

REGENERATION

By

John Brine

NO Man that is unregenerate is *fit* for the Enjoyment of God; nor can participate of future Blessedness. The Sanctification of the Spirit must precede eternal Salvation. Holiness is a Meetness for Glory, and *without* it *no Man shall see the Lord*. Persons who are in a State of Unregeneracy, are *dead in Sin*: Are *under the Dominion* of it: Are *averse to God*, and *not subject to his Law*. These Things are true of some Men *only*, or they are true of all. *If these characters belong to some Men only*; then, a Part of Mankind have *no* Need of Regeneration: They are *fit* for Heaven without any divine Work upon them: And, therefore, it can't be said of such, *Except* they are *born again*, they *cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*. If all Men are *dead in Sin*, previous to this Work upon them, then every Individual of Mankind needs the Grace of Regeneration. The Words of our Saviour, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, are indefinite; and will not admit of any Limitation. They clearly and strongly suggest, that *every* Man must become the Subject of Regeneration, in order to the Fruition of God. This important Point, Mr. *Foster* takes no Notice of,

in treating on the Subject; which is a very *great* Defect: A Defect it is, that affects the most momentous Branch of this evangelical Truth, on which he discourses: And what is still worse, he gives such a Definition of Regeneration, as will naturally lead us to conclude, upon his Principles, that it is not necessary to some. It is, says he, *A Man's sincerely and entirely renouncing the corrupt Sentiments he had before maintained; the irregular Passions he had indulged; and the wicked Practices he had been guilty of.* *

* *Vol. 3 of Sermons, page 260.*

Upon his Principles, I think, it may be certainly concluded, that *many* Men stand in no need of being born again. If a Man has always been so happy, as not to have embraced the *absurd* Doctrines, of the Deity of Christ; the *Reality* and *Perfection* of his Satisfaction; Justification by the Imputation of his Righteousness; the distinct Personality, and Deity of the Holy Spirit; and the Necessity, and certain Efficacy of his Operations, upon the Souls of Men: He has *no* corrupt Principles to renounce. Besides, there are many Persons, who have not *indulged* irregular Passions; who have *always* been *sober, just* and *religious* in their Conduct. And, consequently, they have not been guilty of *wicked* Practices. Such Persons, therefore, have *no* Need of being born again, upon his Principles. Men, who have *ever* been virtuous and moral, in their Behavior, cannot be the subjects of this Change, As corrupt as Mankind are in general, there be *many*, who have

kept clear of *wicked* Practices all their Days. And, therefore, according to this Account of the *New-Birth*, they cannot be the Subjects of it: And, by Consequence, this Definition of Regeneration, is undoubtedly false. For, there is no Man of whom, it can be truly said, that he may enter into the Kingdom of God, without this divine Work upon him.

*Regeneration is the Infusion of holy Principles into the Hearts of Men, viz. Faith, Hope, Love to, and a true Fear of God, which Principles discover themselves, in a holy, spiritual and humble Walk or Conversation. Hence, Christians are said to be the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus, unto good Works {Ephesians. 2:10}. Against this Account of Regeneration, he objects various Things; and gives a false Representation of our Opinion in this Matter, viz. That we conclude, that Mankind are purely passive in a Reformation from Vice to Virtue. **

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We conclude no such Thing; as he must be sensible, if he has consulted what we have said on this subject. And if he has not, he ought to have done it, that he might not have exposed himself in this Manner, to the just Censure of *Ignorance*, or of what is worse, *Unfairness* and *Disingenuity*. What we conclude is, that Men are *purely* passive in the Infusion of holy Principles into their Hearts: But we always maintain, that they are active, in Consequence of such Principles being

infused, in reforming from Vice to Virtue. As the Apostles were passive in receiving an Ability to speak with Tongues; but were active in speaking: We say, that Men are wholly passive in receiving the Principle of divine Life; but, that they are active in forsaking Sin, and practicing Holiness: As *Lazarus* was passive in the Reception of Life, when he was in the Grave; but was active in coming out of it: So we say, that Men are entirely passive in the Reception of new, and spiritual Life; but, that they are active in the Exercise of that Life. We contend, that Faith and other Graces are given, and not acquired; but we full well know and always assert, that Men are active in the Exercise of those Graces. Tho' we say, that Men are passive in the Reception of Power for spiritual Acts; we are not guilty of such Nonsense, as to say, that they are inactive, when they exert that Power. Neither is it true, upon our Principles, that *Men are mere Machines, and void of Intelligence, and free Volition,* *

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as this Writer suggests: Man is still an intelligent Creature; and he retains his natural Freedom of Will and Choice, tho' he is corrupt and depraved: Nor does our Opinion suppose the contrary. And yet it is certain, that Men may become incapable of understanding spiritual Things, and may be the Subjects of a fixed Aversion, to God and his Law; if they are not naturally and universally such. Notwithstanding that Incapacity to discern heavenly Things, in their true Nature,

they are intelligent reasonable Beings; and notwithstanding that fixed Aversion to God, and his Law, they retain their natural Freedom of Will, and they freely choose what is evil. Free Agency is one Thing, and a Disposition to what is good, is another. The Devil is a free Agent; he has not lost the natural Freedom of his Will; but since he has no Disposition to what is good, he refuses to choose it, and he is free in that Refusal. And Men, tho' depraved, are free Agents; but they have naturally a Disinclination to what is spiritually good; and therefore, they refuse to choose it; and they act freely in that Refusal. And they have a strong Bias to the contrary, and therefore, they choose it; and act freely in that Choice. The Grace of God in regenerating us, renders us capable of making a wise Choice, and under the Influence of his Grace, such a Choice we freely make. It is a gross Mistake, that free Agency necessarily supposes an Ability to choose Good, and refuse Evil; if it doth, then a reasonable Creature can never be so far corrupted by Sin, but that he will eternally be able to choose the former, and refuse the latter; tho' left by God, under the Influence of vicious Habits. Devils and damned Spirits then choose Good and refuse Evil; for they are, and ever will continue to be free Agents. Nor do we suppose, *that vicious Men are destitute of Power to reform their Conduct.* We allow, that *they are capable of it, and that they are exhorted to it,* as Mr. Foster observes. But Reformation of Conduct we don't take to be Regeneration; tho' it certainly attends it. We are persuaded, that a dissolute Person may become regular and virtuous, and yet not be born again. He

represents it *as ludicrous and trifling, ungenerous and cruel, and insulting, to exhort Men to the Practice of what is not in their Power.* *

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If, therefore, they cannot love God, *with all their Heart, and Soul, and Strength*, then, if God requires this perfect Love to himself, of them, *he is ludicrous and trifling, cruel and ungenerous, and insulting*: Tho' their Incapacity to obey that Command is not from God; but from Man himself: Or it is the Effect of a criminal Behavior in Man. This, therefore, is not Reasoning, but *downright Raving and Madness*. He farther, observes, that *it would be absurd and cruel to threaten Men with Punishment, or promise them a Reward to fly in the Air, or become invisible, or to do any Thing that is beyond the Extent of their natural Powers.* *

* Page 264.

The Truth of which, I am persuaded, every Man will soon perceive and readily grant: But what is it to the Purpose? Nothing at all. If I could allow myself to be pleasant, I should treat this Impertinence with diverting Ridicule; but the Seriousness of the Subject forbids it. Men are exhorted to reform from Vice, and practice Virtue, which they have a Power to do. But they are not commanded to regenerate themselves. Nor are Promises of eternal Life made to them,

upon a Reformation from Vice, which this Writer seems to suppose. If Man ever was the Subject of a sufficient Power to keep the Law of God perfectly, that Power he is still possessed of, or he is not; I suppose it will be granted, that he is not. That Power he lost, in Consequence of Sin, or it was taken from him by his Maker, without any Offense committed on the Part of Man. This is so absurd, that I imagine none will allow it can be true. Man's present Inability, therefore, to perform his Duty in a perfect Manner, must be the Effect of Sin on his Part. God in commanding Man to keep his Law, perfectly, requires no more of him, than he furnished him with a Power to do. But he never rendered *Man capable of flying in the Air, or becoming invisible*: And, consequently, tho' it would be absurd and cruel, to require him to do either of these Things, it follows not, that it is so, to enjoin perfect Holiness on Men, and condemn them for the Want of it, tho' they are now unable to practice it; because their Defect of Power to obey the divine Law, wholly springs from a criminal Behavior in Man. This Reasoning, therefore, is *so impertinent*, that nothing can be expressed, which is *more impertinent and trifling*.

Mr. *Foster* proceeds in his Impertinence, (for I cannot call it Reasoning) and says, *if Men were entirely passive in the Affair of Regeneration, — it would then be impossible, that any Man should be regenerated sooner than he is; and, consequently, all his Deviations from the Rule of Right, would be unavoidable and innocent.* *

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It is true, that no Man could be regenerated sooner than he is; but it is not true, that all his Deviations from the Rule of Right, were unavoidable in his Unregeneracy for, tho' an unregenerate Person, thro' the Want of a spiritual Principle, cannot spiritually love and obey God, yet he is able to practice Virtue and shun Vice, while in that State; at least, in a far greater Measure than many do. And, tho' Imperfection in Virtue is unavoidable, thro' the Corruption of human Nature, it is not *innocent*; for, as has been before observed, the Defect of Power, to practice Holiness in the utmost Extent the holy Law of God requires, is owing to Man himself. Besides, there is not only a Defect of Power in Men, to obey the Law perfectly; but there is in them an Aversion to it, and therefore, they are rightly charged by God, in his Word, *with Contumacy and Obstinacy, and the most egregious Folly*. And their Crimes are *justly attributed to free Choice, and willful Determination*. This Writer goes on to argue from the Nature of Things, against our Opinion.

And,

1. He concludes, *that deplorable and horrid is the Destiny of Men, and very ungracious seems to be the Case and Providence of their Creator, if they cannot know what is their Duty, and wherein their true Happiness consists.* *

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How does it appear, that God is wanting in Care and Goodness to Men; because human Nature is become, thro' Sin, incapable of understanding perfectly what ought to be practiced, and wherein true Happiness consists? What? Because Man, by his Rebellion against his Maker, has destroyed himself, shall we dare to charge God with a Want of Care and Goodness to him? And if any one of our rebellious Race, shall have the impious Front to exhibit such a Charge against the Almighty, shall his bold, and rude, and insolent Conduct be justified, and pass for Reasoning? With Men of Piety, Wisdom and Modesty, I am sure that it never will. *To suppose, says he, that a farther supernatural, and inward Illumination is necessary to give a just and right Idea of Scripture Doctrines; is in Effect, to assert, that the Scriptures are of no Use at all; and that the inward Teaching, is the only Revelation of the Mind of God to Mankind. **

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Prodigious! Still more *Impertinence!* The Sense of Revelation may be understood, without an internal and supernatural Illumination; or Men by a due and proper Exercise of Reason upon Revelation, may easily discover the Principles therein expressed. But in order to discern the Importance, Excellence and Glory of those Principles, an

internal Illumination is necessary. Yet it can't be said, that the Scripture is a Revelation, unrevealed; or that the Scriptures are of no Use at all; or that the inward teaching is the only Revelation of the Mind of God. The Scripture is a Discovery of divine Truths; those Truths may be known, as they are revealed in the Word of God, without any supernatural Illumination of the Mind. This inward Illumination acquaints us in some Measure, with the excellent Nature of those heavenly Truths. This internal Work, informs us not of the Meaning of Scriptural Terms, Phrases, and Expressions; they are understood without it; and, consequently, the Doctrines of the Scripture are understood without that inward Revelation. So that the Bible is not a Revelation, unrevealed: Nor are the Scriptures useless. They are all, and the only Revelation of divine Truths we receive from God. This inward Illumination is not a Discovery of Truths, but of the Glory of Truths; which being clearly revealed, may be known to be Truths without it. If some Men cannot, or will not distinguish between knowing the Truth of evangelical Principles, and understanding the divine Glory of those Principles, we are not answerable for that. We are aware of this; that they are properly distinct in their own Nature. As Men, we know the Truths which are revealed in the Scriptures; and as Christians, we discern their excellent Nature, and taste their Sweetness, and derive the highest Consolation from them.

2. Mr. *Foster* thinks, that Men are able *to acquire lively Impressions of religious and moral Truths*. — *That they can attain an Acquaintance with the intrinsic Excellence of the Christian Religion, and discover its infinite Importance to their present Peace, and everlasting Felicity*. *

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It is very considerable, that the Christian Religion is allowed, to be of infinite Importance to the present Peace, and everlasting Felicity of Men; for this liberal Grant, the *Gentleman* deserves our Thanks. But it is not of such Importance to these great Ends, but that Men might effectually secure them both without it, as he thinks. It is a Mistake, that Men, are able of themselves, to do the Things expressed above. For they are blind, their Minds are obscured: Their *Understanding is darkened, and they are alienated from the Life of God, thro' the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts* {Ephesians. 4:18}. They are dead in Sin; and have not a Principle of spiritual Life, from which holy and spiritual Acts spring. They are Enemies to God, and *not subject to his Law, nor can they so be* {Romans. 8:7}. For there is a fixed Disinclination and Aversion in them to pure and spiritual Religion: And until a contrary Disposition is wrought in them, they will not be inclined to that Spirituality and Holiness, the Law requires of them. Add to these Things, they are under the Dominion of Sin, that bears Sway in their

Hearts, even in the Hearts of those, who are virtuous and moral in their Behavior, until the Work of Regeneration is wrought in them. He observes, *that the strongest Disinclination does by no means infer an utter Impossibility.* And urges, *that Man must still be a free Agent, and have it in his Power to be either virtuous or vicious; or else he is absolutely incapable of Religion, and moral Government.* *

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I answer, Men may reform from Vice, and become virtuous, without Regeneration: There be many virtuous Persons, who are not regenerate. Again, unregenerate Men freely choose, what is displeasing to God, through the Corruption of their Hearts, and the evil Bias of their Will. Besides, this Manner of Reasoning, seems to suppose, that Power to practice Holiness, and avoid Sin, is essential to an intelligent Creature, and can never be lost, through any Cause at all, which is certainly false.

Reasonable Creatures will eternally be the Subjects of moral Government: And it will always be their Duty, to love, adore, and obey God; and it will be their Sin, not to love, adore, and obey him: But this infers not, that they will eternally have a sufficient Power to enable them to put forth these Acts. It is now the Duty of Men to practice Holiness perfectly; but they have not Ability equal to it; and yet it follows not, that their Defects and Sins are involuntary. The Will of Man freely

choose what is evil, and freely refuses what is good, as it is vitiated and corrupted by Sin.

3. *Every other Disinclination, says he, may be conquered, and every other wrong Habit; but what is of a religious Nature, may be reformed, and that therefore, those also may.*

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But how does that appear? Other Disinclinations, and other wrong Habits, that are not of a religious Nature, they are not criminal, nor are they the Effects of a criminal Behavior in human Nature. These Habits, whatever may be intended by them, since they relate not to Religion, they are not any sinful Taint of the Mind: The Vitreosity, therefore, of Men, does not incapacitate them to conquer those Disinclinations, and reform those Habits. But such wrong Habits, as relate to Religion and Holiness; they are the moral Taint and Depravity of the Mind; and they render that incapable of discerning the Excellency of heavenly Things; and influence the Will to refuse them, and to prefer carnal Delights to them. It is no *Dishonor to Christianity, that Men cannot discern its intrinsic Excellence,* *

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tho' this *Gentleman* takes it upon him to say it is. For, as the Sun is not less glorious, because blind Men cannot see it; neither is the Gospel, because some Men discern not its amazing Lustre and Glory. And since Man has by Sin rendered himself impotent, it is not *injurious to the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of the Deity*, that he is so. Nor is it *any Advancement of the Glory of the Creator*, to assert, that there is at present, *a Power in Man to do good*; tho' Mr. *Foster* conceits it is: Because he is not now *such* as God made him. Some Weakness and Defects he allows do attend human Nature; his Account thereof stands thus. *The animal Passions of Man are turbulent. — That being a little indulged, they will control and over-rule the Dictates of Reason., That an unhappy Constitution of Body, and the various Disorders to which it is subject, are a heavy Clog upon the Mind, and cloud and interrupt the Freedom and Liveliness of its Operations. — That Objects of Sense make powerful Impressions on human Nature; and it every where is surrounded with numerous Temptations to Vice and Irreligion. — That evil Examples often times corrupt it early, etc. **

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On this Account, we may remark as follows. 1. Man would never be the Subject of turbulent Passions, without Guilt on his Part. For it is not reasonable to suppose, that God created him with such irregular and disorderly Passions. The

Turbulence of the Passions of human Nature, therefore, is a strong Proof, that Man is not now in the Image of God. 2. Man was not created with an unhappy Constitution of Body. As Reason will not allow us to imagine, that the Mind of Man, in his Creation, was the Subject of Ignorance and Vice; neither will it permit us to conceit, that his Body was formed with an unhappy Constitution, and various Disorders attending it. And, of Course, the Unhappiness of the Constitution, and the Disorders of the Body, must be *purely*, the Effects of Sin in Man. 3. He limits the Depravity of human Nature, to the inferior Part of it, the Body. Is there then no Ignorance in the Mind, or Incapacity to discern the excelling Glory of divine Things? Is there no Hardness of Heart? Is that as susceptible of heavenly Impressions, as it ever was? Do no other ill Effects follow upon Man's Rebellion against his Creator, than such, as the Body is the Subject of? So this Author seems to apprehend; but it is an Imagination most remote from Truth. The holy Scripture represents the Mind of Man, as blind, and ignorant, and covered with Darkness: His Will as stubborn and perverse: His Heart as hard. That represents him as dead in Sin: As under the Dominion of it: As averse to God and his Law: As disposed to sinful Pleasures. And, it assures us, that Men cannot discern spiritual Things; that they cannot be subject to the Law of God; that they cannot come to Christ; or believe in him. We must therefore conclude, that the present Weakness of human Nature consists in the Disorder and Incapacity of the Mind, as well as in the Irregularity and

Turbulence of the animal Passions. These are Lusts of the Mind, as well as Lusts of the Flesh; *i.e.* the sensitive Part: Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Anger, Malice, Revenge, and the like. And, I am confident, that no Man can say with Truth, that he remembers a Time, when his Mind was free from any one of those devilish Lusts. Men may sooth and flatter themselves, as much as they please, and dress up human Nature, as fine as they can; but the Truth is, we are the Subjects of *diabolical*, as well as of *brutish Lusts*; and the former discover themselves to have taken Place in us, as soon as the latter.

The Author, from his own Account of the Inability of human Nature, grants, that *the Doctrine of divine Assistances may be admitted.* *

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With Respect to these heavenly Assistances, I would ask, whether they are afforded to every Man, as well to *Indians*, and barbarous People, as to those who are civilized, and nominally Christians? Whether any farther Knowledge of good, is conveyed to the human Mind, by those divine Aids, than Men of themselves are able to acquire? And, whether these Influences from Heaven, produce in Men, Faith, Hope, and Love to God, or not? If they do, then all Men, allowing that all are favored with those gracious Influences, must be the Subjects of those divine Principles, or heavenly Graces;

and, consequently, they must be thought to perform Services acceptable to God. If they do not give Being to those gracious Habits in the Hearts of Men, then it necessarily follows, that Men who are destitute of Faith and Hope in, and Love to God, may please him, if these Aids are sufficient to enable them, to perform Duties in a Manner acceptable to the great Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, tho' those Graces are not wrought in their Souls. 1. It is certain, that all Men are not the Subjects of these spiritual Principles: *For all Men have not Faith. That Faith which purifieth the Heart: {Acts. 15:9} Which good Works attend: And which worketh by Love {Galatians. 5:6}. 2. Without those Graces Men cannot serve God acceptably. Without Faith it is impossible to please God: {Hebrews. 11:6}. Without that Faith, which is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen. For that is the Faith, which the inspired Writer discourses of, in that Place. 3. Hence, it follows, that these supposed Aids, which Mr. Foster grants, are afforded to Men, leave them under an Impossibility of Salvation; because they do not render them capable of acting Part, acceptable and pleasing to God. Either these Assistances bring Men out of the Flesh, into a State of Regeneracy, or they do not. If they do, then upon a Supposition, that they are afforded to all Men; we must conclude, that no Man is in the Flesh, or in an unregenerate State, that all Men, at one Time or other, are made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. This we certainly know meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. This we*

certainly know is false. If these Influences do not bring Men out of the Flesh, into a regenerate State; then, unless those who *are in the Flesh, may please God*, and are *fit* for Heaven; notwithstanding these divine Aids, Men cannot please their Maker, nor obtain future Felicity. The Holy Scripture positively asserts, that such cannot please God, nor enter into his Kingdom {Romans. 8:9; John. 3:5}. And, I am resolutely determined to believe, what the sacred Scriptures affirm, let who will assert the contrary. When Mr. *Foster* observes, *that Men are commanded to create in themselves a new Heart*, he must refer to {Ezekiel. 18}. But the new Heart there meant, is no other than what was required of the People of *Israel*, in order to the peaceable Enjoyment of their civil and religious Privileges in the Land of *Canaan*: And not such a Heart as is necessary to the Fruition of eternal Life in Heaven, which is so plain a Matter, that it can scarcely escape the Observation of a common Reader, and therefore, it is nothing at all to his Purpose. And the Command given to the *Ephesians to awake from the dead*, intends not, arising from a State of Death in Sin, for they were not in such a State; being already quickened by divine Grace; but from dead Frames, and dead Works, and dead Companions, which true Saints, are too apt to fall into, and to practice, and to converse with. This Text therefore, neither militates with our Opinion, nor supports the Authors.

This Writer objects very much to an Inference, which we draw from the Metaphor, *viz. That the new Birth is not*

gradual, but instantaneous like the natural. I would, in Candor, says he, suppose that the Meaning here is, that the first Principle of Spiritual Life, is communicated all at once.

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It is an Instance of Disingenuity in this Person, to suggest, that the least Degree of Candor is necessary, to suppose, that this is our Meaning, for it is what we always in as explicit a Manner as we can, declare is our Meaning. And we know, that the Nature of the Thing requires it. A Communication of a Principle of Life, must be instantaneous, it can't be gradual. The Growth of that new Life, is not instantaneous but gradual. This says Mr. *Foster, in Conjunction with some other Principles, has a very malignant and fatal Tendency. — For let a Man, a notorious Sinner, (as he will unavoidably if he adheres to this Scheme) fix on that, as the precise Time of his Conversion, when he is most strongly convicted of his Guilt and Misery, with Convulsions of Terror, and Agonies of Despair, and let him also believe, that the once regenerate, are of the Election of Grace, by the unfrustable Decree of the Almighty, and can never finally perish; however his Regeneration may be dishonored and obscured, and all the Marks of it suppressed, by enormous and capital Vices; that he may notwithstanding, with St. Paul, (whom he supposes to represent his own Character) be carnal and fold under Sin, and brought into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in his*

Members: *Let him, I say, confound and jumble all these Errors together in a Kind of Connection of religious Principles, and Conversion may be without Purity, Religion without Godliness, Christianity without Virtue. — Neither the Thunder of the Law, nor the Grace of the Gospel, may be capable of making Impression upon his Mind; but he may be ruined for ever confidently assured of his own Salvation. **

** Page 273, 274.*

Mr. *Foster*, in this Paragraph, has put a most frightful Vizor on various Evangelical Truths; which hides their lovely Features, and charming Complexion, in order to excite Horror and Dread in the Minds of those, who shall look upon this terrible Mask, and not discover the beautiful Nature of the Truths, hid under this shocking Form, wherein he represents them. As the most agreeable Countenance in the World may be covered with a hideous Appearance, and lose none of its Beauties thereby; so these divine Truths sustain no Loss at all, in their attractive and delightful Charms, by that horrible Dress wherein they are here represented. He has given a very mistaken Account of Conversion; he has misrepresented our Opinion of the Doctrine of Election; and drawn such Consequences from it, as are unnatural, and constantly denied by us; he has dreadfully misrepresented our Apprehensions of the Meaning of the Apostle *Paul*, in *Romans 7*: And infers such Conclusions, as he knew would effectually expose our Sentiments of Regeneration, Election,

and of the final Happiness of Believers, to the highest Degree of Contempt, with the credulous and unwary Reader, who takes Things upon Trust from him. But these sacred Truths, will not, I am persuaded, be at all the less regarded, by any impartial and discerning Person, through the *disingenuous* and *unfair* Representation, which he hath given of them. A few Observations will fully vindicate these divine Principles from that Reproach here cast on them, and discover the *Unfairness* of the Author in endeavoring to raise the Indignation of all sober and virtuous Persons, against those Truths, which doubtless was his Intention, in this *romantic* Discourse.

1. We constantly maintain, that Regeneration is the Infusion of holy Principles, into the Hearts of Men; and that they in Consequence of such Principles being infused into them, are *greatly* concerned for their Sins; and on Account of the Impurity of their Nature; and *earnestly* desire to be holy in all Manner of Conversation, as well as trust in Christ for Pardon, Peace, Acceptance with God, and the Fruition of eternal Life. *Convulsions of Terror, and Agonies of Despair*, we don't take to be Regeneration; for we know, that unregenerate Persons are sometimes the Subjects of such Convulsions and Agonies.

2. We always declare, that upon the Implantation of this divine Life in the Heart, an Abhorrence of Sin, and Indignation against it, and strong Desires to forsake it, and to

have it eradicated out of the Mind, are produced and cherished.

3. We ever assert, that by Regeneration, a Person is disposed and determined, as God shall assist him, by his good Spirit, to deny himself, obey the Law, honor God, and glorify a Redeemer, whom he makes the Object of his entire Hope and Trust, for Holiness here, and complete Happiness hereafter.

4. We at all Times declare it, as our firm Opinion, that those who are chosen to eternal Salvation, are chosen to Holiness, or *the Sanctification of the Spirit*, and that, therefore, those who are not the Subjects of his sanctifying Operations, have no Foundation to believe, that they are Objects of the gracious Decree of Election.

5. It is false, that we conclude, upon the Safety and Salvation of those, who are guilty of *enormous* and *capital* Vices, without *true* and *thorough* Repentance for those Sins, and a forsaking of them; and we suppose, that such *true* Penitents, in Mr. *Foster's* Opinion, will find Mercy with God.

6. We are persuaded, that the Apostle *Paul* in the 7 chap. of his Epistle to the *Romans* {Romans. 7}, represents his *own real* Character, *as a Christian*; but we deny, that he there treats of external Acts, either of Sin or Holiness. He only discourses of the inward Disposition and Acts of his Mind, as he found himself to be the Subject of a Law of Sin, and a Law of Holiness: Or of the unregenerate and the regenerate Part in his Soul; and of the contrary Actings of these opposite

Principles within himself. We contend, that according to the unregenerate Part, he was *carnal and fold under Sin*, and that according to the regenerate Part, he was spiritual, holy, and free from Sin. — That the depraved Part never consented to Good, and that the spiritual Part never concurred in the sinful Motions of his Heart. Which Things are perfectly consistent with his holy Zeal, for the Honor of God, with his strict, humble, and spiritual Conversation, in the Church of God, and in the World.

7. And, therefore, not the least Countenance or Support is afforded to the *wretched* Conclusion, Mr. *Foster* draws from our Interpretation of that Place, in Connection with our Sentiments of Regeneration, Election, and the final Happiness of the Saints, *viz.* That *Conversion may be without Purity, Religion without Godliness, Christianity without Virtue*. As these are Consequences we deny, so they are foreign and contrary to the *genuine* Nature of the Principles we embrace and maintain. If he was capable of proving, that we interpret that Place, in such a Manner, as it might be concluded, that we imagine a regenerate Person may *live in Sin*, be enslaved to Lust, and regardless of Piety and Holiness, he might infer as he does; but this is what he cannot do, I am confident, and therefore, his Conclusion, which was intended to bring an Odium on our Principles, justly exposes himself to Contempt; as a *most* unfair and prejudiced Opponent, determined to say any Thing, to the

Disadvantage of Doctrines, which are unsuitable to his own Taste.

8. It is *most false*, that we so much as in the least Degree suggest, that Persons immoral and vicious, may be assured of Salvation; nor do our Principles at all suppose it. Holiness we firmly believe, and always assert it, as a most sacred Truth, is necessary to Happiness: And tho' we are persuaded, that the Apostle in the Place before-mentioned, speaks of himself, as a Christian, we deny, (and this Writer will never be able to prove it) that he there intends a Prevalence of Sin, over the Influence of Grace, in his Life. And, therefore, it was an *unrighteous* Thing in this *Gentleman*, to charge us with maintaining such horrid Sentiments. If he has no better Holiness, or greater Regard to Truth, than he has discovered in the Manner of his reasoning here; I am free to tell him it will never recommend him to God, nor good Men, nor fit him for a better World. After he has been thus *rudely* free, in charging us in the worst Manner he could; he tells his Reader, that he *chooses not to insist on this Topic*. *

* *Page 275*.

Has he not said enough, to answer his *base* End with all credulous and unwary Readers, who take Things upon Trust? Could he express more than he has been pleased to say, to the Prejudice of the precious Truths of the Gospel? I think he could not. Perhaps he might have some Degree of Consciousness, that he had already said more than he was

able to prove, and for that Reason finished this *romantic* Way of speaking. 'Tis strange, that some Men can't be Advocates for Holiness, and good Works, without falling into many evil Works; but that I have observed is true in several Instances. They have pleaded the Cause of Holiness, with *Lying*; and under the Influence of Pride, Envy, Malice, Revenge, and other base Lusts. After this Discourse of Regeneration, he proceeds to treat of Enthusiasm; and proposes to distinguish it from true Religion. *There is, says he, no Enthusiasm at all, in believing, that God maintains a Communication with the human Mind; and in a Way of calm Illumination, suited to its original Faculties, assists it in the Reformation of evil Habits, supports it under critical Emergencies; and co-operating with its own Endeavors, establishes good Resolutions, and facilitates its Practice in Virtue.* *

* *Page 281.*

I beg leave to ask, whether this Illumination is necessary to enable us to understand what we ought to believe, and what we ought to practice, as Christians? If this is granted then it will undeniably follow, that the Mind of Man, cannot of itself acquire the Knowledge of Things necessary to be believed, and practiced: And if it cannot then the human the Mind must be impaired, and it is not in same State it once was. Again, Does this Illumination actually render us capable of understanding the Nature of heavenly Truths? Or does this enlightening Influence upon our Minds, really raise such

Ideas of divine Things in us, as we could not form without it? If this is allowed, then I would ask, whether this Illumination takes Place in the Mind, at any particular determinate Time? Or whether it is always afforded to Men; and if there is no Point of Time, wherein they did not enjoy it? If it shall be said, that at some particular Time, this great and necessary Help, to enable Men to know and practice their Duty, is given to them; then we must conclude, that no Man could be regenerated before that Time; and therefore, according to the Principles and Reasoning of this Writer, Men's Deviations from the Rule of Right, must be *unavoidable and innocent*. If it is said, that this Illumination is constantly afforded, or that it hath always been enjoyed by Men; then they have ever had Ideas of heavenly Truths, and the Knowledge of their Duty, as Christians, which is certainly false.

*But when, adds he, particular Thoughts, Impulses, and inward Impressions, are directly ascribed to a divine Inspiration and Energy, then Enthusiasm commences. **

** Page 282,*

Answ. If the particular Thoughts intended, are concerning religious Principles and Duties; why may they not be ascribed to that Illumination of the Mind, the Author speaks of, without a Charge of Enthusiasm? Does this Illumination raise no particular Ideas of God and Religion in the Soul? If it doth not, what is the Use of it? Is this Illumination a

Conveyance of Light to the Understanding of a Man, at some one particular Time? And always after that Moment, is a Man entirely left to himself, without God's maintaining any Communication with his Mind, to think, or not to think, of the divine Being, and religious Matters, just as he shall chuse? If it is so, then there is only one single Moment, wherein God condescends to assist his Creature Man, in Relation to the Knowledge and Practice of his Duty. Again, If the Impulses, and inward Impressions mentioned, are of a religious and holy Nature; to what Being must we ascribe them? Surely to God, who sanctifies our Hearts, and makes us *meet* for Heaven.

Mr. *Foster* farther says, *The Enthusiast is wrought up to a strong Imagination, that at certain Times he actually feels God within him; and by this Delusion, he is oftentimes hurried on to very false and dangerous Methods of Conduct.*

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* *Page 282, 283.*

I freely grant, that all Impulses and Impressions on the Minds of Men, by which they are misguided, or influenced to act an unbecoming Part, can never be from God; and that it is direct Enthusiasm to conceit, that they are from him. But, if a Man is excited to what is his Duty; if his Mind is, at certain Times, impressed with a deep Sense of the Importance of divine Things; if he is the Subject of great Sorrow for Sin; if his Mind is, in an extraordinary Manner, affected with the Grace and Favor of God, manifested in the kind Provision he

has made for guilty Creatures; it is not Enthusiasm to ascribe these happy Effects, to a divine Influence upon him. For, that an heavenly Influence, which is productive of such good Effects in the Minds of Men, may be expected, and is really afforded to some, may be concluded from the Prayers of good Men, and of the Church of God. *David* prays, that God would *create in him a clean Heart*, and that he would *renew in him a right Spirit* {Psalms. 51:10}. And he petitions for quickening Grace: *Quicken me in thy Righteousness* {Psalms. 119:40}. And he begs for Illumination from God: *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law* {Psalms. 119:18}. He beseeches God, to afford him strengthening Aid and Support: *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe* {Psalms. 119:117}: The Church intreats, that her beloved would draw her: *Draw me, we will run after thee* {Song. 1:4}. And prays, that God would turn her: *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned* {Jeremiah. 31:18}. The Apostle prays for Illumination, in the Behalf of the *Ephesians*: *Making Mention of you in my Prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, in the Knowledge of him; the Eyes of your Understanding being enlightened* Ephesians. 1:17-18}. And he beseeches God, to *sanctify the Thessalonians* {1Thessalonians. 5:23}. These various Petitions, with Abundance more that might be mentioned, are clearly expressive of a divine Operation on the Mind, in order to furnish it with heavenly Knowledge, Grace and Holiness. Besides. God has promised to operate on the

Hearts of his People. That, they *shall be willing in the Day of Christ's Power*. That he *will take away the stony Heart out of their Flesh, and give them an Heart of Flesh*. That he *will put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgments, and do them* {Ezekiel. 36:26-27}. These Promises are a proper Foundation, whereon we may found our Hopes of receiving such gracious Influences, that are productive of the holy and heavenly Effects, above-mentioned; and, therefore, it is not Enthusiasm to think, that such Influences are enjoyed by some: Nor is it so in any, who have Experience of the Being of those desirable Effects in themselves, to conclude, that they are happily favoured with those gracious Influences. Moreover, the Necessity of this divine Influence on Men, appears from the Representation given of human Nature, in the holy Scripture. We are said to be *without Strength*: All are so for whom Christ *died* {Romans. 5:6}. Our *carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to his Law, neither, indeed, can it be* {Romans. 8:7}. We are under the *Dominion of Sin* {Romans. 6:14}. Are under the *Power of Darkness*; yea, we are *Darkness* itself. It is true of all, who are in a regenerate State, that they had their *Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of their Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind and were by Nature, Children of Wrath, even as others* {Ephesians. 2:3}, They were Subjects of the Lusts of the Flesh, *i.e.* the sensitive Part, the Body; and also of the Lusts of the Mind, *i.e.* the superior, reasonable Part of Man. The Desires of the Mind, in Distinction from the Flesh, were evil

and criminal. Unregenerate Men are the Subjects not only of *brutal*, but also of *devilish* Lusts. From hence, it may be justly concluded, that an heavenly Influence is absolutely necessary to enlighten, quicken, and sanctify Men; and if such a gracious Operation upon them, is needful to render them holy, in order to the Enjoyment of future Happiness; except we will maintain that the whole human Race are left of God, eternally to perish, we must grant, that such an Influence from above, is afforded to some, and, consequently, that those who are the subjects of this gracious Influence, are not guilty of Enthusiasm, in supposing that they enjoy or receive it. I add, Regeneration and Sanctification are constantly ascribed to God: *Who were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God* {John. 1:13}. *And you hath be quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins* {Ephesians. 2:1}. *Hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling* {2Timothy. 1:9}. *We are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works* {Ephesians. 2:10}.

I subjoin, in this Work, there is an Exertion of divine Power: *And what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power; which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead* {Ephesians. 1:19-20}. Since our Regeneration and Sanctification are wholly, and always attributed to God, and they are denied to be of Man: And since there is an Exertion of divine Power therein; it is not Enthusiasm in those, who

are the happy subjects of Grace and Holiness, to entertain an Opinion of their receiving divine Impulses and Impressions; let some Men say what they please. Once more; God has promised, and the Saints have had delightful Experience of Consolation and Joy, upon a Sense of Sin, and of their Sinfulness, and in Temptations, Afflictions, and Trials, for the Gospel's Sake. God is willing that the *Heirs of Promise, should have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope before them* {Hebrews. 6:17-18}. And he hath given to the Saints, *everlasting Consolation and good Hope thro' Grace* {2Thessalonians. 2:16}. They *joy in God, thro' the Lord Jesus Christ* {Romans. 5:11}. And *glory in Tribulation. — The Love of God being shed abroad in their Hearts* {Romans. 5:3-5}. *Their Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ* {1John. 1:3}. They *walk in the Light of his Countenance* {Psalms. 89:15}. They are the happy Subjects of the *Joy of his Salvation, and are upheld by his free Spirit* {Psalms. 51:12}. God gives to them *the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garments of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness* {Isaiah. 61:3}. These various Modes of Expression, afford a solid Foundation to conclude, that God graciously condescends to communicate to his People, Comfort under their spiritual Distresses, and that he gives to them lively Hopes of an Interest in his Grace and Favour: And that it is his Intention to raise them to an exalted State of Blessedness. And, therefore, it is not Enthusiasm in them, to conceive that they receive benign Influences from him. Their heavenly Raptures are not the *airy* Flights of a warm

Imagination; but *solid* and *substantial* Joys, produced in their Minds, by a supernatural Operation on them.

Should it be objected, by this *Gentleman*, or any other Person, that this divine Operation which is productive of those Effects, is incomprehensible; or that it cannot be explained: I would answer, no more can the Impulses, and inward Impressions, and the Illumination, which he allows of, be explained. If God, at any Time, and upon emergent Occasions, maintains a Communication with the human Mind, that Communication is to us, as to the Mode of it, entirely inexplicable; but such a Communication cannot be denied, without we will assert, that Men in no Circumstances of Distress and Difficulty, receive Assistances from Heaven, to comfort, relieve and direct them, in the true Way to Happiness. To affirm which, would enervate all, that the holy Scriptures have said, concerning the heavenly Aids afforded to Men, in the most distressed and disconsolate Condition. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that such an Influence upon the human Mind, may be. For it is not in the least repugnant to Reason, to conceive that the Father of Spirits, can operate on the Spirits he created. Nor is it an unreasonable supposition, that the human Mind is capable of being thus wrought upon, in order to furnish its Understanding with better Light, and its Will with a better Disposition, than, in a corrupt State, the Mind of Man is the Subject of, in these and other Powers of it. And, I would observe, that this Influence

is easily to be distinguished from Enthusiasm, by the Effects it produces.

Those Effects, are a Sense of the vile Nature of Sin, and a deep Sorrow for having sinned, and on Account of its Being, and various Workings in the Heart. An Hatred of it, and a holy Indignation against it as Sin so that no Lust, whatever, is connived at, nor cherished. And this Influence produces Desires to praise and glorify God, for the amazing Goodness, he has discovered in providing for the Welfare of Sinners, who have demerited his awful Displeasure by their criminal Behavior. It also fills the Soul with an humble spiritual Joy, arising from a Sense of that good Will, Grace and Mercy, which the *God of all Grace*, shows, exercises, and discovers towards all those who trust, in him, thro' the Mediation of Christ. If any are pleased to ridicule these Effects, and pronounce them *enthusiastic*, it is not only because they are unhappy Strangers to the Power, which attends *real* Christianity, and *true* Piety; but because they are under the Influence of strong Prejudices and Prepossessions against revealed Truth.

We may now observe what real Enthusiasm is. And,

1. To imagine, that God reveals any Truths to the Minds of Men, which are not contained in his Word, is Enthusiasm. For no Addition is now to be expected to that Revelation,

which we are favored with; nor is it necessary; that is sufficient of itself.

2. It is Enthusiasm to conceive, that he reveals Truths relating to Salvation, immediately, to the Minds of Men, without his Word; or otherwise than by Means of that. Revelation contains all Truths necessary to be believed in order to Happiness. And that is sufficient, as a Rule to guide us, in forming all our religious Sentiments. Hence it follows, that an immediate Revelation of Truths, thereto contained, to the Understanding of Men is not wanted; and therefore, it is reasonable to conclude, that an immediate Revelation is not given to any Person whatever. Farther, should any Man pretend to such a Revelation, what Evidence could he be capable of giving, that he is infallibly guided in forming of his Ideas of Truth, which he pretends is made known to him in this extraordinary Manner? None at all.

3. A Persuasion, that we are excited by a divine Impulse to act, what does not appear by the holy Scripture, it is our Duty to do, is downright Enthusiasm whatever Pretences we may make of enjoying Comfort in it, and receiving Advantage from it. To imagine, that Impulses and Impressions to act besides the Rule of our Practice, in religious Matters, are owing to a divine Influence upon us, is Enthusiasm, doubtless.

4. To conceit, that we are divinely influenced, when we are troubled and oppressed in our Spirits, and we know not well,

on what Account it is, or what is the particular moving Cause of our Distress, is Enthusiasm of a melancholy Kind. For God never makes Impressions on the Minds of Men, but to answer some important and wise Design; no such Design can be answered, by throwing Men into Distress, without some Cause of that Distress appearing to their View. And, therefore, to speak of Terror, and Trouble of Soul, without any Mention of the Occasion and Spring of that Trouble, is a most un-instructive Way of speaking, and it can never be of the least real Use to Christians.

5. An Apprehension, that we are under a divine Influence, because we are full of Joy, and a Confidence of being happy, when we know not the Foundation and Spring of that Elevation of Mind, is Enthusiasm. For, God in administering Consolation to the Souls of Men, always presents to their View some solid Foundation of Comfort; without that, our Comfort would be groundless, and have nothing to support it; and of Course, it must in that Case, be worth nothing. It is Enthusiasm, unless the holy Scripture and its Promises, or scriptural Truths, are the Source from which our Pleasure arises. And, therefore, when Persons express Abundance of Joy and Comfort, which, as they say, they receive from God, and acquaint us not with the Cause from which their pretended spiritual Joys arise; they might as well say not a Word; for all they express relating to those Joys, can never be of the least Benefit to any. Nor can it justly entitle them, to an Interest in our Opinion of their excelling, in Religion and

Piety. If it doth not raise Jealousies an our Minds, of their pretending to what they have not really experienced. 6. No Impulses, which confound Reason, and throw Persons into Agitations, can reasonably be supposed, to have God for their Author. He operates effectually upon Men, whenever he is graciously pleased to work on them by his powerful Grace; but his Influences never interrupt the due Exercise of their rational Faculties; on the contrary, they always direct them to act in the best Manner, and to the wisest Purpose. Nor do his sweet Influences raise Convulsions, in the human Frame, and cause Distortions in the Members of our Bodies. His Operations, tho' they are ever efficacious, they are never violent, but always gentle, and put no Force upon Nature, nor cause Men to act, as if they were in a Ferment. For any to conceit, that they are divinely inspired, because they feel unaccountable and unnatural Motions, and because they are strongly excited to disorderly Actions, and which may justly be accounted *wild* and *frantic*, Delusion and Madness, or it is Enthusiasm of the most evident Kind. By these Marks, Enthusiasm may easily be distinguished from that divine Work upon the Hearts of Men; which Mr. *Foster's* Text plainly asserts: *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit* {**John. 3:8**}.

It may not be improper to acquaint the Reader briefly, with the general and genuine Sense of the Words: 'Tis this: The

Influences of the holy Spirit upon the Souls of Men, are compared to Wind: And as that is not under the Direction and Control of any Creature, so the divine Spirit works upon whom, at what Time, and in what Manner he pleaseth, and none can obstruct his Operations, or disappoint him of his End in working. As the Wind is to us invisible thro' its Tenuity, tho' we perceive its Being by the Motion, and Sounds, and Effects of it: As we cannot particularly and fully describe how it is produced, nor tell where that wait Body of Air sinks, when it subsides: So we are not able to explain the Manner of the holy Spirit's Influence upon us, tho' we are sensible of its Effects. We know, that the new Creature exists, by its Actings, tho' we cannot declare the Manner of its Production.

This *Gentleman* very frequently objects, not only in this Discourse; but also in various other Parts of his Writings, that we extort unnatural Inferences from scriptural Metaphors, and particularly from that used in these Words. But he may be pleased to observe, that without the Use of this or other metaphorical Representations, which are given in the Word of God, concerning this momentous Point, our Opinion may be established: For what we collect from those Representations, is clearly and fully expressed in plain Language. Faith is expressly said to be the *Gift of God* {**Ephesians. 2:8**}. And, therefore, it is not acquired. Repentance is *the Gift* of an exalted Saviour: And, consequently, Men do not effect it in themselves. The Grace

of *Hope* is given of *God*, as well as *everlasting Consolation* is {**2Thessalonians. 2:16**}. And, therefore, Men raise not this heavenly *Hope* in themselves. It is declared, that *God reconciles* us, who were *Enemies* to him, and disobedient to his *Law*: And, consequently, our submissive *Disposition* to his holy *Will*, is not of ourselves. It is *strongly* suggested, that we make not ourselves, to *differ* from others, and that we have *nothing*, as *Christians*, but what we have *received* {**1Corinthians. 4:7**}. And of Course, we must conclude, that it is not of our own *Will*, that we become holy, humble, and spiritual; but we ought to ascribe it *wholly* to *God*, and his gracious *Influence* upon us. It is *explicitely* denied, that those, who are born again, are *born of the Will of the Flesh, and of the Will of Man*: And it is asserted, that *they are born of God* {**John. 1:13**}. The *necessary* Conclusion from which is, that *Regeneration* is not of the *Will* and *Endeavor* of *Man*, but that it is *wholly* and *solely* the Produce of a divine *Operation* upon us. These are plain *Texts*, and not figurative *Expressions*, wherein the whole of what we contend for, is plainly affirmed; and therefore, our *Opinion* is not only built on *Metaphors*, and figurative *Modes* of *Speech*, but it is expressed in the plainest *Language*; which fully defends us, in interpreting *Scripture-Metaphors* relating to this *Subject*, in the *Manner* we do; notwithstanding this *Gentleman's* *Exceptions* to our *Interpretation* of such *Metaphors*.