work of the ministry, for what were they given,—to what end and purpose?

The thoughtful reader, who shall follow out these questions whither they lead, will not fail to see that the reviewer's theory is a cobweb, spun of imaginations, and not a structure built of the solid materials of truth.

The reviewer says, p. 314: "There are two particulars of greatest consequence in which our friend appears to us to forsake the doctrine both of the Scripture and of our Standards." He specifies these: 1. "He denies that the Spirit ever by direct and immediate action communicates any knowledge of truth, either of doctrine or duty." 2. "Again, further, he denies that the subject of the immediate action of the Spirit, whether a sinner being regenerated, or a believer being sanctified, can be conscious of such action." Of course these statements must have reference to the present dispensation of the divine kingdom. I will not deny that these points are "of the greatest consequence," or that I hold in regard to them the views ascribed to me by the reviewer. But whether I or he has forsaken the doctrine of the Scriptures and of our Standards, others will decide for us.

Finally, let me say that this discussion, while turning legitimately on the simple question, whether the Divine Spirit calls men into the ministry, by directly and immediately communicating to them a knowledge of his will, strikes deeper than at first sight would appear. It involves the nature of the ministerial office and its relations to the Divine Master and to his Church—the question, whether the gospel ministry are a "holy order," a distinct class in the Church, or simply brethren of the brethren, of and among them, like them in genus and species, like them servants and disciples, called like them to consecrate themselves and all their gifts to the Master's glory, and doing their particular work, only because he has bestowed on them gifts and abilities for it. I hesitate not to say, that the theory of the reviewer is deeply infected with the virus of the prelatical, sac-

erdotal, apostolical-succession spirit, as was suggested by the writer in this *Review* of October, 1869—with whom the reviewer associates me in his criticisms, and beside whom I esteem it an honor to stand or fall.