

THE
SPRUCE STREET LECTURES,

DELIVERED

BY SEVERAL CLERGYMEN, DURING THE AUTUMN AND
WINTER OF 1831-32.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A LECTURE

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS : WITH
AN APPENDIX,

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SPRUCE STREET LECTURES.

LECTURE VIII.

*Delivered on the Evening of the 20th May, 1832, by the Rev.
Samuel Martin, D. D. of Chanceford, Pa.*

ON REGENERATION.

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Cor. v. 17.

PAUL and his fellow apostles, as the Master whom they served, were constantly exposed to the reproach and hatred of the enemies of the cross. Their zeal was regarded as fanatic, their eloquence as pompous display, to attract notice and procure applause. Their success excited suspicion, and exposed them to unspeakable malice. The purity of their lives, their disinterested labours, and their extensive charity, instead of procuring esteem, heated public resentment. To whatever quarter they turned their eyes, causes of trouble and perplexity arose before them; deaths and dangers stared upon them. Did these things move them? Did they retard their motion, or drive them from their course? Instead of this, they rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of Christ." The entreaties of friends enforced with tears, and the terrors of death in joint array, could not stay the progress of Paul on his journey to Jerusalem, though he well knew that

“bonds and imprisonment awaited him.” “What mean ye,” says he, “to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready, not be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Nor were these the vauntings of a desperado, nor the ebullitions of an overheated imagination; but the composed and well digested resolutions of a soul devoted to the will of Christ, and “strong to do exploits,” in his service. But this fortitude, this devotion to Christ, did not spring from any resources common to man. They were not the attainments of native greatness, improved and cherished in the most favoured schools of science or experience. They arose out of a depression of all these, and the possession of a spirit akin to that which pertained essentially to the Master whom they served. Their pure, and sublime addresses, their self-denying and heavenly conversation, clearly proved that they were born from above. He that had created them at first, had created them anew. They were in Christ Jesus. They were new creatures! New creatures, in a new world. “Old things were passed away, behold all things were become new.” Nor was this peculiar to Paul and his fellow apostles: “For, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”

To be in Christ, involves every thing, immediately or remotely, that is or can be important to man.

It implies an interest in his vicarious righteousness, through a cordial acceptance of it for all the purposes for which he fulfilled it, and for all the ends of its imputation.

To be in Christ, supposes union with Christ, by which union the sinner is made one with Christ in reckoning of law, and so, by the obedience of Christ his Surety, accounted his, he is delivered from condemnation. “For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; for the law

of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made them free from the law of sin and death."

To be in Christ, implies the possession of the Spirit of Christ; of whom the Saviour says to his disciples, "that he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." For this, believers are called "temples of God." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

To be in Christ, implies an alliance to Christ so intimate, that all the supplies of the spiritual life are derived from him, and that this life is entirely dependent upon him for its maintenance. "Because I live," said the Saviour to his disciples, "ye shall live also." And this view is in exact accordance with Paul's experience. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And does light dwell with darkness? Does love enclasp enmity in its bosom? Does holiness entwine herself around the filthy, deformed, and loathsome monster sin? Not at all: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The God of grace prepares the human heart for his reception. He builds for himself a new temple. He sweeps and garnishes it, and takes possession.

The regeneration or new creation of the sinner, is at once a mysterious and an almighty work. It is exclusively the work of God. Speaking of Christ, John states as follows: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." *John* i. 12, 13. Speaking of himself and his fellow Christians, Paul says "we are his, that is, God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, created unto good works." The creation of all things was by the word of God's power, without the supposed pre-existence of any materials. And the spiritual creation, is

the exertion of "the exceeding greatness of his power;" a power compared by the apostle to that which "he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." The above passages, to which many might be added, directly ascribe to God the regeneration of the sinner. But besides this direct testimony, the form of expression furnishes an argument equally forcible with the positive declaration. They are created; to create is exclusively the prerogative of the Almighty. When the Saviour said to the man sick of the palsy, "thy sins be forgiven thee," the Scribes, kindling into rage at the apprehended blasphemy, exclaimed, "Who can forgive sins but God?" The conviction from which this proceeded was just. With equal justness we all exclaim, Who can create but God? In one of the above passages, it is said, concerning those that are brought to Christ, "He," that is God, "gave them power to become the sons of God," and he describes them as "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Why, I ask, was Christ called the Son of God? because he was begotten of the Father. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Peter ascribes to God, in behalf of the regenerated, special praise, in that "God the Father had begotten them again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The full grown man, or woman, is begotten again by God the Father, and is born again. Surprise may force the exclamation from a carnal heart, 'Can a man be born when he is old?' No; if reference be had to created power—No. But if the case be taken as it is; if a spiritual truth be the thing intended; if God be the agent, the answer is, Yes. It is God that worketh in them to change them from carnal, sensual, and devilish, to spiritual, holy, and heavenly. If the phrases 'begot-

ten again,' 'born again,' 'created anew,' mean any thing, they must mean something above human conception, something beyond the reach of human agency. We infer, then, that regeneration is a glorious work of God.

Again: If the estate of man be such as the Scriptures represent, regeneration must be a supernatural work. Two appellations fully describe the whole human race; the righteous and the wicked. The term, righteous, includes all, who, being united to Christ, have, by divine appointment and reckoning, his righteousness as theirs. They are renewed after the image of Him who created them; and have the Holy Ghost within them, to perfect what he has begun. Of these two descriptions of men, the apostle speaks as follows: "We know, that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not; and we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness"—All except the justified. The word translated *lieth*, is often used by Homer, to denote one who lieth slain. The whole world lieth slain in wickedness. "Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceits, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" "The Lord looked down from heaven, upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God." And what is the report which he brings? "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good; no, not one." And Paul's quotation and paraphrase upon this Psalm, presents this picture in shades of still deeper darkness.

"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"—such is the description, which

He, who well knows what is in the hearts of men, gives of our race, out of which many are to be so transformed as to be like angels; yea, like to God. And who in earth or in heaven, but God, can effect the wondrous change? Can any heal themselves? Can any turn their hatred of God and holiness, into love and delight? Then "can the Ethiopian change his skin;" then "can the leopard change his spots." Can any produce the required change upon his fellow man? Recourse has been had to human justice to stay the progress of wickedness. The experiment has been fully made, through a series of years, reaching back to the youth of time, now become old and hoary. All the while, the protection of law, and the immunities of organized governments, have joined their influence with the fear of hell and the hope of heaven, to prompt men to the practice of virtue. Penalties, graduated by the enormity of crime, have been threatened and inflicted. Justice has dealt out its severities. And what has been effected? Avarice has put forth its greatest strength, in laying schemes too deep for the discernment of justice, or too intricate to be scanned by man. The assassin has been taught more covertly to aim his deadly thrust; the debauchee to look for thicker darkness; and the voluptuary, still more devoted, to abide steady at his stall. Philosophers, and wise men, and prophets, and teachers have spent their skill and power upon our race, and all in vain. Parents, to instructions, have added watchfulness, and correction, and entreaties, and prayers. And where is the proselyte? Let the panygerists of human nature point him out? Sportive nature might produce a white crow or a black swan; but in the production of man, a field of operation far more splendid, nature is utterly impotent; her offspring are all of a spot—all guilty, all polluted. The enemy occupies the citadel, all

the springs of human action are poisoned; every power of soul and body partakes of vileness. And as wise physicians sometimes say of chronic diseases, "it were easier to make a new man than cure them." So in this case, the only cure for man is new creation. And who, but God, can create?

Bear with me, while I place before you another class of Scripture testimony on this gloomy view of human nature; and be assured, I should not call upon you to look so long upon the melancholy scene, did I not believe that a long and attentive look might prove the means of exciting you to flee from the grasp of death, now binding many of you fast, to the arms of Christ your deliverer. The Scriptures we shall produce specify the extent of sin's dominion over the powers and faculties of man. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." *Rom. viii. 7.* "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The Apostle describes the heathen, as "having their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." Over Israel and Judea God lamented: "My people is foolish; they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding, they are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge." Paul speaks of Christians as alive from the dead, and as quickened or brought to life from an estate of death. These are a few, out of many passages, which show the reign of sin over all that pertains to man. Over his

intellectual powers,—“every thought of the imagination of the heart” is affected. “The carnal mind,” or the mind of the flesh, ‘is enmity against God.’ Here the understanding, together with the will and affections, are included, as subject to the ‘enmity.’ The other passages are equally comprehensive: while, in some, our ruined and helpless estate is signified by a term, whose import duly felt, depresses the human spirits and inclines to melancholy. “*Dead* in trespasses and sins.” Deplorable condition!—and desperate too; were it not that a life giving-spirit, the Spirit of Christ, is promised to raise men from the dead. Knowledge, which once ruled the whole man, and so spread the image of God before the soul as to engage all its powers in cheerful harmony and delightful unison, in the praise and enjoyment of Him who is alone lovely and who alone can bless, is supplanted by ignorance: its seat is become the abode of darkness. Without knowledge, man in paradise had not been man. Until the understanding is restored to its rightful dominion, man will still be far below himself. None of our powers are whole. Sin has universal possession, and universal dominion. Our bodies are vile, nor can they be refined till they turn to dust, and are raised and fashioned anew. What a wreck is the nature of man! The shattered framework around a ruined soul, reminds us of what it once contained; but when we ask what is now within, we are told that it is a vile, polluted, deformed thing, which, ere long, is to be torn from its insecure moorings, to be engulfed in a Charybdis that casts out none of its dead.

But I have said that the work is mysterious as well as almighty. Who can trace and develop the operations of Jehovah in the creation of the world? Who can tell by what process rude and undigested chaos, from nothing, was brought into being? Who can explain the way of the

Lord, in reducing the jumbled materials into order? Who can illustrate the manner of balancing and adjusting the worlds, so that each maintains its destined place, and moves under laws eternal as its existence? "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," when they gazed with astonishment on the finished and stupendous system. Its mystery and magnificence inspired their song, and gave elevation to their praise. When one sinner repenteth, or is new created, there is joy in heaven. "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." *Luke* xv. 10. This is a part of the work of man's redemption into which "the angels desire to look;" and where they adore the author, whose way to them is hid. Though in lower strains, the glorified saints join the heavenly choir, in notes like these, "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, amen." The people of God, who witness the happy change in others, look on with devout admiration, and as they see the babe in Christ growing to maturity, their anticipations of the crowning scene, when they shall put on immortality, how transporting!

Though the way of God in operating on the nature of man in regeneration be thus mysterious; yet he has graciously revealed the means which he employs, while he has enjoined on us the duty of seeking to become partakers of it. When we speak of means as employed by God, and as enjoined on us, we do not mean to intimate that God cannot, or does not, renew sinners without the use of external means. For ought that we can discern, our salvation was conferred by Christ on one of his fellow-sufferers on the

cross, who, until on the cross, was ignorant of him. One of the Evangelists testifies, that "they, that were crucified with him, reviled him." Yet to one of these, the Saviour declared, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." What we affirm on this subject is, that means go into the general plan of God in the regeneration of sinners.

Allow me here to say, that men are to be regarded, ordinarily, as possessing all the faculties and powers proper to man; this I presume will be called in question by none. As little, surely, ought any to doubt that all these, of whatever name, are so perverted and polluted, that, until renewed by grace, the exercise of them in every case is sinful. We are men, but men fallen! We are men, but men dead, as to holy or spiritual action. We are men, but men in ruin, and exposed to the wrath to come. Now, that men may be prepared for heaven, which is at least the secondary end of the Gospel dispensation, it is obvious, that they must undergo a thorough reform. Every power and faculty of their nature must become the opposite of what it was. The mental faculties, which especially distinguish man from the inferior creatures, and which are the light which ought to guide, and the power which ought to impel all the rest, must, in the order of nature, as well as of grace, first be acted upon. Hence the grand means which God uses for the conversion of sinners, is his Word. Believers are said to be "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." The word of God is addressed to the understandings of men, whether in the reading or preaching of it: and if the heart is to believe unto righteousness, it must be reached through the intellectual faculties. In proof of this, I refer you to the manner of the divine Saviour, in his Sermon on the Mount. What does it contain that is not

directed to the understandings and consciences of men? By what other avenue does he seek to approach their hearts? The sermon of Peter, so justly celebrated for its power and success, had plainly for its aim the conviction of the consciences of his hearers. The burden of his preaching was, the proof that he whom they had lately crucified, was constituted both Lord and Christ. The effect was, their convinced consciences compelled the inquiry addressed to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Agreeably to the promise of Christ, the Holy Ghost prepared their hearts to receive the truth, and wrought through its means the proper effects. Vainly do men address the feelings of the human heart, in the hope of changing it. Let any show me an instance wherein Christ or his Apostles endeavoured to back sinners into a religious course, by direct addresses to feelings and dispositions, and I will consent that they preach to these, "till sides and benches fail." Faith is the grace that savingly unites the sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ; but "how can the sinner believe in him of whom he has not heard, and how shall he hear without a preacher." So "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The word of God, I admit, addressed to the human mind with all the native force of truth, and adorned and softened with all the persuasion of human eloquence, if there be nothing more, will leave the human heart a stone unbroken. Yet if the same word come to the ear by the utterance of the Holy Spirit, though it come as a still small voice, and even lisp its whisper, it will reach the heart. Its power will be felt, and the heart will, as He pleases, either melt or break. When He bears home the truth upon the heart, or rather when He prepares the heart to receive it, and wills its renovation, the designed issue may be confidently ex-

pected. When chaos lumbered in impenetrable darkness, God said, "Let there be light:" and light shone all around: and this same God "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," says the Apostle, "hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Gospel preached, "not with the enticing words of man's wisdom," but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, is the grand means to give to the cross of Christ full effect. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell his dream," but let him that hath God's word, speak it faithfully; for, says God, "what is the chaff to the wheat? Is not my word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" *Jer.* xxiii. 27. "It is quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." *Heb.* iv. 12. When the Lord speaks, will not all nature hear? On one occasion, while the Saviour slept, the winds and waves had combined their forces, and his disciples felt that their ship must sink. The Saviour arose and rebuked the winds, and commanded the swollen billows, "Peace, be still, and there was a great calm." "Lazarus, come forth," exclaimed Jesus, and the man of Bethany, already four days dead, comes forth alive. Unclean spirits depart at his rebuke. Diseases, the most inveterate, are healed by his word. And cannot Christ by his Spirit and his Word, quicken into life the dead in sin, and lead them forth to follow him? Ignorance of our natural condition, and mistaken views of the plan laid for our salvation, may, and often do give occasion to devise plans, and form purposes, to turn to Christ; and these purposes are often accompanied with strong expectations of success. How hollow, how airy, are such hopes! A

scribe, a man skilled in the law, comes to Christ, and declares his purpose in terms most liberal, most unreserved: "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Christ treats his proposal with respect, and tells him plainly what he might look for. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." This was enough. His expectations were all cut off. He slips out of view; you hear no more of him. Again; the Lord Jesus fixes his eyes on one, and addresses him saying, "Follow me." He entreats a delay until he should perform the last offices of filial piety to a deceased father. "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Here, there is no further objection. This, indeed, was a call to a special end, but then it was a call to an arduous office, to greater danger and more self-denial, than ordinarily falls to the lot of the private Christian.

Here it is proper to remark, that Christ, while he presents divine truth before the mind in the execution of his prophetic office, exerts his power as a king upon the human heart; as a prophet or teacher, he speaks as never man spake. The brightness of truth shines upon the mind with a lustre unknown before, when he comes to show the way of life. Though the truths exhibited, are none other than those contained in the Scriptures, the light is withal supernatural. It comes home upon the mind, accompanied with evidences of truth that constrain conviction;—while, as a king, he exerts his mighty power upon the soul to give it efficacy. As a king, new powers of perception, of apprehension, judging, and choice are given. While truth is exhibited to the mind, so that the word is with power, the soul, being at the same time convinced, persuaded, and enabled, accepts the offered salvation. As a prophet, Christ

acts immediately by the word, at the same time that he acts immediately and directly upon the soul as a king, in its renovation. Thus far we have ventured to speak of the manner of this mysterious work of God. In this light the Apostle seems to our view to exhibit it. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of God, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 *Cor.* iii. 10. Analagous to this is the instance of the cure performed on the man whose hand was withered. Christ commanded him, "Stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other." Here the communication of health to the motionless and diseased member, was plainly at the time when the command operated on the mind. While Paul talked with a little group of women assembled at Philippi, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia. In common with others, she listened to Paul's instructions; but she had listened in vain, unless the Spirit had turned her heart to the truth, or prepared her heart to receive it.

If what I have said be scriptural; and for one I believe it is; then we may boldly affirm, that all shall be regenerated that were given to Christ in the eternal purpose of God; the means shall never be withdrawn, nor the operations of grace suspended, until all that are bought with the blood of Christ shall be cleansed and brought home to heaven. "For, saith God, as the rain that cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it."

In the past discussion on the importance of the word of God as a means of salvation, as used by the author of regeneration to produce it, I have necessarily exhibited its usefulness as employed by man in seeking salvation; and shall now trouble you farther but with a few remarks. It will be admitted, that in the use of the word, as read and preached, there is a fitness for the accomplishment of the end intended. It reveals all that is necessary to be known, or believed, or done by men. It presents to our view all that God hath done, and all that he hath promised to do, to effect it. We are enjoined to hear the word; to meditate upon it; to believe and obey it. It is recommended under prospects of unspeakable benefit. "It is able to make wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work." The Scriptures "convert the soul; they make wise the simple." As the word is the important means by which God approaches the sinner, so that the sinner may be found in the various uses of it, which it recommends, must be a matter of much concern. While the Eunuch read the Scriptures, the Spirit told Philip to draw near and instruct him; and the effect was, that he that read believed. "While Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."

The sacraments, considered as means of grace, are mainly concerned with real Christians. They are employed as seals, to renew and confirm their covenant engagements; and in general, to promote the growth of the life already given. Attention to these is not, therefore, necessary in the present discussion; in which we are singly concerned

with the instrumentality employed, in procuring and constituting the new, the heavenly life.

Let us turn our attention to prayer as a duty, which the Holy Ghost may bless to our souls, as instrumental in their regeneration. Of this our Saviour says, that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." Paul, in addressing the idolatrous Athenians, states to them, as reasons which ought to bend them to the worship of the true God, that all nations are made of one blood; that they are all dependent on God their Creator, whose extended providence embraces the most minute concerns and relations of their lives, and that he does this, that they may be excited "to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him." *Acts* xvii. 27. This seeking is here held up to view as reasonable, and not altogether hopeless to the heathen. "O thou that hearest prayer," says the Psalmist, "unto thee *all flesh* shall come." *Psalms* lxxv. 2. Peter, who says of Simon, "Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," yet commands him "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee!" *Acts* viii. 22. That prayer is the duty of all men, whether regenerate or the contrary, the above passages seem to prove. And I have never yet ascertained upon what grounds, prayer has been forbidden to the worst of men. If the purity of the heart, and the perfection of the performance, constitute the reasons of the command, then the command were vain; all would fail of acceptance, for none could so pray. Were they capable of performing it perfectly, then were it unnecessary. There could be no reason for prayer to Adam in paradise; he possessed all that he could wish or enjoy. Abundant indeed was his reason for praise. We never hear that

angels pray, nor the spirits of the just made perfect. For praise they have ample reason. It will be noticed here, that we use the word prayer, singly to signify petition. We offer then, as one reason of preferring requests to God, or of the duty of prayer, our forlorn and necessitous condition. The Gospel is addressed to us as sinners, under, and liable to all the consequences of sin; and our duty is, to come to God as we really are, encouraged by his gracious promises. This duty again, we say, is founded on the fulness of blessing treasured up in Christ, in behalf of sinners. "When he ascended up on high he received gifts for men," even for the rebellious. These he holds in possession. Another reason on which is founded the duty, and I will add, the encouragement to pray, is, that all the fulness of Christ, as mediator, is in Him, by the gift of God the Father, for the specific end of bestowing it on those that were chosen in Him to eternal life; and, therefore, He that is thus full of blessing is willing to give. Who is there among you, whose conscience condemns him as guilty? What will you be told that you must do, to escape punishment? The modern theology commands, repent. Can you repent? No: it is only obtained by the gift of God. But if you could repent—could you by that means cancel the account that stands against you? Impossible; what course then can be left for the sinner, but to ask forgiveness? and why not with prayer? when inspiration tells you, that "with the Lord there is forgiveness, with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."

I say again, that the earnestness, ardour, sincerity, or even the faith of the suppliant, cannot be the reason why God accepts his prayer or his person. The unregenerate sinner is acted upon by the Spirit of Christ, as a prophet and as a

king, in regeneration. The sinner is passive, he is a mere recipient. Christ finds him dead; he gives him life. The Father finds him guilty, and reckons to him his Son's righteousness; he forgives him, and adopts him as his son. For what reason, or on what account? For none other surely, but the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. Now that he is become a new creature, how does he live, and by what means does he grow? He lives, "by Christ living in him." He grows by him, who, while he is "the author, is also the finisher of faith." He now works, but it is by God that worketh in him to will and do of his good pleasure. If God, then, accept and bless even a real Christian, he cannot be moved so to do, either by what he does, or by his manner of doing it; but because he is in Christ, because the fulness of Christ is his. He belongs to Christ's fold, and the great Shepherd of the sheep is bound by covenant engagement to feed him. For Christ's sake, and for his sake alone, good men receive a gracious answer to their prayers; and they all, with one accord, do ask, that the spirit of prayer may be given them; they all do thank God when they receive it; while they jointly exclaim, "Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our works in us." Should any one declare the contrary, and affirm that his ardour and importunity had melted the heart of Jehovah to pity, and rendered him propitious, ye all would say to such a one, "Thou hast a lie in thy right hand." Were you to suppose that God would weigh the prayers of the righteous in a scale of equity, having separated what is pure from what is vile, the latter would still preponderate, and the side of purity would kick the beam:—but this purity, of whatever amount, has been communicated to them; and to God be the praise. The elect of God in Christ Jesus are, in common with others, the subjects of sin, and charged

with guilt while in their natural condition; and as they are not yet united to Christ, nor dealt with as those that are in him, their prayers, cannot be approved by a Holy God. Yet I contend that there is unspeakable importance in prayer to them.

1st. Because they are chosen in Christ, that they should be holy, and so Christ is concerned to make them so. For this end the great High Priest above intercedes for them. "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for those which thou hast given me out of the world, for they are thine." Here he intercedes for his disciples, as being given him by actual calling. But again he says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word." In this you behold the Saviour looking forward to generations rising into existence in orderly succession to the end of time, as embraced in the travail of his soul, as objects of his intercession, as to be made the subjects of his grace. To all quarters, too, is his attention turned. "Other sheep I have, that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." How will this shepherd gather his flock together? He will send his word to the places where they wander and address them; he will turn their hearts to prayer by speaking through his Spirit to them, and compel them to come. Now what man that prays, can tell when the Spirit of God may inspire him, or that he will always pray in vain. If he be one for whom Christ intercedes, there surely will be a time when means will encompass him, and when the power that raised up Jesus from the dead, will give elevation to his soul, and lift it up to heaven. The opposition made to Paul's ministry at Corinth, had discouraged him, and had tempted him to turn away; at which crisis the Lord spoke to Paul in the night

by a vision, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no one shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." Thus does he, to whom the kingdom belongs, provide that all things shall conspire, whether preaching or praying, reading or hearing, with the Almighty power which he waits to employ at the proper moment appointed in the eternal decree, for calling the elect from darkness to light, for creating them anew.

If I have succeeded in showing that regeneration is exclusively the work of God, all the powers and faculties of men being deeply depraved, and incapable of any right exercise or employment towards God; then it will be asked, why does God command what no man is able to perform? and why does he punish them for not obeying? I know not a better answer than the old one given by our fathers, who have long since fallen asleep in Christ.—That God's right to obedience cannot be dissolved by the disobedience of his subjects; and that the lower we are sunk in a spirit of rebellion, the greater is our guilt. But I enter my solemn protest against all the reasoning of men on the subject of ability, as concerned with the question whether God is justified in requiring what we are unable to perform. To those who labour to defend the Divine plan in this particular, I seem to hear God asking, who hath required this at your hand? Sure I am, that the discussion of this subject, has brought forth sentiments near akin to blasphemy. To theories of men on this subject I pay no attention. I shall simply lay before you what I believe the Scriptures teach. I trust none of you will condemn me, when I say that all men, in an estate of nature, are under the curse of the law? I care not, in this case, whether you regard original sin, or depravity, or both united, as the cause, if

you admit that all the world stands guilty before God. It will surely be admitted, that from this damnation none can deliver themselves. If any could, then hath Christ died in vain. That God hath interposed for our deliverance, is matter of unspeakable joy and praise. What then is the plan which God hath laid, and which he is executing? He hath appointed his Son, and sent him to obey the law in our room and stead. In his life he has fulfilled the righteousness of the law, or the obedience which it required of us, as our substitute. In his death he has offered himself a sacrifice, and made an atonement for the sins of his people. By these means God has opened a channel of intercourse between himself and sinners. Through Christ as the way, God comes down with blessings to men. Through Christ the intercessor, men appear before the mercy seat above. All fulness dwells in Christ, as mediator—as the fruit of his purchase—to be bestowed on men. On this account, all the promises are said to be “in him yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God.” This accomplished, God calls sinners to come to Christ, to believe in Christ—surely not because he knows they are able and ready to comply; for their inability and aversion are most fully known to him; but he does so, because he has amply provided through his Son, whatever exertion of power on his part may be needful, and whatever gift to be bestowed for fulfilling his merciful design. If any contend that they have power to believe—I care not whether they call it natural or moral power—they are aside of the Gospel plan of salvation, which proposes faith, and every thing else needful to the sinner, as matter of gift. Such, seeking to be justified by the deeds of the law, or deeds of their own, “are fallen from grace.” If a man is able to believe, why is he not able to love? If he is able to repent, why is he not able to avoid sin and

render repentance unnecessary? The truth is, that the Gospel scheme contemplates man as guilty, as condemned, as utterly impotent, as lifeless in a spiritual sense. And the grace of God takes man as it finds him. The sinner does not hear the voice, (so deaf is he to the things that ought to alarm him,) which tells him, "the soul that sinneth it shall die"—until the Spirit open his ears to hear it, and stir up in his soul the fear of death. What shall I do? says the guilty rebel; what shall I do to escape hell and secure heaven? Believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, is the order. Alas! says the sinner, I cannot apply the remedy. Unbelief reigns, enmity rages, I cannot believe. But let the sinner recollect, that if God demands faith of an unbelieving man, he bestows it too, for Christ's sake, who hath purchased faith for him. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Faith is the gift of God, to all that have it. The sinner's duty, under these circumstances, clearly is, diligent attention to all the outward means ordained of God for men in seeking; and in this, through the grace of God, his hope rests.

Sinners, you are commanded to repent. Repent and be converted. "God commandeth all men every where to repent." Ye exclaim—"Impossible.—My heart refuses to look back upon my sins, it will not glance at my vileness, it cannot bear the purity, nor look upon the spirituality of God's law. Oh, that I could feel as I ought to feel, as a bold offender against God: and fear, as I ought to fear, his hot displeasure." While your heart is sore, because of its hardness, think of this, and see if it will not apply to your case.—God says concerning his Son, that he has "exalted him a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins." Turn your whole attention hither, and seek relief. Ask what God offers.

Again. You are commanded, "Wash ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well." You are commanded to regenerate yourselves. I cannot, you exclaim, and so indeed it is. As well might you undertake to pull down your clayey tabernacles, and build them up again. As well might you attempt to extinguish the immortal spark that is within you, and kindle it again. Regenerate myself! Angels could not. None but the Almighty can. Sinner, hear again the welcome voice of mercy. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Here you discern the promise of God covers the whole ground of the command.

Again. God commands you, "Cast away all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die?" Hear again the grace provided and ready. "A new heart will I give you, a new spirit will I put within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Here again the promise and the provision made, cover the whole ground of the command.

Do not the above promises address men in their natural condition? and when the condition of any is described in a promise, is it not to be regarded as specially directed to them, and more especially, when the promise contains the very blessings which they feel that they need? If I can affirm that any thing is the duty of a man in any case, I can affirm, that when a man sees and feels himself painted in the description annexed to a promise, it is his duty to plead it: not to plead it, is wilful unbelief. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give

you rest." Now I assert, that he that is toiled and oppressed with the burden of sin, is a wilful unbeliever, if he does not plead "Lord sprinkle me with the blood of reconciliation, and grant me peace of conscience and peace with thee." So it is with all the promises, as addressed to the various conditions and necessities of the people of God.

The same is true with respect to unregenerate men. Their duty is to plead promises that describe them. They have hearts of stone; they have sins, many and aggravated. Can they regard God as a God, keeping covenant and mercy, if they fail to plead, "Lord sprinkle clean water upon me, and I shall be clean, from all my filthiness and from all my idols, do thou cleanse me." Sinners, be exhorted to wait on God, in an attendance on all His ordinances. Seek an acquaintance with your own hearts; keep the promises of a faithful God upon your minds; wrestle with God in prayer, and cease not to strive till ye receive the blessing. May the God of grace and peace grant you peace. If I have spoken the truth, may the Lord bless it to you all. If I have erred from the truth, Oh, Lord, forgive; and do thou show me wherein I have mistaken thy holy will. Amen.

In conclusion. I ask any one to tell me why God promises to do for men the very things which he requires them to do, in order to their salvation, if he contemplates men as in any sense able of themselves to do what he requires?

Again, I ask, that with the substitution of Christ in our room and stead, how it can consist with this substitution, that man himself should be the performer?

Again. The demand is not, do and live, but believe and be saved. To talk of doing, is to reject substitution, and to risk the natural plan.