

WINEBRENNER
ON
REGENERATION.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. _____ Copyright No. _____

BT 790

Shelf _____

W 7

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A

POPULAR TREATISE
ON REGENERATION:

FOUNDED ON

JOHN, CH. III, V. 7.

COMPRISING

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERIES OF PRACTICAL SER-
MONS PREACHED BEFORE THE CHURCH OF
GOD, IN THE CITY OF LANCASTER,
IN THE YEAR 1842.

BY JOHN WINEBRENNER, V.D.M.



HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA :
BOARD OF PUBLICATION, CHURCH OF GOD.
DR. GEORGE ROSS.

1878.

77

BT790
W7

COPYRIGHTED, 1878.

THE LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON

P R E F A C E.

THE *Practical Treatise on Regeneration*, which is here presented to the public, embraces the substance of a series of sermons preached before the Church of God, in the city of Lancaster, in the year of our Lord 1842.

A great deal has been written and published on this deeply interesting and important subject ; but the most of it either in connection with other subjects, or else in such voluminous forms as to prevent its general circulation among all classes of the community.

Most of the writers, also, on regeneration, have failed to treat the subject in that regular, plain, and practical manner which we think highly necessary to secure general reading and utility. And, in addition to this, there are not a few of them who have greatly erred, and given out false and dangerous views in attempting to explain the subject of the new birth.

Besides, our own views on this important subject have been repeatedly and grossly misrepresented; and by those, too, who are inexcusable for doing it, because they knew better, or, at least, were not without an opportunity of knowing better.

This work, therefore, is designed for a threefold purpose, viz. :

1. To rectify the errors and false views into which many have fallen by the perusal of unsound works, or the hearing of unscriptural teaching on the subject of regeneration.

2. To set those right who have been misinformed by unfriendly and designing men with regard to ourselves. And,

3. To place into the hands of the public a plain and practical treatise on the new birth—a subject confessedly of vital importance to all ranks and conditions of men.

We bespeak for it a careful, candid, and prayerful perusal on the part of all into whose hands it may chance to fall, hoping and praying most devoutly that, under God, it may lead to, and result in, the happy and sound conversion of scores and multitudes of Adam's fallen and degenerate race.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

SHOWING WHAT REGENERATION IS NOT.

Synopsis of Contents.—Introductory remarks, pages 13–18, General division of the work, 19. Mistaken views of regeneration, 20. Regeneration not reformation, 20. Not orthodoxy, 21. Not baptism, 22. Baptismal regeneration held and taught by different denominations, 22–34. This dogma refuted, 35–37. Confirmation not the new birth, 37–39. Closing remarks, 40.

SERMON II.

SHOWING THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF REGENERATION.

Synopsis.—What regeneration is, 41, 42. Various definitions of it, 42, 43. Where and how often the term occurs in the New Testament, 43, 44. The various features and properties of this change, 44. The change is moral, 44. It is real, 45. It is great, 48. It is universal, 50. It is manifest, 51. It is speedy, 53. It is mysterious, 54. It is supernatural, 57. Address to Christians, 60. Address to the unregenerate, 61.

SERMON III.

SHOWING THE CAUSES OF REGENERATION.

Synopsis.—The moving cause, 63. The meritorious cause, 65. The efficient cause, negatively, not man, 69; nor the discipline of circumstances, 70; but, positively, God, the Father, Son and Spirit, 71. The instrumental cause—the truth, or Word of God, 75. Proved from the Scriptures, 75. The term water in John 3:5 explained, 75–79. Facts prove the Word to be the instrumental cause, 79. The procuring cause, 80. The nature of repentance and faith explained, 81, 82. Both are antecedents, and not effects of regeneration, 83, 84. The whole subject reviewed, 85–87.

SERMON IV.

SHOWING THE INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

Synopsis.—Meaning of inconclusive evidences, 88. Twenty-one such evidences stated, 88, 89. Special gifts no evidence of regeneration, 89. Great privileges no evidence, 91. Knowledge no evidence, 93. Church membership no evidence, 94. Morality no evidence, 95. Plain clothes no evidence, 96. A tranquil conscience no evidence, 97. Tender feelings no evidence, 99. Hatred to sin no evidence, 100. Delight in God's Word no evidence, 102. Prayer no evidence, 102. Keeping of the Sabbath no evidence, 104. Alms no evidence, 104. Observance of the ordinances no evidence, 105. Zeal in a good cause no evidence, 106. Success in a good cause no evidence, 107. Persecution no evidence, 108. Patience no evidence, 109. Reputation no evidence, 109. Hopes of heaven no evidence, 111. Willingness and desire to die no evidence, 112. Concluding remarks, 114.

SERMON V.

SHOWING THE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

Synopsis.—Meaning of conclusive evidences, 115. Statement of these evidences, 115. Salvation from sin a conclusive evidence, 116. Brotherly love a conclusive evidence, 124. Love to enemies a conclusive evidence, 127. Delight in God a conclusive evidence, 130. The fruits of the Spirit a conclusive evidence, 132. Obedience to God a conclusive evidence, 134. Application, 137.

SERMON VI.

SHOWING THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

Synopsis.—The necessity of regeneration proven from three sets of passages, 138. First. From those which require the change, 139–142. Second. From those which show that all who are entitled to heaven have experienced the change, 142–147. Third. From those which positively debar from heaven, and condemn to endless misery, all that live and die without change, 147–154. Application and improvement, 155–157.

SERMON VII.

SHOWING THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION FROM THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Synopsis.—From the constitution and laws of nature, *Similis simili gaudet*, 158. Applied to man analogically, 160. Man, being carnal, cannot enjoy God and spiritual blessings in this world, 161. Death makes no change in the moral character, 164. Man's incapacity for heavenly enjoyments and employments, 165. Remarks and inferences, 168.

SERMON I.

SHOWING WHAT REGENERATION IS NOT.

JOHN 3:7.—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

WE gave notice last Sabbath that we intended to preach a series of sermons before the Church of God in this city, on the subject of regeneration or the new birth. This is confessedly a subject of deep and immeasurable importance; and the sermons we propose to preach upon it will not fail, we hope, to engage the serious and close attention of the people of this city. We commence the proposed series this evening, and shall continue the same, *deo volente*, every Lord's day evening until it be completed.

The text which we have chosen and read as the foundation of these discourses, clearly and explicitly asserts and brings before us the doctrine of the new birth.

In the preceding part of this chapter we have recorded a highly interesting colloquy between Jesus Christ and a man by the name of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was one of the chief rulers

among the Jews; either one of the Sanhedrim or great Council, or one of the rulers of their Synagogue, and no doubt one of those many who believed on him (Christ), as John says, "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue," and so lose the "praise of men," which, it would seem, they loved or esteemed more than the "praise of God." John 12:42. Hence we are informed that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," that is, we Jews, and especially we rulers of the Jews, we both know and believe that thou art "a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (verse 2). But mark! Jesus gives him and his fellow-officers no credit or commendation for their knowledge of the fact that he was the messenger of God, nor for their clandestine faith in him. Those who know the truth and believe it, ought to avow their faith and so let their light shine before men, or else they become the more guilty before God. This sin lies at the door of many now as well as anciently. There are thousands in this and other cities who know and believe the Bible to be the word of God, Jesus to be the Christ, etc., and yet they will not come out and confess Christ, and obey the Bible. It had been better for such not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it not to walk therein. Yet, notwithstanding man's

sinfulness and ill-desert, Christ came to save him and not to condemn him. And in order to save him he must first teach him the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. One of the chief and fundamental doctrines pertaining to the kingdom of God, or the Christian religion, is the doctrine of regeneration. This weighty matter of Christianity, therefore, Christ, the great Teacher, come from God, gave to his night scholar, Nicodemus, for his first lesson. Without any circumlocution, or tedious exordium, he introduces at once the main subject which he wishes to inculcate, and says to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This is one of the most sententious passages in the Bible. Every word seems to be emphatic. Allow me to dissect it, and briefly explain it.

Verily, verily; that is, amen, truly, certainly, so be it. The word comes from the Hebrew *amen*, and signifies truly, certainly, and without fail. It is used by the people of God as a ratification of their prayers, and testimony of their desires to be heard: Jer. 11: 5; 1 Cor. 14:16. When it is repeated or double, as here and elsewhere, by the great Prophet, it amounts to a vehement asseveration or strong confirmation of the thing asserted: as if Christ had said, Nicodemus, thou mayest fully rely on the truth and certainty of what I say, for truly, certainly, and assuredly, it is so; except a person is made a new creature, he can never

enter into the New Jerusalem. All God's sayings are equally true and certain ; but to some there is affixed a special note of certainty, because of their extraordinary weight and man's infidelity. All orders and warrants of kings have not their seals annexed, but those that are of the greatest weight.

I say to thee ; I, who am the Prophet of my church, the Teacher sent from God, the true and faithful witness, for whom it is impossible to lie, I deliver to thee this doctrine as a certain unquestionable truth, that, unless thou hast a new being, it had been better for thee to have had no being, for thou canst never see the kingdom of God.

Except a man ; that is, a person, or every man. The proposition is indefinite, and so equivalent to one that is universal. Except, therefore, any and every man that is born of the flesh, let him be young or old, rich or poor, black or white, bond or free, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, if he is not born again of the Spirit, he can never see the kingdom of God.

Be born again ; that is, be renewed, or turned from nature to grace, or changed from a carnal to a spiritual state, and so become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

On this subject I shall speak more at length and with more precision, when I come to treat of the nature of the new birth in its appropriate place.

He cannot see ; that is, enjoy. Vision in Scripture is frequently put for fruition. *Videre est frui.* Ps. 34: 12 ; Matt. 5: 8 ; Heb. 12: 14.

The kingdom of God; God's kingdom is two-fold, viz.:

1. The kingdom of grace here; and—
2. The kingdom of glory hereafter.

1. The kingdom of God here is the Messiah's reign of grace on the earth, with the privileges and blessings thereof. "Matt. 6:33: Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Luke 17:21: Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. Matt. 21:43: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." See also Matt. 11:12; 13:33; 16:19; 23:13; Rom. 14:17.

2. The kingdom of God hereafter is that glorious and everlasting state of blessedness in the world to come, which God has prepared for and promised to his people. See Matt. 9:47; 25:34; Luke 13:28, 29; Acts 24:22; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 1 Thess. 2:12.

Now, except a man be born again, he can have no qualification for, and no right to, the privileges of the kingdom of grace, nor to the possession of the kingdom of glory.

This important doctrine, or great truth, being thus solemnly asserted by Christ, greatly astonished Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler, and he exclaims, "How can a man be born when he is old?" As man by wisdom knows not God, so neither by wisdom does he understand "the ways and works of God." Here is "a master in Israel" who cannot understand the teaching of the Master from

heaven. When this divine Teacher speaks of heavenly and spiritual things, he understands him to mean earthly and carnal things! How true it is, that the natural man perceives not the things of the Spirit of God! No matter how talented and learned a man may be, the work of grace is an unintelligible mystery, yea, and foolishness to him, until he himself is made spiritual by a spiritual birth. Then, and not till then, are they fully discerned.

But our Lord does not waive the subject, or change the lesson, because of the dulness of his pupil, but takes occasion to repeat and confirm what he had said, and to show more clearly the nature, the causes, and the necessity of the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;" verses 5 and 6. Having said thus much touching the nature and causes of the great work of regeneration, he proceeded to reassert its absolute and indispensable necessity in the words of the text:

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

This paraphrase of the preceding context may serve as an introduction to the general subject of regeneration, or the new birth, which we shall now proceed more fully to open and discuss.

In the discussion of this subject we shall observe the following order:

I. *We shall show the nature of regeneration, or the new birth.*

II. *We shall show the causes of regeneration, or the agencies and instrumentalities by which it is effected.*

III. *We shall point out the evidences or marks of regeneration, or the new birth.*

IV. *We shall show the absolute and indispensable necessity of this great change or work of grace called regeneration, or the new birth, in order to salvation.*

And now "my heart's desire and prayer to God is," that he may mercifully vouchsafe to me "the spirit of wisdom" and "of a sound mind," that I may avoid "handling the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifestation of the truth, commend" this grave and deeply solemn subject "to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Resuming, then, the order proposed, we shall endeavor—

I. *To show the nature of regeneration.* And in doing so we shall consider it, first, negatively, and then positively. We shall show—

1st. Negatively, what regeneration, or the new birth, is not; and—

2d. Positively, what it is.

1. We shall show, negatively, what regeneration is not. On no subject has the word of God been more grossly corrupted than on the subject of the new birth. Many have held and taken that for regeneration, which in reality is not regeneration.

To correct some of the palpable perversions and misunderstandings in regard to this subject, as held and propagated by many theologians and commentators, and by various sects and denominations, shall, next in order, occupy our attention, and form the closing remarks of our first sermon on this weighty subject. Regeneration, then, is not—

1. *Reformation.*
2. *Orthodoxy.*
3. *Baptism.*
4. *Confirmation.*

1. *Reformation, or amendment of life, is not regeneration.* Many suppose themselves regenerated, because they have partially reformed their lives. But this is, manifestly, a false and mistaken view of the subject. Reformation is rather an effect or consequence of regeneration, and not regeneration itself. A man cannot be regenerated without being reformed, but he may be partially reformed without being regenerated.

Morality, and a profession of religion, may cleanse the outside of the “cup and platter,” or “garnish the sepulchre;” but to change the heart requires a divine power.

Many of the old Scribes and Pharisees had kept the commandments, like the young ruler, from youth up; and, like Paul, touching the law, they were blameless; but still, they were far from being born again. And hence Christ asked them the

question, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. 23 : 33.

Many, nowadays, also have been moral from youth up; others have reformed their vicious lives, and have taken up the profession of religion; and so far as their manner of life is concerned, no great objections can be found against them, but as to the work of regeneration, or a change of heart, they are both ignorant and destitute of it. And sometimes these deluded moralists and nominal professors of religion, are found to be the greatest enemies to revivals, or a genuine work of grace. It is no unusual thing for them to repudiate the religion of the heart, as fanaticism or wild-fire. Surely then, we need no further evidence of the fact, that morality, amendment, or reformation of life, is not regeneration. But,

2. *Orthodoxy is not regeneration.* By orthodoxy, we mean soundness in doctrine. However important and desirable it may be to be sound in the faith; yet, let no one be so silly as to believe himself regenerated, because, forsooth, he is orthodox. Orthodoxy and regeneration are totally diverse, and without affinity. A man may have a sound head, and, at the same time, a very bad heart. He may have a good deal of religion in his creed, or confession of faith, and yet none in his heart. Devils, for aught we know to the contrary, are all orthodox, but they are devils still.

The ministers of religion, therefore, ought to preach and labor, not merely to instruct and regu-

late the head, but likewise to better the heart, and amend the life. For, though a man have all faith, and have not charity, he is nothing. 1 Cor. 13:2.

3. *Baptism is not regeneration.* Baptism is an important Christian duty; but it does not pertain to sinners, and of course will not regenerate, or make sinners Christians. The doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*, as it is called, I conceive to be an egregious and dangerous error. The moral tendency of this insidious dogma is so palpably hurtful and ruinous, that it deserves a thorough and unsparing refutation.

But are there any, and if any, who are those that hold this erroneous doctrine? I answer, There are those who hold and teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration *explicitly*—others *implicitly*. I shall here, therefore, attempt to show:

1. Who those are that hold and teach the doctrine of “baptismal regeneration” *explicitly*.

2. Who those are that hold and teach it *implicitly*; and

3. That the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration* is both unscriptural and anti-scriptural.

1. There are those who hold and teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration *explicitly*: That is to say, they believe and assert; that persons are regenerated, or born again, by *baptism*—that it does, de facto, or literally, take place at that time and in that act. Among these we reckon.

1. The Roman Catholics.
2. The Episcopalians.

3. The Lutherans.

4. The Dunkers, or German Baptists.

5. The Disciples.

Now, let a few extracts from their writings be adduced, in evidence of what we affirm.

1. We say the Roman Catholics hold the dogma of baptismal regeneration.

“Baptism may be accurately and appropriately defined, The sacrament of regeneration by water in the word.” See Catechism of the Council of Trent.

“Baptism is a spiritual regeneration, by which we are born again, children of God.” Ibidem.

“Perfect conversion consists in regeneration, by baptism.” Ibid.

“Infants, unless baptized, cannot enter into heaven.” Ibid.

“What is Baptism? It is the first Christian sacrament, whereby we are freed from original and actual sin, re-born children of God, heirs of heaven, and members of Christ’s church.” See Poor Man’s Catechism, p. 195.

“By our first birth, we are born in sin, children of wrath; by baptism we are born again, and become the adopted children of God: by our first birth we are born to eternal misery; by our second we are born to eternal life; for if sons of God, we are also heirs of heaven; for which reason baptism is called regeneration, because by it we are born again of God: John 3: 5.” Ibid.

“By baptism I have been delivered from the

power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of thy beloved Son: by baptism I have been cleansed from the stain of that sin in which I was born: by baptism I have been made a member of the body of Jesus Christ." See Catholic Manual, p. 393.

"By baptism we are spiritually born again." See *He Pasa Ecclesia*, p. 137.

"Catholics believe that by the sacrament of baptism we are cleansed from sin, as well original as actual, and made members of the church of Christ, adopted children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven." *Ibid.* p. 138.

2. The Episcopalians hold the doctrine under consideration.

"Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened: but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God." See 39 Articles of P. E. Church.

"We call upon thee for this infant, that he, coming to thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration." See Liturgy P. E. C., Form of Baptism.

“*Question.* How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his church ?

“*Answer.* Two only, as generally necessary to salvation ; that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord.

“*Q.* How many parts are there in a sacrament ?

“*A.* Two ; the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

“*Q.* What is the inward and spiritual grace ?

“*A.* A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness : for being, by nature, born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.” See Catechism—Ibid.

“*Q.* What is your name ?

“*A.* N. or M.

“*Q.* Who gave you this name ?

“*A.* My sponsors in baptism ; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” Ibid.

“The Churchman,” a religious paper published in the city of New York, asserts the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in the following open and strong terms:—

“We hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The baptized infant is, with us, a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven ? And this he is made by a sacrament—a mysterious and inscrutable means of conveying God’s grace, the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. And is no figure, no metaphor embodied in action ; no type, no bare sym-

bol, no signifying that which may be or may be not; no Jewish sacrament, as Timothy Dwight would make it, but a saving ordinance, a reality tenfold more real than any phenomenon that is presented to us in type, or yet in space."

3. The Lutherans, also, maintain the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

The following quotations from a few of their standard works will furnish ample proof of this fact.

"By the word sacraments is understood, in the Lutheran Church, those religious rites and ceremonies which God himself has instituted in the Holy Scriptures, by which certain spiritual blessings are represented and actually communicated. They serve not only to exhibit or represent to the senses the spiritual blessings which flow from God and Christ, but actually to communicate them. In the sense of the Lutheran Church every sacrament has two parts, the visible and invisible; the visible part in baptism is water, and the invisible is the Holy Ghost. Some spiritual blessing is actually communicated! The Holy Ghost is imparted in baptism, and accompanied by his influences and operations! Because, in Acts 2:38, it is expressly said, Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is the means of regeneration, because the water and the Spirit are connected in effecting the new birth. The Holy Ghost is the cause, baptism by which he operates the means, and regeneration the effect." See Prof. Knapp's Lectures on Chris-

tian Theology, as reported in the Lutheran Herald, Vol. III, No. 6.

“Baptism is considered by the Lutheran Church as the washing of regeneration; thus Paul calls it: Tit. 3:5. We therefore find that in the primitive church baptism and regeneration were used as synonymous terms. Thus in Christian baptism, although we are by nature born in sin, and of sinful parents, yet in baptism God condescends in mercy for Christ’s sake to adopt us as his children, and to take us under his particular care.” See History, Doctrine, and Discipline of the Lutheran Church, by Geo. Lochman, D.D., page 102.

“Q. What are the benefits of baptism?”

“A. It causes the forgiveness of sin, redeems from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to those that believe, as the Word and promise of God declare.” See Luther’s Smaller Catechism.

“Baptism is represented as a means of regeneration; it is termed the “washing of regeneration;” and yet it is admitted that regeneration is effected by the Holy Spirit through the means.

“Baptism is in strong and explicit terms represented as a means to attain the pardon of sin; and it is not reasonable to suppose that an ordinance, which when faithfully attended to exerts so important an influence on the relations of its subject to his God, should make no other impression on the soul of the sinner himself than what results

from the mere efficacy of the truths exhibited by it."

"The agency of the Spirit is distinctly associated with baptism by the Saviour himself. John 3:5; Titus 3:5." See Smucker's Theology, p. 226.

"Divines of the Lutheran Church have always contended for the baptism of believers *only*; that is, that in baptism faith is actually conveyed and imparted to the soul of the infant, and that it is thereby as a *means*, regenerated and born again." See Lutheran Herald, Vol. III, No. 6.

4. The Dunkers, or German Baptists, hold identically the same opinion.

That the Dunkers, or German Baptists, hold the doctrine that baptism and regeneration are identical, their standard works and their preaching clearly and incontrovertibly show. I have no works of theirs at hand just now to make any quotations from, nor do I consider it particularly necessary, as the fact is pretty generally known, and will not, I presume, be denied on their part. Yet I may add, in justice to some of them, that the erroneous dogma is not entertained by all of them.

5. The Disciples, or Reformed Baptists, as some call them, hold and teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

"But one thing we do know, that none can rationally, and with certainty, enjoy the peace of God, and the hope of heaven, but they who intel-

ligerly and in full faith are born of water, or immersed for the remission of their sins.”

“There are three births: one from the womb of our first mother, one from the water, and one from the grave. We enter a new world on, and not before, each birth.”

“Marvel not that I say to you, *you must be born again*. Pious as you are supposed to be, and as you may think yourself to be, unless you are born again you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Cornelius and his family were as devout and pious as any of you. ‘He feared God, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God continually.’ Yet, mark it well, I beseech you, it was necessary ‘to tell him words,’ by which himself and his house ‘might be saved.’ These words were told him; he believed them, and received the Holy Spirit; yet still he must be born again. For a person cannot be said to be born again of anything which he receives; and still less of miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. He was immersed, and into the kingdom of God he came. He was then saved.”

“Are we not then warranted to say, except a man be regenerated of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God? And that all who believing are immersed for the remission of their sins, have the remission of their sins in and through immersion!” See *Christianity Restored*, p. 239, 240, 243, and 245.

2. There are others, who hold the doctrine of

baptismal regeneration *implicitly*; that is, by implication, or obscure involution; or as it were, inadvertently and by mistake. Among these we reckon:

1. The Presbyterians.
2. The Methodists.
3. The Associate Reformed.
4. The German Reformed.
5. The Dutch Reformed.
6. The Congregationalists, etc.

This opinion will be fully sustained by a few extracts from their creeds and principal authors.

1. The Presbyterians hold and teach this doctrine by implication. In a work published by authority of the General Assembly, entitled, "The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, containing the Confession of Faith, etc.," in the twenty-eighth chapter, and sixth section, we meet with these words:

"The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of the ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time." And in proof of this position, as if to show that "God's appointed time" is the very time of baptism, the same authority cites Gal. 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on

Christ ;” and Eph. 5:25, 26: “Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ;” and Acts 2:38: “Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Who does not, on careful examination, perceive in this artful and insidious dogma, every limb and feature of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration? Note the words carefully.

The Confession of Faith confines the “efficacy” of baptism to those to whom “that grace belongeth unto ;” *i. e.* the elect, who alone, it seems, are susceptible of its impressions.

This efficacy “is not tied to that moment wherein it is administered,” but may commence, in some instances, the next moment, or even later ; or instead of stopping with that moment, may run on through several moments, or even hours, days, weeks, months, or possibly years, succeeding ; and to them the “efficacy of baptism,” or the grace promised, is not only offered, but “really exhibited and conferred.”

In the 5th section, there is a passage equally insidious and dangerous: “Grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated.” Thus to make baptism absolutely essential to salvation in all ordinary cases, it is only neces-

sary to make the possible exceptions refer to persons who cannot obtain baptism, and to the non-elect who cannot be reached by it.

The same book teaches, expressly, that baptism is "ordained by Jesus Christ, for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church," and declares, that it is not to be administered, in any case, by any private person, but by a minister of Christ called to be the steward of the "mysteries of God." Again, baptism is declared to be "a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and of ingrafting into Christ."

Besides, we are told (ch. 25), that out of the "visible church" "there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

The following syllogism will exhibit the sum total or true import of this last paragraph :

"Baptism is the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church."

"Out of the visible church there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

Therefore, the unbaptized are not in the church, and cannot be saved.

If this does not imply the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, then I am at a loss to know what does imply it, or how to frame language that will imply it without expressing it.

2. Some of the Methodist writers have expressed themselves to the same effect. For instance,

John Wesley says: "The first benefit we receive

by baptism, is the washing away of the guilt of original sin. Infants need to be washed from original sin, therefore, they are proper subjects of baptism ; seeing in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism." And again, " By baptism, we who are by nature children of wrath, are made the children of God. By water, then, as a mean, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again." See Wesley's *Treatise on Baptism*.

" Baptism when administered to real penitents, is both a means and seal of pardon ; nor did God, ordinarily, in the primitive church, bestow this (pardon) on any, unless through this means." John Wesley's *Note on Acts 22:16*.

Richard Watson says : " Baptism is, both as to infants and to adults, the sign and pledge of that inward grace, which, although modified in its operations by the difference of their circumstances, has respect to, and flows from, a covenant relation to each of the three Persons in whose one name they are baptized : acceptance by the Father, union with Christ, as the head of his mystical body, the church, and the communion of the Holy Ghost."

" Baptism as an act of faith, is, in fact, expressly made, not a figure of the effects which follow, as stated Rom. 6:4, 5, but the means of effecting them. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death ; we enter by this means into the experience

of its efficacy in effecting a mystical death in us; in other words, we die with him, or as it is expressed in verse 6th, "our old man is crucified with him."

"Still farther, by baptism, *δια τῆ βαπτισματος*, through or by means of baptism, we are buried with him; we not only die to sin and the world, but we are separated wholly from it, as the body of Christ was separated from the living world when laid in the sepulchre. Nor is this all, we also mystically rise with him; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life, having new connections, new habits, new enjoyments and new hopes."

"We have a similar passage in Col. 2:12, and it has a similar interpretation. Here too, all these three effects are attributed to baptism as the means. We put off the body of sins, 'by the circumcision of Christ,' that is, as we have seen, by Christian circumcision or baptism; we are buried with him by baptism; *εἶς* being obviously used here, *δια*, to denote the instrument; and by baptism we rise with him into a new life." Vide Watson's Institutes, p. 440 and 444.

If these authors are to be regarded as speaking the real sentiments of the Methodist Church, then they are rather to be identified with the Catholics and Episcopalians on the subject in review than with the Presbyterians and Reformed. But doubtless these writers have expressed themselves

much stronger on this point of doctrine than a majority of them, perhaps, would be willing to indorse.

The same views identically are held and taught by the Associate Reformed Church, and nearly the same by the German Reformed, Dutch Reformed, and the Congregationalist, so that we need not particularize in relation to any of them.

3. We propose to show that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is both unscriptural and antiscritptural.

1. This doctrine we say is unscriptural. By this we mean that it is unsupported and indefensible by the Scriptures or the Word of God. There are a few passages brought forward in support of the theory we are opposing, which it may be proper briefly to notice.

The first and the principal text which is relied on as proof of the doctrine is the following: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. 3:5.

Now let this passage be compared with 1 Pet. 1:23, and read in connection with the verse immediately following, and it will be seen that the phrase, "washing of regeneration," does not mean baptism, but the Gospel, or Word of God.

Again, the fifth verse of the third chapter of the Gospel by John is also adduced in evidence of this doctrine. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

This passage is only explained correctly by an interpretation analogous to the former. The word "water" does not mean baptism, nor the tears of penitents, but the truth of God. The correctness of this interpretation we shall endeavor more fully to establish when we come to speak of the means of regeneration.

2. The doctrine under consideration is antiscip-tural. By this we mean to say, that it is against or contrary to the Scriptures. The Scriptures universally teach us that man is renewed or born again by the Spirit and truth of God. The Spirit is the great agent, and the truth, or Word of God, is the instrument of regeneration. See James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23. But this point is at once placed beyond all reasonable debate by the following declarations of Paul. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." 1 Cor. 1:14 and 17. Now, nothing is more certain than that if baptism insures or proves regeneration, Paul would never have thanked God that he had baptized none of the Corinthians save Gaius, Crispus, and the household of Stephanus.

Again, faith in Jesus Christ, and not baptism, was always insisted on by the apostles and first ministers of religion as the primary and appointed

means of regeneration. See John 1:14, 15; 1 John 5:1.

Besides we read of some that were doubtless converted or born again before they were baptized. See Acts 10:43-48. Consequently baptism could not have been the means of regeneration in their case. Now what is true of Cornelius and his friends was, no doubt, equally so with regard to all the primitive Christians; they were all converted first, and then baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts 8:37; 18:8.

On the other hand thousands have been regularly baptized by authorized ministers in modern times, whose after lives proved, beyond a doubt, that instead of being regenerated they were still like Simon Magus, "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Acts 8:23. And who does not know that thousands of thousands of christened youths at the present day demonstrate by their ungodly lives, that instead of being born again, and on the way to heaven, they are carnal, sold under sin, and on the way to hell.

Thus, in every point of view, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; that is to say, that baptism is the means of regeneration; that it insures or proves it; that it is attended or followed by it, is erroneous and unfounded, unscriptural and anti-scriptural.

In conclusion, for the present, and on this part of the subject, we remark that regeneration is,
4thly. *Not confirmation.* Confirmation is a re-

ligious rite observed by the Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, German Reformed, and Moravian churches, by which, as they say, persons baptized in infancy renew their baptismal covenant and are received into full communion with the Church. This ceremony is held to be "an effectual means of grace," or a means of perfecting a regenerate state.

"The Catholic Church, instructed by the solicitude of the apostles to strengthen the faith of those her children who had received it in baptism, and by the lessons of Christ himself, concerning the importance of receiving that Holy Spirit which is communicated in this sacrament, religiously retains and faithfully administers it to them for the selfsame purpose through all ages. In a word, those who are true Christians by virtue of baptism are not made perfect Christians, except by virtue of the sacrament of confirmation." (Vide "Religious Controversy," by J. Milnor, D.D., page 121.)

"Catholics believe that through the sacrament of confirmation they receive the Holy Ghost to enable them to overcome temptations to sin, and to suffer persecution for the name of Christ. It is administered by the imposition of hands, with prayer, and the unction of the forehead with the holy chrism, accompanied by the words, 'I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Confir-

mation completes what was begun in baptism. In baptism we enrol ourselves under the banners of Christ; in confirmation we receive strength to fight with courage the battles of our leader." (Vide *He Pasa Ecclesia*, pages 138 and 139.)

"What is confirmation?"

"It is a sacrament in which by the imposition of the bishop's hands we receive the Holy Ghost, in order to make us strong and perfect Christians, soldiers of Jesus Christ." See *Catholic Catechism*.

From these few quotations it will be seen that confirmation, in the view of some, is "an effectual means of grace," and that none can be made perfect Christians except by virtue of the sacrament of confirmation.

Now that this is an error, and one of no small magnitude, will appear very obvious to all if we consider—

1st. That it is a bare assertion, unsupported by any scriptural authority; and—

2d. That it is flatly contradicted by the united testimony of all ages.

My dear hearers, as I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ, I charge you before God, and entreat in the name of Immanuel, to examine this weighty subject carefully, and do not suffer yourselves to be gulled, and cheated, and deceived, by blind guides and corrupt systems of religion. You have heard what great blunders, hurtful heresies, and fatal errors many have fallen into

with regard to the new birth. Some hold it to be reformation, some orthodoxy, some baptism, and others confirmation, or something else equally erroneous and unscriptural.

What is this but holding the truth in unrighteousness? What! but a bewitching of the people, that they should not know and obey the truth? What! but preaching another Gospel? What! but a play of good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple?

O beware, I beseech you, of following such cunningly-devised fables. Beware of imbibing such pernicious doctrines and commandments of men. Hear, pray, and study to show yourselves approved; knowing, enjoying, and walking in all the right ways of the Lord. Then may you hope to live and die happy, and gain an entrance into God's everlasting kingdom.

SERMON II.

SHOWING WHAT REGENERATION IS.

JOHN 3: 7.—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

IN the preceding discourse we attempted to show what regeneration is not; in this we shall try to point out what it is.

Regeneration is a thorough change of man's depraved moral nature, after the image of God.

By the moral nature of man, we mean his natural disposition, or spirit of mind.

By his depraved nature we understand a natural propensity to evil.

And by the image of God is meant a conformity or resemblance to God in his moral perfections, especially in his righteousness and holiness.

Now as man by the fall lost both the favor and the image of God, there is a twofold change necessary in order to his salvation, viz.:

1. A change of state: and,
2. A change of nature.

1. A change of state or condition is requisite in all that would be saved. The bondman must be made a freeman. The alien must become a citi-

zen. The enemy must become a friend, etc. See John 8:36; Eph. 2:12, 19; Rom. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10.

2. Man's nature must be changed. The lion must become a lamb. The vulture a dove. The corrupt tree a good tree. The wild olive tree a good olive tree. See John 10:20, 27; Matt. 7:17, 18; Rom. 11:17, 24.

The former change is relative; this is real. The former is wrought in justification, the latter in regeneration.

Regeneration then, we say, is a radical change of man's depraved moral nature. This, and nothing else—this, and nothing short of this—is true evangelical regeneration.*

* Various definitions have been given of regeneration by different theological writers.

DWIGHT defines regeneration to be "A relish for spiritual objects." See his *Theology*, vol. iii, page 418.

BROWN says it is "God's implantation of holy principles in our heart." See his *Divinity*, page 405.

BAXTER says it is, "Nature's reparation, elevation, and perfection."

HELFENSTEIN says it is, "The restoration of God's image to the soul." See his *Theology*, page 306.

FINNEY defines it to be, "A voluntary change in the governing preference of the mind, or a change of choice." See his *Sermons*, page 16.

CAMPBELL says, "Regeneration literally indicates the whole process of renovating or new-creating man." See *Christianity Restored*, page 271.

WM. LAW: "Regeneration consists solely in the restoration of the birth of the Son of God in the human soul." See *Law's Words*, page 51.

The word regeneration is formed by joining the prefix *re* to the word generation. The term generation is often used in Scripture to denote a race of men, or the people of a given age; but it is also used to signify the creation of things. See Eccl. 1:4; Matt. 1:17; Gen. 2:4.

Hence regeneration means to change, renew, renovate, or new-create that which was generated or made.

The word regeneration occurs but twice in the New Testament, viz.: in Matt. 19:28, and in Titus 3:5. In the first text it means a change or renewal in the state of things; and in the latter a change or renewal in the moral state and nature of man. When Christ says, "Ye who have followed me in the regeneration," &c., he means in the change of dispensations—from the legal to the Gospel dispensation. "For the law and the prophets were until John." Then and there they ceased, because then the kingdom of God, that is, the remedial system or Gospel dispensation, began to be preached, and every man pressed into it:

E. D. GRIFFIN: "Regeneration is a transition from supreme selfishness to universal love—from enmity against God to supreme attachment to him." Vide Lectures, page 91.

DR. GILL: "Regeneration is the production of the new man, or a new principle, which was not before." Vide Divinity, page 373.

GEO. DUFFIELD: "Regeneration is the commencement of spiritual life." See his work on Regeneration, page 202.

WITHERSPOON: "Regeneration is the reparation of the loss which man sustained by the fall." See his Treatise, page 136.

Luke 16:16. You, therefore, said Christ, who have followed me in this change of dispensations; you who have renounced Judaism and embraced Christianity, you shall have your reward in my coming kingdom.

In Titus 3:5, regeneration is joined to the word washing; in the original it is *λειτουργῶν*, laver, or bath. Concerning this laver, commentators and biblical critics have had various opinions. My own opinion is, that it means the Gospel, or Word of God. My reasons for this opinion I shall assign hereafter, when I come to speak of the causes of this great change called regeneration.

But the true nature of this work of grace may be seen more fully by considering some of its leading features or properties. This change is:

1. A moral change.
2. A real change.
3. A great change.
4. A universal change.
5. A manifest change.
6. A speedy change.
7. A mysterious change.
8. A supernatural and divine change.

1. We say regeneration is a *moral* change. Not because, as some say, it is effected by moral suasion alone, but independent of the manner in which this change is wrought, it is, in its nature, a moral change, because it lies in the renewal of man's moral, and not in the renewal of his physical and intellectual nature. Man's natural constitution,

the members of his body and the faculties of his mind remain the same posterior to the change that they were anterior to it. The regenerated man, therefore, has no new, natural constitution. This, indeed, may be improved, yet still his physical nature is substantially the same, but his moral nature, that is to say, the prevailing and governing principle of the soul is entirely new; "created after God in righteousness and true holiness."*

2. Regeneration is a *real* change, and not merely a relative or formal one. A relative change, as we have shown, is effected in justification; but in regeneration there is a real *bonâ fide* change wrought in the entire moral nature of man; so that man's carnal and vicious nature is made spiritual and holy.

The reality of this change is clearly evinced:

1st. By the sacred Scriptures.

2d By the experience of primitive Christians, and,

3d. By the experience and observation of modern Christians.

* By a change in man's corrupt moral nature, we are not merely to understand, "a relish for spiritual objects, nor a voluntary change of choice, nor new feelings and affections." These things are, properly speaking, the effects or fruits of the new-born nature, and not the renewal of that nature itself. As the fruit of a tree is entirely different from the nature of the tree itself, so the fruits of man's renewed moral nature are altogether distinct from that nature; and the moral change required lies back of, and is anterior to, its correspondent fruits, and which serve to characterize the renewed nature.

1st. The reality of the work of regeneration is proved by the "Scriptures of truth."

In Ezekiel 36: 26, 27, God says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

In John 3: 6, the Saviour says, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," or spiritual.

In 2 Cor. 5: 17, the apostle says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

These few texts or passages, besides many others that might be quoted, very clearly and conclusively show that regeneration is a real, sound, and radical change in the nature of man.

2d. The same thing is evinced by the experience of the first Christians, as exhibited in the New Testament.

A few passages may be adduced to set this matter in a clear light.

In Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, chap. 3: 9, 10, he says, addressing himself to Colossian Christians, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Again, this same apostle, in his Epistle to Titus, chap. 3: 3-7, says, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving

divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." See also Eph. 2: 1-7.

These, and many other passages of like import, give us a convincing proof of the reality of a change in the character and conduct of the primitive Christians. We learn here what their character was before, and what it was after their conversion; and from the whole we see that their conversion was not a mere fancy or chimera, but a real, thorough, and glorious change of their whole moral nature. But,

3d. The reality of regeneration is also demonstrated by the experience and observation of modern Christians.

There are thousands and tens of thousands, in modern times, who have borne an unequivocal testimony in favor of the truth and certainty of regeneration. This they have done both by word and deed. I might refer you here to the life and experience of many eminent men and women, whose praise is in all the Churches of the saints. Such, for instance, as Richard Baxter, John Bun-

yan, John Newton, Philip Doddridge, Colonel Gardner, Matthew Mead, John and Charles Wesley, William Fletcher, President Edwards, James Patterson, Harriet Newel, Ann Judson, and many others of equal notoriety.

There are also many ministers and Christian congregations, who have witnessed the sound and powerful conversion of scores and multitudes of all classes and ages, of all ranks and conditions, in the numerous and extensive revivals of religion which have signally marked and distinguished the day and age in which we live.

In these revivals, infidels, drunkards, persecutors, and all manner of vile, degraded, and dissolute persons, have been radically and permanently changed in heart and life; so that all who had any acquaintance with them, and whose minds were open to conviction, have had the most convincing proof of the reality of regeneration. A renewed nature, and nothing else, is the true cause of holy volitions and actions. Hence, by reasoning and judging of this work as we rightfully ought to do, *a posteriori*, the reality of it is at once clearly and invincibly demonstrated.

3. Regeneration is a *great* change.

The greatness of this change will appear, if we consider the phraseology and metaphors by which it is expressed in the Scriptures.

First, it is represented under the idea of a resurrection, or a passage from death to life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word,

and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again." Luke 15:24. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:4-6. "We know that we have passed from death unto life." 1 John 3:14.

Again, it is represented under the notion of a new creation.

"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. 5:17. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. 2:10. "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. 3:9, 10. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or as some translate *κτίσις*, creation. Gal. 6:15.

Moreover, it is expressed by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," by being "born again," "born of God," "born of water and of the Spirit," etc. See Titus 3:5; John 3:5, 7; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 1:13.

Now the idea of "a resurrection," a "new-crea-

tion," a "parturition or birth," involves a *great change*. In regeneration, therefore, there is a great and marvellous change wrought upon the inner or spiritual man.

4. Regeneration is a *universal* change.

There are not wanting those who consider the new-birth but partial, at best, in this life. They speak of "regenerated man, as being partly virtuous and partly sinful; and of his true and entire character as being a mixture of moral good and evil."

This unmingled heterodoxy, I must confess, I do not understand, and cannot reconcile with the doctrine of the Bible. In my view of the subject, the doctrine of the new birth, as taught in the sacred Scriptures, obviously implies a general or universal change in the whole man. The entire man is affected and vitiated by the fall. So that "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." Isa. 1:6. Regeneration contemplates the reparation and salvation of the whole man; the whole man, therefore, must be regenerated or born again.

The truth and certainty of this fact, that the change under consideration is not partial, but universal, is clearly established by the constant tenor of the oracles of God. "That," says the Saviour, "which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John 3:6. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, *all things*

are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." Col. 3:9, 10. Now, if the regenerated "are new creatures,"—if "all things are become new,"—if they are spiritual, and not carnal,—if they are "created after God in righteousness and true holiness,"—if "they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,"—if "they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,"—if "they are the sheep of his fold,"—if "branches in Him,"—if "members of his body," etc., etc., then they must have undergone a radical and universal change. This change must comprehend, 1, a change in the understanding; 2, a change in the will; 3, a change in the affections; and 4, a change in the life and conduct.

5. Regeneration is a *manifest* change

1. It is manifest or perceptible to those who are the subjects of it.

2. It is manifest to those around us.

1. This change is clear and manifest to those who are the subjects of it. This fact is denied by some. They think the only perception and evidence that a person can have of his regeneration, is furnished by the subsequent state of his affections and conduct. But this is certainly an error. That it is so, may be readily concluded.

First. From the nature of the work. If this change is, as we have seen, a radical, great and universal change in the moral nature of man, then

the subject of it may surely have, yea, ought to have, and must have, ordinarily at least, some intuitive knowledge and perception of this change. If a sudden transition from darkness to light, and from death to life, is and must be, from the nature of things, clearly perceptible, then doubtless is regeneration also perceptible. But it may be concluded,

Second. From the experience of the primitive Christians. The Bible shows very clearly, that the first Christians were received into Church fellowship, and admitted to Christian baptism, at the time or immediately after their spiritual birth. From this time they were recognized as brethren. Now, with what propriety could they have joined the Church, submitted to baptism, and considered themselves as brethren, if they had no consciousness of the fact that they were born of the Spirit?

Third. From the experience of modern Christians, the denial of intuitive evidence of regeneration is disproved. The most, if not all, who have ever been born of God, have had an intuitive evidence, or realized a feeling sense of their acceptance with God; and who accordingly forever after profess to know the time and place, and all the attending circumstances of their spiritual nativity.

2. This change is also manifest to others; and that to all, both converted and unconverted. If the change were not manifest to the converted, how could they recognize and treat them as brethren? And if it were not apparent to the

unconverted, how could they know when and whom to hate and persecute, as they usually do?

6. Regeneration is a *speedy* change.

This position has been strenuously resisted and controverted by a great many, both among the ministry and membership of the different denominations. But their opposition to the idea of a sudden and speedy regeneration, has uniformly grown out of a misconception of the nature of the work. Where the true nature of a spiritual birth is rightly understood, the speediness of it is seldom or never controverted.

Whatever antecedent acts, exercises, and preparations there may be for such a change, yet all these are certainly to be distinguished from the change itself. All men are either in a regenerate or an unregenerate state; there is no middle state between the two.

Those who adopt the scheme of a gradual or progressive regeneration, must allow an intermediate state, which is absurd. The admission of such a state would imply the existence of characters who are neither sinful nor holy; and if so they have no moral nature, and consequently are deserving neither praise nor blame from God, the moral Governor of the world.

The scheme, therefore, which advocates the principle of progressive regeneration is weak and unphilosophical.

But for the arbitration of this part of the subject, let us appeal to the law and the testimony.

This, doubtless, is the true way of settling every question pertaining to revealed religion. How, then, is it written? and what say the Scriptures on the subject?

The phraseology by which this change is chiefly denoted in the Scriptures, clearly shows that it is not gradual, but instantaneous or speedy. This change is represented under the image of a resurrection: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1. It is called a translation from bondage into liberty. Gal. 5:1. It is called the opening of the eyes of the blind. Ps. 146:8. It is called a new birth. John 3:3. Now all these figures import a speedy change. There is a period when the dead come to life. There is also a moment when the blind begin to see. So likewise a time when bondsmen receive their liberty, and when children are born. The same thing we are taught by facts recorded in the Scriptures. The thief on the cross; the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; Cornelius and his kinsfolks and friends; Lydia and her house; the jailer and his family, and many others, are striking examples in proof of our position.

7. Regeneration is a *mysterious* change. This truth is clearly shown by our Lord, when he says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and 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 3:9.

The fact itself, that God does change the heart

of man—that “he takes away the heart of stone,” as the Prophet says, “and substitutes a heart of flesh;” that he renews the natural “spirit of the mind,” which is averse to God and spiritual good, and propense to that which is evil; and instead thereof, infuses a living principle of grace, or a holy disposition, which renders the soul averse to sin, and inclines it to delight in God and things divine, we have already sufficiently proved, and which indeed cannot be denied: but then, as to the *modus operandi* of the divine power and influence in bringing about this marvellous change, we can know but little—this forms a mystery profound. The mystery of this change the Saviour himself did not pretend to explain; for when Nicodemus inquired into the *rationale* of this birth, saying, “How can these things be?” Jesus simply replied, “Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?”

But there are many in these Athenian times, who pretend to understand and account for everything. And whatever seems to be a mystery, and they cannot rationally account for, they at once reject as being unworthy of a place in their religious creed. These vain and conceited rationalists ought to remember that God intends in a coming day to take the “wise in their own craftiness.”

If men can allow mysteries in the kingdom of nature, why not in the kingdom of grace? Nature is full of mysteries. Every man is a mystery to himself. He cannot explain the mode of his own

existence. He understands not the union subsisting between soul and body. He cannot decipher the mysterious process by which the food he eats is converted into flesh and bones; nor why one hair is black and another white. He cannot solve the mystery of vegetation. He cannot comprehend the process by which the sap of the trees is formed into wood, and bark, and leaves, and blossoms, and all the variety of fruits which grow upon them. He cannot understand and explain the manner in which seed, cast into the ground, vegetates and grows up, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. All these things are inexplicable mysteries. They lie beyond the comprehension of man. They are too deep for him. Yet he never once thinks of repudiating these facts, simply because they are mysterious and inexplicable. Why then discard a religious dogma on account of its mysterious nature? Where is the rationality and consistency of such a course?

Suppose the Israelites had rejected the simple remedy provided for them in the wilderness against the bites of the fiery serpents, at the time of their rebellion, merely because neither Moses nor themselves could tell how a piece of brass in the shape of a serpent, raised on a pole, and set in the midst of the camp, could, when looked at by a bitten Israelite, exert a healing influence on his wounds, and effect a sovereign and immediate cure. What would have been the consequence of such an unreasonable rejection? The unavoidable conse-

quence would have been instant death. There was no other remedy for them. They had no other alternative, therefore, than to use this, or die.

So, likewise, with the sinner. There is but one remedy for him. Christ is the only Saviour. The sinner, therefore, "who believes on him," as the Scripture hath said, with a heart to righteousness, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

8. The change wrought in regeneration is *supernatural*.

By a supernatural change, I mean a change that is above nature—that cannot be affected by natural causes, or by the stated operations of nature, and by human contrivances; but which is and must be accomplished by the influence and power of God.

This truth I shall endeavor to establish:

1. From Scripture testimonies; and
2. From Scripture facts.

1. Scripture testimonies prove the new-birth to be supernatural. A few texts, out of many, will be sufficient to establish this point.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Eph. 2:4, 5.

“For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Eph. 2:8.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Tit. 3:5.

These, and many other passages of like import, and couched under various metaphors, show most conclusively the truth of our position, viz.: that this change is pre-eminently the work of God.

The same thing is equally demonstrated,
2. By Scripture facts.

The case of the Cæsarean converts shows the regenerating power to be supernatural and divine. “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” Acts 10:44-46.

Take another case. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus shows irrefragably the same thing. “At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the

pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”
Acts 26 : 13-20.

Thus, then, we see from Scripture testimony, and Scripture facts, that the renovation of the soul, after the image of God, is a work achieved, not by human power and skill, but by the great power and energy of the living God. The different schemes among the learned as to the manner in which it has been supposed that God effects this change, we shall reserve for future consideration.

We shall close for the present by asking who in this congregation has experienced this great moral renovation of the inner man, the nature, adjuncts,

and properties of which we have endeavored to explain in this discourse. This change of man's depraved nature is the great *sine quâ non* in the scheme of human salvation. Hence an error in this matter is fraught with fearful consequences. Ponder, therefore, this weighty subject in your hearts, and tell me seriously, as in the presence of God, whether any of you have good reasons to believe that you are born again? There are those present, I trust, who can unhesitatingly answer the question in the affirmative. You know, undoubtedly, by internal and external evidences, that you are born of God. May you never forget the day of your nativity! May you always realize your obligations to God for this great mercy! May each of you be enabled to adopt the language, and act upon the sentiments of the poet, in the following stanzas :

Assist my soul, my heavenly King,
Thine everlasting love to sing;
And joyful spread thy praise abroad,
As one, through grace, that's born of God.

No, it was not the will of man,
My soul's new heavenly birth began,
Nor will; nor pow'r of flesh and blood,
That turned my heart from sin to God.

Herein let self be all abased,
And heav'nly love alone confessed:
This be my song through all the road,
That born I am, and born of God.

O may this love my soul constrain
To make returns of love again,
That I, while earth is my abode,
May live like one that's born of God.

And when th' appointed hour shall come,
And thou wilt call me to my home ;
Joyful I'll pass the chilling flood,
And sing and say, I'm born of God.

But a few words yet, before I close, to the unregenerate. You heard under our first sermon, a week ago, what regeneration is not. To-night you have heard what regeneration is, viz.: a radical change of the moral nature or disposition of the mind. This nature or disposition is naturally depraved; that is, prone to evil and averse to good. Hence it must be changed, so that it will be directly the reverse of what it is by nature, averse to sin and inclined to holiness. This renewed spirit or disposition of the mind is called in the Scriptures by different names. It is called, "A new creature." 2 Cor. 5:17. "The new man." Eph. 4:24. "The Spirit of Christ." Rom. 8:9. "The divine nature." 2 Pet. 1:4. "A pure heart." Matt. 5:8. "A heart of flesh." Ez. 36:26. "A new heart." Ez. 36:26. "God's seed." 1 John 3:9. "A spiritual mind." Rom. 8:6.

All these things clearly indicate that this great and necessary change is a divine work. This every sinner must learn to feel. You must learn to rea-

lize your dependence on God. If ever you are born again, you must be born of God.

And yet you must understand that God will never change you by physical and irresistible force. He has made you moral agents. He offers you free salvation. He expects you to receive it through faith. This is his own plan of salvation. If he ever saves you, therefore, it will be in perfect keeping with your free moral agency and his own gracious scheme of salvation. Are you willing to be saved in this way? Are you now willing thus to be saved? If so, now come to Jesus. Now believe on the Son of God, and now, even now, you may obtain power to become the sons of God. "And if sons, then heirs; heirs of God. and joint heirs with Christ."

SERMON III.

SHOWING THE CAUSES OF REGENERATION.

JOHN 3 : 7.—“ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

HAVING shown in the two preceding sermons what regeneration is not and what it is, we shall now proceed,

2dly. *To show the causes of the new birth.*

These we shall consider in the following order :

1. The *moving* cause.
2. The *meritorious* cause.
3. The *efficient* cause.
4. The *instrumental* cause ; and
5. The *procuring* cause of regeneration, or the new birth.

Resuming then, the order proposed, we shall consider,

1st. The *moving* or *impelling* cause of the new birth. This is not man himself. He never was, and never will be, the original mover of his own conversion. Though Adam by transgression fell, and lost both the favor and image of his Maker, yet we are nowhere told that he ever desired and

sought for restoration to God; and if he did, it was not until after the Lord sought him. This is precisely the case with all Adam's posterity.

None ever have of their own accord, and none ever will of themselves, uninfluenced by other and higher causes, desire and seek, much less effect, a change of their own hearts.

But when "man was cast into the open field," and lay "polluted in his own blood;" when there was no eye to pity him, and no created arm to bring salvation; then, even then, did God's eye pity, and his own arm bring salvation. That the Supreme and Eternal God is truly and properly the impulsive cause of regeneration, the following passages will fully demonstrate:

"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:12, 13-17.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved." Eph. 2:4, 5.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich. yet for your

sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Tit. 3:4-7.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son—God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:16, 17.

From these, and many other passages of similar import, it is as clear and conclusive as anything can be, that God, of his own will, and according to his abundant mercy, regenerates and saves the people. We shall now proceed to show,

2dly. The *meritorious* cause of regeneration. This is nothing less than the blood of Christ; in other words it is the atonement, or propitiatory sacrifice made by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. Man, in his primeval state, enjoyed both the favor and likeness of God; but by transgression, or in consequence of his sin, he lost both, and became his enemy. In

this guilty, ruined, and helpless state, Jehovah might justly have suffered him to remain and perish eternally. God was under no obligations to redeem him. Man had ruined himself without cause, and forfeited all claims to the favor and mercy of his Almighty Maker, and justly incurred the penalty of the law, and the wages of sin, which is death. Howbeit, as God had created man for his own glory, he was not willing that any should perish without hope; that is, without an overture of mercy and salvation. But this overture could not be made consistently without an adequate atonement for human guilt. God's law was broken, and his justice required that it should be made honorable. This could not be done by fallen man himself, for he was without strength. Hence God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, and according to his abundant mercy, laid the wondrous plan of salvation as exhibited in the Gospel.

The groundwork of this plan is the atonement of Jesus Christ. This doctrine forms the meritorious cause of regeneration, and the foundation of all our hopes. We shall, therefore, here present the argument as drawn from the Bible in support of this doctrine.

1. The doctrine of the atonement is substantiated by the sacrifices under the law. Under the legal dispensation, God ordered the offering of certain sacrifices as an atonement for the sins of the people. Lev. 1:4; 4:15, 24; 16:6, 16, 21, 22. These sacrifices were vicarious oblations; that

is, they were put in the place of guilty sinners, to appease the anger of God, to atone for their sins, and save them from condign punishment. Lev. 4: 27-35. These Levitical or legal offerings were all typical of the atonement of Christ. Hence the sufferings and death of Christ are expressly called a sacrifice for sins. Heb. 10: 12. As, therefore, Levitical priests offered different animals in the room of the guilty Israelites, so Christ appeared, in the end of the world, "to offer himself without spot to God," and thus "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9: 14-26.

2. This doctrine may be proved from those passages which speak of Christ as a propitiation for sins. Rom. 3: 25; 1 John 2: 2; 4: 10.

The word translated propitiation is in the original *hilasmos*. This word, though seldom used in the New Testament, occurs very often in the Septuagint, and is generally used to signify an expiatory or atoning sacrifice. This, likewise, is the true and proper meaning of the word in the Gospel or New Testament. In German it is translated *versenung*; *i. e.* reconciliation.

3. The doctrine may be argued from those texts, in which it is said that we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ. See 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19, 20; Rom. 5: 10; Col. 1: 20; Heb. 2: 17. "Reconciliation between man and man supposes a former state of friendship subsisting between them, a breach of that friendship, and a renewing and restoring

of it; and there is something similar to this in reconciliation between God and man.”

4. The same thing may be concluded from those passages of Scripture which speak of Christ as a ransom for sin. The word ransom signifies the price paid for the deliverance of a captive. In the original there are two words used, viz., *λοτρον* and *αντιλοτρον*; the latter is used to denote the redemption of a captive, by giving up the life of another person. See 1 Tim. 2:6; Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45.

5. Of the same nature are all those passages, which declare that we are redeemed and saved by Jesus Christ. See Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:9; Matt. 1:21; 18:11; Luke 19:10; 9:56; John 12:47; 1 Tim. 1:15.

6. Identically the same thing may be inferred from various other passages; such as the following: Is. 53:4-8; Mark 8:37; Rom. 4:25; 5:6-10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18.

If, then, the doctrine of Christ's substitution is plainly taught in the Bible, this dogma, and this alone, must be regarded as the grand meritorious cause of all the covenanted mercies and blessings of the God of grace.

Pursuant to promise, we shall consider,

3dly. The *efficient* cause of a spiritual change.

This is,

1. Not man: nor,

2. The discipline of circumstances; but,

3. God, and the special agency of his Spirit.

1. The efficient cause of this change is *not man*.

It is not in the power of man to regenerate himself, nor efficiently contribute to the conversion of others.

(a.) The nature of the change clearly shows that it cannot be effected by men. It is a regeneration; that is, as we have already explained it, a rebegetting, a renewing, or restoring of the lost image of God. It is called a birth, a resurrection, a creation, a transformation, etc.; all of which expressions fully show that this work is not in the compass of man's power to effect.

But then it is asked, "May not men, by the instrumentality of means, measures, and motives, produce a change in the heart, and a transformation of moral character?" I answer, not in a natural way, separate and apart from a divine influence. It is not in the power of means and motives to produce that new and spiritual nature, that holy disposition, and that heavenly taste and temper which is wrought in regeneration.

Means cannot do it. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but all these means will not of themselves change the heart. To make them efficient, God must give the increase."

Motives cannot do it. Motives can only induce the heart to act according to its existing disposition, but can have no influence to change the disposition.

"The power of a motive," says a certain author,

“to influence the will, always presupposes a disposition in the heart to entertain and fall in with it.” In the absence of such a disposition, therefore, motives have no power to move the will. And if so, if, in the nature of things, the will cannot be moved and governed by motives which the heart disapproves; and if by their own charms they cannot create a new and holy disposition, then it naturally and necessarily follows, that men by the simple use of means and motives cannot change the human heart, which is totally depraved. If, indeed, in any other way, Christians and Christian ministers are made helpful and instrumental in bringing about a radical change of heart, it must be ascribed wholly and solely to a concomitant and supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit.

(b.) But to settle this question at once, regeneration is expressly denied to be of men. John the Baptist, speaking of the Messiah, says, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born”—How? by what agency? “Not of blood,” that is, not by virtue of natural descent, “nor by the will of the flesh;” that is, not of themselves, or by any efforts, means, and exertions of their own, “nor of the will of man;” that is, by human power. John 1: 12, 13.

2. The efficient cause of regeneration is not *the discipline of circumstances*.

It is sometimes asserted, “that there is a wise and salutary provision in the established system

of Providence for correcting any preponderance of evil which may arise out of imperfections in the works of nature and grace; and that this provision is nothing but such a general disposition of the course of human events, as is necessary to produce such corrections."

But how often is this "general disposition of the course of human events," this discipline of circumstances, abortive in its effects? Let sober and stubborn facts pronounce the decision. By losses and afflictions of various kinds, hundreds and thousands have been repeatedly and severely disciplined, and yet all to no purpose. Many, indeed, instead of growing better, seem to have grown worse under all these afflictive circumstances and providential dispensations. There are some, it is true, who have been led to serious reflections, and learned to apply their hearts to wisdom, under the discipline of afflictive circumstances. But, then, whenever this has been the happy result, it is not to be attributed to any inherent and saving efficacy in the discipline itself, but to the special and sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit. Nature and education are not sufficient for the transformation of the moral character of man. And if so, to what then is this change to be attributed? By what efficacious agency is it brought about? We answer:

3. The efficient cause, as we have already said, is *God and the special agency of the Holy Spirit*. To

prove this, we adduce the following texts. First, a few from the Old Testament.

“The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deut. 30:6. To circumcise the heart means to renew the heart; to change it from enmity to love. And this circumcision or change of heart is expressly ascribed to God: “The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart,” etc.

“A new heart also will I (God) give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.” Ez. 36: 26, 27. This text also plainly shows that God is the giver of a new heart and a new spirit; and that the consequence of receiving a new heart will be implicit obedience to God: “You shall keep my judgments and do them.”

“But,” it is said in the Gospel, “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12, 13. This passage, on the one hand, denies the new birth to be derived from man, and, on the other, affirms it to be from God.

Again: Christ, in his conversation with Nico-

demus, says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John 3:5, 6. This passage proves in the most decisive manner that the new birth is the work of the Spirit of God, and that it is indispensably necessary in order to salvation. Furthermore, it is said by Paul to Titus:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. 3:5. In this text the renewing influence is expressly ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

Now from these and other passages we readily perceive that this doctrine is confirmed by the oracles of God, in representations as strong as any language can furnish, viz., that Jehovah himself is not only the moving and meritorious, but also the efficient cause of regeneration.

As to the precise manner in which God operates in effecting this moral change, we have said before that it was undefinable.

Accordingly, it is no legitimate subject of investigation. Nevertheless, it may not be improper to make a few remarks touching this point.

Whatever may be the *modus operandi* of the Holy Spirit in the mysterious process of the new-birth, certain it is that his agency will never be exerted in violation of any of the established laws

of nature in relation to mind, nor in any way inconsistent with the free agency of man.

That the Spirit of God may exert a saving influence on the mind of man without infringing on his freedom, cannot be denied, seeing that "with him all things are possible."

Besides, does not experience prove the same thing? "Ask any Christian, and he will tell you, if competent to answer the question, that he is conscious of no loss nor change in his own freedom of acting; but, on the contrary, he chose and acted in the same manner as before, and with the same full possession of all his powers; and that the only difference between his former and present state is, that he now loves God and obeys him voluntarily; whereas he formerly hated him and voluntarily disobeyed him."

To assert, therefore, as some do, that regeneration is the result of a physical and irresistible influence of the Spirit of God is, in our opinion, to speak contrary to the form of sound words. Yet,

How to reconcile the special agency of the Spirit with the free agency of man, I make no scruple to acknowledge is an insuperable difficulty. Both are plainly taught in the Scriptures. Hence, neither must be denied. The denial of the former would lead to Pelagianism, the latter to Calvinism. Both are alike foreign from the truth.

The Bible teaches both the dependence and the activity of man. The sovereignty of God and the ability of man must, therefore, both be affirmed

and enforced, in order to carry out the true principles of the Gospel.

To tell the sinner that "without Christ he can do nothing," and yet that "through Christ strengthening him he can do all things;" to tell him that "Jesus is the author and finisher of faith," and yet that "this is the work of God, that he should believe on him whom he (God) hath sent," is to tell him nothing but what is lawful and right.

We shall now proceed, according to our arrangement, to point out

4thly. The *instrumental* cause of regeneration.

This is, mainly and principally, the truth of God. "All that is contained in means or efforts, human or divine, for the salvation of ourselves or others, is comprehended in truth, and the various ways of presenting truth to the mind. The great body of truth intended for the salvation of men is contained in the Bible. The truth of God, then, as revealed in the Bible, is the grand instrumentality by which the soul is renewed. In confirmation of this doctrine we shall allege in evidence:

1. The testimony of God; and
2. The testimony of facts.

1. We allege in evidence of this theory the testimony of God as given in the Scriptures. Jesus, the great teacher come from God, has expressly said, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5. In this passage are brought to view two things, viz.: the instrumentality and the

agency by which regeneration is accomplished. The instrument or means of this change is said to be water. Of this a man must be born, or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But what does the Saviour mean by the word water? This is a question of no small moment. Various opinions have been entertained as to the true meaning of this term in the above text.

Some have explained it to mean the tears of penitents. Others have said that it meant baptism. And others again have explained it to mean the grace of the Spirit. None of these interpretations do we believe to be the true one.

(*a.*) The word water does not mean the tears of penitents. Some penitents cannot weep. Others weep much, and yet they are not born again. Besides, it is nowhere affirmed in the Scriptures that sinners must weep in order to be born again.

(*b.*) The term water does not mean baptism. Water is an element; baptism is an action. Many have been regenerated before baptism. Acts 10: 44-47. Others have been baptized, and yet not regenerated. Besides, the apostles never preached baptism as a means of regeneration. In fine this explanation proves too much; and, therefore proves nothing at all. It conflicts with other Scriptures, and, therefore, must be false. See page 35.

(*c.*) This word does not mean the grace of the Spirit. It is never said, that man must be born of the grace of the Spirit, and of the Spirit.

Regeneration is not attributed to the grace of the Spirit as a means or an influence different from the Spirit.

If, then, the Saviour did not mean by the word water in this text the tears of penitents, nor baptism, nor the grace of the Spirit, what did he mean? We answer, he meant the truth, or Word of God. To prove this we will show,

1. That the word water is used to mean the Gospel, or Word of God.

2. That a regenerating influence is expressly attributed to the truth of God.

1. We say by water the Gospel or truth of God is meant. In Deuteronomy 32:2, it is said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."

Again, in Ezekiel 47:1-5, it is said, "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward; and behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand, went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were

to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterwards he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." This vision of holy waters evidently refers to the Gospel, and beautifully exhibits both its rise and rapid increase.

Again, in 1 John 5: 8, the apostle says, "There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." Here the word water also means the Gospel.

These passages may suffice to show that the term water is used to signify the Word of God. We propose to show,

2. That regeneration is ascribed to the power of the Gospel as a means. The apostle says, Rom. 1: 16, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Here the Gospel is declared to be the power of God which saves them that believe. In German it reads: "*Eine kraft gottes, die da selig macht alle, die daran glauben.*" If then the Gospel has saving power, it has regenerating power; for without regeneration there is no salvation.

Again, Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, says, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through

the Gospel." 1 Cor. 4:15. James says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." James 1:18. Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." 1 Pet. 1:23. The Psalmist says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Ps. 19:7.

In these and other passages of like import, we have proof positive that regeneration is brought about by the instrumentality of the Gospel, or truth of God. The obvious meaning, therefore, of the Saviour in the words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," is, except he is renewed in heart and life by the power of truth, rendered effectual by the energy of the Holy Spirit, he cannot be saved from hell, and get to heaven.

Having shown from the testimony of God as exhibited in the Scriptures of truth, that the "Word of God" is the instrumental cause of regeneration, we shall now proceed to argue the same thing.

2. From the testimony of facts. It is a matter of fact that whenever and wherever God intends to bring men to the enjoyment of spiritual life and salvation, he first sends them the Gospel, and excites their attention to it. Thus, when the Jews, "the children of the stock of Abraham," were to be regenerated and made "the children of the kingdom," God sent them "the Gospel of the kingdom," which is the "word of this salvation." See Matt. 10:5, 6; Mark 1:15; Acts 13:26. Thus, also, when the Gentiles were to be brought

nigh and made the people of God, the Lord said to Cornelius, by the mouth of an angel, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Acts 11:13, 14. When the people of Macedonia, in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and other places, were to be brought into the fold or "Church of God," the Lord said to Paul in a vision, by a man of Macedonia, "Come over and help us."

Again: It is also a matter of fact, that wherever the Gospel is regularly and faithfully preached, there are many more converted than where it is seldom and loosely proclaimed. The most successful way of preaching it, is to preach it plainly, affectionately, and fully. As to the question, whether God will save any without the use and influence of the Gospel, I would say I cannot tell. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong to us, and our children." Deut. 29:29. Touching the future allotment of the heathen, it is enough for us to know that the God and "Judge of all the earth will do right." And as for us and our children, we know, because we have a "Thus saith the Lord" for it, that none can inherit eternal life, except they are born again; and that, too, in God's own appointed way, "of water and of the Spirit."

We now come to consider in the fifth and last place,

5thly. The *procuring* and *conditional* cause of

regeneration on the part of the creature. An epitome of the system of means which is to be used on the part of man, in view of attaining to the blessing of regeneration, may be said to be repentance and faith. Repentance, in its primary and strict signification, is used to denote a change of mind with regard to sin. Matt. 21:29; Luke 17:3. But then in its more enlarged and evangelical sense it implies: 1. Knowledge of sin; 2. Sorrow for sin; 3. Hatred to sin; 4. Confession of sin; and 5. Renunciation of sin.

Faith in general signifies a full persuasion of mind of the truth of revelation. But living and saving faith is made up, first, of assent; secondly, of desire; and thirdly, of trust. The man, for instance, who believes in Christ "with all his heart," or "with a heart to righteousness," does in the first place give his assent to the truth of all that is testified concerning Jesus; secondly, he sincerely desires him to become his Saviour; and thirdly, he fully trusts him for a present and full salvation. This and this alone is the sum total of living and saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are both voluntary acts of the mind. Nothing, indeed, can be rightfully required of a moral agent, which are not in their nature voluntary acts. These acts, therefore, being in the most express terms required of man by the law of God, must, of course, be voluntary acts of the mind.

Hence, with perfect consistency, God has en-

joined these duties as conditions of a present salvation, and placed them where they ought to be placed, among the antecedents of the change, bearing the name of regeneration.

Accordingly, when John the harbinger of Jesus Christ commenced preaching, he began with the doctrine of repentance and faith, saying to the people, "Repent ye—believe on Christ Jesus." Matt. 3:2; Acts 19:4.

When Christ, the great Teacher come from God, commenced his public ministry, he likewise preached the duties of repentance and faith, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." Mark 1:15.

Again, when the apostles of our Lord went out under their great commission to show the people the way of salvation, they, too, "testified and preached both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21.

Now all this was perfectly right, seeing "God has commanded all men everywhere to repent," and to "believe on his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ," on pain of eternal death.

"With the heart believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not

shall be damned." Acts 17:30; 1 John 3:23; Luke 13:5; John 3:36; John 1:12; Rom. 10:10; Mark 16:16.

Hence we clearly perceive that salvation, from first to last, is conditional. God treats men as moral agents, and not as necessary ones or mere machines.

There are some divines who place faith and repentance among the effects of regeneration, and not among the antecedents. But this, we presume, they have learned in the modern "schools of the prophets," and not in the school of Christ. For if it be true, as they allege, that God regenerates men anterior to the acts of faith and repentance; and if, as they further say, that their final perseverance is infallibly certain, then upon what rational grounds can God, as an all-wise and just Being, command the duty of faith on pain of eternal damnation? God certainly does not mock men. He cannot be the author of folly and sin. And yet this unphilosophical and unscriptural theory charges him with both. For if it be true, as some say, that Christ died for all,—that he has authorized the Gospel to be preached to all,—and that he commands all to believe on himself, on pain of an endless death; and yet that none can or will obey him but such as he first regenerates, then, in our judgment, all such unavoidably charge the Almighty with cruelty, partiality, and folly. Surely God is not so unjust as to suspend the salvation of men upon impossible conditions, and

then damn them eternally for not complying with the same. Such a system impeaches the character of God, and makes him a sheer arbitrary tyrant.

But the true doctrine is, that sinners in the economy of God are required to use the appointed means of grace, such as hearing and reading the Word of God, prayer and fasting, etc., but especially are they required to repent and to believe on Jesus Christ; not of themselves, but under the helpful influence of the grace of God. "For by grace," it is written, "are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph. 2:8. The true meaning of this passage is this: salvation (not faith) is the gift of God; and this gift is not of debt, but by grace; and yet through faith as the procuring and conditional act of the creature. 1 John 5:1.

This is the true plan—this is the right way of the Lord to save sinners. If sinners are not willing to be saved in this way, they can never be saved at all. God will never alter his plan. He will never accommodate himself to the whims and reveries of proud and sinful men, in order to save them and bring them to heaven. No man can reasonably hope to experience and attain to the blessedness of a regenerate state without the exercise of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." As by faith sinners are justified, so by faith also are they regenerated.

Faith, therefore, is the procuring cause on the part of man of regeneration.

Now let us briefly review the subject under consideration, and so conclude for the present.

1st. We have heard that the *moving* or *impulsive* cause of regeneration is the great God of heaven, whose name and nature is love. Let us then, as John says, "love him, because he first loved us." John 3:19.

2dly. We have been informed that the *meritorious* cause of this change is "the atonement of Christ." This makes room for the salvation of the vilest sinner. This furnishes an all-prevailing plea in our approaches to God, because "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," and God, in "Christ, can save to the uttermost."

3dly. We have seen that the *efficient* cause of this moral renovation is "the Holy Spirit." Let us then look away from men and means. Let us look up to God and believingly ask for, carefully cherish, and implicitly submit to, the power and influence of the Spirit of God.

4thly. We have learned that the *instrumental* cause of the new birth is the truth of God. The Bible contains this great body of truth. Make the Bible, therefore, the man of your counsel. "Search the Scriptures," as Jesus said, and receive into honest and good hearts this "incorruptible seed; this engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

Hear, also, the word preached. Hear it often; not once in a while only. Hear it wherever it is

faithfully preached. Hear all things, "whatever the Spirit" by the word "saith to the churches." If sinners neglect the house of God, they have no reason to expect that God will convert their souls. God works by means, and sinners have no right to hope for favors from him but through the use and influence of means. Can farmers expect to reap where they have not sown? No, surely not. So neither can sinners expect to be regenerated and saved whilst they are neglecting the use of God's appointed means. But,

5thly. We have heard also that the *procuring* cause of this new creation, after the likeness of God, is a true and living faith in Jesus Christ. "Faith," we are told, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. In German this text reads, "*Der glaube kommt aus der predigt, das predigen aber durch das Wort Gottes.*" That is, "Faith comes through preaching, but preaching through the Word of God." Now, if faith comes through preaching, and through the preaching of the Word of God, then all who desire to be brought to believe in Christ, and through faith to become converted, should make it a point to attend the faithful preaching of God's word whenever they have an opportunity. And whenever under preaching or otherwise they are cut to the heart, so that they realize their sinfulness, guilt, and danger, they should at once, and at the risk of all things, tear their souls from earth away, give up all, look to the cross

of Christ, and fully trust in the atoning merits of Immanuel, as their only hope of pardon and acceptance with God. If sinners will thus submit to God, they shall obtain mercy, and find grace to help them; but if not, they shall unavoidably be damned.

Now, sinners, lay this well to heart,
And turn without delay;
O hasten to the Saviour's arms,
Whilst it is called to-day.

It is your wisdom so to do;
'Twill be your interest, too:
Then be entreated now to come
To Christ who died for you.

SERMON IV.

SHOWING THE INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCES OR MARKS
OF REGENERATION.

JOHN 3:7.—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

HAVING shown you, in the three preceding sermons what regeneration is not, what it is, and the several causes of it, we shall now proceed to treat of,

3dly. *The evidences or marks of regeneration.*

These, for the sake of perspicuity or clearness, we shall divide into *inconclusive* and *conclusive* evidences. In this discourse we shall show the *inconclusive evidences* of regeneration.

By inconclusive evidences, I mean such evidences, signs, or marks as may and often do pertain to both the regenerate and unregenerate; and, therefore, do not clearly, fully, and conclusively show or prove a regenerate state. Among these we reckon and enumerate the following, to wit :

1. Special gifts.
2. Great privileges.
3. Much knowledge.

4. Church membership.
5. Morality of conduct.
6. Plainness of dress.
7. An approving conscience.
8. Tenderheartedness.
9. Hatred to sin.
10. Delight in God's Word.
11. Secret and family prayer.
12. Sanctification of the Lord's day.
13. Alms, or relief to the poor.
14. Observance of Church ordinances.
15. Zeal in the cause of benevolence and religion.
16. Success and prosperity in matters of benevolence and religion.
17. Persecution for religion.
18. Patience in tribulation.
19. Reputation for piety.
20. Strong hopes of heaven.
21. Willingness to die.

These then are some of the inconclusive evidences of regeneration, or the new birth. Let us briefly consider them in regular order.

1. *Special or extraordinary* gifts we say do not prove a man to be in a regenerate state.

Gifts are twofold, natural and spiritual: and a person may be endowed with both in an extraordinary manner, and yet be in a carnal and unregenerate state.

(a.) He may possess great natural gifts—a strong constitution, a sound mind, a prodigious memory,

a pleasant voice, and a fluent tongue; and yet withal a graceless soul. Cain was a gifted reasoner: "Am I my brother's keeper," etc.; and yet he was a murderer. Gen. 4:9. Noah's carpenters had mechanical skill and gifts to help to build an ark to save others, whilst they themselves were all drowned. Some of the old Scribes and Pharisees also were men of great gifts and splendid attainment; nevertheless they are called by one who could read them without a stop, "hypocrites," "whited sepulchres," "serpents," "a generation of vipers," etc. Matt. 23:27-33.

(b.) He may likewise have great spiritual gifts; as the gift of praying and prophesying, etc., and, notwithstanding, be entirely graceless. Balaam uttered a clear and remarkable prophecy of Christ: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel; I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh." Num. 24:17: and yet Balaam had neither lot nor part in him of whom he prophesied.

Judas also had miraculous gifts: he cast out devils and did many mighty works, Luke 9:10; and yet "he has gone to his own place." Acts 1:25.

The "workers of iniquity" which we read of, Matt. 7:22, had extraordinary gifts: "Many will say to me in that day," etc., and yet Christ will say to them, "I never knew you, depart from me."

Paul tells us, 1 Cor. 13:1, 2: "Though I speak

with the tongues of men and of angels; and though I have the gift of prophecy; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

Again, we are told, that the false prophet wrought miracles before the beast; that is, the corrupters of religion performed miracles before the apostates from religion; and yet "both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Rev. 19:20.

"Gifts," says Mathew Mead, "are for the use and good of others;" they are given *in ordina ad alium*, as the schoolmen speak, for the profiting and edifying of others; so, says the apostle, they are given to profit withal. 1 Cor. 12:7.

God may use a man's gift to bring others to Christ, when he himself, whose gifts God uses, may be a stranger to Christ, and, finally, a cast-away.

"Scultelus tells us of one John Speiserus, a famous preacher of Augsburg, in Germany, in the year 1523, who preached the Gospel so powerfully, that a great many common harlots were converted and became good Christians; and yet himself afterwards turned papist, and came to a miserable end."

2. *Great spiritual privileges* are no sign of a regenerate state.

God favors all his people as a general thing with high and distinguished privileges. See Deut. 28:1-12.

But the simple fact of being thus favored does not argue a gracious state. We read of some, as the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, who were exalted to heaven in point of privileges, and yet were thrust down to hell. The Jews boasted much of the honor and privilege of being Abraham's children; and yet Christ tells them plainly that they were of their father the devil. See Matt. 3:7; John 8:44. Paul also tells of those, Rom. 9:4, 5, who were "Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever;" and notwithstanding all these great privileges, many of them were punished with a sore and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

Just so it is with many at the present day. They enjoy great temporal and spiritual privileges, and they highly value and congratulate themselves on account of the liberties, Sabbaths, sermons, ordinances, and civil and religious principles which they enjoy. But let it be remembered that tares may be in the same field with wheat, enjoying the same benefit of the sun, rain, air, and earth, and yet be tares still. Many may claim church membership, and eat bread and drink wine at the Lord's table, but do it unworthily. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15.

3. *Much knowledge* is no evidence of a regenerate state. Knowledge is fourfold, viz.: 1. Natural. Rom. 1:21; Jude 10. 2. Artificial. Ex. 35:31. 3. Legal. Rom. 3:20; 7:7. 4. Evangelical or spiritual. 2 Cor. 2:14.

Now, although all regenerate persons have more or less knowledge, still there may be much knowledge, and all kinds of knowledge—natural, artificial, legal, and evangelical,—and withal no change of state and of the “Spirit of the mind.” The Scribes and Pharisees had much knowledge: “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will;” and yet, so far from being regenerate, they were called, and properly too, “a generation of vipers.” See Rom. 2:17, 18; Matt. 23:33.

The heathen had much knowledge; for the apostle says, Rom. 1:21, “When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Hence, then, we perceive that a man may have much knowledge of God and his will; yea, and as Paul says, 1 Cor. 13:2, “All knowledge;” and yet lack a disposition to obey God by doing his will. Knowledge may fill the head, whilst Satan, “the strong man armed,” keepeth the palace of the heart. Luke 11:21. Where then is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where the man that seemeth to be wise in this world? Let him become a fool that he may be wise in Christ; “Who of God

is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.

4. *Church membership*, or a profession of religion, is no proof of regeneration.

All that are regenerated, we believe, will come out and make a profession of religion by uniting with the church. This was uniformly and universally the case in the days of the apostles. And wherever this duty is neglected, there is reason to fear that something is yet radically wrong. John 12:42; Matt. 10:31. But still the performance of this duty, the making of a profession of religion, or uniting with the church, does by no means furnish conclusive evidence of a spiritual birth.

"All are not Israel that are of Israel." Rom. 9:6.

"He is not a Jew that is one outwardly." Rom. 2:28.

And as not every one that is clothed in uniform, and carries a musket, or wears a sword, is a soldier; so neither is every professor and church member a sound believer and a true convert.

The Scriptures also speak of some that have "a form of godliness, but deny the power." 2 Tim. 3:5. Such were many of the old Pharisees and Sadducees. Such was that haughty and boasting Pharisee who went up with the publican to the temple. Luke 18:11. Such was the young lawyer who came to Christ, asking, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Luke 18:18. Such was Paul before his conver-

sion. Such were the Laodiceans. Rev. 3:17. Such the foolish virgins, Matt. 25:3; and many others in days of old. And such are many modern professors of religion. They have been baptized (or perhaps *rantized*) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; they are regular churchgoers; they hear the word with joy, like the stony ground hearers; they often go to the Lord's table, but they have never been born again. Nicodemus-like, "they know not these things." Yea, and some of them, like Paul before his conversion, are "persecutors of this way."

The profession of religion, therefore, and the experience of it, or the life of God in the soul, are two very different things. The name and nature of Christ are both good; but the name without the nature profiteth little. Men should have the Spirit of Christ before they name the name of Christ. Dear hearers, how stands this matter with you? Are you transformed by the renewal of your minds? Are you partakers of the divine nature? If not, your empty lamps of profession,—your nominal church membership,—your Lord, Lord, saying will be wholly unavailing in the day of Christ without a change of heart.

5. *Morality*, or propriety of conduct, is no certain evidence of the new birth. Some have erroneously supposed, as we stated in our first sermon, that reformation or morality of life constituted regeneration itself; but so far from being that, it is not even a conclusive evidence thereof. The

young man in the Gospel was moral and outwardly religious from youth up; yet the Saviour told him he lacked one thing, viz., a radical change of the inner man, or the new birth. So it is with many now, who build all their hopes on the propriety of their outward behavior. They are civil, honest, and well behaved, but they are not spiritual, because they are not "born of the Spirit." Morality may be the result of education, custom, fear, or restraining grace; but regeneration is the result of a divine influence. The soul that would go to heaven must be born of "water and of the Spirit." Dear hearers, it may be you are no swearers, no liars, no drunkards, no defaulters, no thieves, no adulterers or adulteresses, nor justly chargeable with any other vile immorality; yet your moral conduct, however good and commendable in itself, will give you no title claim to the kingdom of God. Therefore, do not rest your hope of heaven on the "sandy foundation" of outward morality, or moral rectitude between man and man.

6. *Plainness of dress* is no proof of a gracious state. This like civility or propriety of conduct, and other good things, is highly commendable in all who "name the name of Christ," or who profess to be his people, because it belongs to religion, and is an effect of grace; nevertheless, it may sometimes, like other things, be the mere creature of education or custom. In some denominations there is so much stress laid upon these things, that uniformity of speech and dress become character-

istic of these societies. And hence the good and bad, the regenerate and the unregenerate, are all alike, so far as outward appearance is concerned. Under these circumstances, therefore, and indeed under no circumstances, can plainness be regarded as an infallible sign of regeneration.

Howbeit, let me exhort you, my Christian hearers, in the language of Holy Writ, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." Rom. 12:16. "What is highly esteemed among men (like gayety and costly apparel) is an abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15. But on the other hand bear in mind that the heart is the seat of true religion, and not the habiliment. There is a vast difference between "a pure heart," and "a plain dress." A man's raiment may be all right, and yet his heart all wrong. The Lord, it is said, seeth not as man seeth. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Saml. 16:7. Search, therefore, and see first of all, "whether your heart is right in the sight of God." Acts 8:21. Whether you have put on the new man, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:24.

7. *An approving*, or rather an *unaccusing conscience*, is no sure criterion of a renewed state. Conscience, or the moral sense, is implanted in man for high and noble purposes. It is the "candle of the Lord," or the vicegerent of God in the soul, and on its shoulders rest in a great measure the government of the inner and outer man.

But, like the soul itself, it is naturally darkened and polluted by sin, and must therefore be enlightened and purged by divine grace, in order that it may answer in all respects the end for which it was created. Accordingly, we read of "an evil" and a "good conscience." "An evil conscience" is a natural conscience; a "good conscience" is a sanctified one. The dictates of a natural conscience must, therefore, from the nature of things, be exceedingly uncertain and delusive. Conscience may give in false testimony, either through its blindness, sleepiness, security, or sear-edness. Hence, obedience to the dictates of a natural conscience gives no sufficient evidence of a gracious state.

It is, in fact, no infallible rule to go by in matters of religion. It is purblind, and savors not of the things of God. Hence, Christ told his disciples, that the time would come, that they who killed them should think they did God service. John 16 : 2. Paul's conscience told him that it was his duty to persecute the disciples, and to suppress Christianity. "I verily thought," said he, "with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; which thing I also did," etc. Acts 26 : 9, 10, 11. Who then in the face of these Scriptures can consistently take the position, that to follow "the light within," or to obey the dictates of a natural conscience, furnishes conclusive evidence of a regenerate state?

Such a doctrine as this would have us to believe that persecutors and murderers can be Christians. What a glaring absurdity! And yet, there are multitudes who flatter themselves that all is well, simply because they follow the dictates of their natural conscience.

A certain author has justly said, "Conscience is indeed a rule, but *regula regulata prius quam regulans*: such a rule as must be ruled by God's Word, before it can be a right rule for our conduct. To the law and to the testimony, if conscience speak not according to these, it is because there is no true light in it. Scripture is the compass by which conscience must bend its course, or else it will never land its passengers at the desired haven." Is it a rational argument that I am in my Prince's favor, because I obey my captain, when he is a traitor? Dear hearers, do not be cheated, duped and ruined by taking this *ignis fatuus* as an infallible rule of life.

8. *Tenderness of heart* is no mark of grace. By this we mean tender and excitable feelings. These are twofold, natural and gracious. Christians are all more or less tenderhearted. But they are so, because they have by a new and heavenly birth received the Spirit of Christ. Christ was full of tender emotions. He often wept and groaned in the Spirit. He was also "very pitiful and of tender mercy." James 5:11. Now, as he was, so are Christians in this world." 1 John 4:17. However unfeeling, hardhearted, and insensible

they may have been in their unconverted state, this, with other old things has passed away in the work and process of regeneration; so that now they are made conformable to the tenderhearted Jesus.

But sinners may sometimes also weep and show tender feelings. Some ministers, therefore, are much more in the habit of addressing themselves to the passions than to the understanding and conscience of men. And if they can only raise an excitement, or excite great emotions, they are ready to conclude they have done great things. But let it be remembered, that not every weeping sinner is a penitent sinner. Esau,* Ishmael,† Samson's wife,‡ and the merchants of the earth,§ all wept and showed strong and tender emotions; yet, who will say they were regenerated? The fact is, many persons are naturally tender and feeling. Their passions are easily moved. They can soon be made to weep, and soon to sin. Their tears and tender emotions, therefore, are no signs of a new and holy heart. Whilst, therefore, tenderheartedness ought to be carefully sought, and highly appreciated by the followers of Christ, yet it ought never to be relied on as a proof of the new birth.

9. *Hatred to sin* is no evidence of conversion or of the new birth. The unregenerate, as well as

* Gen. 27:33. † Jer. 41:6. ‡ Judges 14:36. § Rev. 18:15-19.

the regenerate, may hate sin, though not for the same reasons.

The regenerate hate sin because it offends God, wounds Christ, grieves the Spirit, wrongs the soul, and tends to subvert the government of God.

The unregenerate may hate sin,

1. Because of the shame and disgrace that attends it. Absalom hated Amnon's lewdness, though he himself was a wicked man, because it brought shame upon him and his sister. 2 Sam. 13: 22. For the same reason identically, do many at the present day hate disgraceful sins, such as drunkenness, theft, fornication, etc.

2. They may hate sin, because of a contrariety of lust. "A man may hate one sin as being contrary to another. When one lust gets to be the master lust in the soul, then it may, and often does, work a hatred to its contrary. For instance: where covetousness becomes the dominant lust of the heart, there the heart begets a hatred to pride and prodigality; and where pride gets to be the master lust, then the heart hates covetousness," etc.

From these and other causes men in an unregenerate state, may, and do sometimes abhor sin of one kind or another; though perhaps never all sin, nor for the evil that there is in sin. Their nature is to love sin, and were it not for warring lusts, it would never be otherwise. Hatred, therefore, to some sins, is no evidence of a gracious state.

10. *Delight in God's Word* is no conclusive evidence of piety, because saints and sinners may both take delight therein.

Saints delight in the word and ordinances of God, because they are from heaven, because they are congenial to their nature, and because they are the medium of communication with God.

Sinners, or unregenerate men, delight therein from motives of selfishness. Because it may promote their interests or popularity; or because of the eloquence of the preachers, or some other sordid consideration. Many delight not so much in the doctrines and duties that are preached, as in the dress they are delivered in. Thus it is said of the prophet Ezekiel, that he was to the people in his day, "as a very lovely song of one that had a pleasant voice." Ezek. 33:32. And it is said of some ancient formalists, "That they took delight in approaching to God." Isa. 58:2. It is also said of the stony ground hearers, "That they received the word with joy." Matt. 13:20. "Herod," it is said, "heard John gladly." Mark 6:20. From this then we perceive that men may greatly delight in, and be full of joy under the word and ordinances of God, and yet be empty and destitute of the grace of God in the heart. Dear hearers, beware that your joy be not the joy of the hypocrite.

11. *Secret and family prayer* does not decide the question of regeneracy. All that are born of God are praying people. This is their well-known character in all ages. They pray always with all

prayer,—of course they will regularly maintain “secret and family prayer.” This is included in the phrase “all prayer.” And they do so, because they love to do it; because they delight to please God; because they are needy and dependent creatures; and because prayer is the appointed means of procurement. But there are a great many who pray both in private and in public, not because they love to pray nor because they delight to honor God, nor yet because they feel themselves needy and dependent.

No, their chief motives are to keep conscience quiet, or, as they think, escape punishment and to procure help; or as the Scripture saith, “To be seen of men.” Thus we are told the Scribes and Pharisees prayed: “Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.” Matt. 23:14. These very things we fear drive many up to the duty of prayer at the present day, who after all know nothing of spiritual regeneration. If men do not pray at all, it may be taken as proof positive that they are not the children of God; but if they do pray, and pray much, they cannot thence conclude with certainty that they are. I know some men, the more they sin, the more they pray; and some who are never more religious, seemingly, than when they are half drunk. Verily, this looks like trying to go to heaven *per fas et nefas*.

12. *The sanctification of the Lord's day* does not determine the state of men to be spiritually good.

The institution of the Sabbath is unquestionably from heaven, and is of perpetual and universal obligation, because moral in its nature. The observance of the Lord's day is in every aspect political, moral, and religious, a privilege and a blessing. But the keeping of this day no more proves a man regenerate than the singing of psalms and hymns proves him an angel.

There are some people exceedingly strict with regard to the sanctification of the Sabbath, and then in other respects they are miserably lax and latitudinarian in their faith and manners. Surely this is not as it should be. The people of God ought to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and to desecrate God's day ought never to be once tolerated amongst them; but then they are not to suppose that the keeping of the Sabbath proves a regenerate state.

13. *Alms, or relief to the poor*, is no evidence of a state of grace.

"The poor," says Christ, "ye have always with you." Hence the duty of almsgiving, like the Sabbath, is of perpetual and universal obligation and the saints are never without an opportunity to show the fulness of their almsdeeds. True Christianity is a liberalizing, diffusive and expansive principle. It is practically illustrated in the character and conduct of the good Samaritan: Luke 10:33-37; Cornelius the Centurion: Acts

10:1, 2; Dorcas: Acts 9:39; Paul and others: Gal. 2:10. Now, although it is undeniably true, that no man who is penurious, miserly and stingy, can have the spirit of true religion; yet it is equally certain, notwithstanding, that a man may be liberal and "give all his goods to feed the poor," and still be no Christian. The fact is, some people are naturally humane, liberal and benevolent; but this natural benevolence, however commendable and praiseworthy in itself, does not make a man righteous, and prove him regenerated.

14. *A regular observance of the sealing ordinances of God's house* is no decisive mark of a gracious state. A person may be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and he may regularly wash the saints' feet, and commune at the Lord's table, and yet be entirely ignorant of the knowledge of salvation by regeneration and adoption. Many suppose themselves regenerated, because they have been buried with Christ in baptism; and others conclude this from the fact that they are regular communicants. But, O my hearers, be not deceived. The institutions of Christ are all good things. Baptism, feet-washing, and the Lord's Supper, especially, are solemn and important Christian ordinances. But they cannot change the heart. And the observance of them is no conclusive evidence of a change of heart. The fact is, none should presume to attend to any of these ordinances until they are converted. And then when they feel and know

that they are created anew in Christ Jesus, they will have an abiding disposition to obey God in all his precepts and ordinances. This new and holy disposition, and not the observing of the ordinances, abstractly considered, is the best evidence of a spiritual and sanctified nature.

15. *Zeal in the cause of benevolence and religion* is no sign of the new birth.

Zeal, genuine zeal, in every good cause, and especially in the cause of religion, is highly commendable and useful. Yet it ought to be recollected, that there are different kinds of zeal, a false and spurious, as well as a true and genuine zeal; and likewise, that men may be zealous from different motives. Before, therefore, we can properly determine a person's state by the zeal which he exhibits, we must know whether his zeal is true or false, and whether it is prompted by good or bad motives. Jehu was zealous against Baal and his priests, because that was Ahab's sin, but not against the calves of Bethel, because that was his own. 2 Kings 10:16.

"The Jews were zealous, but not according to knowledge." Rom. 10:2.

Paul was zealous before as well as after his conversion: "I was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day, and I persecuted this way unto the death." Acts 22:3, 4. Again he says, "I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly

zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Gal. 1 : 13, 14.

Here, then, are a few specimens of false zeal. Such spurious zealots there are yet among men. Some are more zealous for the machinations of men than for the institutions of God. Others are zealous in the cause of benevolence and religion ; but like Jehu, Saul, and others, from selfish and unholy motives. 3 Sam. 15 : 1, 9, 15. Zeal, therefore, in itself considered, apart from the cause in which it is displayed, and the motives which prompt it, furnishes no conclusive evidence of a regenerate state.

16. *Success and prosperity in the cause of benevolence and religion* is no evidence of regeneration.

As zeal is commendable, so success is desirable, in every good cause we espouse ; but neither conclusively proves a regenerate state. The former I have already shown ; the latter shall be made to appear.

The "little horn," we are told, "waxed exceeding great;" "and it practiced and prospered." Dan. 8 : 9-12.

Judas, in his ministry, for aught that appears to the contrary, was just as successful as any of the rest of the apostles.

I know two ministers of the Gospel, within two hundred miles from this place, who had revivals in their churches before their conversion, and who were led by the success of their own labors, in part at least, to seek the salvation of their own souls.

I have heard and read of others whose labors were crowned with similar success, prior to their own conversion. The same will apply to temperance lecturers, tract distributors, etc. Let no one conclude, therefore, *omnia bene*, all is well, because they are, or have been, successful and prosperous in matters of religion, or in any good cause.

17. *Persecution for religion* is no positive proof of a regenerate state. Since the days of Cain, men of all ages have been wont to persecute one another, and for nothing more than for their religion—an invincible proof of human depravity. And those who have had the purest and best system of religion, have always had to suffer most; whilst those who have been most corrupt in their principles and practices, have very generally betrayed the greatest degree of malevolence and the most violent spirit of persecution. Sometimes, however, the less has been persecuted by the greater, or the weak by the strong, not because there was any essential difference in the purity of their religion, but because of envy and superior strength, whilst at the same time they were both alike corrupt, and equally afar removed from the true standard of experimental and practical righteousness.

So that the simple fact of men being persecuted does not prove them in a renewed or gracious state. Some men provoke their own sufferings. They are persecuted not for their “well doing,” but for their “evil doing.” Not, however, by the truly pious. These never persecute. The spirit of persecution

always identifies men with the children of this world, or with false professors and a corrupt Church: but the suffering of persecution does not necessarily identify them with the children of God, or with the true Church. Whilst the persecuted, therefore, have no right to conclude on that account, that they are certainly born again, simply because they are persecuted, persecutors may, nevertheless, know to a certainty that they are not.

18. *Patience under suffering and provocation* furnishes no conclusive evidence of a regenerate state.

“Many,” we are told, “are the afflictions,” or tribulations and trials “of the righteous.” Ps. 34: 19. The most of these, if not all, are calculated and designed to try “the faith and patience of the saints.” And those who are righteous, or saints in reality, will not fail to show it by their patience and long-suffering. And this they do in Christ’s strength, and for Christ’s sake. This patience, therefore, is a note of sincerity and a sign of grace.

But then there is a patience under sufferings and tribulations that is the mere plant of nature. It grows out of a stout constitution and a Roman resolution—or out of vainglory, or some other selfish end. Then, my dear hearers, be not deceived. The question is not, art thou patient amid earthly sorrows and tribulations, but art thou born of God?

19. *Reputation for piety* does not fully show a gracious state.

Unregenerate men sometimes make high pretensions to sanctity, and by specious acts and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple. Among these, therefore, they may easily acquire a high reputation for piety. Like Simon Magus, they may be looked upon by the populace, yea, and by some real saints, as great and good men, whilst at the same time they are in "the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity." How many have there been who were cried up to be very rich, and who kept up a great appearance, when suddenly we have heard of their bankruptcy. So many may be considered rich in grace, and heirs of the kingdom of God, because they make a fair show in the flesh, with imposing form, or bodily exercises, when on a sudden they break, or fall away.

How much were the eleven apostles deceived in Judas! When Peter, as their foreman or mouth-piece, speaks of their faith, Judas is included, John 6:69: "We believe, and are sure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." When he speaks of their good works, Judas is not excepted: "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee." Matt. 19:27. And even when a traitor is mentioned, Judas is not suspected; his deportment was so fair, that they were more jealous of their own hearts than of him. Matt. 26:22. And yet he was a traitor and a devil.

How was holy Paul mistaken in Demas! At one time he embraced the ministry, and was Paul's fellow-laborer. Phil. 24. Subsequently he

embraced or fell in love with this present world, and forsook Paul. 2 Tim. 4: 10.

Thus we have reason to fear it is with many at the present day; they have a high reputation for piety among men, whilst they are sheer hypocrites before God. "The outside of the cup and platter" is well enough, but the "inside" is still defiled. Hence, those who judge by the outward appearance will account them children of God, whilst in fact they are unregenerated and children of the wicked one. Dear hearers, do not live altogether, as some tradesmen, on your credit with others. Look not to others' commendation, but to your own regeneration, for that alone accompanies salvation.

20. *Strong hopes of heaven* is no infallible evidence of regeneration.

Hope is common to all men, in some sense, who are not in actual despair. But there are different kinds of hope. There is a good hope, and there is a false hope. A good hope is—1st. A gracious or living hope. 1 Pet. 1: 3. 2dly. A well-founded hope. Col. 1: 27. Heb. 6: 19. 1 Pet. 3: 15. 3dly. A purifying hope. 1 John 3: 3. 4thly. A cheering and joyful hope. Rom. 5: 2. Such a hope as this "maketh not ashamed," because it is "the anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast." Heb. 6: 19.

But, then, as there is a true hope, so there is a false hope; and this is more common than that, even as bastard pearls are more common than true pearls.

"There is," saith Solomon, "that maketh him-

self rich, yet hath nothing." Prov. 13:7. That is, there are some that think they love God; they hope that they have religion, and that they will one day get to heaven, when, alas! "they are dead in trespasses and sins," utterly ignorant and destitute of a work of grace, and ready to fall from their high turret of presumption into the bottomless gulf of perdition. The Jews in the days of Christ, almost *en masse*, had strong hopes of heaven, when at the same time, as the Saviour told them, "they were doing the works of their father, the devil." John 8:44.

Paul tells us, that "he was alive once without the law;" that is, "his way was right in his own eyes;" he imagined all was well, and he would surely get to heaven, when, in fact, everything was ill with him, and there was but a step between him and hell. Howbeit, by the grace of God, he was plucked as a brand from the burning. My beloved hearers, build not your hopes on anything short of a saving interest in Christ.

21. *Willingness to die* is no sure sign and evidence of regeneration.

Grace prepares for death and heaven; and those who are fully prepared for their exit from time to a blissful immortality, die not only willingly, but peacefully, joyfully, and triumphantly. But, through various other causes, men are sometimes found willing, yea, anxious to die, who, notwithstanding, are entirely unprepared for death and heaven. Some may be willing to die, on account of

bodily afflictions ; some on account of temporal losses and difficulties ; others by reason of old age, persecutions, loss of character, children, friends, etc. But that which tends, most of all, to beget this state of mind in the unregenerate, is ignorance ; ignorance of the claims of God, of the work of grace, and of their own true character. Through ignorance and false hopes some are anxious to die, thinking that they would go to heaven, and be much better off there. Under strong delusions, the worst men have not only been willing to die, but anxiously desired and sought death. We have a striking instance of this recorded in the ninth chapter of the Revelations. Under the sound of the fifth trumpet, we are told that the locusts which came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit, were commanded to torment, five months, those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads (*i. e.* wicked men) ; and that “in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.” Rev. 9:6. Hence the simple fact of men being willing, or even anxious to die, is no conclusive evidence at all that they are really regenerated and prepared to die. I have met with many, in the course of my ministry, some on sick-beds, others under other circumstances, who expressed a willingness and desire to die ; and yet, upon examination of their moral and religious character, they were found not only ignorant and destitute of “salvation through grace,” but even opposers and persecutors of “this

way." Beware, then fellow-mortals, where and how you build your hopes of heaven! Examine well the grounds of your hopes and prospects. If you have never repented; if you are not born again; if you are not holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, you have no Scriptural title-claim to the kingdom of everlasting life.

As we have travelled over a great deal of ground in this discourse, and detained you somewhat over the usual time, we shall close for the present, by simply exhorting you, in the language of the apostle, "Be not deceived" in the great matter of regeneration. Of all delusions, religious delusion is the worst; because it relates not to temporal matters only, but to spiritual and eternal things. And O, how many have been deceived! Think of the Lord, Lord sayers. Matt. 7: 21-23. Think of the foolish virgins. Matt. 25: 11, 12. Think of the old Scribes and Pharisees. Think of the thousands now, throughout Christendom, who have a form of godliness, and deny the power; who have a name that they live, but are spiritually dead. Think of yourselves, my hearers. Have you any better reasons to believe that you are born again, than those of which you have heard to-night? Put the question home to your own hearts. "Prove your own selves; for know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. 13: 5.

If you will attend here next Lord's day evening, we shall (Providence permitting) try to show you some *conclusive evidences* of regeneration.

SERMON V.

SHOWING THE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

JOHN 3: 7.—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

IN the preceding sermon we endeavored to show the inconclusive evidences of the new birth. In this, we propose to consider the conclusive evidences or marks of this great change.

By the inconclusive evidences, as we stated before, those are intended which do not clearly, fully, and decisively prove a person to be in a regenerate state. Of these we treated at length in the preceding discourse.

But by the conclusive evidences, and of which we are now to treat, we mean those marks and evidences which give indubitable and undeniable proof of a regenerate state. Among these we may properly set down and reckon the following, to wit:

1. Salvation from sin.
2. Brotherly love.
3. Love to enemies.
4. Delight in God.

5. The fruits and leadings of the Holy Spirit.
6. Implicit and universal obedience to God.

These are some of the indisputable and conclusive evidences of regeneration. Let us consider them in the order proposed.

1st. *Salvation from sin.* The word sin has different meanings in the Scripture. It is used to denote,

1. Guilt or blameworthiness. As in Rom. 5 : 13, it is said : "Sin is not imputed where there is no law." See, also, Heb. 10 : 2 ; James 4 : 17, etc.

2. Depravity, or man's carnal and corrupt nature, which is, as the Apostle says, the body of sins. Rom. 6 : 6 ; or, τὸ σῶμα τῆς αμαρτίας, "The sinful body," or, as it is expressed in chapter 7 : 29, "the body of this death." See, also, Rom. 6 : 7, 12, 14 ; 7 : 8, 17 ; 1 John 5 : 17, etc.

3. Transgression, or an actual violation of God's law. This is its usual and general meaning. 1 John 3 : 4, "Sin is the transgression of the law." See likewise, Num. 5 : 6 ; 1 John 5 : 16 ; 3 : 6, 8, 9, etc.

Besides these meanings, the term is also taken in various other acceptations, which we forbear to notice at present.

Now, because man is guilty, he must be justified ; and because he is depraved, he must be regenerated ; and when he is justified and regenerated, he will manifest and evidence the same by "ceasing to do evil," or refraining from actual sin. Hence the Apostle says, 1 John 3 : 9, "Who-

soever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." And again, chapter 5:18, "We know whoever is born of God sinneth not." These passages have greatly perplexed and puzzled many modern divines and commentators; not because there is anything ambiguous and hard to be understood in the language used by the apostle, but because the obvious and natural meaning of these passages comes directly in contact with, and flatly contradicts their popular and favorite dogma, "That no man can live without sinning daily in thought, word, and deed."

The Bible nowhere gives countenance and support to this pernicious dogma, but uniformly and universally supports the contrary, namely, that Christians are "freed from sin;" Rom. 6:7; that they have "put off the old man, and put on the new," and, therefore, they "do not commit sin," yea, they "cannot sin." This, however, is not to be understood of natural, but of moral ability. Christians have the same natural ability to sin that they had previous to their conversion; but being born of the Spirit after the image of God, they have no longer any moral ability to commit sin. It is contrary to their moral nature to sin, and, therefore, they "cannot sin." They have natural power to sin; as, for instance, to swear, to steal, to rob, or to murder; but their moral nature, being formed averse to these things by a new and heavenly birth, they have no inclination

or relish for such crimes, but an utter disrelish and aversion to them, and, therefore, it may justly and properly be said that they "cannot sin."

The same doctrine, substantially, is taught in various other places. For instance, in the Gospel by John, 8th chapter and 36th verse, it is said, "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." In Romans 6: 11, it is said, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Being then made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (22d v). Again, in the Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Ch. 5: 24. But to cap the climax, Christ says expressly, "Every tree is known by his own fruit; for a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Luke 6: 43, 44.

And then, on the contrary, it is said, "Whoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8: 34. And, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." 1 John 3: 8. "In this," therefore, "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." 1 John 3: 10. The children of the devil "live after the flesh," because they relish and delight in the "works of the flesh;" but the children of God, who, by a heavenly birth, are made partakers of the divine nature, live after or according to the

Spirit, because "they hate every false way," and love "the ways of truth."

But then we are told that the Bible teaches the doctrine of peccability; that is, that all men are liable to sin, and that none can live without sinning. Now, if this be true, then the Bible must contradict itself; for we have already seen that the Bible promises salvation from sin, that it requires holiness of heart and life, and asserts it to be the privilege and duty of the saints to stand in awe and sin not. The Bible neither promises nor requires impossibilities.

But let us hear what the advocates of sin have to say in defence of their cause. They refer us in the first place to 1 Kings 8:46; and to 2 Chron. 6:36; where it is said, "There is no man that sinneth not." Does Solomon, in this text, mean to say no carnal man, or no regenerate man? If he meant the latter, he contradicts John—if the former, he agrees with him. The latter, therefore, must be the true meaning of the text. Again, we are referred to Prov. 24:16: "A just man falleth seven times, and rises up again." Observe, it is not said that a just man falls seven times *into sin*. It may mean sickness, temptation, persecution, darkness, or something else. It does not necessarily mean sin. Again, it is said, Eccl. 7:20, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." I take this text to mean that there is not such a person, naturally or by nature. The taking of it otherwise makes it con-

flict with other Scriptures, and therefore cannot be the correct interpretation. The true way to explain Scripture is by Scripture. This is the safest rule in the system of exegesis. And according to this rule the obvious meaning of the passage is, that nature never has, never will, and never can produce a just man who always does right and never wrong.

Again, the unbelievers in the doctrine of a sinless life, quote Rom. 3 : 9-12, where it is said, "There is none righteous, no, not one—there is none that doeth good, no, not one." These expressions are not to be interpreted to mean that there was not a solitary good and pious person on the face of the whole earth ; for that would involve a palpable contradiction of other passages ; but it simply means, as the scope of the passage shows, that depravity is universal, and that none, therefore, whether Jews or Gentiles are righteous by blood or natural descent. Hence, as all are equally alike under sin, so all equally alike stand in need of "the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ," and that none can be justified but by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

The text, 1 John 1 : 8, 10, is also quoted in evidence of the theory that saints are sinners, or that saints cannot live without committing sin. But let the seventh and ninth verses be read in connection with the eighth and tenth, and every mind of ordinary discernment will at once perceive

that the only correct interpretation of the passage is, that the denial of original and actual sin is a daring and perfidious falsification of God's word, a virtual rejection of the blood of Christ, and an infallible token of a self-deceived and God-forsaken soul. This is all that the passage means, and not that Christians cannot be free from sin; and that if they say they are, they deceive themselves, make God a liar, and show that the truth is not in them, as some explain it.

But the master proof by which this theory is supported is the seventh chapter of the Romans. To understand that chapter correctly, the question, whether the apostle there speaks of himself, and gives his own experience as a Christian, or whether he refers to the experience of a penitent under the law, must first be settled. We think that he refers to his experience as a penitent under the law, and not to his experience as a regenerated person. We come to this conclusion from the following considerations.

1. From the general scope and design of the apostle in said chapter and context. This was to show the insufficiency of the law for justification and sanctification, and the sufficiency of the Gospel for both. Hence, in the fifth verse, he shows what they were naturally under the law, and in the sixth, what they were spiritually under the Gospel. He then gives his experience as an instance of the experience of every penitent or awakened sinner under the law, namely: that he found himself

carnal and sold under sin, and yet his "inner man," or his reason and conscience, recognized the law as spiritual, and approved of it as holy, and just, and good; but still such were the "motions of sin," or the strength of his inbred propensities to evil, that the good that he wished to do he could not do, and the evil which he did not wish to do, that he did. This painful captivity and subjection to the law of sin, or sinful propensities, which the law both discovered and condemned, but could not relieve, shut him up to the faith of the Gospel, and so led him to Christ. And hence, as he tells us in the beginning of the eighth chapter, "What the law could not do (save from sins) was effected by the Gospel. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." That is, through the Gospel or Christian religion, I am made free from the controlling and predominating influence of sin; so "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We conclude the same thing.

2. From the nature of the work of regeneration. In regeneration man is changed from "the image of the earthly," to "the image of the heavenly." Love is the prominent attribute of this heavenly image. And whereas selfishness was once, love is now, the controlling principle. And love fulfils the law. See second sermon, commencing on page 41.

3. From the analogy of faith. Sinners are uni-

formly described in precisely the same state in which the apostle represented himself in the chapter under consideration. Christians, on the other hand, are never so described ; but always as being delivered from, and having victory over sin, the world, and the devil. Sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are said to be under sin ; but Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, are said to be free from sin. Rom. 3 : 9 ; 6 : 18-22.

How then, I ask, could the apostle be carnal and sold under sin, and, at the same time, be spiritual and free from sin ? In other words, how could he be a saint and a sinner at one and the same time ?

But then we are told by the objector, that the apostle says in the twenty-second verse, " I delight in the law of God after the inward man ;" and this, it is affirmed, " shows that the apostle was not speaking of an unregenerate man." As a refutation of this argument, see pages 101, 102.

In short, the application of this chapter to Paul in his renewed state, and the consequent application of it to all persons indiscriminately in a converted state, is, in my judgment, not only grossly erroneous, but also, highly pernicious and ruinous to souls. The pure, noble, and exalted character everywhere disclosed and required in the Bible, clearly shows such a construction and application to be false and hurtful. It is an unwarrantable lowering of the standard of religion, and a daubing of carnal and nominal professors with untempered mortar.

In view, then, of this subject, from first to last, with the Scriptures rightly explained, we have no difficulty to perceive, that it is the privilege of the Christian to be saved from all sin; and that this salvation from sin, and especially from actual transgression, is a clear and conclusive evidence of a regenerate state. An equally decisive evidence of the new birth is,

2d. *Brotherly love.* By this is meant that mutual love which exists among Christians. And this love is the love of complacency, or the love of virtue. Christian brethren are virtuous beings. This virtuous character is the prime object of their mutual attraction and delight. Hence brotherly love, unlike benevolence, is directed towards the virtue of good beings, and not merely towards the happiness of intelligent beings. In the absence of a virtuous moral character, there can be no exercise of brotherly love. Christians, therefore, cannot exercise this affection towards sinners, because they have no virtuous character. But the regenerate all possess this character, and hence they love one another on that account.

Now, from the Scriptures, and from the nature of the case, it is very evident that brotherly love furnishes a decisive proof of a regenerate state. Let us hear briefly the testimony of Christ and the apostles. In the Gospel by John, 13: 34, 35, Christ, says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all

men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And again, in chap. 15: 12, he says, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." Now from these texts we learn two things,

1. The measure of brotherly love. And what is that? It is to love one another as Christ loved them. And how did Christ love his disciples? He loved them heartily or sincerely, not in word and tongue only; he loved them impartially, or without respect to persons; and he loved them constantly, even to the end. This, then, is the rule and measure of Christian love. They are to love one another, in like manner as Christ loved them. We learn,

2. That by this badge of discipleship, Christians are to be manifest or known to the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." And if so; if this attribute will make Christian character a subject of knowledge to mankind in general, it will not fail to give peculiar evidence of a regenerate state to Christians themselves. The materials of which a virtuous character is constituted, must be clearly discernible, or the exercise of brotherly love will be impracticable. How can a man love an object before he knows it? And how can a Christian love a fellow-Christian before he knows him to be such? It is impossible. If we are required to love Christians for what they are, and not for the relation they bear to us; nor because they are of our party, because they live

and act with us, and are profitable to us; but because they are born of God, and wear his image; then, surely, there must be some way of ascertaining that fact. One of these is here pointed out. It is "love to the brethren." Thus primitive Christians knew the fact. Hence John says, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him. That he who loveth God love his brother also." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John 2: 10, 11; 3: 10, 14; 4: 20, 21. To these passages I add one more, which is the clearest and strongest proof of all, It is this—"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4: 7.

These and other passages teach, in the clearest manner, that brotherly love is a distinguishing and conclusive mark of regeneration. If, then, we know with certainty that we possess and exercise

this love, we know, with equal certainty, that we are born again. Let each one, then, examine his Christian character, and his claims to Christian brotherhood, by this indubitable criterion. Let him ask himself: Do I love good men for their goodness' sake? Do I love their company and their pious conversation? Do I pray and labor for their holiness, happiness, and prosperity? If so, you have one good evidence in your favor, that you are a child of God, and an heir to everlasting life. But if you are a persecutor and hater of God's people, then rest assured that you are yet in your sins, and in danger of an endless death.

Another strong and decisive evidence of regeneration is,

3. *Love to enemies.* In one sense Christians may regard all to be their enemies who are not their friends. For Christ has said, "He that is not with me is against me." Matt. 12: 30. This is equally true of his people. Everywhere they are spoken against. Acts 28: 22. Yet there are some who are the avowed enemies of Christ and his people. By their fruits ye may know them. Their enmity is acted out by their scoffing, railing, slandering, lying, cursing, persecuting, and maltreating. "But marvel not," saith Christ, "if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." John 15: 18. "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke 23: 31. "Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you

in their synagogues. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Matt. 10 : 17, 22. And the apostle says, Gal. 4 : 28, 29, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."

These and other Scripture passages, together with the experience of Christians in all ages, fully show that the people of God always will have enemies. Sinners who hate God, will also hate the godly, or those who are born of God. But then, as God loves his enemies, and as Christ loves them, and has commanded his people to love them, it is of course their duty and privilege to do so. John 3 : 16 ; Rom. 5 : 8, 10 ; Matt. 23 : 37 ; Luke 23 : 34.

The command of Christ on this subject is most emphatic: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them." Matt. 5 : 44, 45 ; Luke 6 : 32. Besides, in the moral law, we are required to "love our neighbor as ourselves." Under the term neighbor, our enemies may be considered as included.

ence, then, we cannot fail to perceive that the

Scriptures obviously require not merely the exercise of that love commonly called *Φιλανθρωπια*, philanthropy, and *Φιλadelphια*, brotherly love, but also *Αγαπη*, charity, or disinterested benevolence. The two latter forms of love it is the peculiar privilege of the children of God to exercise. This being pre-eminently the character of God, Christians in this respect are "followers of God, as dear children." Of this truth we have a practical illustration in the life and conduct of the apostles and primitive Christians, especially in Stephen, Paul, and others. Acts 7: 60; 26: 29.

But what is it to love an enemy? It is precisely the same thing as to love a friend, save with this difference: in the one case our love is reciprocated and becomes mutual, in the other it is not. Hence, to love an enemy requires disinterested benevolence. We are to do him good, and to promote his happiness, independent from all selfish considerations, merely because he is an intelligent fellow-being, capable of becoming virtuous, useful, and happy. Religion is a diffusive principle; it naturally prompts him in whom it exists, to labor and pray for the happiness of his fellow-men, whether friends or foes. Therefore, the apostle says, Rom. 12: 20: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." And the Saviour says: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. 7: 12.

Compliance with these rules proves the existence of disinterested love, and consequently identifies us with "the children of our Father, which is in heaven." Matt. 5 : 45

4. *Delight or joy in God and godliness* is another positive evidence of regeneration.

Sinners, or the unregenerate, as we remarked before, may delight in God's Word and outward ordinances of religion, because of self-interest, etc., but they cannot delight in God and true godliness. To do this requires grace—even regenerating grace. Regeneration has to do mainly with the new-creating and regulating of the heart, from whence are the issues of life. This, by nature, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17 : 9. The whole tide of its feelings and affections runs swiftly out after the world, and the things of the world. But not so with the regenerate heart. The new-born soul places his affections supremely on God, and the things of God; and from thence flow his highest enjoyments.

1. The regenerate joy and rejoice in God. Although every earthly stream of comfort and consolation should dry up, yet they can adopt the language of the prophet in reference to Christ, and say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61 : 10.

It is also said by Habakkuk, the prophet, "Al-

though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. 3: 17, 18. And again, the prophet Joel saith, "Be glad, then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God." Joel 2: 23. The Psalmist also says, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Delight thyself in the Lord." Ps. 33: 1; Ps. 37: 4. Paul in his epistle to the Philippians, says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4: 4. And in the Romans he says, "We also joy in God." Chapter 5: 11. Peter says, "In whom ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. 1: 9.

These passages plainly show that the saints of the Old and New Testaments delighted greatly in the Lord their God, even as a bride delighteth in the bridegroom. But,

2. The regenerate delight in the things of God; such as the Word, the people, and the worship of God. They delight in these, not from sinister motives, but because they are congenial to their nature. The royal Psalmist says, "I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved." "I delight in thy law." Ps. 119: 47, 70. Again, speaking of the righteous, he says, "His delight is in the law of the Lord." Ps. 1: 2. In the 16th Psalm he says, "But to the saints that are in the

earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." And in the 40th, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

Now, in view of all this strong array of testimony, beloved hearers, to prove that saints delight in God and godliness, how, let me ask, stands the matter with you? Do you delight in God, your maker, your Saviour and Sanctifier, and to meditate on his excellent glory? How do you feel towards his Word and worship? Is it your meat and drink to obey his commandment? Are his precepts sweeter to you than honey and the honeycomb? Do you esteem "one day in his courts better than a thousand elsewhere?" Do you love "the house of prayer?" Is the "Sabbath your delight?" Do you make his people your companions? Do you delight to wash the saints' feet? Do you regularly commune at the Lord's table? Do you love to pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks? Do you take pleasure in visiting the sick, in feeding the hungry, and in clothing the naked? In short, do you find "his yoke easy, and his burden light?" and his "ways, ways of pleasantness, and all his paths peace?" If to these questions you can return an affirmative answer, then you have another good evidence in your favor that you are born from above, and possess the image of the heavenly. We proceed to show another conclusive evidence of regeneration, viz.:

5thly. *The fruits and leadings of the Holy Spirit.*

The Scriptures compare the regenerate to good trees, and the unregenerate to corrupt trees. "Every good tree," says Christ, "bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Therefore, he adds, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7: 16, 17. What then are the fruits which grow upon the trees of the Father's right hand planting? Or, what are the fruits of the Spirit, by which the regenerate are known from the unregenerate? Paul gives us the answer to this question, in Gal. 5: 22, 23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Here are nine fruits or graces, by which we may know the people of God. 1. Love, or universal and disinterested benevolence. 2. Joy, not carnal, but spiritual joy—joy in God and things divine. 3. Peace with God, peace of conscience, and peaceableness towards all men. 4. Long-suffering, or patience. 5. Gentleness, or friendliness. 6. Goodness, or loving-kindness. 7. Faith, or reliance, trust, confidence. 8. Meekness, or humility. 9. Temperance, or chastity.

Here, then, are clear, definite, and infallible characteristics by which the newborn sons of God may always be recognized. As these are good fruits they determine with unquestionable certainty the trees upon which they are found to be good also.

The same thing may be inferred from the leadings of God's Spirit. For the apostle says: "As

many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And again, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Rom. 8 : 14 ; Gal. 5 : 18. But let no one mistake his own whims and fancies for the leadings of the Spirit. The Spirit leads according to the Word. By this, therefore, man may know whether his inward dictates and promptings are from the Spirit of God or not. If a person is inwardly moved to do something that does not directly or indirectly militate against the Word of God, nor conflict with the interests of Christianity, he may take it to be from the Spirit ; but if it does, he is driven to an opposite conclusion.

We now proceed to sum up all, by considering one more conclusive evidence of regeneration ; and one, too, in potency second to none, to wit :

6. *Implicit, universal, and constant obedience to God.* We will dissect this evidence.

1. *Implicit* obedience. This is the first mark of true and acceptable obedience to God. Sinners may obey God in some things, but they, perhaps, never obey God implicitly. Christians obey God because it is right to obey him ; because God has a right to command ; and it is their duty to obey, because he does command. Here is the essence of evangelical obedience. If men found their obedience on the authority of God, they will not stop to inquire into whys and wherefores, but acquiesce in the simple fact, that God says so.

2. *Universal* obedience. Those who obey God from selfish motives, are usually partial in their

obedience. But not so with God's treeborn and untrammelled sons. For the same reasons that they obey God implicitly, they obey him universally.

To obey God in some things, and to disobey him in other things, shows both an unwise head and an unsound heart. Such an obedience is both unreasonable and unscriptural. Gospel obedience is universal obedience. Hear the word of the Lord on this subject: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" Deut. 5:29. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28:20. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:14. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10.

3. *Constant obedience.* This is another property of Gospel obedience. Temporary obedience is no mark of grace. Many have "run yell" for a season, but at length they grew weary and turned aside. Let such remember the words of Christ, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62. Let them, also, consider the words of the Lord, Heb. 10:38, "But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Like Caleb, then, we must "follow the Lord fully." Num. 14:24. And, like David, we must "have respect to all

his commandments," and "perform his statutes always, even unto the end." Ps. 119 : 6, 112.

This, then, is the true nature of evangelical obedience. This obedience no one renders in a natural state, before he is born again. Whenever, therefore, men yield such obedience to God, it is an evidence of their regeneration. And it is one of the surest and best evidences of a regenerate state. One that can always be relied on without any fears of deception. One that carries its own conviction with it of the reality and genuineness of the work. One that proves most conclusively and satisfactorily, beyond all doubt and controversy, that the soul is born of God, and meet for heaven. In corroboration of all this, we find it written, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." John 14 : 21. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Chap. 15 : 14. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5 : 3. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Chap. 4 : 16. "Every one that loveth is born of God." Verse 7. "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." Chap. 2 : 29 ; 3 : 10.

Now, then, the great question is settled, so far, at least, as evidences of the new birth are concerned. We have seen, from six decisive or conclusive evidences, who has a rational and scriptural right to conclude that he is born again. But to whom do

these evidences apply? Who proves himself born of God by these infallible evidences? Who stands in awe of God, and sins not? Who can say, whereas I was once the servant of sin, I am now the servant of righteousness? Who loves "the brotherhood" with "a pure heart, fervently?" Who can love his enemies by blessing them, praying for them, and doing them good? Who can delight himself in God and things divine? Who bears the fruit, enjoys the witness, and follows the leadings of the Spirit? And who keeps the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus? Are there such people in the city of Lancaster? Are there such in this vast crowd to-night? Who are they? How many are there? How many men? How many women? Do any of you think these hard sayings? Stop and think again. Think of the Saviour's words. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and by their fruits ye shall know them." Judge then, but judge righteous judgment. And, above all, judge your own selves by the marks and evidences we have given you this evening, whether you are born again! Blessed be God, there are some, I know, who can stand the test of this examination! Thanks be to God that the regenerate have greatly multiplied in this city within the last year or two! God grant that they may continue to multiply, and that they may let their light so shine, that others, seeing their good works, may learn to glorify God also.

SERMON VI.

SHOWING THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION FROM THE
SCRIPTURES.

JOHN 3:7.—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be
born again.”

HAVING finished the discussion of the evidences
of regeneration in our last discourse, a week ago,
we now come to consider,

4thly. *The absolute and indispensable necessity of
this great work in order to eternal life.*

This we propose to argue,

1st. From the Scriptures; and,

2dly. From the nature of things.

1. We shall prove the absolute necessity of re-
generation from the Holy Scriptures. The Scrip-
tures come to us as a revelation from God. If we
receive them as such, we are bound to believe
what they teach, both concerning God and man.
Now, on the subject under consideration, they do
teach, most expressly and unequivocally, that “no
man can enter into the kingdom of God, except he
is born again.” To set this doctrine in the clearest
and strongest light, we shall present the testimony
of the Bible in the following order, to wit:

1st. Those passages which require the change.

2dly. Those which promise heaven to them, and them alone, that possess it. And,

3dly. Those which exclude from heaven, and condemn to eternal death, all those who live and die without it.

1st. We propose to show the necessity of regeneration from those passages or texts of Scripture which require the change either expressly or by implication. From among these take the following: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7: 17-20.

The moral of this text is to show, that the moral character of men must be tested and known by the tenor of their life and conversation. As in nature, so in grace; if the nature is good, the fruit will be good also. If the nature of man is good, his temper and conduct will be good; but if his nature is evil, then the passions and actions will be evil also. Hence the moral nature of man must be changed, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," or the temper and conduct will never become good, spiritual, and holy. And just as the trees that are not made good, and the fruit not good, are all hewn down

and cast into the fire; so will every sinner fare whose heart is not changed, and whose life is not made righteous and holy. This passage, then, shows and teaches the importance of the new birth, or a change of nature.

Another passage, which shows precisely the same thing, we have in these words: "Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Conversion, in one sense, means the same as regeneration; but, in another, it is more comprehensive. It always includes regeneration, though often it expresses more. It denotes a thorough change of heart and life. When, therefore, conversion is required, regeneration is required also. This is the case in the text just cited. And without this there is no remission, no reconciliation, and no salvation.

Again, it is said, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Rom. 12: 2. This passage shows distinctly that God requires a transformation of moral character. For, mark! it is a transformation "by the renewal of the mind" that is called for and required. This requirement is strikingly philosophical. It is making the tree good, that the fruit may be good; and when the tree is made good, as we have heard before, the fruit will be good as a natural consequence.

Another text, very much analogous to the one we have just quoted from the Romans, we find in

the Epistle to the Ephesians: "Put ye off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:22, 23, 24. By the old man, in this text, is evidently meant man's carnal and sinful nature; and by the new man, his spiritual and holy nature. And by putting off the old man, and putting on the new, is simply meant a renewal or change "in the spirit of the mind." This change of the spirit of the mind is said to be "created after God in righteousness and true holiness." Here, then, we have another strong proof that God requires a great and radical change in the moral character of man, in order to the inheriting of the kingdom of God.

Another passage which may be adduced as proof of the importance and necessity of the new birth, we have recorded in Ezek. 18:31: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die?" To make a new heart, is to regenerate or change the heart. The necessity of this change may be inferred from the question, "For why will ye die?" It plainly shows that man must change or die. The command, "Make you a new heart," can only be obeyed by believing in Christ. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12. The poet says:

I cannot change my heart
 But by believing thee ;
 And waiting for thy blood t' impart
 The spotless purity.

While at thy cross I lie,
 Jesus, thy grace bestow ;
 Now thy all-cleansing blood apply,
 And make me white as snow.

2dly. We shall now proceed to show the necessity of being born again, from those passages in which the heirs of heaven have this character given them. By the heirs of heaven, I mean those to whom heaven is promised. Heaven is promised to God's people. God's people have different names given them, all of which are descriptive of a renewed and holy character. The legitimate heirs of heaven, therefore, are those who are re-born of water and of the Spirit. From the multitude of passages in the Bible, on this subject, we select and present the following :

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Matt. 5 : 8. None are pure in heart but the regenerate. And those that obtain purity of heart by the “washing of regeneration,” will evidence it, as we have heard on a former occasion, by purity of life. The pure, therefore, in heart and life, and these alone, “shall see God.”

Again, in Matt. 19 : 28, it is said : “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the

throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." To follow Christ in the regeneration, is to follow him according to the requirements of his Word. His Word requires, as we have already heard, a change in the spirit of the mind, or a transformation of the moral nature. Those, then, that follow Christ in this regeneration, or in this change from nature to grace, and in all subsequent acts of obedience, have the promise of high honors and privileges in his kingdom; but without such following, there is no promise.

Again, in John 5:24, the Saviour says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Here believers are represented as having passed from "death to life." Such a translation is equivalent to the new birth; and these, it is said, "shall not come into condemnation," but "have everlasting life."

In Paul's letter to the Romans, it is said: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8:15-17. In this text the children and heirs of God, who shall be glorified together with Christ, are those "who have re-

ceived the Spirit of adoption, realized the witness of the Spirit, and that suffer for the name of Christ; consequently such, and such only, as are regenerated by the Word and Spirit of Christ."

Moreover, it is said, in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3: 3, 4. In this passage, "The saints and the faithful brethren in Christ who were at Colosse, and who had the promise that they should appear with Christ in glory," are said to be dead, and that their life was "hid with Christ in God." These then, of course, were also born of God.

Furthermore, we read, in the Epistle to Titus: "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Tit. 3: 4-7. This passage, also, clearly shows that the heirs of "eternal life" are born again. "They are saved," says the apostle, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." In this way only can men be made, scripturally, "the heirs of eternal life."

Once more we read, in the beginning of the first Epistle of Peter: "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

This text shows the necessity of regeneration with respect to the purpose of God. "Elect," says the apostle, "according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, to obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." How beautifully the causes, means, and ends are here blended together! "Though," says a sage writer, "God did not choose men because they were holy, yet he chose men to be holy,—though he appointed not men to be saved, because they were saints, yet he appointed men to be saints, that they might be saved." The truth of this remark is forcibly illustrated by the passage just recited.

There are various other passages which present

the people of God under a renewed or sacred character.

The various names and titles by which the mouth of the Lord has named his people, are likewise descriptive of the same character. But this sacred character cannot be formed without a change of nature; therefore to be born again is absolutely necessary to bear the character which is peculiar to God's people. In evidence of this fact take a few passages.

“God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. And now ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Rom. 6:17, 18, 22.

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Cor. 5:17.

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Cor. 6:11.

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Heb. 2:11.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous

light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." 1 Pet. 2: 9, 10.

Besides, the names, as we said before, by which the people of God are designated, portray a similar character. For instance, they are called Saints, Holy Brethren, Christians, Righteous, Children of Light, New-born Babes, etc., etc.

The description of character set forth in the afore-cited passages, and by the appellations just mentioned, is never attributed to man in a natural state. It is a description of character which belongs exclusively to the children of the kingdom of God. Sinners, therefore, "must be born again," or they cannot answer this description of character. And without this virtuous and holy character they can have no Scriptural nor rational claim to the kingdom of heaven.

We shall go on to argue the necessity of the new birth.

3dly. From those texts which exclude from the kingdom of God and condemn to eternal punishment all persons who live and die without it. From among these we select the following:

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5: 20. What was the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees? An *outward* conformity to the law. In what respects must our righteousness ex-

ceed theirs? In that ours must be both an inward and outward conformity to the will of God. But without regeneration, this conformity is utterly unattainable. Exclusion, therefore, from the kingdom of God, must unavoidably follow.

Again, in chapter 18 : 3, the Saviour declares, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Here, then, you perceive, conversion, which implies regeneration, is required, on pain of exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. And not only so, but a conformity to little children is also required. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter," etc.

It is not enough, then, you perceive, to be converted or born again. But such are required likewise "to grow in grace," "to add to their faith," and "to perfect holiness in the fear of God," and thus be made conformable to the image of little children. And where there is no such advancement and conformity, there can be no admission into heaven. Many new-born souls, I fear, lose sight of this requirement. The covetousness, pride, and bigotry which exist among many professors, is decisive proof of this fact.

Again, in the text and context, we have the settled, firm, and unalterable legislation of the King of heaven on this subject. And, as I remarked in the opening of this series of sermons, Christ issued the royal law to Nicodemus, without any circum-

locution, qualification, or condition, saying, "Verily, verily I say to thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And again, "Ye must be born again." This birth he declares must be accomplished "by water and by the Spirit." That is to say, as we have shown before, by the influence and power of the Gospel and the Holy Ghost. Its indispensable necessity he asserts in the strongest and most explicit terms.

If heaven's legislation, therefore, contained nothing more on the absolute necessity of regeneration than what is found in this noted conversation between Christ and Nicodemus, it were already abundantly sufficient to establish the verity of this doctrine. But this is far from being all that the Scriptures contain on the subject. Its necessity is supported, not by a few isolated passages only, but by the general tenor of the Scriptures. This we have heard in part already. But let us trace it still further.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, 12th chapter and 14th verse, it is said, "Follow after peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." By nature all men are destitute of peace and holiness. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "They are all gone out of the way." "There is none righteous." Rom. 3: 10-12. Hence all are commanded to repent and be converted. And except they repent they shall perish; except they

are born again, and so become holy, they cannot have peace with God, and they cannot see or enjoy him in his kingdom. The saints shall have such a beautiful vision of God in heaven as shall make them like God. 1 John 3:2. But the unholy shall not see God. It takes purity of heart, purity of eyes, and purity of hands, to entitle men to this privilege.

Another passage in point here, we find recorded in Rev. 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." This passage likewise shows very pointedly that heaven or the city of God, as it is here called, is not for the unregenerate, but for the regenerate; for they alone have "their names written in the Lamb's book of life." Phil. 4:3.

Having now presented a few passages, which exclude the unregenerate from the kingdom of God, let us next exhibit and consider a few which condemn to eternal punishment all those who live and die unchanged in their moral character.

John the Baptist said, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matt. 3:10. Christ, the teacher come from God, asserts precisely the same thing. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matt. 7:19. The phrase, "good trees," as we have

heard before, is to denote good men ; whilst that of " corrupt trees," or " barren trees," is used to denote bad men. All men by nature are corrupt and sinful ; therefore, all must be made good by regeneration, or else like corrupt trees they will be hewn down and cast into the fire. This fire is called " hell-fire," and is said to be " prepared for the devil and his angels ;" in it the wicked shall be punished according to their wickedness forever and ever.

Another passage of the same import, and which proves identically and conclusively the same thing, is brought to view in the parable of the tares of the field. " As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13: 40-42.

The tares in this parable represent the children of the wicked one, or the unconverted in general. These " shall be gathered out of his kingdom," that is, they shall be separated from the righteous, and " cast into a furnace of fire." Consequently, such will not only be excluded from " the regions of bliss, but condemned to the wrathful regions of perdition."

Another text which strongly illustrates the same truth, we find recorded, Matt. 22:11-13 ;

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” This passage is a part of the well-known parable of the marriage of the king’s son. The design of this parable is to show the great provision which God has made, under the Gospel dispensation, for the salvation of mankind. The guests at this marriage represent the children of God. The wedding garment denotes their virtuous and holy character. Now as the man in the parable who was found destitute of the wedding garment was rejected and cast into outer darkness, so will it be in the judgment with all those who are found destitute of a regenerated and sanctified nature. Nothing short of a second birth will save men from the second death.

Another passage which shows the same thing, is the parable of the nobleman, “who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” Luke 19:12-20. This nobleman represents Christ—the servants represent the regenerate, and the citizens the unregenerate. Now mark, the citizens hated him, and declared they would not have him to reign over them. This is exactly the character and conduct of the unregenerate. “The carnal mind,” says the apostle, “is

enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8: 7, 8. There must, therefore, be a change from enmity to love—from insubordination to subjection, or there is no such thing as pleasing God—no such thing as inheriting eternal life, and consequently no such thing as avoiding the damnation of hell. Hence, mark it, I beseech you, when the nobleman returned, he said, "Bring hither those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before me." Luke 19: 27.

Again, the apostle says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Rom. 8: 13. "To live after the flesh," means to live according to the natural propensities and inclinations of the carnal mind, according to the course of this world, without the exercise of holy affections, and without regard to virtue and piety.

Now all those that live thus, it is declared, shall die; that is, they shall be punished in a coming world. The word death is often used in this sense. See Rom. 6: 21–23; 8: 6. It cannot simply mean natural death, or a dissolution of the body, for that is common to all, good and bad. But the proper and obvious meaning of the passage is, as we have just said, that those who live after or according to the evil inclinations of the natural unregenerate heart, shall be punished hereafter in the world to come, according to the degree and extent of their wickedness. See Rev. 20: 11–14.

In the first chapter of Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, we find another passage directly in point: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. 1:7-10. Here, you perceive that the ignorant and disobedient shall be punished "with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," whilst the saints and true believers "shall be admired and glorified." All, therefore, who are not born again, and made saints or holy ones, can by no means avoid "everlasting destruction."

Once more, in the twentieth chapter of the Revelations and fifteenth verse, it is said, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Again, in the twenty-first chapter and in the seventh and eighth verses, it is said, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." None are conquerors but believers. And

those who by faith overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, and receive power to become the sons of God, shall have their names recorded in the Lamb's book of life; and if faithful until death, "they shall inherit all things." But those who remain in a carnal state, unpardoned and unsanctified, and who continue to live after the flesh, or according to their sinful appetites and propensities, "shall have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death."

And now, my dear hearers, from the long and strong train of Scripture proofs, which we have adduced in evidence of the necessity of regeneration, you cannot fail to perceive the truth and certainty of the doctrine. It rests not upon doubtful testimony. It is not a mere matter of inference. It is based on plain, unequivocal statute law. The strength of the argument deducible from the Bible, we have endeavored to present to you in the most simple, easy, and natural form and order. We have endeavored to prove the necessity of this great change,

1st. From those passages which require it, either expressly or by fair implication.

2dly. From those which show that the heirs of salvation have undergone or experienced this renewal of their moral nature; and,

3dly. From those texts which plainly and expressly exclude from heaven and condemn to eternal woe all that live and die without being born again.

In conclusion, my hearers, let me entreat you to ponder this solemn subject in your hearts. Bear the sayings of God in faithful remembrance. The Bible argument, as you have heard, is a potent and invulnerable argument. God himself has settled this question conclusively and forever, that no man shall see and enter into the kingdom of heaven, except he is born again. Heaven and earth shall pass away, says God, but my words shall not pass away. Ye must then, ye must, aye yes, ye must be born again, or heaven has no mansion for you. Where God and his Christ is—where glorified saints and angels are, ye cannot come. But, far from this high and blessed abode, among devils, unbelievers, and hypocrites, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, there will you have and hold your sad allotment forever and ever.

One word more. Let me beg you to consider that this is no unwise, unmerciful arrangement—no arbitrary act of legislation. God does not debar men from heaven because he has formed them for woe, or because he takes pleasure in sending them to hell. So far from this being the case, we have both the declaration and oath of God to assure us to the contrary. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” Eze. 33 : 11. On the other hand we are told, “That God is not willing that any should

perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
2 Peter 3 : 9.

But then God cannot save sinners in any way that is inconsistent with his character, and the character and end of man. God acts from the highest and best motives, and in reference to the nature and fitness of things. As the moral governor of the universe he must maintain the purity of his throne, and treat the subjects of his moral government as free and intelligent agents. Hence, from the character of God, and the end of man; from the nature and fitness of things, it is further evident that man cannot be saved and enjoy eternal life, except by the regeneration of his soul he is qualified and prepared for it. This argument, however, we shall not insist on at present, but reserve for consideration in our next and concluding sermon.

SERMON VII.

SHOWING THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION FROM THE
NATURE OF THINGS.

JOHN 3: 7.—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born
again.”

IN our last sermon we entered upon the consideration and proof of the necessity of the new birth. The necessity of this change we proposed to prove,

- 1st. From the Scriptures: and,
- 2dly. From the nature of things.

The Bible argument on this subject we presented in our last discourse: we now come to argue it,

- 2dly. *From the nature of things.*

Reason, experience, and observation, go to show, and to show conclusively, that the happiness of all living beings, whether in the physical or moral world, depends upon the congeniality and suitability between their natures and the things to be enjoyed, and that where there is no such congeniality, fitness, and adaptation, there can be no substantial happiness.

Go into the physical or material world, and you will find it to be so there. With the exception of

a few amphibious animals, it will be found that every creature of God has its own peculiar nature, suited to the climate, element, mode of existence, etc., for which it was intended; and that its own comfort, happiness, and, perhaps, its very existence depends upon the adaptation and suitableness of its nature to these things.

The fishes, for instance, have their nature adapted to the element of water. In it they are comfortable and happy. But take them out of that element into the element of air, and what is the consequence? Immediate distress and misery. Why? Because their nature is not adapted to the element of air.

Birds, on the other hand, have their nature suited to the element of air. In it they live, and move, and are comfortable and happy. But transpose them from their native element into the element of water, and the result will be the same.

So, likewise, with regard to some quadrupeds and animalcules. Some of them can only live and be happy in the dark, in damp and dark subterraneous abodes. Others would inevitably get blind, become miserable, and die, without light.

Some are carnivorous, and can only subsist on flesh; others can only live with comfort on vegetables.

Some are tame, and easily domesticated; others are wild and untamable. Some wander and live mostly in solitude, others are never without company; but that company, in order to make them

satisfied, comfortable and happy, must always be company of their own kind, in its wild or domesticated state, as the nature of the case may require. Thus we see, from the nature of things in the kingdom of nature, that the nature and faculties of a creature must be adapted to the nature of the things to be enjoyed, in order to secure happiness.

Again, go into the moral or spiritual world, and you will find the same thing there. Psychology, as taught us in the Bible, is no mystery. Human nature is identically the same now it has ever been since the fall of man. But it is very different in its lapsed from its primeval or original state; and no less diverse now in its carnal from its spiritual state; there are those who are carnal, and those who are spiritual; two classes altogether different and opposite in their moral natures; fully as much so as sheep and wolves are diverse in their natures, or as doves and birds of prey. At any rate, to these they are respectively compared, and very justly. Those who are spiritual, have been made so by regeneration, or a spiritual birth; for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and nothing else, in a moral sense.

Now the moral difference between this description of characters lies here: those who are carnal, mind the things of the flesh; whilst those who are spiritual, mind the things of the Spirit. That is to say, those who are carnal have a natural propensity for, and delight in, the things or works of

the flesh (vide Gal. 5 : 19–21); whilst those who are born of the Spirit, and, therefore, are spiritual, have a natural inclination for, and delight in, the things of the Spirit. Hence, with natures so essentially dissimilar and uncongenial, they cannot be happy in the enjoyment of the same things.

That all mankind are naturally depraved, yea, totally depraved, corrupt, and sinful, so that they are wholly and solely inclined to things sensual, earthly, and devilish, it is not in my place here to consider. This humiliating truth is clearly and strongly supported both by reason and revelation. The whole scheme of human redemption goes upon this fact. The great proof of the necessity of regeneration is founded upon this doctrine. But we have heard enough throughout the course of these sermons, and especially in the last sermon, fully to convince every reflecting and candid mind of the truth of this doctrine.

Our main business, at present, is to show that human nature, in its fallen and natural state, cannot enjoy God and the things of God; that this, nevertheless, is the great end of man, and that, therefore, man must be born again, in order to answer the noble end of his being.

We say, then, that natural, unregenerate men cannot enjoy God. And why not? Obviously and mainly for two reasons.

1st. Because their nature is dissimilar. God is benevolent. Sinners are malevolent. God is just and holy. Sinners are unjust and unholy.

2dly. Because they do not love God. Instead of loving him, they hate. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. If sinners had a nature and character like God, then they would love him, for the same reasons that they now hate him. And then their supreme delight and enjoyment would be in God. For he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love. And to love and to be loved is to be happy. Sinners, therefore, must be born again in order to be conformed to the moral likeness of God, and to enjoy fellowship with him.

Again, we say, that natural and unrenewed men cannot enjoy the things of God. As for instance:

1. The communion of saints. One of the chief ends for which Christ has ordained the establishment of churches, is the enjoyment of Christian fellowship. And this fellowship or communion of saints, has always been regarded by the people of God as one of their greatest enjoyments in this life. To love and be loved, to favor and be favored, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, gives an unearthly, unspeakable, and heavenly peace and happiness. It is heaven on earth begun. But to this joy and happiness sinners are utter strangers. In it they cannot participate so long as they remain carnal and sold under sin.

This accounts for the shyness of the unconverted. They have a natural dislike and aversion

to the company of Christians. Such Christians, I mean, who have the spirit of Christ, and who talk and walk as did their Master. Sinners do not like the society of such holy ones, much less can they enjoy their religious conversation, their pious devotions, their heavenly places, and their blessedness.

2. The reading and hearing of God's Word. This the ungodly have no enjoyment in. They may, from selfish ends, as we have shown before (see page 130), take an interest and delight in the Word of God; but at the same time they have no inward and spiritual enjoyment, like Christians have. To them the Word of God is "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." They delight in the law of the Lord "after the inward man." But this is not the case with sinners. They cannot relish the things of the Spirit. They account them foolishness, and they never have, and never will delight in them, until they are born again.

3. Devotional acts and exercises in the closet, in the family, and in the church. These the carnally minded cannot take pleasure in. They may attend to them for conscience' sake; but as to take delight in them, as they do in the things which are congenial to their nature, that is altogether impracticable. Sinners must first be "renewed in the spirit of their mind," before they can properly mind, receive, and delight in holy exercises and virtuous pursuits.

Now, if the unregenerate have no capacity for the enjoyment of God and things divine here in this world, how can they reasonably expect to glorify and enjoy him forever in the world to come?

Death, let it be remembered, makes no change in the moral character of men. It merely dissolves the connection between soul and body. As, therefore, death leaves them the judgment will find them. Hence, says Solomon, "If the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Eccl. 11:3. The obvious meaning of this text is, that there will be no change in the moral character of men, after death, in the world to come. In the identical state, and with the same character that they leave this world, they will be found in eternity. If they die unpardoned and unregenerated, they will appear as such in the judgment, and so remain forever. But if, on the other hand, they form and retain a spiritual and holy character in this probationary life, they will carry it with them to the world to come; and so be prepared for the enjoyment of God and his kingdom; whereas, none shall see, much less enter into the kingdom of God, without this preparation. This is the settled and immutable decree of Jehovah. And this prohibitory statute, as we said before, is no arbitrary act of sovereignty—no unreasonable caprice in the Divine Being. No, it is a wise and salutary statute, founded on the just

principles of reason and the nature of things. Hence, we argue the necessity of regeneration from this consideration.

We have shown that the unregenerate, in consequence of the total depravity of their nature, cannot enjoy God and the things belonging to the kingdom of grace here on earth; and if so, it necessarily follows, we say, that they cannot enjoy God, and the things pertaining to the kingdom of glory in the world to come.

Reflect but for a moment on the sublimity, effulgence, and glory of the heavenly world. The Lord Jehovah, as we have heard, is an infinitely pure and holy Being. He dwelleth, it is said, in light inaccessible (to unholy beings) and full of glory.

Holiness is the habitation of his throne. His countenance is as the sun shining in his strength. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

"The word *holy* in this passage," says Prof. Dwight, "naturally denotes the positive excellence of Christ's character; the word *harmless*, an absolute freedom from the guilt of injuring and corrupting others; the word *undefiled*, his freedom from all personal corruption; and the phrase, *separate*, or separated from sinners, the entire distinction between him and all beings who are in any sense or degree the subjects of sin."

Heaven is a holy, magnificent, and glorious

abode. It is called "the high and holy place"—"The habitation of God's holiness," etc.

The inhabitants of heaven are all immaculate and holy beings. These are constituted or made up of two great and grand generations. There is first, what may be called a generation of natives, usually denominated angels. These, though of different orders, are all spotless and holy beings. There is, also, what may be called a generation of foreigners. These are commonly styled the saints of the Most High—the spirits of just men made perfect, etc.

The pursuits and employments of heaven are all spiritual, virtuous, and holy. Their great, unceasing, and harmonious employment is to adore and glorify the great, supreme, and eternal God—the originator of all things, and the infinite source of all blessedness. The burden of their unceasing song is, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who wast, and art, and art to come."

Hence, then, my dear auditors, you cannot fail to perceive that the idea of unregenerated and unholy persons going to heaven, and of being happy there in company with saints and angels in the worship and enjoyment of God, is as idle and unreasonable, as it is unscriptural. It is impossible from the nature of things.

If in this life righteousness can have no fellowship with unrighteousness—if light can have no communion with darkness, and Christ no concord with Belial (because they are contrary one to the

other), how much less can this be expected in the world to come? If sinners do not love God, and delight in his worship here in this world, how can they expect to love him, and delight in his service in the world to come? If they have no affection for God's people, no pleasure in their company, and no delight in their virtuous pursuits and sacred employments here on earth, how can they expect to have these things in heaven, with identically the same carnal, sinful, and unholy nature which they possess here on earth? No, dear sinners, the thing cannot be. It is entirely out of the question. It is preposterous and irrational to expect it.

If heaven was a Mahometan paradise; if a place of sensual delights or carnal enjoyments; then, were sinners admitted there, they might expect to be happy. But heaven is not such a place. There is nothing there that will suit the carnal propensities and sinful passions of the unconverted. The things which they love and delight in here, are unknown and disallowed in heaven; and the things which they now hate and disrelish (because unsuitable to their nature), these alone are to be found there.

Sinners, I therefore tell you, once and again, and that, too, upon the authority of God's law, and on the rational conclusion drawn irresistibly from the reason and nature of things, that "you must be born again," in order to glorify and enjoy God forever in his kingdom.

Let me repeat and press this assurance, in the poetic language of Bishop Hoskins.

Sinners! this solemn truth regard!
 Hear, all ye sons of men;
 For Christ the Saviour hath declared,
 "Ye must be born again."

Whate'er might be your birth or blood,
 The sinner's boast is vain:
 Thus saith the glorious Son of God,
 "Ye must be born again."

Our nature's totally depraved,
 The heart's a sink of sin:
 Without a change you can't be saved,
 "Ye must be born again."

That which is born of flesh is flesh,
 And flesh it will remain;
 Then marvel not that Jesus saith,
 "Ye must be born again."

Having now gone through with this series of sermons on the vitally important subject of regeneration, we shall add a few

REMARKS AND INFERENCES.

1. Regeneration is one of the cardinal and fundamental doctrines of the Bible. This fact, I trust, has been fully established by our discussions of this subject, through the course of these sermons.

2. Regeneration is a doctrine, therefore, which

ministers of the Gospel ought frequently and strenuously to insist on in their preaching.

The *nature* and philosophy of this great work should be properly and carefully explained. An error on this point cannot fail to prove hurtful and ruinous to souls.

The *evidences* of this change should be pointed out with clearness and discrimination. This cannot be done with too much perspicuity and precision. If this is properly done, it will prove a character detector and a position definer; the doing of which will be of vast utility in winning souls.

The *necessity* of this change, also, ought to be made out by fair and sound arguments, and pressed upon the conscience by every consideration calculated to give it effect. But that which is decidedly of the greatest importance, in preaching on this subject, is, a vigorous enforcement of the duty of immediate and unqualified submission to God. Sinners must give up all, and submit to God, or they cannot be saved.

It is all perfectly right to use the appointed means for the attainment of this change of nature, or disposition of the mind; such as hearing the preaching of the Gospel; reading the Bible, religious books, pamphlets, and papers; prayer and fasting, after the example of the Ninevites, etc.; but then all this will be fruitless and unavailing without the exercise of repentance and faith, and the consecration of the whole man to God. Un-

reserved submission and entire consecration is the measure of man's ability, and the requisition of God. This, therefore, must be faithfully explained and enforced by the preacher, or his toils and labors, comparatively at least, will be inefficient and vain. I have often heartily regretted that this *sine qua non*, in the efficiency of preaching, is so badly understood, and so badly managed on the part of many ministers. It is owing to this, more than anything else, that so many able and talented preachers have little or no fruits of their ministry. If they would copy the example of Peter and Paul, and all the primitive ministers of the Gospel, and command sinners immediately to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of sending them to prayer-books and closets to pray, to the Bible, catechism, and other books, to read, and to the baptismal font and the Lord's table, to take upon them the vows of God, they would, doubtless, soon witness a different and a better state of things. God has wisely adapted means to the end. The Gospel is the appointed instrument for the conversion of sinners. This is both "quick and powerful." It is like a fire, and as a hammer, saith the Lord. If sinners, therefore, are ever made to feel their obligations to God as they ought, it is more likely to be when the blazing, burning truth of God is held up before their minds than at any other time. And now, also, it is more reasonable and philosophical to expect them to yield and submit their hearts than at any other time. If this

point of doctrine, and this part of the sinner's duty, should again become generally understood, and universally insisted on by all the ministers of the Gospel, then, as in primitive times, conversions to God, under the preaching of the Word, will be no rare and uncommon thing. May the Lord of Hosts help all his servants, and especially the ministers of the Church of God, fully to understand, and wisely to handle, this all-important subject.

3. From the subject we have had under consideration, we may infer that there are comparatively but few that will be saved. If, as we have heard, "men must be born of water and of the Spirit" in order to be saved, then we are not sure that any of the heathen will be saved. I say, we are not sure. We may think and fondly hope they will; but there is no certainty in the matter after all. On the supposition, then, that they cannot be saved without the Gospel, the greater part of mankind, of course, will be excluded from the kingdom of God. But be this as it may, in Christian lands the one-half, or more, live and die without ever knowing what regeneration is. They mistake the nature of the work. Many of them are taught to mistake it. Others who are not mistaught, nevertheless live and die ignorant and destitute of it. Make a simple calculation:

Take an account of those that live in infidelity and unbelief, and that will not acknowledge or serve God at all;

Then compute the number of those that worship

God in vain, because they do it in an idolatrous and superstitious manner, or because they rest in an outward appearance of religion, whilst they are strangers to the life and power of godliness; such as take up a profession merely from education, or from external motives and inducements; and who owe all their restraints from sin, and their promptings to duty, to these human and natural influences;

Add to these a list of such as are guilty of cursing and swearing, lying and forswearing, and of profaning the Lord's day.

Tell over the number of those that are notorious for drunkenness, for gluttony, extravagance in dress and mirth, or for revenge and destructive passions, whereby they shorten their own lives, or take away the lives of others;

Set down all those that are infamous for adultery, or fornication, or other acts of uncleanness:

Go on to those who thrive by unjust means, such as robbery, theft, gaming, frauds, slavery, and oppression;

Survey the crowd of those that are disobedient to parents, to masters, to rulers in church and state, and to God;

And when you have added all these together, contrast them with the number of those who are born again, and you will find their number comparatively but very few indeed.

4. If sinners are not regenerated and saved, it is not God's fault. God hath done far more to save

the world, than the world either desired or deserved. He sent his servants the prophets, both late and early, who gave line upon line, and precept upon precept, for the instruction and salvation of the people. And when the fulness of time had come, he sent his only begotten Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save it. Christ, the Son of God, proclaimed the kingdom of heaven at hand, and showed the way of entering into it. He established his divine mission by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles. He suffered and died, the just for the unjust, that they might be brought to God. He was buried and rose again on the morning of the third day for our justification. He commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; commanding all men everywhere to repent and obey the Gospel, that they might not perish but have everlasting life.

Now, if his orders are not obeyed, and his offers of salvation are not accepted, whose fault is it? Who is to blame? Surely not the Father of mercies and the God of all grace. He has done all things well. He has done all that he justly and with propriety could do, to save a guilty and ruined world. The same he is doing still. And hence, if sinners are not converted and saved, the fault is not in God. It is, and must be, their own fault, or the fault of their fellow-men. God cannot have the blame. He is justly and forever clear.

5. Christians should cherish a lively sense of

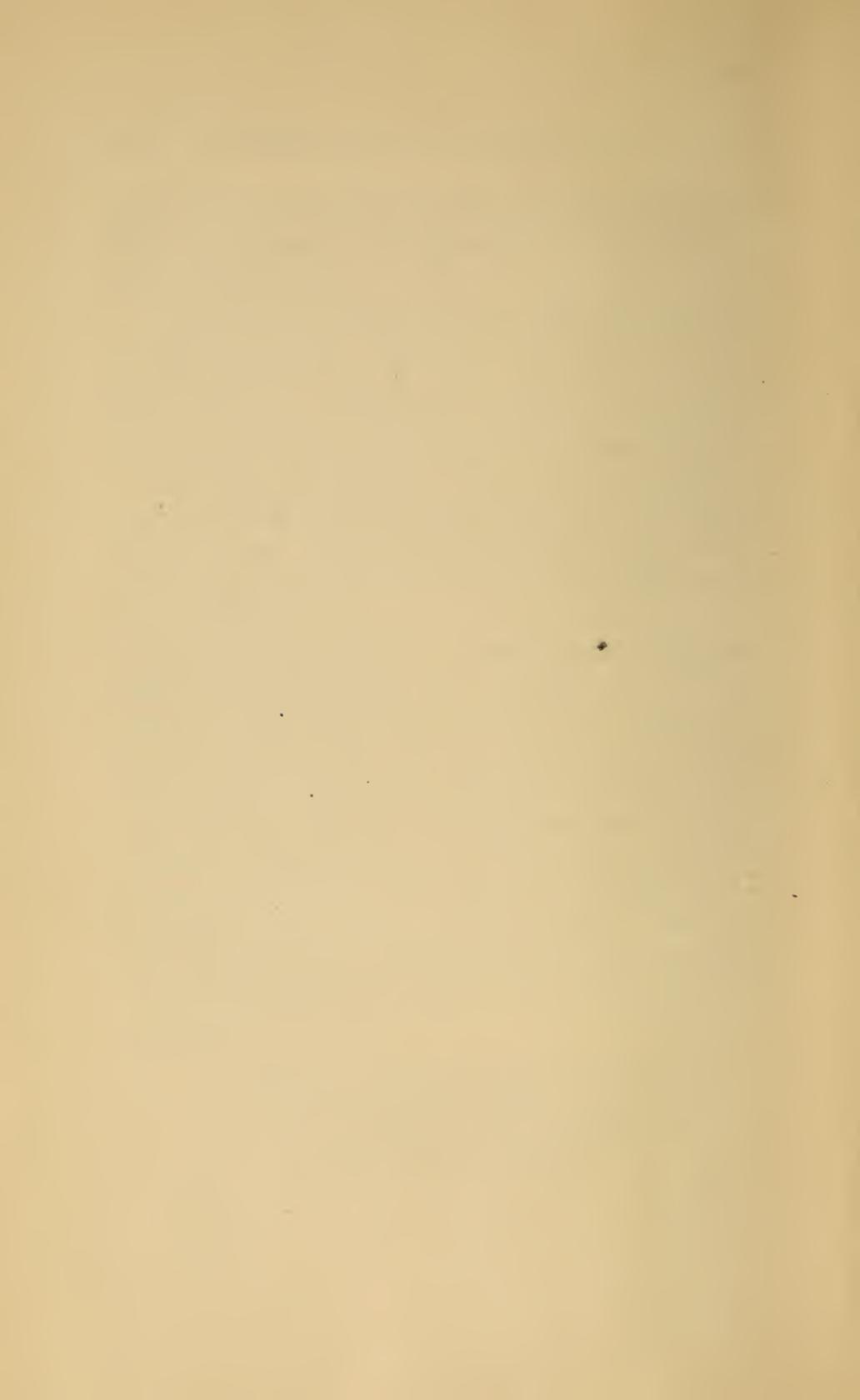
their obligations to God for regenerating grace. To be born again is a high, distinguished, and unspeakable mercy.

It is to be delivered from sin, the greatest and worst of all evils. It is to be freed from the power of the wicked one. It is to be raised above the fears of death. It is to be saved from the curse of the law, and from an easeless and endless misery.

And what is far better still—it is to be made a child and heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ of all things. It is to be made holy, and useful, and happy, here in this world, and in that which is to come.

Surely, then, there is abundant cause for gratitude and joy among the sons of God. If any people under heaven have cause to be thankful, it is that people who are regenerated and adopted into the favor and family of God, and whose names are written in heaven. O, my brethren, laud and magnify the God of heaven with all your ransomed powers, for what he has done for you in the rebuilding of his image on your souls. Let your whole life be an unceasing song of praise to God. And with the devout aspirations of the poet sing and say :

Had I ten thousand, thousand tongues,
Not one should silent be ;
Had I ten thousand, thousand hearts,
I'd give them all to thee.



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BT
790

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 651 280 A

