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THE HOLY SPIRIT, An Experimental and Practical View

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"The Spirit a Quickener" or "The Soul Before Conversion"

It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing. John 6:63

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. John 6:63

It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. John 6:63

Having laid the foundation of the Holy Spirit's work in His Personal Dignity, it will now be an easy and a more delightful (because less controversial) task to raise the superstructure. Commencing from such a foundation—the GODHEAD Of the Spirit—what dignity and glory attach to His various offices and operations, as contained in the covenant of redemption, and as unfolded in the work of grace upon the heart! How important that we should enter upon its discussion deeply impressed with the spirituality of our theme, with its essential relation to the eternal happiness of the soul, and with fervent prayer for His own Divine illumination! It will be perceived that, in unfolding His work, we commence with the Spirit's first gracious and Divine act—the breathing of spiritual life in the soul. This must be regarded as an operation preceding all others. The Spirit's work as a Quickener must ever precede His work as a Sanctifier and a Comforter. If we look for Him in any of His offices before we have received Him as the Author of Divine life in the soul, we

reverse His own order and cover ourselves with disappointment. We enter upon the discussion of this subject the more readily and, we trust, prayerfully, from the conviction that the modern views of the doctrine of regeneration, as held and preached by many, are not only widely different from the old standards of doctrinal truth, but, which is more serious and deeply to be deplored, are such as the Word of God clearly and distinctly disowns, and upon which there rests the darkness of its frown. Regeneration, as taught by many in the present day, differs widely from the doctrine as preached in the days of the apostles and reformers. In their writings and discourses the basis was deeply and broadly laid in the original and total depravity of man; this doctrine is now by many greatly modified, if not absolutely denied. In the days of primitive Christianity, the utter helplessness of the creature, and the absolute and indispensable necessity of the Holy Spirit's influences in the regeneration of the soul, were distinctly and rigidly enforced; sentiments the reverse of these, subversive of the Scripture doctrine of regeneration, and destructive of the best interests of the soul, are now zealously and widely promulgated. Surely this is a cause of deep humiliation before God; may He restore to His ministers and people a pure language, and graciously revive the precious, soul-humbling, Christ-honoring truths, once the safeguard and the glory of our land. We propose in this and the following chapter to present a simple and scriptural delineation of the doctrine of regeneration, the office of the Holy Spirit in its production, and some of the holy effects as traced in the life of a believer. May there descend on the reader the anointing of the Holy One, and may the truth empty, sanctify and comfort the heart.

Regeneration is a work standing alone and distinct from all the other operations of the Divine Spirit. It is to be carefully distinguished from conversion, adoption, justification and sanctification, and yet must be regarded as forming the basis and the spring-head of them all. For instance, there can be no conversion without a principle of life in the soul, for conversion is the exercise of a spiritual power implanted in man. There can be no sense of adoption apart from a renewed nature, for adoption confers the privilege only, not the nature, of sons. There can be no comforting sense of acceptance in the Beloved until the mind has passed from death unto life, nor can there be the smallest advance in a conformity of the will and of the affections to the image of God while there is lacking in the soul the very root of holiness. Faith is a purifying grace, but faith is only found in the heart "created anew in Christ Jesus." There must necessarily be the spiritual renewal of the whole man, before the soul can pass into an adopted, justified and sanctified state. Reader, ponder seriously this solemn truth. It will

probably aid us in arriving at a clearer and more accurate knowledge of the true nature of regeneration, or the new birth, if we briefly look at the subject first from a negative point of view.

Notice first of all that regeneration is not an act of grace conferred upon an individual in the external rite or ordinance of baptism. An error so untenable on scriptural grounds and so fatal to the spiritual interests of the soul, we could scarcely believe would find an advocate professing to be taught of the Spirit, in this gospel-illumined age. And yet from the pulpit and from the press, both professing to be the guardians of evangelical truth, this doctrine is zealously propagated; thousands receive it as a Divinely revealed truth, and live and die in the fatal delusion. Oh, did every professed minister of Christ but study the third chapter of John's Gospel, with earnest prayer for the teaching of the Spirit, before he attempted to expound to others the way of salvation, how soon would the heresy of baptismal regeneration be expelled from our pulpits, and banished from the land! Let us endeavor to pour the light of Divine truth upon this dark and fatal error.

We observe that the application of water in any mode, as a sacramental rite, is utterly impotent in the production of this mighty change in man. It cannot impart spiritual life to a soul "dead in trespasses and sins." The following are some of the strong and emphatic expressions which the Word of God employs in describing the new birth: "Born again" "born of the Spirit" "quickened by the Spirit" "created anew in Christ Jesus" "made alive" "new creature." Claims that the external application of water, even as a sacred rite, could effect the great change implied in these phrases, are utterly incredible to a spiritual and reflecting mind.

To regard the ordinance of baptism as a vehicle by which the Spirit of God operates on the heart is equally unscriptural and dangerous. As a means of grace, it cannot be relied upon. If regeneration has not transpired in the soul before the act of baptism, we are nowhere in the Scriptures of truth authorised to believe that mere submission to the external ceremony confers spiritual life upon the subject. The ordinances both of baptism and the Lord's supper are to be considered, as far as they relate to the receiver, merely as sources of spiritual nourishment and comfort to the grace already implanted in the soul, through the omnipotent and effectual operation of the Spirit of God. The one may more properly be regarded as a witness to the grace that is there; the other, as a Divinely instituted source of nourishment to that grace. If it is not so; if this setting aside the two ordinances of Christ's church as

causes of spiritual life is not scriptural and proper, then it must follow that all who have submitted to these external institutions are actually regenerated; and so, in reference to the departure into eternity of the avowed unbeliever, on the ground that baptismal regeneration be true, death is to him the birthday of a glorious immortality! If this is not a most awful inference, properly and legitimately drawn from the error we have stated, we know not what is. The advocate of baptismal regeneration cannot evade it. It is a fair, legitimate and logical conclusion deduced from his own premises. If all those who have ever been baptized were, in the act, made the subjects of renewing grace, then thousands are now shut up in the regions of hopeless despair who ought not to be there. They were baptized and yet they lived in open rebellion against God and died, as the record of many testifies, with the "terrors of the Lord" already in their consciences. And, if baptism is a rite essential to salvation, it must follow that vast numbers are now in glory, who, never having submitted to that institution, are admitted there on other grounds than the mere observance of an external ceremony. We cite from among many, the case of the thief upon the cross, as illustrating our idea. There is no record of his having received Christian baptism, either in the early part of his life, for he was a pagan, or at the period of his death. And yet, here is presented to us the amazing spectacle of a heathen malefactor, passing from spiritual death unto spiritual life at the very extremity of his ignominious existence; and, without having washed in the laver of baptism, going from the cross to receive a kingdom and a crown. If water baptism be essential to salvation, let the advocate of the doctrine explain to us the nature and the cause of this remarkable conversion and this triumphant death.

Reader, your baptism, whether received in infancy or in riper years, will avail you nothing if you are not a new creature. You may be baptized, and yet be lost; you may not be baptized, and yet be saved. "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision" (and the same is true of baptism), "but a new creature." Gal. 6:15. Your baptism infused into you no principle of life; it conferred upon you no saving grace. You must be born again of the Spirit, be washed in the blood of Christ and be clothed in His righteousness before you can enter the kingdom of grace on earth, or be admitted within the kingdom of glory in heaven.

Again, an outward reformation of habit does not constitute the spiritual change under investigation. The influence of education, early moral instruction, attendance upon an evangelical ministry, combined with the moral restraints of society, will go far in effecting an outward reformation of

human character. There may be much unfolding itself which bears strong resemblance to the sweet flower of Divine grace—gentleness—kindness—amiability; there may be the heart that pours forth its deep sympathies over the picture of human suffering—the tear that falls upon the pallid cheek of sickness—the arm that is nerved to shield the oppressed—the hand that is extended to relieve the widow and the fatherless; and yet "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (the spring of all true holiness and goodness) may be strangers to that bosom. In others, there may be the excision of outward sins, the giving up of sinful habits long indulged in, even a love of virtue, an approval of things that are excellent, and a diligent observance of the means of grace, marking the character and deportment; and all the while, the heart, self-deceived, may know nothing of the renewing, transforming, humbling power of God the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is a mighty and a deep work. It does not rest upon the surface. It has to do with the deep, hidden principle of evil in the heart of man. It allows nothing for the tender and kindly instincts of our fallen nature. It does not destroy or weaken them in the wonderful process through which the mind passes at the period of its renewal, but rather invests them with a new character and directs them into another and a holier channel; yet in the effecting of this mighty moral revolution they take no part, and can lay claim to none of the glory.

This chapter may possibly arrest the attention of the rigid moralist, who, up to the present, has been enveloping himself in the thick and silken foldings of a self-complacent and self-righteous spirit, not for a moment suspecting the existence of a deep taint of ungodliness within, which, in the eye of a holy and a heart-searching God, mars all his moral virtues, and renders of none effect all his moral duties. Reader, may the Lord the Spirit in His infinite mercy bring you out of this awful state of self-deception; and, as one step towards it, He warns you in His word to trust to no view of yourself presented by the false mirror of your own heart. That "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Do not trust in it, it is treacherous; expect nothing truly good from it, it is a depth of undiscovered depravity. Is this harsh language? Are these sentiments revolting to you? I speak but the truth of God when I say that your heart, in its present unrenewed state, is your worst enemy. Does it speak soothingly? It speaks but to flatter. Does the surface look fair and pleasant to the eye? Beneath is every thing that defiles, and that works abomination. O the awful picture your renewed heart would present to your view were the Holy Spirit now to put in the plough of conviction, break up the hard and fallow ground, and bring to the surface the hidden evil that is there. How would you shudder at the discovery, and shrink away from the sight!

Again, shall we add, after the exceptions we have made, that an outward profession of the Gospel may exist, and yet the heart be a stranger to this spiritual process? And yet the age we live in demands a distinct avowal of this. If in the days of our Lord and of His faithful and vigilant apostles—the days when a public profession of attachment to Christ was to mark a man for the cross and the stake—if in their days and under these circumstances there were found those who could take refuge in a mere outward profession, is it astonishing that now, when it costs a man nothing to profess Christ, but rather adds to his worldly influence and emolument, thousands should run upon this quicksand and make shipwreck of their souls? Oh, it is no marvel. Our blessed Lord foresaw and forewarned men of this evil. Let His words—searching and solemn as though now uttered from the judgment-seat sink down into our ears: "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity." Matt. 7:21-23.

Yet we would go farther than this. In reviewing the negative evidences of regeneration, it is of the utmost importance that we do not overlook that close approximation to this work, which in numberless cases may take place, but which when brought to the test of God's Word proves but an awful deception. Few, but those who have been taught of the Spirit and who have accustomed themselves to analyze closely the evidences of true conversion, are aware how far an individual may go, not merely in an outward reformation of character and in an external union to Christ, but in a strong resemblance to the positive and manifest evidences of the new birth, without the actual possession of a single one. If there is one aspect in which our subject may be viewed as more solemn than another, it is this. May the eternal Spirit lead us into deep self-examination and prayer, while examining these FALSE EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

We have observed that there may be in an individual's frame of mind and outward conduct, much that bears a strong affinity and resemblance to many of the positive evidences of the new birth, without a single step towards that state having been taken. There may be, as regards the state of mind, a deep and clear knowledge of Divine truth, a strongly enlightened judgment, and a sound and scriptural creed. There may be a strong attachment to, and a

zealous maintenance of, some of the distinguishing doctrines of grace—even a desire to hear of Christ, and an ability to judge between sound and unsound preaching—and all the while the heart may be encased in the hardness of impenitence and unbelief, a stranger to the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God. Do not misinterpret our meaning. We are not saying anything against a true spiritual and experimental acquaintance with Divine truth. We do not forget that there can be no faith in Christ without some knowledge of Christ. The very existence of faith in the heart implies the existence of, and an acquaintance with, the object of faith—the Lord Jesus. We are not against an enlarged possession of Divine knowledge. It would be well for the Church of Christ, and would greatly promote her stability and real spirituality, were the standard of Divine knowledge more elevated in her midst. It would screen her from much of the unsound theology and false philosophy, which, at this moment, threaten her purity and her peace. It cannot with perfect truth be said, as far as an elevated and spiritual taste and thirst for experimental truth are concerned, that "wisdom and knowledge are the stability of our times." Much of the prevalent religion is characterized by "itching ears," 2 Tim. 4:3; habit of "change," Prov. 24:21; "unstablenss," 2 Pet. 3:16; affected by "every wind of doctrine," Eph. 4:14; and which, in its influence, is "barren and unfruitful," 2 Pet. 1:8. Were there a more diligent and prayerful study of God's word, a more regular and constant attendance upon a stated ministry (if that ministry be found productive of spiritual benefit), connected with frequent seasons of retirement consecrated to meditation, self-examination and secret prayer, there would be less of that superficial Christianity which marks the many in this day of high and universal profession. We need more depth of knowledge, more spirituality, more experience, more of the life and power of true godliness; in a word, more of the anointing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit in the church.

But in the exception that we make, we refer to a knowledge of biblical truth that is not saving in its effects, is not influential in its character, and which has its place in the judgment only. Here the truth may be assented to, approved of, and even ably and successfully vindicated, while the soul, the seat of life; the will, the instrument of holiness; and the heart, the home of love, are all unrenewed by the Holy Spirit. You cannot be too distinctly nor too earnestly informed that there is a great difference in divine knowledge. There is a knowledge of the truth, in the attainment of which a man may labor diligently, and in the possession of which he may look like a believer, but which may not come under that designation of a knowledge of Christ, in allusion to which our dear Lord in His memorable prayer uses these words, "This is life eternal,

that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17:3. The fatal error to which you are exposed is—O that you may have escaped it!—the substitution of knowledge of Divine truth in the judgment for the quickening grace of God in the heart. It is surprising how far an outwardly moral individual may go in Divine attainments—spiritual knowledge—eminent gifts—and even great usefulness, and yet retain the carnal mind, the rebellious will, the unhumbled and unbroken heart. If the volume of divine truth had not informed us of this, and supplied us with some striking and solemn cases in proof, we should be perpetually beguiled into the belief that a head filled with rational, speculative, theoretical truth must necessarily be connected with some degree of divine grace in the affections. But not so. Balaam's knowledge of Divine things was deep; he could ask counsel of God and prophesy of Christ, but where is the undoubted evidence that he "knew the grace of God in truth"? Saul prophesied, had "another spirit" given him, and asked counsel of God; but Saul's heart was unchanged by the Holy Spirit. Herod sent for John, and "heard him gladly, and did many things," and yet his heart and his life were strangers to holiness. Addressing the Pharisees, the apostle employs this striking language, "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, and know his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law": and yet deep hypocrisy was their crying sin. O let no man be so deceived as to substitute knowledge for grace. Better that his knowledge of the truth should be limited to its mere elements, its first principles, and yet with it be enabled to say, "Behold, I am vile, but He has loved me and given himself for me," than to possess "all knowledge," and live and die destitute of the renewing grace of God upon the heart.

Still farther may an individual go in an approximation to the evidences of true godliness, and yet remain unregenerate. He may possess eminent spiritual gifts—fluency of expression in prayer—great exhortatory powers—eloquence in preaching—clear discrimination in spiritual subjects—the discerning of spirits—the gift of speaking and of interpreting of tongues; yet continue a graceless soul, retaining the "carnal mind" and the "heart of stone." What, we ask, is the most instructive and solemn page in the history of the Corinthian church? That which teaches us that great gifts may exist in union with great impiety; in other words, that gifts are not graces, that an individual, or a community of individuals, may possess the gifts that edify, and at the same time be destitute of the grace that humbles and sanctifies. On the other hand, how frequently is the union found to exist of feeble natural and acquired gifts with great grace, deep spirituality, and even extensive

usefulness! The tongue has stammered in prayer; thought, deep welled in the mind, has found no adequate utterance; feelings, burning in the heart, no outlet; a glowing and spiritually-chastened imagination, no conductor; and yet in the man's secret life, there has been the holy and close walk of a patriarch, and in his public one, the self-consuming zeal of an apostle. God has revealed to him the secret of His love; Christ has opened to him the treasures of His grace; and the Holy Spirit has sealed him to the day of redemption. Well might an eminent prelate exclaim, as he surveyed a spectacle like this—"The poor illiterate world attain to heaven, while we, with all our learning, fall into hell."

One step farther would we go. There may be strong light and conviction of sin in the conscience (Heb. 6: 4)—deep distress of soul in the near prospect of death and eternity (Acts 24:25)—this succeeded by solemn vows, purposes and resolutions (Exod. 9:27, 28)—and this by a species of joy (Matt. 13:20)—connected with an external mortification of sin (Acts 8:12, 13)—and yet the mighty and spiritual process of regeneration may not even have commenced in the soul. Far be it from us to say that the Spirit of God may not employ these as means of conversion—He may, He often does; yet they may exist alone and apart from any connection with a work of grace. We are aware that, in showing what regeneration is not, we have assumed high and solemn ground, and have advanced statements which, if supported by the Scriptures of truth (and we have endeavored to fortify every position by the Word of God), will break up the lying refuges, undermine the spurious hopes, explode the false evidences, and rip apart the specious covering of many now dwelling in the outer courts of Christianity and making a "fair show" of religion "in the flesh." Gal. 6:12. But the vast importance of the subject and its vital relation to the eternal happiness of the soul demanded from us a close investigation of the false evidences of this great work.

We now proceed to **VIEW POSITIVELY THE NATURE OF REGENERATION.** Need we enlarge upon the moral state of the soul which is the reverse of true regeneration? It may be helpful to glance briefly at it. It is described in God's Word in dark colors, and by gloomy images. The heart is spoken of as depraved—the understanding as darkened—the will as perverted—the affections as estranged. Look at the description of the heart in its natural state. Jer. 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Matt. 15:19: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Awful picture of the natural heart!—the picture of all yet in an unrenewed state.

There may not be the overt act of sin, the actual commission, the outbreaking of the evil—but the evil is there, deeply imbedded and hidden there, and only restrained by the power of God. Read again, Eccles. 8:11: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccles. 9:3: "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live." Can language present the natural state of the heart in more affecting and awful terms? Here it is represented as "fully set to do evil" "full of evil and madness" "deceitful" "desperately wicked." The surface may be fair to the eye—there may be kindness, affection, benevolence dwelling there; but beneath that surface is deep, deep ungodliness. No love to God there—no affection for Jesus there—no thirst for holiness there—no crucifixion of sin and self there; and until the Holy Spirit enters and creates all things new, all things will remain as they were, under the unbroken dominion and tyranny of sin.

The understanding is dark. Eph. 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened." Hence there can be no true knowledge of God and of Christ; no proper acquaintance with His word, His law, His commands; no just realization of eternity, no proper estimate of time. All is spiritual darkness in the soul.

The will is perverted. It is in opposition to God and holiness. It has no bias towards spiritual and heavenly things. Its natural bent and disposition is to evil; evil only, and evil continually.

But there is more. There is positive enmity in the natural man to God. Rom. 8:7: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This is a strong expression; the apostle states that the carnal mind is not only alienated from God, averse to Him, but is actual enmity. Had he represented the carnal mind as an enemy to God, that would have sounded startling; but when he describes it as "enmity" itself, we have the most vivid and awful idea of man's state by nature. An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. The ground of this enmity the apostle states to be "the law of God." "It is not subject to the law of God." The enmity of the carnal heart is against God as the moral Governor of the universe. Let not the reader, especially if there be the honest conviction in his conscience of the existence of the carnal mind, overlook this important fact. There is danger of turning aside from the true cause of man's enmity to God. We repeat then, all are enemies to God who do not submit to His kingly authority. Men may imagine they admire and love God under other characters, but hate Him as a Lawgiver. But this cannot be. If God is not loved, adored and obeyed as a

Lawgiver, He cannot, without denying Himself and throwing contempt upon His own law, recognize the supposed love and adoration of any of His creatures. Supreme dominion is essential to His character, and to be properly and truly loved He must be loved as a King. Among men, the person and the office may be separable. A man may be the personal friend of the king, and yet an enemy to his government. As a man, he may be loved; as a magistrate, he may be hated. We can imagine that many who lived in the days of the Commonwealth were sincerely attached to the person of Oliver Cromwell, but disapproved of his government, and condemned as unjustifiable his usurpation of authority and power. But not so in reference to God, the moral Governor of the world. His nature and His office, His attributes and His government are inseparable: and no one can possibly be a friend to God who hates His government and refuses obedience to His law.

Now "the carnal mind is enmity against God" because of His moral government. The question is, "who shall reign, God or the sinner?" This is the only ground of controversy. Decide this question in favor of the sinner, and so far as it relates to him, the controversy ceases. Only let God drop the reins of His government—let Him descend from His throne, lay aside His scepter, give up His law—and the enmity of the carnal mind ceases. Man would revel in His goodness, admire His wisdom, and adore His power. But God can as soon cease to be, as give up His right to dominion. He must assert His claim to the throne. He is bound to maintain the dignity, shield the purity and support the honor of His law; and sooner can heaven and earth pass away than one jot or one tittle of that law fail. This the carnal mind cannot bear, "for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Enmity against God, O awful thought! Enmity to the best of beings, the dearest of friends! Enmity to Him whose nature and whose name is love!—who is holy, yes, holiness itself—good, yes, goodness itself—true, yes, truth itself! Enmity to Him, out of whom nothing is good, nothing holy, nothing true; who is the Fountain from where all the streams flow, the Sun from which all the rays emanate. Enmity to Him, who gave His Son to die for sinners! "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Yes, to die for His enemies. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Enmity to Jesus who thus died; who flew on wings of love to the rescue and the redemption of fallen man; who took the place, bore the sins, endured the curse; all this for rebel man; who

gave His life, His obedience, all He could give—Himself; all this for the poor, the vile, the worthless; who suffered, bled and died—was not this enough? Could He have done more? The law said, "it is enough "; justice said, " I am satisfied "; all this—and who can estimate it? all this for sinners, for rebels, for enemies! Son of God, is it for this they hate You, despise You, reject You? Oh, the enmity of the carnal mind!

If possible, the Word of God gives a yet more awful description of the unrenewed state of man. It is represented under the image of death. The natural condition of the soul is moral death. Thus is it described. Eph. 2:1: "Dead in trespasses and sins"; and verse 5: "When we were dead in sins." Col. 2:13: "You being dead in your sins." "Through the offence of one, many are dead." This is his awful state—spiritually, legally and (if the quickening power of the eternal Spirit of God does not interpose) judicially dead. 'Insensibility to all spiritual things' marks the unrenewed mind. To things that are 'carnal', it is all feeling, all sensitiveness, all life. Here all its natural faculties are in full vigor and play. The understanding, the will, the affections find ample range for their carnal propensities, powerful incentives to their indulgence, and revel and exult and expatiate amid the world of sensual delight—limited it is confessed—that opens to their view. O yes, all is life here. The mind can think, reason, compare and arrange; the will can select, and the affections pour forth their tender yearnings—and still the pall of spiritual death covers the soul!

What are the symptoms? Is insensibility a mark of death? Then it is here. No spiritual sensation—no feeling—no emotion; all is stagnant, quiet and motionless as the river of death. True, the natural conscience may for a moment be aroused, and the agitated and alarmed soul may exhibit some signs of feeling—and so will a corpse under the influence of galvanic power—the eye may roll, and the lip may move, and every feature in the countenance assume the expression of life, but it is a corpse still. We speak to the soul dead in trespasses and sins; we employ the language of terror, we preach the law; we unfold its authority, its purity, its demands; we announce its curse, its threatening, its fearful doom. We speak of a holy God, a sin-seeing, sin-hating, sin-avenging God; we uncover hell and reveal its darkness, its quenchless flame, its undying worm, the smoke of its eternal torments; we look—but not a bosom heaves, not an eye weeps, not a lip quivers, not a feature wears the aspect of terror—all, all is still, cold and motionless; death is there!

We change our theme. We speak in the language of persuasive tenderness. We

preach the Gospel. We proclaim its divinity, its design, its fulness, its freeness, the mercy it promises, the blessings it breathes, the glory it unfolds. We lift up Jesus, as loving sinners, dying for sinners, receiving sinners, saving sinners. We unveil heaven, and bring to view its light, its holiness, its cloudless day, its eternal sunshine, its deep songs of joy, its never-dying, ever-growing bliss; we look—but not a heart throbs, not an eye glistens, not a lip praises, not a countenance beams with delight—all, all is quiet, cold, and silent—for death is there! Awful picture of the unrenewed man!

Does the absence of breath—the vital principle of life—denote a state of death? Then it is here. Prayer is the vital energy of a quickened soul, the spiritual breath of one "born from above." It is the first symptom of spiritual sensibility—the first and strongest evidence that "the Spirit that quickens" has entered the soul, breathing over the whole man the "breath of life." The pulse may at first beat but faintly, even as the first gentle heaving of an infant's bosom; still it is not less the product of the Spirit, the breath of God. "Behold he prays" is the announcement that sends gladness through the church of Christ on earth, and kindles joy among the angels of God in heaven. God the Father hastens to welcome the returning and resuscitated soul, and exclaims, "This my son was dead, and is alive again." It will follow then that the absence of prayer marks the soul yet "dead in sins." What evidence can be more convincing? It is a symptom that cannot mislead. The praying soul is a quickened soul. The prayerless soul is a lifeless soul. The individual that has never truly prayed has never known what one throb of spiritual life is. He may content himself with the external form—he may kneel in the outer court of the tabernacle, and, as the holy Leighton expresses it, "breathe his tune and air of words," and yet continue an utter stranger to true prayer.

Are you such a one? Let the voice of tender affection now lead you to a serious consideration of your real state. Do not mistake the outward form of prayer for the inward spirit of prayer. The soul may be dead, with all the appearance of life. But where there is true prayer, there is real life; for prayer is the ascending of the Divine life to God from whom it came. It came from God, and returns to Him again. As the river flows towards the ocean, or as the infant turns to its mother, the author of its existence and the source of its nourishment, as the "well of water" in a renewed soul "springing up" rises heavenwards—so a soul born of God turns to God, its Author, its Sustainer, its Keeper.

But it is proper that we detain the reader no longer from a consideration of

the real nature of the spiritual change. It is the reverse of what we have, with some minuteness and at some length, been describing. The Word of God shall be the speaker here.

IT IS A PASSING FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE. John 5:24: "Verily, verily, he that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Col. 2:13 "And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened." 1 John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

IT IS A NEW CREATURE. 2 Cor. 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Gal. 6:15: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

IT IS A DIVINE NATURE. 2 Pet. 1:4: "Partakers of the Divine nature." Heb. 12:10: "Partakers of his holiness."

A NEW BIRTH. John 3:3: "Except a man be born again (marg. from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 1:13: "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." 1 Pet. 1:23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever."

A TURNING FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT. 1 Pet. 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

A CHANGE FROM ENMITY TO LOVE. Col. 1:21: "And you, who were once alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled." 1 John 4:19: "We love him." Rom. 5:5: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."

A RESTORATION OF THE DIVINE IMAGE. Col. 3:10: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Rom. 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." 1 John 2:29: "If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is

born of him."

Thus clearly and emphatically does the Word of God speak when unfolding the nature of true regeneration. Reserving for the next chapter the consideration of the Author and the evidences of this work, we close the present one by holding up more distinctly and prominently to view **A FEW OF THE BROAD LINEAMENTS OF THE NEW CREATURE.**

The Holy Spirit testifies that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." This testimony is true. For first, he loves and worships a new God. The natural man is a god to himself, and he has many other gods as well. Whether it be self-righteousness, self-gratification, the world, wealth, family, in whatever form it appears, "other lords have dominion over him," to the exclusion of the one true and living God. The nature of the human mind is such that it must love and worship some object supremely. In his state of innocence, Jehovah was the one and supreme object of the creature's love and adoration. Seduced from that state of simple and supreme affection by the tempter's promise that, if they ate of the fruit of the tree forbidden of God, "they should be as gods," in one moment they threw off their allegiance to Jehovah, renounced him as the object of their supreme love, the center of their holiest affections, and became gods to themselves. The temple was ruined, the altar was thrown down, the pure flame was extinguished, God departed and "other lords" entered and took possession of the soul. But what a change does grace produce! It repairs the temple, rebuilds the altar, rekindles the flame and brings God back to man! God in Christ is now the supreme object of his love, his adoration and his worship. The idol self has been cast down, self-righteousness renounced, self-exaltation crucified. The "strong man armed" has entered, cast out the usurper, and, "creating all things new," has resumed his rightful supremacy. The affections, released from their false deity and renewed by the Spirit, now turn to and take up their rest in God. God in Christ! how glorious does He now appear! Truly it is a new God the soul is brought to know and love. Never did it see in Him such beauty, such excellence, such blessedness as it now sees. All other glory fades and dies before the surpassing glory of His character, His attributes, His government, and His law. God in Christ is viewed as reconciled now; enmity ceases; hatred has passed away; opposition throws down its weapons; hard thoughts of His law, and rebellious thoughts of His government, subside; love kindles in the soul and, in one precious Christ the one Mediator, God and the sinner meet, embrace and blend. Truly they become one. God says, "You are mine." The soul responds, "You are my God—other lords have had dominion

over me, but henceforth, You only will I serve, You only will I love. My soul follows hard after you; your right hand upholds me. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."

God in Christ is his Father now. "I will arise, and go unto my Father," is the first motion of a renewed soul. "Father, I have sinned against You," is the first confession rising from the broken heart. The Father hastens to meet and embrace His child, and clasping him to His bosom exclaims, "This My son was dead, and is alive again." Reconciled, he now looks up to Him truly as his Father. "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "You shall call me, My Father; and shall not turn away from me." Jer. 3:19. Does God speak?

it is the voice of a Father he hears. Does God chasten and rebuke? it is from his Father, he feels. Are his hopes disappointed, his plans crossed, his cisterns broken, his gourds withered? "My Father has done it all," he exclaims. Blessed Spirit of adoption! sweet pledge and evidence are You of the new creature.

God in Christ is now the object of confidence and trust. Trust in a reconciled God and Father was no mark and portion of his unrenewed state. It was then trust in self, in its imagined wisdom, strength and goodness. It was then trust in the arm of flesh; in second causes. Now the soul trusts in God, trusts Him at all times and under all circumstances, trusts Him in the darkest hour, under the gloomiest dispensation, trusts Him when His providences look dark and lowering, and God seems to hide Himself; it even trusts Him "though He slay." Now "though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vines; the labor of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall, he will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation." Oh, how safe he feels in God's hands and under His government now! His soul, his body, his family, his business and his cares are completely surrendered, and God is all in all. Reader, this is to be born again.

Second, the regenerate soul possesses and acknowledges a new Savior. How glorious, suitable and precious is Jesus to him now! Not so formerly. Then he had his saviors, his "refuges of lies," his many fatal confidences. Jesus was to him as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor loveliness." It may be

that he denied His deity, rejected His atonement, scorned His grace and slighted His pardon and His love. Christ is all to him now. He adores Him as the "mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace"; as "God over all, blessed forever"; as "God manifest in the flesh"; as stooping to the nature of man, becoming bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; as offering Himself up as the "propitiation for our sins"; as dying, "the just for the unjust." His righteousness is glorious as "justifying from all things"; His blood is precious as "cleansing from all sin"; His fulness of grace is valued as "supplying all need." Oh, how surpassingly glorious, inimitably lovely and unutterably precious is Jesus to a renewed soul!

Truly a new Savior! "Other lords" he has renounced; "refuges of lies" he has turned his back upon; "false Christs" he no longer follows. He has found another and a better Savior—Jesus, the mighty God, the Redeemer of sinners; the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." All is 'new' to his recovered sight; a new world of glory has floated before his mind. Jesus the Lamb is the light and glory thereof. Never did he suppose there was such beauty in His person, such love in His heart, such perfection in His work, such power and such willingness to save. That blood which was trampled under foot is now precious. That righteousness which was scorned is now glorious. That name which was reviled is now as music to the soul, even "a name that is above every name."

Jesus is his only Savior. Not an allowed confidence has he out of Christ. The covenant of "dead works" he has renounced. The Spirit, having brought him out of and away from it, has led him into the covenant of grace, the substance and stability and glory of which is Jesus. On the broad basis of Immanuel's finished, atoning work he rests his whole soul; and the more he presses the foundation, the more he leans upon the "corner-stone," the stronger and the more able to sustain him does he find it. True, he feels a self-righteous principle closely adhering to him all his journey through the wilderness. When he prays, it is there; when he speaks, it is there; when he labors, it is there; when he reflects, it is there: he detects it when suspicion of its existence would be most at rest. But in the sober moments of his judgment, when prostrate beneath the cross and looking up to God through Jesus, this principle is searched out, abhorred, confessed and mourned over; and with the eye of faith upon a suffering Savior the language of his expanding heart is,

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on You."

Third, new and enlarged views of the Holy Spirit mark a regenerate mind. Having received the Holy Spirit as a Quickener, he feels the need of Him now as a Teacher, a Sanctifier, a Comforter and a Sealer. As a Teacher, discovering to him more of the hidden evil of the heart, more knowledge of God, of His word and of His Son. As a Sanctifier, carrying forward the work of grace in the soul, impressing more deeply on the heart the Divine image, and bringing every thought and feeling and word into sweet, holy and filial obedience to the law of Jesus. As a Comforter, leading him in the hour of his deep trial to Christ; comforting, by unfolding the sympathy and tenderness of Jesus, and the exceeding preciousness and peculiar fitness of the many promises with which the word of truth abounds for the consolation of the Lord's afflicted. As a Sealer, impressing upon his heart the sense of pardon, acceptance, and adoption; and Himself entering, as the "pledge of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Oh, what exalted views does he now have of the blessed and eternal Spirit—of His personal glory, His work, His offices, His influences, His love, tenderness, and faithfulness! The ear is open to the softest whisper of His voice; the heart expands to the gentlest impression of His sealing, sanctifying influence. Remembering that he is "a temple of the Holy Spirit," he desires so to walk—humbly, softly, watchfully and prayerfully. Avoiding every thing that would "grieve the Spirit," resigning every known sin that would dishonor and cause Him to withdraw; the one single aim of his life is to walk so as to please God, that "God in all things may be glorified."

Fourth, a new spring of action is a distinguished feature of the renewed man which must not be overlooked. Every unconverted man has his rule of action; or, in other words, some great governing principle, which is his rule and standard in all that he does. The controlling principle of an unrenewed mind is SELF. His rule is to adopt such a course, and to do such things, as either gratify or elevate himself. Beyond this narrow circle he never moves. Other and more spiritual motives he is a stranger to. But quickened by the Spirit, "born of God," "created anew in Christ Jesus," the will of God is now his rule of action, the glory of God his aim, and the love of Christ his constraining motive. "The expulsive power of a new affection" has found a home and a dwelling place in his heart; and when his own will comes into competition with God's will, under the holy sway of this "new affection"—the love of Christ—self is renounced, yes swallowed up in God, and God in Christ is all in all.

Fifth, it would be an imperfect enumeration of some of the strong features of

the new creature did we omit to notice the growing nature and tendency of the vital principle of grace thus implanted in the heart of the regenerate. Nothing more strikingly and truly proves the reality, we would say the divinity, of the work within, than the growing energy and holy tendency that ever accompany it. It is the property of that which has life in itself, to increase—to multiply itself. The seed cast into the earth will germinate. Presently will appear the tender sprout; this will advance to the young sapling, and this in time to the gigantic tree with its overshadowing branches and richly laden with fruit. Obeying the law of its nature, it aspires to that perfection which be longs to it. It must grow. Nothing can prevent it but such a wound as will injure the vital principle, or the cutting of it down entirely. The life of God in the soul of man contains the principle of growth. He that is not advancing—adding grace to grace, strength to strength; fruitful in every good word and work; increasing in the knowledge of God, of his own heart, of the preciousness, fulness and all-sufficiency of Jesus; and in Divine conformity "growing up into Christ in all things"—has great reason to suspect the absence of the Divine life in his soul. There may be much that suggests a resemblance to the new birth; there may be the portrait finely executed, the marble statue exquisitely chiseled, but there is not the living man, "the new creature." We can expect no increase of perfection in a finished picture or in a piece of statuary; that which has not life in it cannot grow. This is self-evident.

An individual may look like a believer, and even die, with a false peace, like the righteous, and all the while retain his dwelling among the tombs. But the spirit we are now considering is that of a man truly "born again." Phil. 3:12-14: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark." O holy resolve of a regenerate man! Here is the springing up of the well of living water in the heart. Here is the turning of the soul to God. See how the fountain rises! See how the flame ascends! It is the mighty energy of God the Holy Spirit drawing the soul upward, heavenward, Godwards.

Let not the Christian reader close this chapter with a burdened heart. Let no dear child of God "write hard and bitter things against himself" as he reads this last sentence. Let him not come to any hasty, unbelieving, doubting and God-dishonoring conclusions. What are you to yourself? worthless—vile—empty? What is Jesus to you? precious lovely—all your salvation and all your

desire? What is sin to you? the most hateful thing in the world? And what is holiness? the most lovely, the most longed for? What is the throne of grace to you? the most attractive spot? And the cross? the sweetest resting-place in the universe? What is God to you? your God and Father—the spring of all your joys—the fountain-head of all your bliss—the center where your affections meet? Is it so? Then you are born again—then you are a child of God—then you shall never die eternally. Cheer up, precious soul! the day of your redemption draws near. Those low views of yourself—that brokenness, that inward mourning, that secret confession, that longing for more spirituality, more grace, more devotedness and more love does but prove the existence, reality and growth of God's work within you. God the Holy Spirit is there, and these are but the fruits and evidences of His indwelling. Look up, then, reader, and let the thought cheer you—that soul never perished that felt itself to be vile, and Jesus to be precious!

Thus have we endeavored to unfold some of the prominent and essential attributes of the great work of regeneration. The next chapter will exhibit the Author of the work, and a more experimental and practical view of its nature and tendency. And may the anointing of the Holy Spirit rest upon the reader while perusing it.

"The Soul after Conversion"

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:6

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. John 3:6

Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. John 3:6

No truth shines with clearer luster in the Divine word than that salvation, from first to last, is of God. It is convincingly and beautifully shown to be the work of the glorious Trinity in unity: each person of the Godhead occupying a distinct and peculiar office, and yet all engaged upon, and, as it were coalescing in this mighty undertaking. The Father is represented as giving His elect in covenant engagement to His Son, John 17:2. The Son is represented as assuming in eternity the office of Surety, and in the "fulness of time" appearing in human form, and suffering for their sins upon the cross, Rom.

8:3. The Holy Spirit is represented as convicting of sin, working faith in the heart, and leading to the atoning blood, John 16:8. Thus is salvation shown to be the entire work of the Triune God, distinct in office, yet one in purpose. We have now more immediately to do with that department in the stupendous plan which is ascribed especially and peculiarly to God the eternal Spirit.

We have already viewed the sinner in the various phases of his unconverted state. How awful did that state appear! The understanding, the will, the affections were all dark, perverted and alienated from God, with enmity and death marking every unconverted man. We have seen this state reversed; the temple restored, and God dwelling again with men; the heart brought back to its lawful Sovereign, and clinging to Him with all the grasp of its renewed affections; darkness succeeded by light, enmity by love, ingratitude by praise—and the whole soul turning with the rapidity and certainty of the magnetic needle to God, the center of its high and holy attraction. To whose power are we to attribute this marvellous change? To the sinner himself? That cannot be; for the very principle that led to the first step in departure from God, and which still urges him on in every successive one, supplies him with no adequate power or motive to return. To the mere exercise of some other human agency? That is equally impossible; for in the whole empire of created intelligence God has nowhere delegated such power and authority to a single individual. We must look for the secret of this spiritual change outside of the creature, away from men and angels, and seek it in God the eternal Spirit. God looks within Himself for the power, and He finds it there, even in His own omnipotent Spirit. This is the great and spiritual truth we are now to consider: regeneration, the sole and special work of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine that assigns to human power an efficient part in the new birth is based upon the supposition that there is in man an inherent principle, the natural bias of which is to holiness; and that, because God has created him a rational being, endowed with a will, understanding, conscience, affections and other intellectual and moral properties, therefore the simple, unaided, voluntary exercise of these powers—a simple choosing of that which the conscience and the understanding point out to be good in view of certain motives presented to the mind—is all that is required to bring the soul into the possession of the Divine nature. With all meekness and affection, yet uncompromising regard for the glory of God, would we expose, on scriptural grounds alone, the fallacy and the dangerous tendency of this hypothesis.

Begging the reader to bear in mind that which in the previous chapter has

been advanced touching the actual state of the natural man, we would earnestly call his attention to the following passages. John 3:6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It is, morally, nothing but flesh. It is carnal, corrupt, depraved, sinful and has no discernment or perception whatever of spiritual things. This is the sense in which the term flesh, as opposed to spirit, is to be interpreted in God's Word. It signifies the corruption of nature. Gal. 5:17 "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Again, Rom. 8:5-8: "For those who are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but those who are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God." What further proof do we need of the natural sinfulness and impotence of man? And yet the powerful testimony borne to this by God's Word is by no means exhausted.

Do we speak of his mind? Eph. 4: 18: "Having the understanding darkened." Of his knowledge? 1 Cor. 2:14: "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Of his heart? Eccles. 9:3: "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." Of his love to God? Rom. 8:7: "Enmity." Of his ability to believe? John 12:39: "They could not believe." Of his power to acknowledge Christ? 1 Cor. 12:3: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." Thus minute, clear and solemn is the testimony of the Holy Spirit Himself, touching the real amount of human power brought to bear upon the production of spiritual life in the soul of man.

So far from cooperating with the Spirit in the new creation, the natural man presents every resistance and opposition to it. There is not only a passive aversion but an active resistance to the work. The stream of man's natural inclinations, as we have fully proved from the Scriptures of truth, runs counter to all holiness. A strong and steady current has set in against God, and all that God loves. The pride of reason, the perverseness of the will, the enmity of the mind, the heart's love of sin, all are up in arms against the entrance of the Holy Spirit. Satan, the great enemy of God and man, has been too long in quiet and undisturbed possession of the soul to resign his dominion without a strong and a fearful struggle to maintain it. When the Spirit of God knocks at the door of the heart, every ally is summoned by the "strong man armed" to "resist" the Spirit, and bar and bolt each avenue to His entrance. All is alarm, agitation and commotion within. There is a danger of being

dispossessed, and every argument and persuasion and contrivance must be resorted to, in order to retain the long undisputed throne. The world is summoned to throw out its most enticing bait—ambition, wealth, literary and political distinction, pleasure in her thousand forms of fascination and power—all are made to pass, as in review, before the mind. The flesh exerts its power—the love of sin is appealed to, affection for some long—cherished lust, some long—indulged habit, some "fond amusement," some darling taste—these, inspired with new vigor, are summoned to the rescue. Thus Satan, the world, and the flesh, are opposed to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, in the great work of spiritual regeneration. Oh let no individual be so deceived as to believe that when God the eternal Spirit enters the soul, He finds the temple swept and garnished, and prepared for His reception—that, without the exercise of His own omnipotent and irresistible power, the heart bounds to welcome Him, and reason bows submissively to His government, and the will yields 'an instant and humble compliance. O no! If He that is in the regenerate were not greater and more powerful than he that is in the world, such is the enmity of the heart to God, such the strong power and love of sin, such the supreme control which Satan exerts over the whole empire of man, God would be forever shut out, and the soul forever lost.

But see how clearly regeneration is proved to be the work of the Spirit. A few quotations from His own Word will set the question at rest. Examine the following. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "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 Spirit." Other passages show the power exerted in regeneration to be infinite. 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." The same power that called the material creation from nothing into existence, effects the new and spiritual creation. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The same power that raised up Jesus from the dead—"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." We need not multiply proof. God has written it as with a sunbeam, that "we are His workmanship," and that the eternal Spirit is the mighty Agent.

We now proceed to show in what MANNER the blessed Spirit commences, carries forward and sustains this great work in the soul.

First, the commencement of spiritual life is sudden. We are far from confining the Spirit to a certain prescribed order in this or any other part of His work. He is a Sovereign, as we shall presently show, and therefore works according to His own will. But there are some methods He more frequently adopts than others. We would not say that all aspects of conversion is a sudden work. There is a knowledge of sin, conviction of its guilt, repentance before God on account of it; these are frequently slow and gradual in their advance. But the first communication of Divine light and life to the soul is always sudden—sudden and instantaneous as was the creation of natural light. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." It was but a word, and in an instant chaos rolled away, and every object and scene in nature was bathed in light and glory. Sudden as was the communication of life to Lazarus—"Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!" It was but a word, and in an instant "he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes." So is it in the first communication of Divine light and life to the soul. The eternal Spirit says, "Let there be light," and in a moment there is light. He speaks again, "Come forth," and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead are raised incorruptible, and are changed."

Striking illustrations of the suddenness of the Spirit's operation are afforded in the cases of Saul of Tarsus, and of the thief upon the cross. How sudden was the communication of light and life to their souls! It was no long and previous process of spiritual illumination—it was the result of no lengthened chain of reasoning—no labored argumentation. In a moment, and under circumstances most unfavorable to the change—as we should think—certainly at a period when the rebellion of the heart rose the most fiercely against God, "a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun," poured its transforming radiance into the mind of the enraged persecutor; and a voice conveying life into the soul reached the conscience of the dying thief. Both were translated from darkness into light, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

How many who read this page may say, "Thus was it with me! God the eternal Spirit arrested me when my heart's deep rebellion was most up in arms against Him. It was a sudden and a short work, but it was mighty and effectual. It was unexpected and rapid, but deep and thorough. In a moment

the hidden evil was brought to view—the deep and dark fountain broken up—all my iniquities passed before me, and all my 'secret sins seemed placed in the light of God's countenance.' My soul sank down in deep mire—yes, hell opened its mouth to receive me."

Do not overlook this wise and gracious method of the blessed Spirit's operation in regeneration. It is instantaneous. The means may have been simple—perhaps it was the loss of a friend—an alarming illness—a word of reproof or admonition dropped from a parent or a companion—the singing of a hymn—the hearing of a sermon—or some text of Scripture winged with His power to the conscience; in the twinkling of an eye, the soul "dead in trespasses and sins" was "quickenened," and translated into "newness of life." O blessed work of the blessed and eternal Spirit! O mighty operation! O inscrutable wisdom! What a change has now passed over the whole man! Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, that which is begotten in the soul is the Divine life, a holy, influential, never-dying principle. Truly he is a new creature, "old things passing away, and all things becoming new."

For this change let it not be supposed that there is, in the subject, any previous preparation. (The author is not affirming that the Holy Spirit has no dealings with a sinner prior to regeneration but that the sinner does nothing to prepare himself for this saving act of God.) There can be no preparation for light or life. What preparation was there in chaos? What preparation was there in the cold clay limbs of Lazarus? What in Paul? What in the dying thief? The work of regeneration is supremely the work of the Spirit. The means may be employed, and are to be employed, in accordance with the Divine purpose, yet are they not to be deified. They are but means, "profiting nothing" without the power of God the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is His work, and not man's.

We have remarked that the first implantation of the Divine life in the soul is sudden. We would however observe that the advance of that work is in most cases gradual. Let this be an encouragement to any who are writing hard and bitter things against themselves in consequence of their little progress. The growth of Divine knowledge in the soul is often slow—the work of much time and of protracted discipline. Look at the eleven disciples—what slow, tardy scholars were they, even though taught immediately from the lips of Jesus; and "who teaches like him?" They drank their knowledge from the very Fountain. They received their light directly from the Sun itself. And yet, with all these superior advantages—the personal ministry, instructions, miracles, and example of our dear Lord, how slow of understanding were they to

comprehend, and how "slow of heart to believe," all that He so laboriously, clearly, and patiently taught them!

Yes, the advance of the soul in the Divine life—its knowledge of sin, of the hidden evil, the heart's deep treachery, intricate windings, Satan's subtlety, the glory of the Gospel, the preciousness of Christ, and its own interest in the great salvation—is not the work of a day, nor of a year, but of many days, perhaps many years of deep ploughing, long and often painful discipline, of "windy storm and tempest."

But this life in the soul is not less real, nor less Divine, because its growth is slow and gradual; it may be small and feeble in its degree, yet in its nature it is the life that never dies. The figures and illustrations employed by the Holy Spirit to set forth the character and advance of His own work in the soul, are frequently such as convey the idea of feebleness. Thus, Isa. 40:11: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Can language more strikingly and more touchingly unfold the feebleness and often burdened state of God's dear saints? Again, ch. 42:3: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Had it been described as a "reed" only, that had been deeply expressive of its weakness; but a "bruised reed," seems to unfold the very lowest degree of feebleness. Had this gracious work been compared to "flax" merely, we would have thought it small indeed; but "smoking flax" seems to represent it as "ready to die." And still both are the product of the eternal Spirit; never shall the "bruised reed" be quite broken, nor the "smoking flax" be quite extinguished; the Lord will tenderly bind up and strengthen the one, and will carefully watch over and nourish the other. How many of the Lord's beloved ones, the children of godly parents brought up in the ways of God, are at a loss in reviewing the map of their pilgrimage, to remember the starting point of their spiritual life! They well know that they left the city of destruction, that by a strong and a mighty arm they were brought out of Egypt; but so gently, so imperceptibly, so softly and so gradually were they led—"first a thought, then a desire, then a prayer"—that they could no more discover when the first dawning of Divine life took place in their soul than they could tell the instant when natural light first broke upon chaos. Still it is real. It is no fancy that he has inherited an evil principle in the heart; it is no fancy that that principle has been subdued by grace. It is no fancy that he was once a child of darkness; it is no fancy that he is now a child of light. He may mourn in secret over his little advance, his tardy progress, his weak faith, his small grace, his strong

corruption, his many infirmities, his startings aside like "a deceitful bow," yet he can say, "though I am the 'chief of sinners,' and the 'least of all saints'; though I see within so much to abase me, and without, so much to mourn over, yet this 'one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.' I see that which I never saw before—a hatefulness in sin and a beauty in holiness; I see a vileness and emptiness in myself, and a preciousness and fulness in Jesus." Do not forget then, reader, that feeble grace is yet real grace. If the soul but "hungers and thirsts," if it "touches but the hem," it shall be saved.

We must also point out the sovereignty of the Spirit's operations in the production of this work. There is a sovereignty in all the works and dealings of God. If it be asked what God's own definition of His sovereignty is, we refer the inquirer to His words. "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy." Here is the Sovereign! How like Himself he speaks! He carries forward His gracious purposes of infinite wisdom, and love—chooses or rejects—reveals or withholds, "working all things after the counsel of his own will," "giving no account," either to angels or to men, "of any of his matters." Now, notice the unfolding of sovereignty in the operations of the blessed Spirit. Thus did Christ declare it. John 3:8: "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof, but can not tell where it comes, and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Here is His sovereignty. Mark how striking is the figure. The wind bids defiance to man's governing power. It is as irresistible in its influence as it is mighty in its strength.

We cannot command it nor can we control it. It is alike out of our power to summon as it is to soothe it. It comes, we know not whence, it goes, we know not whither. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." We do not say that the Spirit is not resisted—He is resisted, strongly and perseveringly. But He is not overpowered. All the enmity and carnality of the heart rises in direct opposition to Him; but when bent upon a mission of love, when in accordance with the eternal purpose He comes to save, not all the powers on earth or in hell can effectually resist Him. Like the mighty wind, He bears down all opposition, sweeps away every barrier, overcomes every difficulty, and the sinner, "made willing in the day of His power," is brought to the feet of Jesus, there meekly and gratefully to sit, "clothed and in his right mind." His power, who can withstand? Whether He speaks in the "still small voice" of tender, persuasive love, or whether He comes in the "mighty rushing wind" of deep and overwhelming conviction, His influence is unquenchable, His power is irresistible. He "effectually works" in those who believe.

But His operation is as sovereign as it is mighty. He comes to whom He will; He comes when He will; He comes in the mode He will. We cannot bring Him by an effort of our own will, nor can we by an effort of our will compel Him to depart. He blows where He wills; we hear the sound, we see the effects; but how He works, why He works, and why in a particular way He works, He does not reveal to mortals. Even so, O blessed and eternal Spirit, for so it seems good in Your sight.

We will not expand this part of the subject by citing the numerous examples of this truth which abound in the Scriptures of truth. The reader may refer to them at his leisure, if they do not spontaneously recur to his recollection at this moment. We would merely now urge him to examine the cases of Jacob and Esau—the publican and Pharisee—Saul of Tarsus, and the men who journeyed with him—the two thieves upon the cross, and see if the sovereignty of the Divine choice and the operation of the eternal Spirit are not written out in their histories as with a sunbeam.

Is the reader a child of God? Then we will not confine him to the word of Divine truth. We summon him as a witness to the sovereignty of the blessed Spirit's operation. "You are my witnesses," says God. Who and what made you to differ? You have been taken out of your family, your kindred, your friends, your companions. From this circle it may be that you alone have been selected, called, and made a child of grace, an heir of glory. The others, where are they? Still dead in trespasses and sins. Where are they? Living in the world and to the world, lovers of pleasure, lovers of self, lovers of sin, hating God, rejecting Christ, and warring against the Spirit speaking to them in the Word, through providences, and by the conscience. Where are they? Bursting through every restraint, and bending their footsteps down to the doom of the lost. Where are they? Gone, many of them, into eternity—past the confines of mercy, "in hell lifting up their eyes, being in torments." And what are you? A sinner saved by grace, a sinner chosen and called, pardoned and justified, washed and clothed, adopted and sanctified, brought to the foot of the cross, constrained to welcome Jesus, to take up the cross and to follow Him. O the electing love of God! O the distinguishing grace of Jesus! O the sovereign operation of the eternal Spirit! "Who are you, O man, that replies against God?" Bow down to the sovereignty of His will; silently wonder and adore Him who says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Has my reader hitherto found this doctrine a "hard saying"? Has he been prone to object to it and pass it by? I would, with all meekness and affection,

urge him seriously, candidly and prayerfully to examine it by the light of the Divine Word. Let him not object to it, lest he be found to "fight against God"; let him not pass it by, lest he "grieve the Spirit," and rob his own soul of an inestimable blessing. O precious truth! It stains the pride of human merit—it lays the axe at the root of self—it humbles and abases—it empties and lays "low in a low place," and ascribes all the praise, honor and glory, might, majesty and dominion of the new creation in the soul, to the Triune God.

Intimately connected with the sovereignty, is the free grace of the Spirit's operation. No worthiness of the creature allures Him to the sinner's breast. What worthiness can be supposed to exist; what merit can there be in an adjudged criminal, an outlawed rebel, a poor insolvent, one whose mind is enmity, whose heart is swelling with treason against God, His government, and His Son, one who owes ten thousand talents, and has "nothing to pay"? None whatever. And that the eternal Spirit should enter the heart of such a one—convincing of sin—subduing the hatred—breaking down the rebellion—leading to Jesus, and sealing pardon and peace upon the conscience—oh! what but free grace—unmerited mercy—sovereign love, could thus have constrained Him? And as He exercises His sovereignty in conversion, let none suppose that that which decides Him in the selection of His subject is anything more worthy, or more lowly, which He may discover in one more than in another. O no! He often selects the poorest, the vilest, the most depraved and fallen, as if utterly to explode all idea of human merit, and to reflect in its richest luster the free grace of His heart. Behold then, the grace of the blessed Spirit's operation; He comes, He knocks, He unbars, He enters, and creates all things new, irrespective of any merit of the creature, if merit that may be called which is so wretched and poor that language fails adequately to describe it. O the riches of His grace! How it is magnified—how it is illustrated—how it shines in the calling of a poor sinner! "Lord, what did You see in me," exclaims the convinced soul, "that moved You with compassion, that drew You to my breast, and that constrained You to make me Your temple? Nothing on my part, but poverty, wretchedness, and misery—on Your part, nothing but love, sovereignty, and unmerited favor." Reader, do not turn from this glorious feature of the blessed Spirit's operation—it glorifies God, while it humbles man—it exalts Jesus on the ruins of the creature. Poor in spirit! blessed are you! You are rich in your poverty—you are exalted in your lowliness. All the love that is in God—all the grace that is in Jesus—and all the tenderness that is in the Spirit, all, all is for you. Lift up your head then, and let your heart sing for gladness. Though poor, though nothing, though despised, though worthless in your own eyes—ah! and

worthless in the eyes of the vaunting Pharisee—yet, for you, Jehovah pours out all the treasures of His grace—gives His well-beloved Son, and sends His blessed Spirit. "All things are yours," you poor in spirit, you broken in heart—"all things are yours"—how vast the compass of your blessings! "All things are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Oh, could you know how dear you are to the heart of God—could you know with what tenderness Jesus yearns over you—how the blessed Spirit delights to make you His dwelling-place, you would rejoice in that you are made low. "For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. 57:15.)

The operation of the Spirit is effectual. As we have necessarily touched upon this feature in former parts of the chapter, especially in the preceding sentences, it seems to demand a less extended unfolding here. Still, it presents an important and glorious aspect of the Spirit's work, upon which we cannot reflect without clearer, more elevated and sanctifying views of His operations in the work of regeneration. The reader will not need to be reminded that the great change which takes place in the soul at regeneration is frequently termed by the Holy Spirit, in various parts of His Word, a calling. A reference to a few passages will prove it. Gal. 1:15: Paul speaks of his being "called by grace." Rom. 8:28: The saints of God are spoken of as the "called according to his purpose." 1 Pet. 2:9: "Called out of darkness." Rom. 8:30: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Jude 1: "Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." 2 Tim. 1:9 "Who has called us with a holy calling." Heb. 3:1: "Partakers of the heavenly calling." 2 Pet. 2:10: "Make your calling and election sure." Thus is it clear that he who is raised from the dead, brought out of darkness, and born again is called. The blessed Agent by whom he is called is the eternal Spirit. "It is the Spirit that quickens," and calls. The point with which we have now especially to deal is the effectual nature of His calling.

There is an external and also an internal call of the Spirit. The external call is thus alluded to. Prov. 1:24: "I have called, and you refused." Matt. 22:14: "Many are called, but few are chosen." This outward call of the Spirit is made in various ways: in the Word, in the glorious proclamation of the gospel, through the providences of God—those of mercy and those of judgment—the warnings of ministers, the admonitions of friends, and, not less powerful, the awakening of the natural conscience. By these means does the Holy Spirit

"call sinners to repentance." In this sense, every man who hears the gospel, who is encircled with the means of grace, and who bears about with him a secret but ever-faithful monitor, is called by the Spirit. The existence of this call places the sinner in an attitude of fearful responsibility; and the rejection of this call exposes him to a still more fearful doom. God has never poured out His wrath upon man without first extending the olive-branch of peace. Mercy has invariably preceded judgment. "I have called, and you have refused." "All day long I have stretched forth my hands." "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." He reasons, He argues, He expostulates with the sinner. "Come, let us reason together," is His invitation. "Bring your strong arguments." He instructs, warns and invites; He places before the mind the most solemn considerations, urged by duty and interest; He presses His own claims and appeals to the individual interests of the soul, but all seems ineffectual. Oh, what a view does this give us of the patience of God towards the rebellious! That He should stretch out His hand to a sinner—that, instead of wrath, there should be mercy—instead of cursing, there should be blessing—that, instead of instant punishment, there should be the patience and forbearance that invites, allures and "reasons." Oh, who is a God like unto our God? "I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded."

But, there is the special, direct and effectual call of the Spirit, in the elect of God, without which all other calling is in vain God says, "I will put my Spirit within them." Christ says, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live." And in the following passages reference is made to the effectual operation of God the Spirit. Eph. 3:7. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." 1 Thess. 2:13: "The word of God which effectually works in you that believe." Thus, through the instrumentality of the truth, the Spirit is represented as effectually working in the soul. When He called before, there was no inward, supernatural, secret power accompanying the call to the conscience. Now there is an energy put forth with the call which awakens the conscience, breaks the heart, convinces the judgment, opens the eye of the soul and pours a new and an alarming sound upon the hitherto deaf ear. Notice the blessed effects. The scales fall from the eyes, the veil is torn from the mind, the deep fountains of evil in the heart are broken up, the sinner sees himself lost and undone—without pardon, without a righteousness, without acceptance, without a God, without a Savior, without a hope! Awful condition! "What shall I do to be saved?" is his cry: "I am a wretch undone! I look within me, all is dark and vile; I look around me, everything seems but the image of my

woe; I look above me, I see only an angry God: whichever way I look, there is hell! And were He now to send me there, just and right would He be." But blessed be God, no poor soul that ever uttered such language, prompted by such feelings, ever died in despair. That faithful Spirit who begins the good work, effectually carries it on and completes it. Presently, He leads him to the cross of Jesus—unveils to his eye of glimmering faith, a suffering, wounded, bleeding, dying Savior—and yet a Savior with stretched-out arms! That Savior speaks—oh, did ever music sound so melodious? "All this I do for you—this cross for you—these sufferings for you—this blood for you—these stretched-out arms for you. Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest—him that comes to Me, I will in no way cast out—look unto Me, and be saved—only believe. Are you lost? I can save you. Are you guilty? I can cleanse you. Are you poor? I can enrich you. Have you sunk to the depths? I can raise you. Are you naked? I can clothe you. Have you nothing to bring with you—no price, no money, no goodness, no merit? I can and will take you to Myself, just as you are; poor, naked, penniless, worthless, for such I came to seek, such I came to call, for such I came to die." "Lord, I believe," exclaims the poor, convinced soul, "help my unbelief. You are just the Savior that I need. I needed one that could and would save me with all my vileness, with all my rags, with all my poverty—I needed one that would save me fully, save me freely, save me as an act of mere unmerited, undeserved grace—I have found Him whom my soul loves—and will be His through time, and His through eternity." Thus effectually does the blessed Spirit call a sinner, by His special, direct and supernatural power, out of darkness into marvellous light. "I will work," says God, "and who shall let it?" (marg. turn it back).

This great work the Holy Spirit sustains in the soul. As he is the Author, so he is the Supporter. He breathed the spiritual life, and He keeps, and nourishes, and watches over it. Let it not be supposed that there is anything in this life that could keep itself. There is no principle in Divine grace that can keep this life from decline and decay. If it is not watched over, nourished, sustained, and revived perpetually by the same omnipotent power that implanted it there, it is liable to constant decline. What experienced child of God has not felt this? Where is the believer who has not been made, solemnly and painfully, to learn it? That there is not a grace of the Spirit in him, but that grace needs, at times, greatly invigorating; not a particle of faith, but it needs strengthening; not a lesson, but he needs to re-learn; not a precept, but requires to be re-written upon his heart. Now this is the work of our ever-watchful, ever-loving, ever-faithful Spirit. He watches over, with a sleepless,

loving eye, the work He has wrought in the soul. Not a moment but He has His eye upon it. By night and by day, in summer and in winter, when it decays and when it revives, He is there, its Guardian and its Protector, its Author and its Finisher.

And how does He nourish it? Spiritually. As the life is spiritual, so the support is spiritual. 1 Pet. 2:2: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." 1 Tim. 4:6: "Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." How does He nourish it? By leading the soul to Jesus, the substance of all spiritual truth. By unfolding His fulness of all grace, strength and sanctification. By leading constantly to His blood and righteousness. By teaching the believer the sweet lesson of living outside of himself, his convictions, his enjoyments, his fruitfulness; upon Christ, and Christ alone. What is there in a child of God, in his best estate, that can supply adequate nourishment and support for this principle of Divine life? He has no resources within himself. He cannot live upon evidences; how soon they are clouded! He cannot grow upon spiritual enjoyments; how soon they are gone! He cannot find nourishment in any part of the work of the Spirit within him, precious and glorious as that work is. Christ is the "true bread" that sustains the life of God in the soul of man. Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." Again, "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me." The renewed soul only lives, as it lives on Jesus; it only advances, grows, and "brings forth much fruit," as it draws its vigor, its nourishment, its support and fruitfulness simply and entirely from Christ. These again are His words, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me." Reader, it may be that for a long time you have been looking to yourself for spiritual nourishment, for strength, for comfort and for fruitfulness. And the more you have looked within yourself, the more emptiness, poverty and barrenness you have discovered. And now the blessed Spirit, the nourisher as He is the author of the life within you, may give you such a new and enlarged view of Jesus as you have never had before. It may be that He will unfold to your soul such a fulness in Him—strength for your weakness, wisdom for your folly, grace for every corruption, tenderness and sympathy for every trial—as will bring you out of your bondage, introduce you into a "large room," and cause you to exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" Thus does the Spirit nourish and sustain the work He has wrought in the soul. He leads to Jesus.

I must not omit to notice the use of sanctified trial as one means frequently made, by the Spirit, subservient to this great end. In order to stir up His own grace within us, the Lord often places us under some heavy affliction. Did He not thus deal with his servant Job, and with a host more of the Old Testament saints? Messenger upon messenger arrives, and billow upon billow rolls, but bearing the precious tidings—though they may speak roughly, as Joseph did to his brethren—of God's love to our souls, that our Brother lives, that Joseph is alive and loves us still, that there is plenty of food in Egypt, and that all we need do is simply to come and partake of it. What new life the news infuses into us! What new energy! What an impulse, what a new spring to hope, faith, joy and wondering gratitude! Blessed result when our afflictions are thus sanctified, when they arouse our souls, when they impart new energy to prayer, new vigor to faith, a new spring to hope, a new thirst for holiness, and a new motive and encouragement to trust in God. We can then truly say, "It has been good for me that I have been afflicted." Do not despise then, tried and afflicted soul, the chastenings of the Lord. He may now be about to communicate some of the most costly blessings of your life. Who can tell what mercies now await you, what covenant favors are in reserve, what new views of truth, what enlarged views of Christ, what an abiding sense of His love, what advances in holiness your covenant God and Father may, through this painful yet needed discipline, be on the eve of making you the happy partaker of? Then look up and say, "I will trust him, and not be afraid. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." In this way does the Spirit often stir up, strengthen and invigorate the Divine life in the soul by sanctifying the discipline of the covenant.

Although the limits assigned to this chapter have already been exceeded, we cannot properly close it without a brief exposition of some of the EFFECTS OR FRUITS OF REGENERATION as manifest in the spirit and life of a believer. We have incidentally touched upon some of them as we have passed along, yet there remains a few essential and prominent marks to be considered.

The first evidence we would mention is holiness. This appears to be the order of the Holy Spirit. 1 John 3:9: "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This is a solemn and important point. None more so. When we think how Satan can counterfeit God's work; when we remember how much false, spurious Christianity there is in the world, yes, even in the professing world, we cannot but feel peculiar solemnity here. But God has stamped His own

work with His own seal, and a mind taught of the Spirit cannot fail to recognize it.

Let us repeat the passage: "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." These words have received two interpretations, which we believe are equally true. The more general one is that he who is born of God does not willingly sin. Having "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," he cannot sin with the full consent and concurrence of the will. He hates it, he fights against it, he resists it. But, it may be inquired, is not all sin an act of the will? We reply, not the renewed will. The apostle speaks of two wills in a believer, or rather, the same will under two opposite influences. "When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it." Romans 7:19-20. Few will question that Paul here speaks of himself as a regenerate man. And yet he refers to two antagonistic principles dwelling in him; one is on the side of holiness, the other on the side of sin. "What I hate, that I do." No man can possibly hate sin, unless he is "born of the Spirit." "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." And still he says, "what I hate"—the sin that is so abhorrent to me, "that I do." Is there volition in the act? True philosophy demands that we reply, "Yes." Every sin must be voluntary; if not so, it cannot be sin. Is there the concurrence and consent of the renewed will in the act? True grace demands that we reply, "No." "For what I hate"—there is the mark of the regenerate man, "that do I"—there is the act of the will under the influence of indwelling sin.

But, there is another and a stronger interpretation of which the passage is susceptible. It is this. He that is born of God, as such does not sin at all; there is in him a regenerate soul, an indwelling, living principle of grace and holiness, whose natural and constant bias is to holiness. "He (the new man) cannot sin, because he is born of God." "He cannot sin." Why? "Because his seed remains in him." And what is that seed? 1 Peter 1:23, "incorruptible"—being born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." In accordance with Christ's own words, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is spiritual, holy, "from above," "the Divine nature"—it "CANNOT sin, because it is born of God."

Here then is the great evidence of regeneration. Let not the reader mistake it. Aware how tender the conscience of a dear child of God often is—how acutely

alive to every view of truth that appears condemnatory, how prone to self-accusation, thinking hard and bitter things, calling that nature which is grace, extracting sometimes from the very consolations of God's word, material for self-condemnation—We would here tenderly caution the Christian reader against a misinterpretation of what we have advanced in the preceding sections. We are far from asserting that sin does not still exist in the regenerate. Paul himself speaks in Rom. 7:20 of the "sin that dwells in me." The entire testimony of God's Word and the histories of all the saints recorded in its pages go to confirm the doctrine that indwelling sin remains in a believer. The Lord has wisely, we must acknowledge, so ordained it that sin should yet remain in His people to the very last step of their journey. And for this he has graciously provided His word as a storehouse of promises, consolations, cautions, rebukes, admonitions, all referring to the indwelling sin of a believer. The covenant of grace—all its sanctifying, strengthening, invigorating and animating provision—all was designed for this very state. The gift of Jesus—all His fulness of grace, wisdom, strength, and sympathy, His death, resurrection, ascension and advocacy—all this was given with a special view to the pardon and subjection of sin in a child of God. Perfect holiness, entire sinlessness, is a state not attainable in this life. He who has settled down with the conviction that he has arrived at such a stage, has great reason to suspect the soundness, or at least the depth of his real knowledge of himself. He, indeed, must be but imperfectly acquainted with his own heart who dreams of perfect sanctification on this side of glory. With all meekness and tenderness, we would earnestly exhort such an individual to review his position well, to bring his heart to the touchstone of God's Word, to pray over the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and to ascertain if there are not periods when the experience of an inspired apostle, once "caught up to the third heaven," will not apply to him—"I am carnal, sold under sin"—the "sin that dwells in me." The writings and the preaching of men, mistaken views of truth—yes, I would add, even what was once a sincere and ardent desire for sanctification—any one of these, or all combined, may have led to the adoption of such a notion as sinless perfection, the nature and tendency of which is to engender a spirit of human pride, self-trust and self-complacency; to throw the mind off its guard, and the heart off its prayerful vigilance, and thus render the man an easy prey to that subtle and ever-prowling enemy, of whose "devices" (and this is not the least one) no believer should be "ignorant."

O yes, sin, often deep and powerful, dwells in a child of God. It is the source of his greatest grief, the cause of his acutest sorrow. Remove this, and sorrow in

the main would be a stranger to his breast. Go and ask that weary, dejected, weeping believer the cause of his broken spirit, his sad countenance, his tears. "Is it," you inquire, "that you are poor in this world?" "No." "Is it that you are friendless?"

"No." "Is it that worldly prosperity does not shine upon you—your plans are blasted—your circumstances are trying—your prospects are dark?" "No." "What is it then that grieves your spirit, clouds your countenance, and that causes those clasped hands and uplifted eye?" "It is sin," the soul replies, "that dwells in me; sin is my burden, sin is my sorrow, sin is my grief, sin is my confession, sin is my humiliation before my Father and God; rid me of this, and the outward pressure would scarcely be felt." Truly does the apostle say—and let the declaration never be read apart from its accompanying promise—"If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely." 1 John 1:8-2:1

Again, we beg the reader to note this great evidence of regeneration: "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin." He does not commit it with the total, absolute, and complete assent and concurrence of the renewed will. He does not give himself over to sin "with greediness." "He would do good." He hates sin. Grace reigns, not sin. Sin dwells in him, but does not govern; it has power, but does not rule; it torments, but does not reign with a continued, unbroken supremacy. His experience accords with the promise, "sin shall not have dominion over you." It may for a moment triumph, as it did in David, in Peter, and in a host of other eminently holy men; yet still the promise is verified—as we see in the restorings of the blessed Spirit in their spirit and conduct, in their humblings and confessions, and holy and upright walk with God in after years—"sin shall not have dominion over you." Reader, have you ever been made aware of the plague of sin within you? What do you know of warfare in the soul, of "the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh"? Your honest reply will decide the great question whether or not you are born of God.

Secondly, there is a positive mark of regeneration. 1 John 2:29: "Every one that does righteousness is born of him." Negative holiness, the abstaining from

outward sins, does not always describe a regenerate soul. Associated with this there must be positive evidence. "Every one that does righteousness is born of him." Where there is life, there is action, motion and energy. The life of a regenerate man is a life of the highest activity. The principles that influence him are Divine and heavenly; their tendency is to holy action. The more we resemble Christ "in righteousness and true holiness," the stronger the evidence to ourselves and to others that we are born again. We possess professedly and, if not self-deceived, actually the life of Christ. That life is holy in its tendency and vigorous in its acting. The renewed soul longs for holiness. He pants for Divine conformity. He does not rest in the mere longing; he arises and labors for the blessing; he "works out his salvation with fear and trembling." He prayerfully and diligently uses the means the Lord of sanctification has given him for the attainment of holiness; he is active in his pursuit of the blessing. He does not resemble the sluggard, who rests in mere desire. "The soul of the sluggard desires, and has nothing." But he resembles the "diligent soul," of whom it is said, "Blessed is the man that hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." He seeks the blessing. He seeks it diligently, perseveringly. He "watches daily at the gates," he "waits at the posts of the doors." If he does not find it in one way, he seeks it in another. Should one door of grace be closed, he turns to another—for grace has many doors of blessing. If the ministry conveys no nourishment, he seeks it in a more retired walk. Perhaps he turns to the communion of saints, but he may find no refreshing here—for God sometimes makes his people a "dry tree." Disappointed in this channel, he turns to the revealed Word. This he finds a sealed book; no promise meets his case, no consolation speaks from its sacred page. Driven from this "door," he flies to the throne of grace. (Precious pavilion! ever verdant spot of a tempest-tossed, wearied spirit!) But alas! a cloud overshadows the mercy-seat, this last sanctuary of his soul; not the cloud of the Shekinah—the visible glory of the Lord—but the dark cloud of guilt and unbelief. Just ready all hope to resign, he goes out into the "highways and hedges" of sin and wretchedness. He enters a hovel, goes down into the cellar, or climbs up to the garret, the gloomy abode of some child of sickness, sorrow and need. He inquires for the Sabbath school child, or delivers a tract, or drops a word of reproof, rebuke, exhortation, comfort, or prayer; and while like his Divine Master he is going about doing good, the Lord the Spirit meets him with a blessing, the Sun of righteousness breaks in upon his soul, every cloud is gone, and he looks up to God's serene countenance and calls Him "Abba, Father!" Thus is he made to experience the blessedness of the man that hears God, watching daily at his gates.

Thirdly, victory over the world may be specified as another and a strongly marked feature of a regenerate man. 1 John 5:4: "Whoever is born of God overcomes the world." How does victory over the world mark one born of God? It proves it in this way. That which overcomes the world must be superhuman, of almighty power. It cannot be anything of the world, nor can it be of the flesh; for the flesh has no power over the flesh, and the world will never oppose itself. The flesh loves itself, and the world is too fond of power, quietly and unresistingly to yield its dominion. What then is that which overcomes the world? John goes on to reply, "And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." Faith then is the conquering grace; this it is that gives the victory; this it is that crushes this tremendous foe. And what is faith but the "gift of God," and the work of the eternal Spirit in the soul? So that he who possesses that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit is "born of God"; and "whatever is born of God overcomes the world," and the instrument by which he overcomes the world is faith. "Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

And how does faith overcome the world? By leading the believer to the cross of Jesus. True faith deals with its great object, Jesus. It goes to Him in the conflict, it goes to Him when hard pressed, it goes to Him in its weakness, it goes to Him in deep distress; on Him it leans, and through Him it always obtains the victory. Of the martyrs it is recorded that they "overcame through the blood of the Lamb," and Paul employs similar language in describing his victory: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It is faith in Christ that gives us the victory. How could a feeble saint, with no strength or wisdom in himself, overcome so powerful and subtle an enemy as this without supernatural aid? He never could. Look at the world! There are its ten thousand temptations, its temptations of pleasure, its temptations of ambition, its temptations of wealth, its false religion, its temporising policy, its hollow friendship, its empty show, its gay deceptions, its ten thousand arts to ensnare, beguile, allure and charm. Oh, how could one poor weak believer ever crush this fearful, powerful foe but as he is "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"? The cross of Christ gives him the victory. Christ has already conquered the world, and faith in His blood will enable the feeblest soul to exclaim, while the enemy lies subdued at his feet, "Thanks be unto God, who always causes me to triumph in Christ."

Reader, have you obtained the victory over the world, or has the world obtained the victory over you? One of the two is certain; either you are

warring against it, or you are its passive and resistless victim; either you are "born of God," and "have overcome the world," or you are yet unregenerate, and the world has overcome you. On whose side is the victory? Perhaps you profess faith in the Lord Jesus, yet love the world, and conform to its maxims, its policy, its principles, its fashions, its dress, its amusements, even its very religion—for it has its hollow forms of religion. Is it so? Then hear what the Word of the Lord says to you. "Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you." 1 John 2:15. A solemn declaration for you, you who profess faith in Christ, and who are still lovers of the world! You cannot love God, and love the world at the same time. Do not be deceived! The outward garb will not save you. The mere name, the empty lamp—these will avail you nothing when you come to die. If the world has never been ejected from your heart, if you have never been crucified to it, then the love of God is not there; if the love of God is absent, then you are a stranger to the new birth.

There is another and a peculiar snare of the world to which the saints of God are exposed; and because many have fallen into it, and not a few have in consequence greatly embittered their happiness, retarded their holiness and dishonored God, we would briefly, and in this connection, touch upon it with all tenderness and affection. We allude to the formation of matrimonial alliances between the saints of God and the unregenerate world. The Word of God is against a union so unholy and so productive of evil as this. Not a precept authorizes it, not a precedent encourages it, not a promise sanctions it, not a blessing hallows it! Indeed, so far is God from authorizing it, that He expressly forbids it. Thus, 2 Cor. 6:14-18: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? and what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." How strong the command, how conclusive the argument, and how persuasive and touching the appeal! Could it be more so? The command is—that a believer not be yoked with an unbeliever. The argument is—he is a temple of God. The appeal is—God will be a Father to such, and they shall be His children, who walk obediently to this command. There are many solemn considerations

which seem to urge this precept upon the believer. A child of God is not his own. He does not belong to himself. "You are not your own." His soul and body are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and therefore he is Christ's. He must not, he cannot, dispose of himself. He belongs to the Lord, and has no authority to give away either soul or body. O that this solemn fact could be written upon every believer's heart, "You are not your own. You are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." May the eternal Spirit now engrave it deeply and indelibly there! But more than this, if this were not enough to urge the command upon a believer, his body is the "temple of the living God"! How solemn and weighty is this consideration! And shall he take "the temple of God," and unite it with one who is a stranger to His grace, to His love, to His Son? with one whose "mind is enmity against God," and whose heart beats not one throb of love to Jesus? God forbid! "Know you not," says James, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" Then for a believer to form with an unbeliever an alliance so close and so lasting as this, involving interests so important and so precious, is to enter into a league with an enemy of God. It is to covenant, and that for life, with a despiser of the Lord Jesus!

It is no extenuation of this breach of God's command that the Lord has frequently, in the exercise of His sovereign grace, made the believing party instrumental to the conversion of the unbelieving party. He can, and often does, bring good out of evil, order out of confusion, "making the wrath of man to praise him," and causing events that were designed to thwart His purposes to be the very means of promoting them. But this is no encouragement to sin; and when sin is committed, this is but poor consolation. And to enter into a compact of the nature we are deprecating, with a conscience quieted and soothed with the reflection that "the wife may save the husband, or the husband may save the wife," is presumption of the highest kind, a presumption which God may punish with a disappointment as bitter as it is overwhelming. Let no dear child of God be allured into an alliance so unholy, by a consideration so specious as this. Many have fallen into the snare, and have covered themselves with shame and confusion.

To the believer himself, forming an alliance so contrary to the express injunction of God's Word, the evils arising from it are many and grievous. To say nothing of the lack of what must ever be considered essential to the mutual happiness of the union—oneness of mind, harmony of sentiment, congruity of spirit—there are lacking the higher elements of happiness—the mutual faith of each other in Christ, the communion of redeemed spirits, the

holy communion of renewed minds, the unutterable sweetness of talking of Jesus by the way, and as "heirs together of the grace of life," the joy of looking forward to the reunion of the glorified beyond the grave. It is, from the very nature of things, impossible that these elements of happiness should exist in the relation we are considering. The individuals thus united are inhabitants of different countries; one is an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger and a foreigner," the other is a "fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God"; they speak different languages, are traveling opposite roads, and are journeying towards different countries. Surely we may ask, What real union and communion can exist here?

But more than this. There are not merely negative evils, but positive evils resulting from such a connection. The influences that are perpetually exerting their power are hostile to all growth in grace, to any advance in sanctification and to an upright and holy walk with God. The temptations to inconsistency of Christian conduct are many, perpetual and alarming. The constant influence of worldly conversation, worldly example and worldly pursuits weakens by slow but certain degrees the spiritual life of the soul, impairs the taste for (and lessens the enjoyment in) spiritual duties, unfits the mind for communion with God, and opens the door for an almost endless train of departures. We do not claim that all these evils are realized; but we do say that the believer who so shapes his course is fearfully exposed to them; and that he has not been, or may not be, overcome of them is of the mere grace of God. The evils themselves are the necessary sequences of his departure from God's Word; and that he is preserved from the direst of them is only of the covenant mercies of that God, who, in the midst of all their temptations, is alone able to keep His people from falling.

A child of God, passing through this valley of tears, requires all the spiritual assistance he can meet with to urge him on his way. All the strength, the comfort, the encouragement, and all the support it is possible for him to obtain from any and every quarter, he needs to call into full exercise, in order to bear up against the many and peculiar difficulties that throng his path, and would keep him from advancing. Infirmities within and impediments without, inward corruptions and outward trials, the strugglings of sin and the assaults of Satan, all conspire to cast him down, and often to extort from him David's exclamation, "My soul cleaves to the dust." At such a period, how strengthening, how supporting, how encouraging and how animating the communion and soothings of a kindred spirit—a spirit one with himself! If it be true—and most true it is—that "as iron sharpens iron, so does the

countenance of a man his friend," to a much greater degree, and in a more endearing sense, is this reciprocity experienced in the high and endearing relation we are considering. The godly husband and the godly wife are true helpmeets to each other. They belong to the same family, speak the same sweet language, are traveling the same happy road, and are journeying to the same blissful home. For a child of God, then, to unite himself to one who can be of no assistance to him in his journey, but rather a hindrance—who, when he speaks of conflicts, cannot understand them; of burdens, cannot lighten them; of perplexities, cannot guide them; of trials, cannot share them; of sorrows, cannot soothe them; and of joys and hopes, cannot participate in them—is indeed to mark out for himself a lonely and a desolate path, which may know no termination of its trial until it conducts him to the grave. To the Christian reader who may already have taken the step, we would say, with much affection, guard vigilantly against its hurtful consequences. Necessary as they are, they may, in a degree, be greatly mitigated. Draw largely from the grace that is in Christ Jesus, treasured up for all the circumstances and the necessities of His people. Be doubly prayerful, watchful, and humble; let your whole deportment be marked by the fear of God, a jealous regard for His honor, and a beautiful harmony with the high "vocation with which you are called"—and may God overrule the event to His glory and your real good.

To others we would say, guard against this needless and unscriptural entanglement with the world. Marry "only in the Lord." "In all your ways acknowledge him." Let His Word be your guide, His fear your rule, His glory your aim, and He will direct your paths through life, sustain you in death and conduct you safely to His heavenly kingdom.

As we review the subject of this chapter, many important considerations suggest themselves, which in closing can be allowed but a brief and passing notice. The first is, how high the obligation to live to God! Are we born again? Can we think of the "horrible pit, the miry clay," the "valley of bones," the "rock where we were hewn," and then remember, that if we are born again, we have in our souls at this moment the buddings of eternal life? Oh, can we think of this, and not desire an unreserved surrender of all we are and all we have to God? Christian! watch over your principles, your daily walk, your communion with the world, and see that the evidences of the new birth signalise every action of your life. The world is a close observer. Narrowly and vigilantly are you watched. It weighs your actions, scrutinizes your motives, sifts your principles, and ponders all your steps, waiting for your halting. Disappoint it! Live out your religion, carry out your principles; they are

designed not merely for the Sabbath, but for the week; not merely to be exhibited in the place and at the hour of prayer, and in social Christian communion, but they are to be carried into your haunts of business, into your shop, your counting-house, your study, your profession. You are to exhibit them, not in a spirit of ostentation, but in "lowliness of mind" in all your communion with a world lying in wickedness. To be born again! Oh, it is a mighty work! Let the evidences of its reality in you be such as shall compel the gainsayer to admire the work, though he may hate the change. Oh, be in spirit—in temper—in life—like Jesus.

Have not even you, who may be tried and afflicted, much to make you praise God? Born again! How light are your afflictions when compared with this! Take the scales and weigh the two. Place in one your every sorrow. Is it domestic?—place it there. Is it personal—a nervous frame, a feeble constitution, trying circumstances?—place it there. Are friends unfaithful, are saints unkind, does the world frown?—place it all there. Then in the other put your hidden life, your sense of pardon and your hope of heaven; these outweigh them all. "For I reckon," says Paul, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Unconverted reader, what solemn truth does this subject address to you! You must have perceived that the Word of God sets before you a new mold into which you must be cast. It professes to work a great change in you, in the hands of the eternal Spirit, not of opinions only, but of your nature, of your heart. Is this done? Do not turn away from the question; do not lightly pass it by—your all depends upon the answer to it. Eternity hangs upon the issue. I ask not what you hold, what you know, or what you profess, but what you are. Are you born again? Are you a new creature? Do not say, "peace, peace, when there is no peace." You may persuade yourself, or be persuaded by others, that regeneration is all enthusiasm, a delusion and a lie, and yet,

"This fearful truth will still remain,
The sinner must be born again,
Or sink to endless woe."

**"The Indwelling of the Spirit"
or "The Believer a Temple"**

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1 Cor. 6:19

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 1 Cor. 6:19

Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 1 Cor. 6:19

That the religion of our adorable Immanuel is a reality—no airy fiction, as is the Mohammedan, and no "cunningly devised fable," as is the Romish—many, conclusive and precious are the evidences. There is however, to the true believer, one evidence which, apart from, and superior to all others, affixes the seal of credibility; this is the conviction of its truth arising from the indwelling of the Spirit in the heart. There is in this great truth, something so palpable, so undoubted and so self-evident, that no sophistry of man, no ingenuity of Satan and no knowledge of the deep evil of our fallen nature can weaken or overthrow it. It is God Himself, as it were, taking the witness-stand and, setting aside all other testimony, challenging everything that would reduce His own work to a mere non-entity and exclaiming, "Who is he that condemns?" Clad in the armor of this evidence, the feeblest disciple of Jesus takes higher ground in vindication of the truth of the Gospel than the acutest reasoner who is destitute of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is true that the conviction arising from this source of evidence is the strongest and most convincing to his own mind; yet there is, in the simplicity, the honesty and the boldness with which his belief is declared, that which carries a powerful conviction to the minds of others. He may be challenged by the skeptic, there may be objections which he cannot meet, arguments which he cannot answer, difficulties which he cannot explain and sophisms which he cannot unravel; and yet the "witness within himself" shall throw such vigor into his reasoning and tenderness into his spirit, and shall invest his whole demeanor with an air of sincerity so touching that his accusers shall be compelled to pay him the tribute once awarded to his Lord, "he speaks as one having authority." He believes and has experienced what he declares, and thus God has given him a "mouth and wisdom, which all his adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

But let it not be supposed that we regard the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer as presenting merely, or even mainly, an evidence in favor of the

truth of the Gospel. This undoubtedly demands a distinct and grateful recognition. But we must not rest here. We are to take a more enlarged view of the glory of God, as unfolded in this most holy and blessed doctrine—His glory as secured to Him in the comfort, holiness and filial walk of the believer who is conscious that he is a temple of the Holy Spirit. We feel the subject to be one of great and solemn importance. Its vastness is almost overpowering. The bare thought that the "high and lofty One, inhabiting eternity, whose name is Holy," should dwell with man, yes, in him—that He should take out of the fallen race of His creatures a people whose hearts should be so renewed and sanctified as to form a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit—that this heavenly visitant should take up His abode there in all His regenerating, sanctifying, sealing and comforting influences—the bare thought of this seems almost too illimitable and glorious for a poor finite mind to grasp! And yet, reader, the consolation flowing from this subject is so great, and the motives to holiness drawn from it so persuasive, and God so glorified by it, that we feel constrained to place it in the foreground of this treatise. May He Himself draw near, unfold His own truth to our minds, and sanctify us through its holy influence!

The first thought that presents itself to the mind as we look into this great subject is that suggested by the passage placed at the head of this chapter: "Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?" The great idea here conveyed is that **THE BELIEVER IS A TEMPLE, THE RESIDENT OF THAT TEMPLE BEING GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.** With the converted Corinthians, to whom these words were addressed, the figure would be at once striking and significant; the magnificent city in which they dwelt abounded with gorgeous temples erected to the honor of supposed deities, at whose idolatrous and superstitious rites they had frequently attended in the days of their ignorance. Drawing their minds away from the service of idols (while at the same time using the concept of a heathen temple as an illustration of his fine idea) the apostle, by an easy and a beautiful transition of thought, leads them to consider themselves as temples in an eminent and holy sense—formed, consecrated and adorned for the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit. There is a depth of important and spiritual truth in this idea which we desire to unfold, as the Divine Teacher shall Himself "anoint us with that anointing which teaches us of all things."

In contemplating the believer as a temple of the Holy Spirit, it is natural and proper to consider the condition of the soul previous to the entrance of the Spirit of God. Man, in his original constitution, was a glorious temple. Two

facts will prove it. First, he was like God in his moral image; and second, God dwelt in him. He was in every respect worthy of such a resident. He was the holy temple of a holy God. Not a flaw was there. The entire man was holy. There was perfect knowledge in the judgment, perfect holiness in the will, and perfect love in the heart. "Holiness to the Lord," was the inscription written on every window and every door, yes, on every part of this temple. A beautiful structure was man in his original state! Well did the mighty Architect, as He gazed upon His work, pronounce it "very good"!

But behold what sin has done! Man has lost his original resemblance to God. It is true that he still retains his spiritual, intelligent and immortal nature, these he can never lose. But as for his moral likeness to God in knowledge, purity, justice, truth and benignity, these glorious lineaments are blotted from his soul, and darkness, impurity, desolation and death reign there. With the obliteration of moral resemblance, the soul has lost all love to God. More than this; there is not only the absence of love but, as we have shown in a former chapter, there is positive enmity. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," that enmity showing itself in a thousand ways, principally in its seeking to dethrone God. From his affections he has dethroned Him. To eject Him from the throne of His moral government in the universe is the great and constant aim of the carnal mind. If this is not so, why this perpetual war against God—against His being, His law, His will, His supreme authority to govern and reign? Why this refusal to acknowledge and obey Him? "Who is the Lord God, that I should obey him?" Oh, there is no mystery in the case! Man has revolted from God and, having thrown off all allegiance to Him as his Sovereign, he seeks to be a God to himself. Self is to him what Jehovah once was—the object of supreme delight. Having cast out God, he moves in a circle of which he himself is the center—all he does is from self, and for self. From this all the lines diverge, and to this they all again return.

It needs not the argument or the illustration of a moment to show that such being the moral destitution of man, God has ceased to dwell in him. The temple polluted, defaced and destroyed, the Divine Resident has gone, and the heart, once so sweet a home of Deity, is now the dwelling-place of all sin. Another occupant has taken possession of the ruin; and, like ancient Babylon, it has become the den of every ravenous beast, a habitation of dragons and the impure abode of every foul, malignant passion. Reader, it is as impossible that God can make your heart His dwelling-place, while every thought and feeling and passion is up in arms against Him, as it would be for Christ to dwell with Belial, or light to commingle with darkness. You must be renewed in the spirit

of your mind. You must be born again.

But it was God's eternal and gracious purpose to restore this temple. Satan had despoiled His work, sin had marred His image; but both usurpers He would eject, and the ruin of both He would repair. Oh, what mercy, infinite, eternal and free, was this that set Him upon a work so glorious! What could have moved Him but His own love, what could have contrived the plan but His own wisdom, and what could have executed it but His own power? In the restoration of this temple, man was no auxiliary. He could be none. His destruction was his own, his recovery was God's. He ruined himself; that ruin he could not himself repair. The work of restoration is a greater achievement of Divine power than was the work of creation. To repair the temple when ruined was more glorious than to create it. In one day He made man; He was four thousand years in redeeming man. It cost Him nothing to create a soul; it cost Him His dear Son to save it. And who can estimate that cost? He met with no opposition in creating man; in re-creating him, Satan, the world, even man himself, is against Him.

We have said that it was God's gracious and eternal purpose to restore this ruined temple. The first step which He took in accomplishing this great work was His assumption of our nature, as though He Himself would be the model from which the new temples should be formed. This was one of the profoundest acts of God's wisdom, one of the greatest demonstrations of His love. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (marg. tabernacled among us). His human body, the temple; his Godhead, the indwelling Deity. Was ever a temple so glorious as this? "Immanuel, God with us." "God manifest in the flesh." O awful mystery! what imagination can conceive, what mind can fathom it? We can but stand upon the shore of this vast ocean of wisdom and love, and exclaim, "O the depth!" "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." This was the first step towards His work of replenishing the earth with spiritual temples, to be filled now and eternally with the Divine presence and glory. The entire success and glory of His undertaking rested here. This was the foundation of the structure. He could only obey the law, as He was "made of a woman"; He could only "redeem those who were under the law," as He was God in our nature. The absolute necessity, then, of His Godhead will instantly appear. Had the basis of the great work He was about to achieve been laid in any other doctrine, anything inferior, less holy, less dignified; had the foundation been laid in mere creature excellence, however exalted that excellence might be, there could have been neither strength, permanency, nor glory in the temple. It

would have fallen before the first storm of temptation, and fearful would have been its destruction. God well knew at what cost the work of redemption would be achieved. He knew what His violated law demanded, what His inflexible justice required, and through what costly channel His love must flow; therefore "He laid help upon one that was mighty" — "mighty to save." And what was the secret of His might? His absolute deity. Take a lower view than this, and you reduce the work of Christ to nothing; you tear the soul from the body, pluck the sun from the firmament, wrench the keystone from the arch and the foundation from the building. But look at His work through His Godhead, and oh, how vast, how costly, how glorious does it appear; what a basis for a poor sinner to build upon; what a resting-place for the weary soul; what faith, hope, and assurance does it inspire; how perfect the obedience, how infinitely efficacious the blood, and how prevailing the intercession—all derived from the Godhead of Jesus. Glorious temple were You, blessed Son of God!

But this temple was to be destroyed. Jesus must die! This was the second step in the accomplishment of the great work. Thus did he announce the fact to the obtuse and incredulous Jews: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "He spoke of the temple of his body." His death was as necessary to the satisfaction of justice, as His life of obedience had been to the fulfilling of the law. As the Substitute of His people, He must yield up His life; as the Surety of the covenant, He must completely surrender Himself into the hands of Divine justice; as the Testator of His own will, there must of necessity be His death, otherwise the testament would have been of no force at all while He lived. There was no possible avenue for His escape, even had He sought it. He or His people must die. He must taste the bitterness of the death that was temporal, or His elect must have tasted of the bitterness of the death that was eternal. O yes, Jesus wished to die. Never for one moment did He really shrink from the combat. He well knew the conditions upon which He had entered into a covenant engagement on behalf of His people. He knew that the price of their pardon was His own blood, that His death was their life, and that His gloomy path through the grave was their bright passage to eternal glory. Knowing all this, and with the awful scene of Calvary full in view—the cross, the sufferings of the body, the deathly sorrow of the soul—He yet panted for the arrival of the moment that was to finish the work His Father had given Him to do. How ready was Jesus thus to die? Where this eagerness? It sprang from His great love to sinners. Oh, this was it! We must go down to the secret depth of His love, if we would solve the mystery of His willingness to die. "God commends his love toward us, in that,

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Thus was the "temple of His body" destroyed, that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." See, reader, the source of your free pardon, the ground of your humble trust, the secret of your "strong consolation." It is all involved in the death of Jesus. You cannot ask too much, you cannot expect too much, you cannot repose too much at the foot of the cross. All is mercy here—all is love—all is peace. Sin cannot condemn, Satan cannot tempt, the world cannot allure, conscience cannot accuse; "there is no condemnation" to a poor soul that shelters itself beneath the cross of Jesus. Here every dark cloud withdraws, and all is sunny; here every tear is dried, but that of joy; and every voice is hushed, but that of praise.

But a third step in the accomplishment of this stupendous design was the resurrection of Christ. This formed an essential and glorious part of His work, in preparing a way for the personal and permanent residence of the Holy Spirit. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." Great stress is laid upon this doctrine in the Word. And the child of God may be but imperfectly aware what an essential pillar it is to his hope, and how sanctifying and comforting the blessings are that spring from a full belief in it. The resurrection of Jesus is the great seal to the character and perfection of His work. Indeed, without this Divine attestation His work would never have effected our salvation. His perfect keeping of the law and His suffering unto death were but parts of the vast plan, and, taken separately and distinctly, were not capable of perfecting the salvation of the church. The apostle so reasons. "And if Christ was not raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your trust in God is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God, for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave, but that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished!" 1 Cor. 15:14-18. A moment's reflection will justify the conclusions which the apostle deduces from the supposition that Christ had not risen.

Our dear Lord endured the "curse of the law"; a part of that curse was death—death legal, death temporal, death eternal. He was "made a curse for us," and died. So long as He remained imprisoned in the grave, "death had dominion over him." We would have looked in vain to His obedience and sufferings for the proof of the all-sufficiency and acceptableness of His

satisfaction, as long as the iron scepter of the king of terrors held Him in subjection. O what a momentous period were the three days that intervened between the giving up the spirit upon the cross, and the bursting of the tomb! The salvation of the whole church hung upon it. All who had already "fallen asleep" in Him, and all whom it was the purpose of God yet to call, were deeply interested in this one fact. But on the third day the destroyed temple was raised again; death had no more dominion over Him, its sting was extracted, its scepter was broken, the curse was rolled away, and the redemption of the church was complete. "He was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification."

Let the Christian reader fully believe this one truth, that Jesus is alive again, and it will afford to his soul greater confirmation of the veracity of God's character, of the truth of His Word, and of the perfection and all-sufficiency of Christ's work, than all other truths beside. Is Jesus alive at the right hand of God? Then the debt is paid, and justice is satisfied. Is Jesus alive at the right hand of God? Then the Father is well pleased in the work of His Son, and He "rests in His love, and rejoices over His church with singing." Is Jesus alive? Then every promise shall be fulfilled, and all the blessings of the everlasting covenant shall be freely bestowed, and I, a poor worthless sinner, yet resting upon His atoning work, shall live also. May the Holy Spirit lead you into the full belief—the belief of the heart as well as of the judgment—of this glorious truth. It is the keystone of the temple. Press it as you will, the more you lean upon it, the stronger you will find it; the more you rest upon it, the firmer will grow your hope. Only receive it in simple faith, Jesus is alive—alive for you; all you need in this valley of tears is here; all your temporal mercies are secured to you here; all your spiritual blessings are laid up for you here. Such is the great charter, such are the immense, untold blessings it contains, that, come how you will, come when you will, and "ask what you will, it shall be granted you of the Father," because Jesus is at His right hand. Well may we take up the dauntless challenge of the apostle, "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died; yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Your salvation is complete, your heaven secure, and all victory, happiness and glory bound up in this one great fact. Then may we not again exclaim with Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Thus have we briefly traced the successive steps which God took to prepare

the way for the permanent indwelling of the Spirit in the believer. Through the incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ, a way was opened by which God could again dwell with man, could resume His abode in the very temple that sin had destroyed, and show forth the riches and glory of His grace far more illustriously than when this temple stood in its original perfection and grandeur. Here was the foundation of every successive temple that grace was about to raise. "Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." On the dignity of His person, finished righteousness, perfect atonement, all-sufficient grace and inviolable faithfulness, believers, "as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. 4:5), for the everlasting indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

In passing now more specifically to the consideration of the indwelling of the Spirit, we proceed to adduce the testimony He Himself has borne to the doctrine. In the following passages the truth is unfolded. Looking into the Old Testament, shadowy as the period was in which that part of the inspired Word was written, we yet find clear intimation of the doctrine before us. Ezek. 36:27: "And I will put my Spirit within you." Ezek. 37:14: "And I shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live." In the New Testament the doctrine opens upon our view with increasing power and brightness. Our Lord's own words are familiar. John 14:16, 17: "And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you." Rom. 8:9: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you." Ver. 11: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," etc. 1 Cor. 3:16: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" 1 Cor. 6:19: "What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" 2 Cor. 6: 16: "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them," etc. Eph. 2:22: "In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." We will not multiply quotations; it is sufficiently clear that the indwelling of the Spirit is a revealed doctrine of Scripture. We proceed to develop it.

When does the Holy Spirit enter a soul? We reply, at the moment of its regeneration. This is His first gracious act. Previous to this, all is dark,

desolate and dead, as we have in other places fully shown. What pen is adequate to describe the moral desolation, the fearful dilapidation of the soul of man, before the Spirit enters, bringing in His train, life, light and order? One brief sentence of Divine truth will more correctly and vividly describe it than the most elaborate human production. "Sensual, having not the Spirit." But the Spirit enters. He comes, in accordance with the eternal purpose, in harmony with the covenant of grace, borne on the wings of His own love, and traveling in the greatness of His own strength. What a triumphal entry, when He takes possession of the temple, already purchased by the Savior's blood! At His approach, darkness, enmity, pollution and death retire, and are succeeded by light, love, holiness and life. It is true that He meets with fierce opposition from within, for "the strong man armed keeps his palace," and "his goods are in peace"; but "a stronger than he comes," and puts to flight all opposition, bends the will, subdues the enmity, dissolves the heart and implants the sweet response, "Come in, blessed of the Lord, why do you stand outside? Enter, and take full possession for Yourself. Long have I closed my heart against You, too long have I resisted all Your importunities. But now You have conquered and prevailed; come in, blessed Spirit, and seal me for Your own." O blissful moment, when the Spirit enters, convincing of sin, breaking the heart with godly sorrow, laying the soul low in the dust in the spirit of self-abasement and self-condemnation before God, then leading it to the atoning blood of Jesus and speaking pardon and peace to the conscience.

The Spirit dwells in the believer as a manifestation of the Divine glory. The temple that Solomon built was one of great magnificence and splendor. But it was an earthly glory; and although He who "dwells not in temples made with hands" condescended to reveal Himself in it, yet it possessed no glory in comparison with the glory that was to exist in the new spiritual temple which the Holy Spirit was to erect and inhabit. Speaking of the legal dispensation, with which the temple prepared by David and built by Solomon was designed to harmonize, the apostle argues that it possessed no glory in comparison with the Gospel economy. And why? Because there was less of the Spirit in the former than in the present dispensation. It was the enlarged manifestation of the Spirit, especially His indwelling of the saints, which constituted the peculiar and far-surpassing glory of the new economy. "How shall not (says he) the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excels."

The superior glory of the new dispensation then is that it is more spiritual; there is a more enlarged and rich effusion of the quickening, sanctifying and sealing influences of the Holy Spirit; there is more of Christ, more of the holy liberty of adoption, a more simple, spiritual and child-like approach to God. But especially does the indwelling of the Spirit in the saints form a distinguished feature of the new economy. Here is an especial manifestation of the Divine glory. That the Spirit should, on the broad basis of Immanuel's finished atoning work, call a poor sinner by grace, regenerate, sanctify and then take possession of him forever, dwell in him, witness in him, work in him and make him fit for the inheritance of the saints in light—this is a marvellous display of the Divine glory. The electing love, infinite wisdom and omnipotent power of God are glorified; the atoning work, all-sufficient grace and unspeakable compassion of Jesus are glorified, the irresistible power, infinite patience and efficacious work of the Spirit are glorified in the soul that becomes "a habitation of God through the Spirit." We even dare assert that the conversion of a soul, the sustaining of the work wrought in that soul, the keeping of the believer through a long life of holy, upright and close walk with God, and the bringing of him safe to eternal happiness, are greater displays of the mighty power of God and more glorify Him than the creation of ten thousand worlds like ours.

The Spirit dwells in the believer as the ever-living Spirit of all grace and comfort. All that is really holy and gracious in a child of God is found in the work of the indwelling Spirit. All the holy breathings and desires of the soul, all the longings for God and for conformity to His will and image, all that is lovely and like Jesus in the saint, are the result of this gracious act of the eternal Spirit. The Lord Jesus Himself would direct us to this truth. John 4:4: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." That this well of water is the indwelling of the Spirit, seems clear from the 10th verse: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If you knew the gift of God," etc.; that "gift of God" was the Holy Spirit, alluded to again still more emphatically in ch. 7:38, 39: "He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which those who believe on him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Here is a gracious truth. The Spirit in every believer is a deep and living well of all spiritual blessings. He dwells in the soul "not like a stagnant pool, but like an ever-living fountain that flows at all seasons of the year, in heat and

cold, and in all external circumstances of weather, whether foul or fair, wet or dry." Nature could not produce that which the indwelling Spirit accomplishes in the saints of God. The hungering and the thirsting for righteousness, the rising of the heart in filial love to God, the sweet submission to His sovereign will, the longing for more knowledge of Christ, the constant struggling with the law of sin, the mourning over the indwelling principle of sin; all this is above and far beyond nature. It is the fruit, the precious fruit, of the indwelling spirit.

It may be, reader, that your heart is often anxious to know in what way you may distinguish between nature and grace, how you may clearly discern between that which is legal and that which is spiritual, between that which is the work of man, and that which is the work of God. In this way you may trace the vast difference—that which at first came from God, returns to God again. It rises to the source where it descended. Divine grace in a sinner's heart is a springing well—"a well of water springing up into eternal life." Did nature ever teach a soul the plague of its own heart? Never! Did nature ever lay the soul in the dust before God, mourning and weeping over sin? Never! Did nature ever inspire the soul with pantings for God and thirstings for holiness? Never! And did it ever endear the throne of grace, and make precious to the soul the atoning blood, the justifying righteousness of Jesus? Never! never! All this as much transcends the power of nature as the creating of a world. Is this your real state, reader? O look up! "Flesh and blood" did not reveal it to you—but the eternal God has revealed it and that by the indwelling of His own blessed Spirit in your heart.

We must not overlook His indwelling as a Spirit of holiness. This is His great and crowning work in a believer. It is in vain that we look for Him as a Witness, or as a Spirit of comfort, if we slight Him as a Sanctifier. Although we have assigned a distinct chapter to the subject of the sanctification of the Spirit, we would yet briefly allude to it in connection with His indwelling of the saints. The work of holiness forms a great and glorious part of His operation as the Indweller of His people. He has come to restore, not only order, but purity to the temple. He has come to restore the reign of holiness, to set up the law of God in the soul, to unfold its precepts, and to write them upon the heart, and, shedding abroad the love of Christ, under its gentle but powerful constraint to lead the believer to "run the way of God's commandments." He is pre-eminently a "Spirit of holiness" in the believer. For a more full unfolding of the manner in which the Spirit carries forward the work of holiness in the soul, the reader is referred to the chapter on that

subject.

Nor must it be forgotten that He dwells in the believer as an abiding Spirit. It is a permanent indwelling. Our dear Lord laid especial stress upon this feature. When on the eve of leaving His disciples to return to His throne, He promised them "another Comforter," whose spiritual presence should more than make up for the loss of His bodily presence. And lest there should be any painful apprehensions as to the time of His dwelling with them, He assures those who the Spirit should abide with them forever. "And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." Do not overlook this truth. Let no spiritual darkness, no workings of unbelief, no sense of indwelling sin, rob you of the comfort and consolation which a believing view of it will impart. There may be periods when you are not sensible of the indwelling of the Spirit. Clouds and darkness may be around this doctrine; there may be severe trials, gloomy providences, foreboding fears, the way rough and intricate, the sky dark and wintry, faith small, unbelief powerful, and your soul, from its low depths, led to exclaim, "All these things are against me. Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? does his promise fail for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? has he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Oh do not forget that even then, dejected saint of God, then when all is dark within and all is desolate without, then the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and the Comforter and the Glorifier of Jesus, dwells in you, and shall be with you forever. True, you may be assailed by powerful corruptions, the "consolations of God few and small" with you, and your prayer like David's, "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me"; yet He, the blessed Indweller, is there, and His still, small and soothing voice shall soon be heard amid the roaring of the tempest, hushing it to a peaceful calm. He shall "abide with you forever." No wanderings, no neglect, no unkindness, no unworthiness, no unfaithfulness shall ever force Him from your bosom. He may withdraw His sensible presence; He may withhold His comforting influence; He may be so grieved by a careless walk as to suspend for a while His witnessing and sanctifying power, permitting indwelling corruptions for a moment to triumph; but He restores the soul; He brings it back again; He breaks the heart, then binds it up; wounds, then heals it, fills it with godly grief, then tunes it with thanksgiving and the voice of melody. "For a small moment have I forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather you." "He restores my soul."

I can present, in this chapter, a mere outline of the remaining operations of

the Spirit as the Indweller of the saints. I regret this the less because some of those parts of His work are more fully discussed in the chapters especially assigned to them in this treatise.

As a Spirit of adoption He dwells in the believer. Gal 4:6 "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

As a Witness He is there. Rom. 8:16: "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

As an earnest and pledge of future glory He is there. Eph. 1:13, 14: "In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," etc.

As a Teacher He is there. John 14:26: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." "He shall guide you into all truth."

As a Remembrancer He is there. Verse 26: "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance."

As a Glorifier of Jesus He is there. John 16, 14: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

All these gracious operations works that one and self-same Spirit, dwelling in the hearts of all believers.

In reviewing this subject, the following important reflections suggest themselves to us.

How amazing the grace of God that makes the heart of a poor sinner His dwelling-place! O what grace is this! How it prostrates all high thoughts of self, how it brings down the lofty look, and lays the soul where it should ever lie, "low in a low place." "Will God in very deed dwell with man?" "I will dwell in them," says God, "and will walk in them."

Let us not forget that it is the humble broken heart that forms the true temple of the Holy Spirit. He only dwells here. And here He does dwell. It may be a temple despised by man, but God prepares and chooses it for His abode. The proud and haughty spirit of self-righteous man may overlook it as valueless;

the tear that falls in silence, the sigh that is breathed in secret, the heart that mourns over sin may be thought little of by the passer by, but with God it is of "great price." He has a bottle for that tear, a record for that sigh, and that mourning is music in His ear. "The high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, the Holy One, says this: "I live in that high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I refresh the humble and give new courage to those with repentant hearts." Isaiah 57:15. Perhaps your cry is, "Come, blessed and eternal Spirit, into my heart; make it a temple, now and forever, for Your abode worthless though the offering be, yet it is all I have to present You; enter, with all Your humbling, sanctifying, sealing and comforting influences, and take full possession for Yourself."

O blessed cry! O sweet fruit of that loving, faithful Spirit, who already has entered (unknown and unsuspected, it may be, by you) and has planted there this desire, the sure and certain pledge of future glory! Be assured, precious soul, that this cry, feeble as it is, is an evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit. It is the first gentle springing up of the living fountain within you, and it shall continue to spring up even unto eternal life. Cherish it as you would your greatest blessing. Pray that it may be increased and strengthened more and more, and closely watch against the slightest thing which would tend to enfeeble it.

How holy should the temple of the Spirit be! Reader, are you a temple of God the Holy Spirit? Then dedicate yourself unreservedly to God. You are not your own. Your body, your spirit, your family, substance, time, talents, influence, all, all belong to God. He dwells in you—lives in you—rules in you, and calls you His dwelling-place. "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" Then what a separation should there be between you and the world that lies in wickedness! How should you guard against every unnecessary entanglement with it; how cautious and prayerful, lest, by contracting an unholy alliance with it in any form or degree, you should defile the temple of God, "whose temple you are!" Oh, what heavenly wisdom, holy circumspection and ceaseless prayer do you need that you may walk with unspotted garments—that no rival should enter your heart—that no lofty views of self, no spirit of worldly conformity, no temporising policy, no known sin, no creature idolatry should enter there—that, like the heavenly temple, nothing that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, should be cherished or entertained in the abode and in the presence of the Holy Spirit; for "what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in

them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Reader, whose temple are you? Solemn question! Does God or Satan dwell in you? Christ or Belial? Light or dark ness? Either the one or the other has, at this moment, possession of you. You cannot serve two contrary masters; you cannot entertain two opposite guests. You are living either for God or for Satan. You are traveling either to heaven or to hell. Which? On your bended knees before God, decide; and may the Lord the Spirit renew you by His grace, and if renewed, make you "a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

**"The Sanctification of the Spirit"
or "The Necessity and the Nature of True Holiness"**

"Through sanctification of the Spirit." 2 Thess. 2, 13.

We have already briefly intimated that one most important feature in the work of the indwelling Spirit is the sanctification of the believer. What was merely glanced at in the preceding chapter will now, by the assistance of that same Teacher who has promised to guide into all spiritual truth, be more fully unfolded. While yet upon the threshold of our subject, let it be premised that there is an order, as well as a harmony, in the operations of the Spirit, which it is highly important should be observed. An ignorance or an oversight of this has led to great and fatal perversions of the Gospel, especially that part which relates to the doctrine now under discussion. All the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, and all the self-devotion of the deluded disciple of the papal superstition, have their origin here. Now the order of the Spirit is this: regeneration of the heart first, then its sanctification. Reverse this, and we derange every part of His work and, as far as our individual benefit extends, render it entirely useless. Sanctification is not the first and immediate duty of an unrenewed person. Indeed, it is utterly impossible that it should be so. Sanctification has its commencement and its daily growth in a principle of life implanted in the soul by the eternal Spirit; and to look for holiness in an individual still dead in sins is to look for fruit where no seed was sown, for the actings of life where no vital principle exists. It is to expect, in the language of our Lord, to "gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles." The first and imperative duty of an unrenewed man is to prostrate himself in deep abasement and true repentance before God. The lofty look must be brought

low, and the rebellious will must be humbled; in the posture of one overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, he must look by faith to a crucified Savior, and draw from Him life, pardon and acceptance. It is most solemnly true that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; yet all attempts towards the attainment of holiness before repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will but disappoint the soul that looks for it.

This work of renewal done, sanctification is a comparatively easy and a delightful task. Motives and exhortations to a life of holiness now find a ready response in the heart, already the temple of the Holy Spirit. The "incorruptible seed" sown there, germinates into the plant, and blossoms and ripens into the fruits of holiness. The well of "living water" created there springs up and pours forth its stream of life and purity, adorning and fertilizing the garden of the Lord. Let us then be careful not to disturb the arrangement, and reverse the order of the blessed Spirit in His work. From lack of such care, great errors have arisen, and souls have gone into eternity fearfully and fatally deceived. Especially cautious should they be in this matter who are appointed to the office of spiritual instruction, to whose care immortal souls are entrusted, lest, in a matter involving interests so precious and so lasting, anyone listening to their teaching should pass into eternity ignorant of the one and true method of salvation.

Let the reader prayerfully follow us while we endeavor to unfold the necessity of sanctification in the believer, its gospel nature, and the means employed by the Spirit in its production.

There exists an absolute and solemn NECESSITY for sanctification in a child of God. To remind the reader of this may at first sight appear a needless work, so self-evident, and so immediate an effect of regeneration by the Spirit does it seem. And yet the advanced believer, much more the sincere inquirer after a more perfect knowledge of the will of God, needs to be perpetually reminded of the solemn necessity, for his own happiness and his Father's glory, of a daily growth in all holiness. And as the believer is, after regeneration, an active agent in the furtherance of this great work, and as there is a perpetual proneness, through the many infirmities of the flesh, to settle down in a state of ease and sloth in it, the importance of being reminded of this necessity will immediately appear.

The first ground on which this necessity rests is the holiness of God. The nature of the God whose temple he is pleads for the sanctification of the

believer. We have to do with a holy God who, from the very necessity and purity of His being, can have no fellowship with sin. He must hate, He must abhor it. A stronger plea for the sanctification of the child of God can nowhere be found. Let us for a moment trace this argument as it runs like a golden thread through every part of God's Word. We see its commencement in the Old Testament. Levit. 11:44, 45: "For I am the Lord your God you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy...I am the Lord that brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." Levit. 19:2: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, You shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."

And that these commandments and this standard may not seem to belong exclusively to the Old Testament saints, the apostle Peter embodies them, as of equal force and solemnity, in his writings to the saints of the New Testament. 1 Peter 1:15, 16: "But as he who has called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy." If this motive to sanctification came clothed with such solemnity and power, and was so felt by the Jewish church, what should be its authority and influence with the church as it now exists! The increased power and solemnity of this motive is drawn from the more resplendent exhibition of God's holiness in the cross of Christ. The saints of the Old Testament were not favored with such a development of the Divine purity as an argument to sanctification. But we possess it; so that if we continue in sin after we have believed, we are "without excuse," and God is "clear when He judges." The cross is God's grand demonstration of His holiness. Here has He, as it were, unveiled His great perfections, and shown what a sin-hating, holiness-loving God He is. What! Could He not pass by His dear Son? Did He give Him up to the "shame and the spitting"? Why did He not withhold his "darling from the power of the dog"? Did justice sheath its sword in the heart of Jesus? Did it smite the Shepherd? And why all this? The answer comes from Calvary, "I, the Lord, am a holy God." And then follows the precept—O how touching!—"Be holy, for I am holy." See how the justice of God (and what is the justice of God but His holiness in exercise?) revealed itself as a "consuming fire" on Calvary. Our dear Lord was "a whole burned offering" for His people; and the fire that descended and consumed the sacrifice was the holiness of God in active and fearful exercise. Here then springs the solemn necessity for sanctification in the believer. The God he loves is holy, his Father is holy—and He has written out that holiness in awful letters in the cross of His well-beloved Son, "Be holy, for I am holy." We must study God in Christ. There we see His

holiness, justice, wisdom, grace, truth, love and mercy, all unfolded in their richest glory and most benevolent exercise.

The necessity for sanctification also springs from the work of Christ. The Lord Jesus became incarnate, and died as much for the sanctification as for the pardon and justification of His church; as much for her deliverance from the indwelling power of sin as from the condemnatory power of sin. His work would have been but partial and incomplete if no provision had been made for the holiness of the believer. But He came not only to blot out sin but to rend asunder its chain, not only to remove its curse but to break its scepter. The believer in Jesus may be but imperfectly aware how closely associated his sanctification is with the obedience and death of Christ. Indeed the very death of Christ for sin outside of him, is the death of sin inside of him; no inroads are made upon the dominion of indwelling sin, no conquests obtained, no flesh crucified, no besetting sin laid aside, but only as the believer hangs daily upon the cross. Observe how the Holy Spirit connects the two—the death of Christ and the holiness of the believer: thus in John 17:19: "And for their sakes," says Jesus, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." As their High-priest to atone and purify, He set Himself apart as a holy sacrifice to the Lord God for the church's sake. "For their sakes I sanctify myself"—or set myself apart. Oh, what a motive to holiness is this, saint of God! Can you resist it? Yet again the connection is unfolded. Tit. 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Eph. 5:25, 26: "Husbands, love your wives, even as 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." Thus clearly does the Holy Spirit unfold the close and beautiful relationship between the death of Christ and the death of sin.

The covenant of grace enforces the sanctification of the believer. "It is the eternal and immutable purpose of God," observes Dr. John Owen, "that all who are His in a peculiar manner, all whom He designs to bring unto blessedness in the everlasting enjoyment of Himself, shall, antecedently there unto, be made holy." For the security and attainment of this, all provision has been made in the everlasting covenant of grace. The very election of the believer to eternal life provides for and secures his holiness. There could not possibly be any holiness without election, because election provides the means of its attainment. Thus clearly does the Spirit of truth unfold it. 2 Thess. 2:13: "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through

sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Again, Eph. 1:4: "According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Let this be clearly understood. On the ground of no foreseen holiness in the creature, did God thus purpose to save him; but seeing the indispensable necessity of sanctification in order to eternal glory—the impossibility of the one without the other—He chose us in Christ "that we should be holy."

Let not the Christian reader turn away from, or treat lightly, this precious revealed truth of God's Word—an election of a people unto holiness here, and glory hereafter. The prejudice of education, early modes of thought, a preconceived system, and most of all the neglect of a close and prayerful investigation of God's Word for himself, may lead to the rejection of the doctrine. But he who first objects to it, and then renounces it, without a thorough and prayerful sifting of its scriptural claims to belief, stands on solemn ground, and his attitude may have fearful consequences. What God has revealed, "that call not you common." What He has commanded, do not turn from, lest you be found to have turned from God Himself. Why it has pleased the Lord to choose a people in this way, it is not our province to inquire, nor, we believe, would it be for our happiness to know. We do not attempt to explain the doctrine, much less to account for it. We simply and, we trust, scripturally state it, leaving God to vindicate and bless it. He is the best defender and apologist of His own sacred truth. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Dent. 29:29.) The secret thing in the doctrine of election is why God has done it; the thing which is revealed is that He has done it. Let us not then seek to be wise above what is written, though it is our duty, as an acute writer has remarked, to be wise up to what is written, leaving the more perfect knowledge of the things that are now seen as "through a glass darkly," to that period of perfect illumination when we shall "know, even as we are known." But thus much we know, that it is the eternal purpose of God, revealed and provided for in the covenant of grace, that all who are chosen, called, and justified, shall, with a view to their being glorified, be "partakers of His holiness." Heaven is a holy place, its inhabitants are a holy people, and He whose glory fills the temple is a holy God. Behold then the provision God has made for the sanctification of the believer in the everlasting covenant of grace. The foundation is laid in the death of Christ, it commences in the effectual calling of the Spirit and, by all the precious assurances of grace, wisdom and strength provided in the covenant, it is carried forward to a glorious completion.

We would only specify, as one more consideration pleading for the sanctification of the believer, his own personal happiness. Holiness is necessary to the comfort of the believer, as it is an essential element of his Christian character. Sanctification is a part of the new creation. Although not the first step the soul takes into the new world of holiness, it yet immediately follows. Regeneration is the commencement of the reign of holiness, or (to change the figure) the planting of the germ, which time and the Lord's covenant dealings cause to take deep root and to put forth its lovely and fragrant flower. In proportion as the sanctification of a believer advances, his real happiness advances with it. Holiness brings its own peculiar and high enjoyment. It is from heaven, and conveys into the heart the happiness of heaven; so that he who is most holy has most of the material of heaven in his soul. O how loudly does the happiness of a child of God plead for his holiness! As his soul approximates to the likeness of God, his circumstances, trying as they may be, cannot remove the fine edge of his inward and concealed enjoyments. Indeed, sanctified by the indwelling Spirit, trials only heighten those enjoyments, and are found the most effective helps to the maturing of holiness in his soul.

These are some of the grounds on which the necessity of sanctification is enforced in the Divine Word. It will now be proper to unfold its gospel NATURE.

What is true sanctification? The question is vastly more important than would at first sight appear. Unscriptural views of sanctification have been found to exist, not only among the unregenerate, but even in the church of Christ. Yet every dear child of God who honestly desires to follow the Lord fully and to live as a temple of the Holy Spirit, deeply feels the necessity of the Spirit's teaching in a matter so personal and so momentous as this. How much do we who now write and they who read need, while contemplating this subject, the anointings of the Holy One and the eye that looks at the blood that cleanses from all sin!

Sanctification has been defined as "the work of the Holy Spirit whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." Briefly and emphatically, it is a progressive conformity of the whole man to the Divine nature. Under the Levitical dispensation the term sanctified had a peculiar meaning. People and things were said to be sanctified which were separated,

set apart and offered to God. Thus the furniture of the temple was pronounced holy, or sanctified; the ark, the altar, all the utensils of the temple and the vestments of the priest were regarded as sanctified, because set apart and dedicated to God. For the same reason, people were said to be sanctified who were solemnly consecrated to the service.

The dispensation of ritual having passed away, the word, by an easy and natural accommodation, has assumed a more comprehensive and evangelical meaning; and is now employed to set forth the advance of the believer in a conformity of heart to the will and image of God. In explaining the nature of sanctification, we would first of all establish from the Scripture the spirituality of the Divine law. There is a sense, as we have elsewhere shown, in which the believer is dead to the law. His union to Christ has delivered him from the law as a covenant of works. "You have died to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Again, "Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead (marg. being dead to that) wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Rom. 7:4, 6.) This then is the deadness to which the apostle refers. It is a release from the law as a ground of acceptance. The believer is "accepted in the Beloved"—pardoned, justified, and sanctified in Christ. He is married to Christ—is one with Christ. As such he is delivered from the law, under whose condemnation he once rested: being dead to that wherein he was held, it can no longer assert its claims, or exact obedience as the condition of life. It can no longer threaten or condemn. Shut up in the faith of Jesus, and receiving pardon and justification through Him, he is beyond the power of the law as a covenant of life, and is screened from its vengeance as a source of condemnation. No single truth has the Holy Spirit more clearly written out than this. He has shown, too, that it forms the basis of sanctification in the justified believer. His release from a covenant of works and his translation into the covenant of grace, his deliverance from the law and his union to Christ, form the ground of all holy liberty, filial obedience and spiritual fruitfulness. Those who are under the law are under the curse—but "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus"—therefore the believer in Christ is not under the law.

But we come to the sense in which they "that are in Christ Jesus" have yet to do with the law. Released from it as a covenant of life, it yet remains obligatory as a rule of obedience to Christ. If we suppose that the law has lost all authority and use—to be entirely abrogated—we must suppose that the

relation of God to His creatures as their moral Governor has also ceased—that, having laid aside all rule of obedience, He has with it abdicated the throne of the universe, and that man has ceased to be the subject of a moral government. But, far from this, the law of God remains in all its dignity, purity and force. The believer in Christ is released from it as a ground of acceptance, but not as a standard of holiness. Is it true that Christ is the standard and pattern of a believer's holiness? Undoubtedly. Then we argue that the moral law was the standard of Christ's holiness; therefore it must necessarily be the standard of the believer's. The whole life of Jesus was a conformity to the purity of the Divine law which was His standard of holiness and His pattern of obedience; therefore in following the example of Christ we are being conformed to the purity of the law "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Sanctification, then, is a growing conformity to the spirituality of the Divine law. The sincere believer acknowledges "that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good"; he knows "that the law is spiritual." He therefore "delights in the law of God after the inward man." Does his faith in Jesus "make void the law"? "God forbid." Instead, his faith "establishes the law," reflects its spirituality, maintains its purity, vindicates its holiness and glorifies its Divine Author. The closer then the resemblance of the believer to the spirituality of the law of God in his life, his temper, and habit of his mind, his principles, his daily walk in the world and out of the world, among the saints or as surrounded by the ungodly, the more thoroughly is the work of sanctification advancing in his soul.

In all this there is a more simple surrender of the will to God. The holy Robert Leighton has remarked that to say from the heart "Your will be done" constitutes the very essence of sanctification. There is much truth in this, more than perhaps strikes the mind at the first view. Before conversion, the will—the governing principle of the soul—is the seat of all opposition to God. It rises against God, His government, His law, His providence, His grace, His Son; to all that appertains to God, the unrenewed will of man is hostile. Here lies the depth of man's unholiness. The will is against God; and so long as it refuses to obey Him, the creature must remain unholy. Now it needs no lengthy argument to show that when the will, as renewed by the Holy Spirit, is made to submit to God, the holiness of the believer must be in proportion to the degree of its submission. There could not be perfect holiness in heaven, were there the slightest preponderance of the will of the creature towards itself. The angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect" are supremely holy because

their wills are supremely swallowed up in the will of God. "Your will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven." The will of God is supremely obeyed in heaven, and in this consist the holiness and the felicity of its glorious inhabitants.

Now in exact proportion as God's will "is done on earth" by the believer, he drinks from the pure fountain of holiness; and as he is enabled by the grace of Christ in all things to look up to God with filial love and to say, "Not my will, O my Father, but Yours be done," he attains the very essence of sanctification. Let us trace out this subject. It is God's revealed will that His child should be holy—"this is the will of God, even your sanctification." When the will of the believer rises and blends itself with God's will here, and in the spirit of sonship responds, "Lord, is it your will that I should be holy? Then make me so in body, in soul and in spirit. Subdue all my corruptions, break the power of my lusts; bring every thought, affection, word and look into sweet obedience to Yourself; rule in the midst of Your enemies"—how truly does the work of sanctification advance in the soul!

It is the revealed will of God that His child should maintain a walk in all things pleasing to Him: "that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." When the believer's will fully acquiesces in this, and the heart is drawn out in earnest and agonizing prayer for an upright walk, worthy of his high calling and of the Lord by whom he is called, for more fruitfulness in every good work, and for an increase of faith, love and knowledge of God, who will not say that such a soul is rapidly growing in sanctification?

It is the revealed will of God that the believer should walk as an obedient child: " O that you had hearkened to my commandments! then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." And, when these are the responsive breathings of his soul: " I love your commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold; therefore I esteem all your precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. I will run the way of your commandments, when you shall enlarge my heart "—such a soul is maturing in holiness, and is becoming fitted " for the inheritance of the saints in light."

It is the revealed will of God that His child should meekly and silently bow to His chastening hand: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by him." And when the tried and afflicted

believer "hears the rod, and He who has appointed it," and with a humble and filial acquiescence, justifies the wisdom and the love and even the tenderness that sent it—surely such a soul is a rich partaker of God's holiness. In all these particulars, there is a surrender of the will to God, and consequently an approximation to the holiness of His nature. The point we are now considering is one of great importance. It involves as much your holy and happy walk as it does the glory of God. We put the simple questions—can there be any advance of sanctification in the soul when the will is running counter to the Divine will?—and can that believer walk happily when there is a constant opposition in his mind to all the dealings

of his God and Father? O no! Holiness and happiness are closely allied; and both are the offspring of a humble, filial, and complete surrender of the will in all things to God. Such an attainment in holiness is not soon or easily gained. Far from it. In many, it is the work of years; in all, of painful discipline. It is not on the high mount of joy, but in the low valley of humiliation, that this precious and holy surrender is learned. It is not in the summer day—when all things smile and wear a sunny aspect—then it were easy to say, "Your will be done"; but when a cloudy and a wintry sky looks down upon you, when the chill blast of adversity blows, when health fails, when friends die, when wealth departs, when the heart's fondest endearments are yielded, when the Isaac is called for, when the world turns its back—when all is gone and you are like a tree of the desert, over which the tempest has swept, stripping it of every branch—when you are brought so low that it would seem to you that you could not be any lower—then to look up with filial love and exclaim, "My Father, Your will be done!" Oh, this is holiness, this is happiness indeed.

It may be that God, your God and Father, is dealing in this way with you now. Has he taken from you health? Has he asked for the surrender of your Isaac? Have riches taken to themselves wings? Does the world frown? Ah! little do you realize how God is now about to unfold to you the depths of His love, and to cause your will sweetly, and filially, and entirely to flow into His. Let me repeat the observation—a higher degree of sanctification there cannot be than a will entirely swallowed up in God's. Earnestly pray for it, diligently seek it. Be jealous of the slightest opposition of your mind, watch against the least rebellion of the will, wrestle for an entire surrender—to be where, and to be what, your covenant God and Father would have you; and so shall you be made a partaker of His holiness.

Furthermore, sanctification includes a growing resemblance to the likeness of

Christ. How beautifully and explicitly has the Holy Spirit unfolded this in His Word! This was the exhortation of our dear Lord, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart"; and throughout the writings of His apostles the same truth is exhibited: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. 8:29. "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Eph. 4:15.

Here is the glorious pattern of a child of God. Sanctification is a conformity to the image and the example of Christ. The more the believer is growing like Jesus, the more he is growing in holiness. And on the contrary, the less resemblance there is to Christ in his principles, in the habit of his mind, in his spirit, temper, daily walk, in every action and in every look, the less is he advancing in the great work of holiness. O how many who profess His dear name, and who are expecting to be with Him forever, never pause to consider what resemblance they bear to Him now! Were they to deal faithfully with conscience in the much-neglected duty of self-examination, were they to bring themselves to this great standard—how far below it would they be found to have come! How much in their principles, in their governing motives, in their temper, spirit, and daily conduct, how much in their walk in the world, in their deportment in the church, and in their more concealed conduct in their families, would be discovered that was unlike Christ! How much that was "from beneath," how little that was "from above"—how much of the "image of the earthy," how little of the "image of the heavenly"! But, look at the image of our dear Lord—how lowly, how holy it is! Look at His poverty of spirit, lowliness of heart, humility of deportment, tenderness, gentleness, forgiveness of injuries, self-denial, prayerfulness, zeal for His Father's glory, yearnings for the salvation of men. O to be like Jesus!—to grow up into Him in all things! This is to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"; this is to realize "the will of God, even our sanctification." Let it not then be forgotten that an advancing believer is one growing in a resemblance and conformity to the image and example of Christ.

We must include, though in general terms, as involved in the growing sanctification of the believer, an increasingly tender conscience, a soft and gentle walk, deepening views of sin, looking at it more directly in the light of the cross, mourning over, confessing, hating, and crucifying it there. Nor must we omit a more complete investiture of the Christian with the graces of the Spirit; the active graces—faith, love, zeal, self-denial; the passive graces—meekness, patience, gentleness, peace. There are some, and not a few cases, in

which all of these features distinguish a believer advancing in sanctification.

Having thus briefly considered the nature of sanctification, we now proceed to the main design of this chapter which was to show **THE AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** in its production.

The work of sanctification is pre-eminently the product of the Spirit. He is the great Sanctifier of the soul. We have shown that the implantation of the germ of holiness in regeneration is of Him. For let it ever be borne in mind that a renewed soul has within it the "incorruptible seed" of holiness. Although its growth in many instances may be slow and scarcely perceptible, although during a long period of his journey the believer may be the subject of strong corruptions and clinging infirmities, which, in a degree, act like frosts upon the tender scion, checking its advance to maturity—yet the seed is there. Indwelling sin cannot destroy it, the frosts cannot kill it, it is "incorruptible" and therefore cannot be corrupted. In process of time, under the tender and faithful culture of the eternal Spirit, it shall deepen and expand its roots, and put forth its branches and its boughs, and then shall appear the fruit, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear". It will vary in its degree of fruitfulness among the saints, in "some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold," but in all it will be of the same nature and the product of the same Spirit.

It has been the constant effort of Satan to divert men from the great point we are now considering. In two ways has he proved successful. First, in setting them upon the work of mortification of sin before regeneration; and second, in setting them upon the same work after conversion, in their own strength. With regard to the first, we have shown at some length that sanctification is not the work of an unbeliever; that, although it is solemnly true that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," yet the attainment of holiness is an utter impossibility so long as the heart remains a stranger to the regenerating operations of the Holy Spirit. Repentance and faith are the first necessities in order of time for an unconverted man. With regard to the second effort of Satan to deceive the soul, it is equally ruinous to all true mortification of sin. No child of God can accomplish this mighty work in his own strength. Here lies the secret, be assured, of all our failure and disappointment in the work. Forgetting that he who would prove victorious in this warfare must first learn the lesson of his own weakness and insufficiency, and, thus schooled, must go forth in the "strength that is in Christ Jesus," and in the "power of His might," taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword

of the Spirit—forgetting this important truth, we march to the overthrow of our giant corruptions in our own fancied wisdom and power; and the result always has been, and with the same means ever will be, our complete discomfiture. Oh! when shall we learn that we are nothing—that we have "no might"—and that our feeblest enemy will triumph if his overthrow be attempted in our own insufficiency?

The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of all holiness in the believer. If we look into the prophecy of Ezekiel, we find clear intimations of the promise of the Spirit to this effect. There God unfolds what may be regarded as the foundation of all sanctification—the removal of the stony heart and the implanting of a new spirit. Ezek. 11:19: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you." Ezek. 36:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Let us see the doctrine as more clearly unfolded in the writings of the apostles. Rom. 8:9: "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." 1 Cor. 6:11: "And such were some of you:, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 2 Thess. 2:13: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." 1 Pet. 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit." We are far from excluding the Father and the Son from any part in this great work—we believe they are deeply interested in it, as the Divine Word shows in Jude 1: "Those who are sanctified by God the Father." 1 Cor. 1:2: "Those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus." But the Holy Spirit is the special and immediate Agent to whom the work of sanctifying the believer is assigned.

Let us now attempt to show **IN WHAT WAY HE SANCTIFIES THE BELIEVER**. First, by leading to a deeper acquaintance with the existence and power of indwelling sin. Perhaps the first impression of the reader is, how can this be? How does the breaking up of the deep fountain of inbred sin lead to the quieting of its dark and turbulent waves? But the Holy Spirit works in a way contrary to the dictates of our poor reason—in a way often that we never should have conceived, and by methods we should never have selected. This is one method of His operation in subduing our iniquities, and in making us partakers of the Divine holiness. The knowledge of indwelling sin, its existence

and power, is often exceedingly defective at conversion, and this ignorance may continue for years after. We just see sin enough to alarm the conscience, awaken conviction and take us to Christ. As a thing against God, we hate it, mourn over it and seek its pardon through the atoning blood. This is followed by a sweet and lively sense of its blotting out and a growing desire after Divine conformity. But, oh, the unknown depths of sin!—these we have never explored. What infinite wisdom and love are seen in hiding these depths at first from our knowledge! Were the Lord fully to have revealed the hidden evils of the heart at the period when grace was yet in the bud, and faith was feeble, and our views of the Lord Jesus dim, and the "new creature" yet in its infancy, deep and dark despair must have gathered around the soul. With perhaps just knowledge enough of Christ to go to Him as a Savior, with just faith enough to touch the hem of His garment, the eternal Spirit first disclosed to us the existence and the guilt of sin; a full disclosure might have shut us up in hopeless despair. As believers it is sweet to remember the tender love of God in our espousals, to trace the gentleness of His first dealings with us in conversion, and to bear in mind that what He was then, He is at this moment.

But trace the work of the Spirit in the days after our experience. He comes, in accordance with the design of the covenant of grace, to sanctify, having called and quickened us. He is about to enlarge the "kingdom of God within" us, to stamp more deeply and bring out more vividly and broadly on the soul the varied lineaments of the Divine image. He is about to purify the temple more thoroughly, to take a fresh possession for God, to expel every rival that, by slow and imperceptible degrees, may have insinuated itself there; in a word, He is about to sanctify us. And how does He commence the work? By leading us into the chamber of imagery, by disclosing the depths of indwelling sin. Sin whose existence we had never imagined, He shows to have its principal dwelling in the heart. Iniquity that we had never thought of, He reveals as lurking in secret ambush within. O what darkness, what evil, and what baneful principles are found to have existed for so long, where we thought all was light, holiness and rectitude! We start, we shudder, and we shrink away, aghast at the discovery. "What!" says the alarmed soul, does all this evil dwell in me? Have I carried about with me for so long these sinful desires? Have I dwelling in me the seeds of such deep and dark depravity? Wonder of wonders is it, that the flood has not long since carried me away—that these deep evils have not broken out, to the wounding of my peace, and to the dishonoring of my God and Savior." Thus made acquainted with his own heart, almost a stranger to him before, the Holy Spirit awakens in his soul an ardent desire for holiness. In view of such a discovery, where can he fly but to

the throne of grace? There, then, he goes weeping, mourning, confessing—and his prayer is, "Lord, subdue these evils of my heart—I am overwhelmed with astonishment. I lie down in shame, and my confusion covers me, that I should have harbored so long these treacherous foes against You, God of holiness and love. Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'" Now the Spirit deepens and strengthens this desire for sanctification; the believer is set upon earnestly seeking holiness of heart; he sees such an iniquity in sin as he never saw before, and seeing it, he abhors it, and abhorring it, he takes it to the Spirit of holiness, that He might overcome and subdue it. Thus, in leading the believer into a deeper acquaintance with the existence and power of indwelling sin, does the blessed Spirit sanctify the soul, by making it the occasion of stirring up its desires for holiness. So do not be cast down at the discovery of the hidden evil of your heart. Sweet is the evidence it affords to the fact that the Holy Spirit is working there. Whatever be the sin that is brought to light—pride, deceit, carnality, inordinate affection, evil thoughts, unbelief, impatience, whatever it be—He is revealing it to you, not unnecessarily to wound and grieve you—O no, he is a loving and a gentle Spirit—but to beget this desire in your heart, "Lord, conform me to Your image—make me holy as You are holy."

Another process by which the Spirit sanctifies, is by deepening and strengthening the Divine life in the soul. There is, in every believer, a spiritual life. This life is from God. He is therefore said to be a "partaker of the Divine nature." This new and Divine life is, from its very nature, holy, and therefore opposed to the flesh. The flesh and the Spirit are ever hostile the one to the other, "for the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Paul, referring to his own experience, corroborates this statement. "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Now the advance of the believer in true sanctification is just in proportion to the state of the Divine life within him. If it be low and declining, feeble and drooping, then the flesh gains the ascendancy and the root of sin is strengthened. If, on the contrary, the life of God in the soul is deepening and expanding, healthy and vigorous; if the "kingdom of God within," which is the new creation, is filling up every avenue of the mind, extending its conquests, and bringing every thought and affection into captivity to Christ; then the great work of sanctification is advancing, and

"the law of the mind" is prevailing against "the law of sin."

There is an idea; fatal to all true sanctification of sin, which some believers, especially those who are young in experience, are prone to entertain, that nothing is to be done in the soul after a man has believed, that the work of conversion having taken place, all is accomplished. So far from this being the case, he has but just entered upon the work of sanctification, just started in the race, just buckled on the armor. The conflict can hardly be said to have begun in conversion; and therefore to rest indolently with the idea that the soul has nothing more to do than to accept of Christ as his salvation—that there are no corruptions to subdue, no sinful habits to cut off, no long-existing and deeply-embedded sins to mortify, root and branch, and no high and yet higher degrees in holiness to attain—is to form a most contracted view of the Christian life, such a view as, if persisted in, must necessarily prove detrimental to the spiritual advance of the believer.

The work of sanctification is a great and a daily work. It commences at the very moment of our translation into the kingdom of Christ on earth, and does not cease until the moment of our translation into the kingdom of God in heaven. The notion, so fondly cherished by some, of perfect sinlessness here, is as fatal to true sanctification as it is contrary to God's Word. They know but little of their own heart, who do not know, that sin (to borrow the language of John Owen), "not only still abides in us, but is still acting, still laboring to bring forth the deeds of the flesh." They know little who do not know that in their "flesh there dwells no good thing," that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and will retain its fleshly nature and propensities to the very last. Let us not exult "as though we had already attained, or were already perfect"; let us not be "ignorant of Satan's devices," one of which is to build us up in the belief that, in the present life, a man may cease from the work of mortification. The Lord keep the reader from cherishing so erroneous an idea. The work of sanctification is the work of a man's life. "When sin lets us alone (as has been remarked) we may let sin alone." But when is the day, indeed, when is the hour, that sin does not strive for the mastery, and in which the believer can say that he has completely slain his enemy? He may, "through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body," and if he does, "he shall live"; but as the heart is the natural and luxuriant soil of every noxious weed of sin, and as another springs up as soon as one is cut down, indeed as the same root appears again above the surface with new life and vigor, it requires a ceaseless care and vigilance, a perpetual mortification of sin in the body, until we throw off this cumbrous clay and go where sin is known no more.

In this way does the Spirit deepen the holiness of the child of God. He strengthens the Divine life within him; He invigorates the principle of holiness; waters, and revives, and expands the germ; infuses new life into His own blessed work; gives a new spring to faith, a new impulse to obedience, enlarges the heart with the love of Christ, and excites such a thirsting for holiness as none but God Himself can satisfy.

We would not omit to notice the influence of sanctified afflictions, which, through the eternal Spirit, are a powerful means of sanctification to the soul. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," has been the exclamation and the testimony of many of the Lord's covenant and tried people. It is often difficult at the time to justify the wisdom and the goodness of God in His dealings with His saints. David found it so, when he saw with envy the prosperity of the wicked. Job found it so, when in the hour and depth of his afflictions, he exclaimed, "You are become cruel to me: with your strong hand you oppose yourself against me." Jeremiah found it so, when in his affliction he said, "He has hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he has made my chain heavy." And yet where is the furnace-tried, tempest-tossed believer that has not had to say, "In very faithfulness has he afflicted me"? During the pressure of the trial, at the moment when the storm was the heaviest, he may have thought, "all these things are against me"; but soon he has been led to justify the wisdom, and the love, and the faithfulness, and the tenderness of his covenant God and Father in His dealings, and to sing, in sweeter notes than ever,

**"It is my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Savior's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss." (Cowper.)**

The furnace is a needed process of sanctification. If not, why has God so ordered it? If not, why is it that so many of His people are "chosen in the furnace of affliction"? Why do all, more or less, pass through it? The furnace is needed. It is needed to "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." It is needed to consume the dross and the tin which adhere so closely to the precious ore, to burn up the chaff that mingles with the precious grain, to purify the heart, to refine the affections, to chasten the soul, to wean it from a poor, empty world, to draw it from the creature, and to center it in God. O the

blessed effects of this sanctified process! Who can fully unfold them? That must be blessed indeed which makes sin more exceedingly sinful, which weans and draws away from earth, which endears Jesus and His precious blood and righteousness, and which makes the soul a "partaker of His holiness." This is the blessed tendency of the sanctified discipline of the covenant. In this way does the Holy Spirit often sanctify the child of God.

Are you a child of affliction? Ah! how many whose eye falls on this question shall say, "I am the man that has seen affliction!" So too was your Lord and Master, and so too have been the most holy and eminent of His disciples. Then "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy." This is the path along which all the Lord's covenant people are led, and in this path, thorny though it be, they pluck some of their choicest flowers, and find some of their sweetest fruits. I am not addressing myself to those who are strangers to sanctified sorrow, whose voyage so far has been over a smooth and summer sea, whose heart's affections have never been sundered, whose budding hopes have never been blighted, whose spring blossoms have never fallen just when the fruit was beginning to appear, or whose sturdy oaks around which they fondly and closely clung have never been stricken at their side; to such I speak a mystery when I speak of the peculiar and costly blessings of sanctified affliction. It is not so with the experienced child of God, the "man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath." He is a witness to the truth of what I say. From this mine, he will tell you, he has dug his richest ore. In this field he has found his sweetest fruit. The knowledge of God to which he has here attained—His tender, loving and wise dealings with His people, His glorious character and perfections, His unchangeable love and faithfulness; the knowledge of Christ—His all-sufficiency and fulness, His sympathy and love; the knowledge of himself—his poverty, vileness and unworthiness: O where, and in what other school, could these high attainments have been made but in the low valley of humiliation, and beneath the discipline of the covenant of grace? Thus does the Spirit sanctify the soul through the medium of God's afflictive dispensations; thus they deepen the work of grace in the heart awaken the soul from its spiritual drowsiness—empty, humble, and lay it low—thus they lead to prayer, to self-examination, and afresh to the atoning blood; in this way, and by these means, the believer advances in holiness "through sanctification of the Spirit."

Again, it is by simple, close, and searching views of the cross of Christ that the Spirit most effectually sanctifies the believer. This is the true and great method of gospel sanctification. Here lies the secret of all real holiness, and, may I not add, of all real happiness? For if we separate happiness from holiness, we separate that which, in the covenant of grace, God has wisely and indissolubly united. The experience of the true believer must testify to this. We are only happy as we are holy—as the body of sin is daily crucified, as the power of the indwelling principle of sin is weakened, and as the outward deportment more beautifully and closely corresponds to the example of Jesus. Let us not then look for a happy life apart from a holy one. Trials we may have; indeed if we are the Lord's covenant ones, we shall have them, for He Himself has said, "in the world you shall have tribulation"; disappointments we may meet with—broken cisterns, thorny roads, wintry skies; but if we are walking in fellowship with God, walking in the light, growing up into Christ in all things, the Spirit of adoption dwelling in us, and leading to a filial and unreserved surrender—oh, there is happiness unspeakable, even though in the very depth of outward trial. A holy life is a happy life. This is God's order, it is His appointment, and therefore must be wise and good.

The Spirit especially and effectually sanctifies by unfolding the cross of Jesus. We desire to enlarge upon this point, not only because He Himself presents it in His Word as one of vast importance, but from the sober conviction of our judgment that there is no great advance in holiness without a growing knowledge of Christ, as the sanctification of the believer. A reference to God's Word, will place this truth in its proper light. Matt. 1:21: "And you shall call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Not only shall He save them from the guilt and condemnation of sin, but also from the indwelling power or reign of sin, so that "sin shall not have dominion over" them. We shall presently show more fully how, in His sacerdotal office, He accomplishes this.

Again, 1 Cor. 1:2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." But the most striking allusion to this important truth is found in the 30th verse, where the Lord Jesus is especially spoken of as made of God the sanctification of His people: "But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Now it is essential to a right reception of the subject that we should know in what points of view Christ is made our sanctification; so that believing in Him and receiving Him as such, we may "grow up into Him in all things."

In the first place, the atoning work of Christ lays the foundation of sanctification. He opens a way by which God, so to speak, can deal with the soul in the great business of its holiness. Only upon the broad basis of His law honored, His holiness secured, and His justice satisfied, can God, in the way of mercy, have communication with the sinner. Here we see the great glory of Jesus as the God-Man Mediator. His atoning work opens a channel through which God, without compromising a single perfection of His nature, can communicate the saving and sanctifying power of His grace to the soul. The obedience and blood-shedding of our adorable Lord, are ever, in the Divine Word, connected with the sanctification of the church. A few examples will suffice to show this.

Speaking of the legal, but imperfect sanctification by the sacrifices under the law, the apostle supplies an argument in favor of the superior sanctification by the blood of Christ. Heb. 9:13, 14: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Again, in Rom. 6:3-6, the following phrases occur "Planted in the likeness of his death" "our old man crucified with him" "the body of sin destroyed" "that henceforth we should not serve sin." Let the reader also consult the following passages: Rom. 5:9; 1 Pet. 3:18; Col. 1:14; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 John 4:10. Thus does the atoning blood of Jesus lay the foundation of all future degrees of sanctification. The cross of Christ is, so to speak, the starting point of the soul in this glorious career of holiness, and the goal to which it again returns. By it, the body of sin is wounded, and wounded fatally; from it, pardon, and peace, and holiness flow; and through it, the soul daily rises to God in a holy surrender of itself to His service. Let no man dream of true mortification of sin, of real sanctification of heart, who does not deal constantly, closely and believingly with the atoning blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit brings the cross into the soul and lays it upon the heart to be the death of sin. "I am crucified with Christ." "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"—and see how the cross lifted him above the world and deadened him to it—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Thus did Paul breathe

after and attain unto holiness.

The intercession of our Lord Jesus pleads for and secures the sanctification of the believer. In this sense it may be said that He is "made of God unto us sanctification." The Christian reader may be but imperfectly aware how closely connected is every spiritual grace and blessing that he receives with the advocacy of Jesus at the right hand of God. (The Lord increase our faith in this great and sanctifying truth!) While yet upon earth, our dear Lord commenced that work of intercession for the sanctification of the church, which He ascended up on high more fully to carry on. This was the burden of His prayer, and it forms, as John Owen observes, "the blessed spring of our holiness"—"Sanctify them through your truth." And not only would He leave it, as it were, as a model of the intercession of His exalted priesthood, but, for our encouragement, He would provide an evidence of its success. To Peter, about to pass through a severe temptation, He says, "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." Nor did his faith fail. It was sifted, it was severely shaken, it was powerfully tried, but it failed not; not a particle of the pure gold was lost in the refining, not a grain of the pure wheat in the sifting: and why?—because Jesus had interceded, and His intercession was all-prevailing. O the vast and costly blessings that flow into the soul from the intercession of Christ! Never shall we know the full extent of this, until we pass within the veil. We shall then know the secret of our spiritual life—of all our supports, consolations and victories; why it was that the spark in the ocean was not quite extinguished, why the vessel in the storm and amid the breakers did not quite become a wreck; why, when temptations assailed, and crosses pressed, and afflictions overwhelmed, and unbelief prevailed, that our faith still did not fail, and our bark was not driven from its moorings, and that "out of the depths" we were enabled to cry, "Thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ." The secret will then disclose itself—the intercession of Jesus our great High Priest.

How sweet and consoling to the believer is this view of our exalted Emmanuel in the hour of bereavement, when confined to his chamber of solitude, or languishing upon his bed of "pining sickness." Too deeply absorbed in sorrow, it may be, to give utterance to his anguished spirit in prayer—his bodily frame so weakened by disease, and racked by pain, as to render the mind unfit for close and connected spiritual thought—O how sweet is then the intercession of Jesus; how sweet to know that, in the hour of the soul's extremity when human sympathy and power are exhausted, "Jesus has entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God" for His suffering

child. And when all utterance has failed on earth; when the heart is broken and the lips are sealed, then to look up and see our elder Brother, the Brother born for our adversity, the exalted High Priest waving the golden censer before the throne, while the cloud of His atoning merit goes up before the mercy-seat, bearing as it ascends, the person, the name, the circumstances and the needs of the sufferer below—precious gospel, that opens to the eye of faith so sweet a prospect as this! When you cannot think of Him, afflicted soul, He is thinking of you; when you cannot pray to Him, He is praying for you, for "He ever lives to make intercession."

But our Lord Jesus is the sanctification of the believer in still another and blessed sense. View Him as the Head of all mediatorial fulness to His people. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Here is sanctification for the believer who is mourning over the existence and power of indwelling sin, feeling it to be his greatest burden and the cause of his deepest sorrow. In the growing discovery of the hidden evil—each successive view, it may be, deeper and darker than the former—where is he to look but unto Jesus? Where can he fly, but to His cross? Hemmed in on every side by a host of spiritual Philistines, no avenue of escape presenting itself, the eternal Spirit leads the soul to a simple view of Jesus, opens to him the vast treasury of His grace, and the free welcome to all comers. And what does he find in that fulness? All that he needs to pardon sin, to hide deformity, to overcome unbelief, and break the power of strong corruption; he finds that there is enough in Christ to make him holy, that, in simply taking his sins to Jesus, they are pardoned; in taking his strong infirmities, they are subdued; in taking his needs, they are supplied; in a word, he finds Christ to be his "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

We close this chapter with a few remarks in the way of caution, direction and encouragement in this great work.

Do not mistake the nature of true sanctification. It is an internal and radical work. It has its seat in the heart. A mere external mortification of sinful habits does not come up to the standard of gospel sanctification. True, this is included in real holiness, yet it may exist without a holy heart. A man may cut off outward sins, and leave the principle of all sin yet remaining in its unsubdued power. We may visit a forest, and level a tall cedar to the earth; yet, if we leave the root deeply embedded in the soil, the vital principle yet remaining in all its vigor, what marvel if, in course of time, that root shall

again shoot forth, and branch out as before? True sanctification is a daily mortification of the root of sin in the heart—the continual destruction of the principle. The Word of God bears us out in this; Gal. 5:24: "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Rom. 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Do not rest short of this. Would you be holy as God is holy, and happy as the saints in glory are happy?—then must you reach after this and rest not until you attain it.

Again we would urge—seek high attainments in holiness. Do not be satisfied with a low measure of grace, with a stunted religion, with just enough Christianity to admit you into heaven. O how many are thus content, satisfied to leave the great question of their acceptance to be decided in another world, and not in this, resting upon some slight evidence, in itself faint and equivocal, perhaps a former experience, some impressions or sensations or transient joys long since passed away; and thus they are content to live, and thus content to die. You should not be satisfied with anything short of a present Christ, received, enjoyed and lived upon. Forget the things that are behind, reach forth unto higher attainments in sanctification, seek to have the daily witness, daily communion with God; and for your own sake, for the sake of others, and for Christ's sake, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

Beware of self-dependence in this work. Remember the words that Jesus once spoke to His disciples, and now speaks to you, "Without me you can do nothing." Self-trust, self-complacency, self-boasting, all must be crucified; and, strong only in the strength that is in Christ Jesus, must the believer gird himself to the work. Our wisdom is to go in our weakness and folly to Jesus. In this lies the great secret of our victory: "When I am weak, then am I strong." "My grace is sufficient for you." "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Do not forget that the truth of God is the great instrument of sanctification. "Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth." There is that in the truth of God, which, when brought into the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit, always sanctifies. It is holy truth; it unfolds a holy God, reveals a holy law, exhibits a holy sacrifice, and enforces by the most holy motives the sanctity of the most holy precepts. In proportion as the renewed mind is brought into a close and constant contact with God's truth, it grows nearer to its spirit. Let then "the word of Christ dwell richly in you in all wisdom" and

spiritual understanding. Be close, diligent and prayerful students of the Word of God. Do not separate the doctrine from the precept, nor the precept from the promise; every part is essential to the sanctification of the believer; to secure this great end, the doctrine, the precept and the promise must be alike received, and brought into active, holy exercise.

Deal much and closely with the atoning blood of Jesus. There is no victory over the indwelling power of sin, and there is no pardon for the guilt of sin, but as the soul deals with the blood of Christ. The great object of our dear Lord's death was to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is the great work of Satan. To overcome this, to break its power, subdue its dominion, repair its ruins and release from its condemnation, the blessed Son of God suffered the ignominious death of the cross. All that bitter agony which He endured, all that mental suffering, the sorrow of His soul in the garden, the sufferings of His body on the cross—all was for sin. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. 2:14. "He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it and that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:25-27. See, then, the close and beautiful connection between the death of Christ and the death of sin. All true sanctification comes through the cross! Reader, seek it there. The cross brought into your soul by the eternal Spirit, will be the death of your sins. Go to the cross—oh, go to the cross of Jesus. In simplicity of faith, go; with the strong corruption, go; with the burden of guilt, go; go to the cross! You will find nothing but love there, nothing but welcome there, nothing but purity there. The precious blood of Jesus "cleanses from all sin." And while you are kept low beneath the cross, your enemy dares not approach you, sin shall not have dominion over you, nor shall Satan your accuser condemn you.

Deal much and closely with the fulness of grace that is in Jesus. All this grace in Christ is for the sanctification of the believer. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," for the necessities of His people; and what necessities so great and urgent as those which spring from indwelling sin? Take the corruption, whatever be its nature, directly and simply to Jesus: the very act of taking it to Him weakens its power; indeed it is half way to victory. The blessed state of mind—the holy impulse that leads you to your secret place, there to fall prostrate before the Lord in lowliness of spirit, brokenness of heart and humble confession of sin, with the hand of faith on the head of Jesus, the atoning Sacrifice is a mighty achievement of the indwelling Spirit

over the power of indwelling sin. Learn to take the guilt as it comes, and the corruption as it rises, directly and simply to Jesus. Do not allow the guilt of sin to remain long upon the conscience. The moment there is the slightest consciousness of a wound received, take it to the blood of Christ. The moment a mist dims the eye of faith, so that you cannot see clearly the smile of your Father's countenance, take it that instant to the blood of atonement. Let there be no distance between God and your soul. Sin separates. But sin immediately confessed, mourned over and forsaken, brings God and the soul together in sweet, close and holy fellowship. O the oneness of God and the believer in a sin-pardoning Christ! Who can know it? Only one who has experienced it. To cherish, then, the abiding sense of this holy, loving oneness, the believer (to use the figure of the tabernacle) must wash daily in the brazen laver that is outside—then, entering in within the veil, he may "draw near" the mercy-seat and ask what he will of Him who dwells between the cherubim. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10:19-22.

Thank God for the smallest victory gained. Praise Him for any evidence that sin has not entire dominion. Every fresh triumph achieved over some strong and besetting weakness is a glorious battle won. No victory that ever flushed the cheek of an Alexander or a Caesar can be compared with his, who, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, overcomes a single corruption. If "he that rules his spirit is better than he that takes a city," then he who masters one corruption of his nature has more real glory than the greatest earthly conqueror that ever lived. O how God is glorified, how Jesus is honored and how the Spirit is magnified in the slaying of one spiritual enemy at the foot of the cross! Cheer up, precious soul! You have every encouragement to persevere in the great business of sanctification. True, it is a hard fight; true, it is a severe and painful contest, but the victory is yours! The "Captain of your salvation" has fought and conquered for you, and now sits upon His throne of glory, cheering you on, and supplying you with all needed strength for the warfare in which you are engaged. Then "fight the good fight of faith," "act like men," "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," for you shall at length "overcome through the blood of the Lamb" and be "more than conquerors through Him that has loved us." Here, beneath the cross, would I breathe for you the desire and the prayer once offered by the apostle of the

**Gentiles in behalf of the church of the Thessalonians, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Amen and Amen.**

**"The Sealing of the Spirit"
or "The Believer an Epistle"**

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 2 Cor. 3:2

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. 2 Cor. 3:2

But the only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves! Your lives are a letter written in our hearts, and everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you. 2 Cor. 3:2

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Ephes. 1:13

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, Ephes. 1:13

And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. Ephes. 1:13

What an inestimable gift is God the Holy Spirit, and how vast is His work! Each successive step we take in unfolding it does but more deeply convince us of this. New rays of light are reflected, new aspects of importance present themselves, and new features of interest and beauty are brought to view, as we pursue our research into this essential and important department of Divine truth. The more thoroughly and prayerfully we are led to investigate the operations of the Spirit upon the soul, especially if we watch closely His work in our own hearts, the more powerfully will the conviction press itself upon the mind that all real advance in Divine knowledge, in righteousness, joy and peace, is inseparably connected with His indwelling and sanctifying power. In

the previous chapter, we endeavored to unfold this. We have seen Him as the Author and Finisher of holiness in the soul—beginning the great work, carrying it forward, strengthening it when feeble, reviving it when drooping, and thus preparing the believer for the "inheritance of the saints in light." Closely connected with this part of His work is His sealing operation. As various opinions have been held regarding the nature of the Spirit's sealing, as it is a subject of a highly spiritual and practical tendency and (to an inquirer after a more perfect knowledge of the truth) of much importance, we enter upon the discussion of the subject the more readily, and, we trust, with earnest prayer for Divine assistance in unfolding it.

THE NATURE OF THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT

What do we understand by the sealing of the Spirit? What does the Word of God teach upon the subject? There are various passages in which the same figure is employed, but which do not convey the idea we ascribe to His present operation. For example, there is a sealing spoken of in 2 Tim. 2:19:

"Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are his." We think it clear that the seal here alluded to has respect to the Father's sealing His people in election with the seal of His foreknowledge, which, of course, is an operation anterior to the existence of faith in the soul, and is within Himself, and not upon them. It is, so to speak, His secret designation of His people, known especially and only to Himself.

There is also a sealing spoken of in the Song of Solomon 8:6: "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm: for love is strong as death." It is equally clear that this cannot refer to the work of the Spirit, but must refer to Christ's strong and unchangeable love to His people. They are set as a seal upon His heart, the dwelling-place of love; and upon His arm, the instrument of power; unchangeable love and omnipotent power are pledged to their eternal security. As a seal set upon His heart and worn upon His arm, they are precious to, and valued by, Him.

Nor are we to interpret the sealing under consideration to mean the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; for it is a remarkable fact, already alluded to—and it speaks solemnly to those who are forming a higher estimate of gifts than of graces—that the Corinthian church, the most distinguished for its possession of the gifts of the Spirit, was at the same time most remarkable for its lack of the sanctifying graces of the Spirit. It was the most gifted, but at the same time the least holy community gathered and planted by the apostles.

The question still recurs—what are we to understand by the sealing of the Spirit? It is that act of the Holy Spirit by which the work of grace is deepened in the heart of the believer, so that he has an increasing and abiding conviction of his acceptance in Jesus, and his adoption into the family of God. It is a clearer and more undoubted manifestation of Christ to the soul, a larger degree of the sanctifying, witnessing and anointing influences of the Holy Spirit, evidencing itself in a growing holiness of character. Let us not be misunderstood. We are not speaking of some peculiar and sudden impulse on the mind, of some immediate suggestion or revelation to the soul, some vision of the night, or voice in the air. No! we speak of a growth in a knowledge of Christ, in sanctification of heart, in holiness of life, in an increasing and abiding moral certainty of the believer's "calling and election." "In whom also after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Spirit is both the seal and the sealer; even as Jesus was both the sacrifice and the priest. He deepens the work of grace in the heart; He witnesses to the believer that he is born of God; He seals the soul to the day of redemption, and by His indwelling and anointing influences enables him to say, "I know whom I have believed—He has loved me and given Himself for me."

THE MANNER OF THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT

With this brief and simple definition of the nature of the sealing of the Spirit, we proceed to unfold the manner in which it is effected.

It is sometimes a sudden work of the Spirit. A soul may be so deeply sealed in conversion, may receive such a vivid impression of Divine grace, such an enlarged communication of the Divine Spirit, as it never afterwards loses. It is sealed "unto the day of redemption"; and that too, in the most simple way. In the hearing of a single sermon, the reading of a single chapter of God's Word, some promise brought with the power of the Holy Spirit and sealed upon the heart, in a moment the soul is brought into the full assurance of understanding and of faith. Take, for example, that one precious promise which the Spirit has sealed, never to be effaced, upon many a poor sinner's softened heart: "him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out." O what a sealing is this! God speaking to a poor, distressed, and disconsolate soul, assuring it of a cordial welcome and of a free pardon—that though no tongue can express its vileness and poverty, and no imagination conceive its deep sorrow, yet, coming to Jesus just as it is, it shall in no wise be cast out! Is not this an impression of the seal in the hands of the great Sealer, which is unto

the day of redemption?

Sometimes it takes place as the Holy Spirit unfolds to the anxious soul the great truth that Christ is the Savior of a sinner. You have been long waiting for some offering, some gift, some price with which to come; long lingering on the margin of the fountain, waiting for some preparation to enter—in other words (for it amounts to this), waiting to feel less vile, less unworthy, in order that you may be more welcome. And now, the blessed Spirit opens to your mind that great and precious truth, that "Christ died for the ungodly," that He is the mighty and the willing Savior of a sinner; that no gift, no price, is asked; no previous fitness or self-preparation is necessary; that the more vile and unworthy, the more fit and the more welcome. O what an impression of the seal is this upon a wounded heart! When the glorious announcement is brought home to the soul—a full and free pardon for a poor sinner—the blood of Jesus cleansing from sin—is it any marvel that no change of time or circumstance can obliterate the impression or the remembrance of that moment from the mind? It was a sealing of pardon upon a heart which God had made soft, and which was the sure prelude to, indeed the beginning of, eternal glory.

But in most cases the sealing of the Spirit is a more gradual work. It is a work of time. The soul is placed in the school of deep experience and is led on step by step, stage by stage. The knowledge of self and of Christ increases, deeper views of indwelling sin are discovered, the heart's treachery is more acutely felt, the devices of Satan are better known, the mystery of God's gracious and providential dealings with His children is more clearly unfolded and better understood. And all this, it may be, is arrived at through a process—the deep, painful, yet sanctified discipline of the covenant—so that years may elapse before a child of the covenant attains to the full sealing of the Spirit. And yet, blessed be God, the work of regeneration is so perfect in itself, the blotting out of all a believer's sins so complete, and his justification so entire, that a saint of God dying in the first stages of the Divine life is safe forever. May we not refer to the thief upon the cross as an example illustrating and confirming this?

There are, then, degrees, or progressive stages of the Spirit's sealing. The first impression is made in regeneration. This is often faint, and in numerous cases, scarcely perceptible. Especially is it so in ordinary conversions. We mean by ordinary conversions those that occur under the common influences of the Spirit, in the use of the stated means of grace. Where the Holy Spirit descends

in an especial and extraordinary manner (as the history of the American churches and, more recently, of many in our own land testifies that He sometimes does), conversions assume a more marked character and type. They are clearer, more perceptible, and undoubted. The work is of a deeper kind, views of sin are more pungent, the law-work of the soul more thorough, and, when the soul emerges from its gloomy night of conviction into the glorious light of pardon, it seems more like the "perfect day" of God's forgiveness. There is, in a work of grace transpiring during an especial outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a deeper impression of the seal of the Spirit upon the heart, a clearer and more manifest sense of pardon and acceptance, than in the normal conversions of ordinary times. Nor is this difficult to account for. There is a greater and richer manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This is the grand secret. He gives more of Himself. He imparts more of His anointing influences; and the larger the degree we possess of the quickening, sanctifying influences of the Spirit, the more in proportion do we know of His sealing operation. How this thought should awaken the desire, and impart power and fervency to the prayer, for a more enlarged communication of the Holy Spirit! Ceaseless should be the cry, "Lord, fill me with the Spirit!" But, as we have remarked, in conversions occurring under the more ordinary instrumentalities, the first impression of the seal of the Spirit is often but little beneath the surface. The work of grace is feeble. It may be compared to the faint outline of a picture: the design is there, the idea of the artist is seen, but the fulness of its parts, the coloring, the light and shade, are lacking to the perfection of the whole. It may be compared, also, to the first streak of morning light, before it deepens into "perfect day," or to the gentle rising of the rivulet, before it widens into the "broad river." Its beginnings are feeble, and yet real. The light is not less light because it is but a faint and struggling ray, nor is the rivulet less a rivulet because its issues are feeble and almost unseen. Grace loses nothing of the greatness and glory of its character in the smallness of its degree. An infant loses nothing of its identity with its species because it is not a "perfect man," nor does the father disown it as his child because it is the smallest and the feeblest of his family. O no! feeble grace is still Divine grace; and he who touches but the hem, is as much saved, and shall be as surely glorified, as he whose faith removes the mountain and casts it into the sea. The first impression is as much the work of the Spirit as any deeper one in after years. Let not the weak believer overlook or undervalue what God has done for him. That feeble light, that little strength, that faint and flickering ray, that touching but the hem—oh, it is the blessed product of God the eternal Spirit. Nature never taught you your sinfulness, your worthlessness, your vileness, your nothingness; "flesh and blood " never

revealed to you the absolute necessity of a better righteousness than your own, nor led you to Jesus, as your "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." Then "give glory to the Lord your God" for what He has done. Praise, O praise Him for the work He has wrought in you. Tell to others the wonders of His love, His grace and His power. Confess his name before angels and men. Be very diligent in seeking large and yet larger supplies of that "river that makes glad the city of God." "In whom also, after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

But a yet deeper impression of the seal is made, when the believer is led more fully into the realization of his sonship, when he attains to the blessed sense of the "adoption of children." Although it is most true that the moment a sinner believes in Jesus, he becomes actually an "heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ," and enters into the family as an adopted child, yet the clear and undoubted sense of this vast mercy may not be sealed upon his heart until later years. He may long have walked without the sweet sense of God's adopting love in his heart; the frame of his spirit and the language of his soul in prayer may have been more akin to that of the "son of the bond-woman" than the "son of the free-woman." He may have known but little of the "free spirit," the spirit of an adopted child, and may seldom have gone to God as a kind, loving, tender and faithful Father. But now the Divine Sealer—the eternal Spirit of God—enters afresh, and impresses deeply upon his soul the unutterably sweet and abiding sense of his adoption. O what an impression is then left upon his heart, when all his legal fears are calmed, when all his slavish moanings are hushed, when all his bondage spirit is gone, and when under the drawings of filial love, he approaches the throne of grace and cries, "My Father!" And his Father responds, "My child!" "You shall call me, My Father, and shall not turn away from me." Jer. 3:19. "In whom also, after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

In the process of sanctified affliction, the soul often receives a fresh and a deep impress of the seal of the Spirit. The furnace works wonders for a believer. O that he should ever wish to be exempt from it! Indeed, it may be remarked that real grace is inseparable from a state of trial. Where there is real faith, the Lord will try it. Where there is the true ore, the Refiner will prove it in the furnace. There is not a grace of the Spirit but, more or less, and at one time or another, Jesus tries that grace. "The Lord tries the righteous." He tries their principles, tries their graces, tries their obedience, proves His own work, brings out the new man in all its muscular fulness, develops the nature and character of His work and shows it to be His mighty product, and in all

respects worthy of Himself. Much, then, as we would wish at times, exemption from a state of trial, anxious for the more smooth and easy path, yet, if we are really born of God, and His grace has truly made us one of His family, like them we have been "chosen in the furnace of affliction," and with them in the furnace we are brought into the possession of some of the most costly blessings of our lives.

Real grace, then, is tried grace. And note how, in the process of its trial, the blessed and eternal Spirit more deeply seals the believer. The hour of affliction is the hour of softening. Job bore this testimony: "He makes my heart soft." The hardness of the heart yields, the callousness of the spirit gives way, the affections become tender, conscience is more susceptible. It is the season of holy abstraction, meditation and prayer, of withdrawal from the world and from creature delights, while the soul is more closely shut in with God. The heart, now emptied, humbled and softened, is prepared for the seal of the Spirit; and what an impression is then made, what discoveries of God's love to the soul, what enlarged views of the personal glory of Christ, of the infinite perfection of His work, of the preciousness of the atoning sacrifice, of the hatefulness of sin, and of the beauty of holiness! His own personal interest in this great work of Christ is made more clear and certain to his soul. The Spirit bears fresh witness to his acceptance, and seals him anew with the adopting love of God. It was the psalmist's wisdom to acknowledge, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Let it not then be forgotten that an afflicting time is often a sealing time.

We would remark in this connection that the sealing of the Spirit does not always imply a rejoicing state. It is not necessarily accompanied by great spiritual joy. While we cannot forget that it is the believer's privilege to be "always rejoicing," "rejoicing evermore," and that a state of spiritual joy is as much a holy as it is a happy state, yet we cannot suppose that the "sealed" are always in possession of this "fruit of the Spirit." It is perhaps more a state of rest in God, a state of holy quietude and peace, which, in many cases, seldom rises to that of joy. There is an unclouded hope, a firm and unshaken resting on the finished work, a humble reliance on the stability of the covenant and on the immutability of God's love, which is never moved even when there is no sensible enjoyment and when comfort seems to die. It is a state corresponding to that which David thus expresses, "Although my house do not be so with God; yet he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." Perhaps it is more akin to Job's frame of soul when

he exclaimed, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." A sense of comfort may be withdrawn, joy may be absent, the Sun of righteousness casting but a faint twilight over the soul, and yet, such is the power of faith grasping the cross of Christ, such is the firm resting of the soul upon the stability of the covenant, upon what God is, and upon what He has promised, that, without one note of joy, or one ray of light, the believer can yet say, "I know whom I have believed." And why, we ask, this strong and vigorous reliance? Why this buoying up of the soul in the absence of sensible comfort? We reply that it is because that soul has attained unto the sealing of the Spirit. This forms the great secret.

This conducts us to another reflection. The believer will never lose the sealing of the Spirit. The impression of God's pardoning love made upon the heart by the Holy Spirit is never entirely effaced. We do not say that there are no moments when the "consolations of God are small" with the believer, when he shall have no severe "fightings within and fears without," when the experience of the church shall be his, "I opened to my beloved: but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spoke: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer"—all this he may experience, and still not lose the sealing of the Spirit. In the midst of it all, even in the lowest depth, there shall be the abiding conviction of an interest in God's love which sustains, animates and comforts. It will be seen, by reverting to the state of the church alluded to above, that although there was the consciousness of her Beloved's withdrawal—though He was gone, and she sought Him but could not find Him, called Him but He gave her no answer—yet not for one moment did she lose the impression that He still was her Beloved. Here was the glorious triumph of faith in the hour when all was loneliness, desolation and joylessness. Here was the sealing of the Spirit which never left her, even though her "Beloved had gone." And while not a beam of His beauty glanced upon her soul, nor a note of His voice fell upon her ear, she still could look up and exclaim, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." O mighty power of faith that can anchor the soul firm on Jesus in the darkest and wildest tempest! And this, reader, is indeed the sealing of the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit so deeply impressing on the heart a sense of pardoning love, so firmly establishing it in the faithfulness of God, in the finished work of Christ, in the stability of the covenant, and in the soul's adoption into the one family, that in the gloomiest hour, and under the most trying dispensation, there is that which keeps the soul steady to its center—Jehovah Jesus. And even should his sun go down behind a mist, he has the sustaining assurance that it will rise upon another world, in peerless, cloudless

splendor. O yes! the sealing of the Spirit is a permanent, abiding impression. It is "unto the day of redemption"—the day when there shall be no more conflict, no more darkness, no more sin. It is not to the day of pardon, for he cannot be more entirely pardoned than he is; it is not to the day of acceptance, for he cannot be more fully accepted than now. No, it is to the glorious "day of redemption," the day of complete emancipation longed for by the sons of God, and even sighed for by the "whole creation": "and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." O shout for joy, you who are sealed of the Lord! Tried and afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, you who find the world to be but a wilderness, a valley of tears—the path rougher and rougher, narrower and narrower—lift up your heads with joy; the hour of "your redemption draws near," and the "days of your mourning shall be ended." And this is your security: a faithful covenant-keeping God, "who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

In closing this chapter, we would remark in the first place that it is the duty and the privilege of every believer diligently and prayerfully to seek the sealing of the Spirit. He rests short of his great privilege if he slights or undervalues this blessing. Do not be satisfied with the impression which you received in conversion. In other words, do not rest content with a past experience. Many are satisfied with a mere hope that they once passed from death unto life, and with this feeble and (in many cases) doubtful evidence, they are content to pass all their days and to go down to the grave. Ah, reader, if you are really converted, and your soul is in a healthy, growing, spiritual state, you will want more than this. And especially, too, if you are led into deeper self-knowledge, into a more intimate acquaintance with the roughness of the rough way and the straitness of the strait path, you will want a present Christ to lean upon and to live upon. Past experience will not do for you, but only as it confirms your soul in the faithfulness of God. "Forgetting those things that are behind," you will seek a present pardon, a present sense of acceptance; and the daily question, as you near your eternal home, will be, "How do I now stand with God? Is Jesus precious to my soul now? Is He my daily food? What do I experience of daily visits from and to Him? Do I more and more see my own vileness, emptiness and poverty, and His righteousness, grace and fulness? And should the summons come now, am I ready to depart and to be with Christ?" As you value a happy and a holy walk, as you would be jealous for the honor and glory of the Lord, as you wish to be the "salt of the earth," the "light of the world," and to be a savor of Christ in every

place—O seek the sealing of the Spirit. Do not rest short of it, reach after it, press towards it—it is your duty. O that the duty may be your privilege: then shall you exclaim with an unfaltering tongue, "Abba, Father;" "my Lord and my God!"

Again, I remark, this blessing is only found in the way of God's appointment. He has ordained that prayer should be the great channel through which His covenant blessings should flow into the soul. If it is your anxious desire to attain to this blessing, I would quote for your direction a remark of that eminent servant of Christ, Dr. Thomas Goodwin: "Be sure of this," says he, "that, before God ever communicates any good to a soul, He puts that soul in a state of holiness to receive it." To confirm and illustrate this thought, let me ask—what was the state of the apostles when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in His witnessing, anointing and sealing influences? It is described in these words—"these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Acts 1:14. What is the important lesson thus taught us? That God would have His child in a waiting, seeking, supplicating posture; and in this holy state prepared to receive the high attainment we plead for. Do you earnestly desire the sealing of the Spirit? "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find." As surely as you petition for it—sincerely, humbly, believingly, seeking it in the name of Jesus—through the Cross of Christ, you shall have it. The Lord the Spirit is ready to impart it to you. It is the fresh gift of His love, without respect to any worth or worthiness on the part of the soul that receives it. It is a gift of grace for the poor, the dependent, the unworthy, those who are little in their own eyes, and little in the eyes of others; and if this is your conscious state, then is it for you. And O, the blessed results! Who can describe them? Sealed! How will all your legal fears and unbelieving doubts in a moment vanish away; your soul, so long fettered and imprisoned, shall now go free; the cross you have so long looked at, not daring to bow your shoulder to it, shall now be taken up with a cheerful mind; Christ's yoke, so long resisted, will now be easy, and His burden, so long refused, will now be light; and, with a heart enlarged with the love of Jesus, you will "run the way of His commandments," esteeming His precepts better than life. Prayer, importunate prayer, will bring the blessing we plead for into your soul. Seek it with your whole heart, seek it diligently, perseveringly. Seek it by day and by night, seek it in all the means of grace, in every way of God's appointment; especially seek it in the name of Jesus, as the purchased blessing of His atoning blood. "Ask what you will in My name," are His own encouraging words, "and it shall be granted unto you." Then ask for the sealing of the

Spirit. Ask nothing less; more you do not need. Feel that you have not "attained" until you possess it, that you have not "apprehended that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus" until you have "received the Holy Spirit" as a Sealer.

It is, and has long been, the solemn conviction of the writer, that much of the spiritual darkness—the lack of spiritual consolation, the stunted piety, the harassing doubts and fears, the imperfect apprehensions of Jesus, the feeble faith, the sickly drooping state of the soul, the uncertainty of their full acceptance in Christ which mark so many of the professing people of God in this our day—may be traced to the absence of a deep sealing of the Spirit. Resting satisfied with the faint impression in conversion, with the dim views they then had of Christ, and the feeble apprehension of their acceptance and adoption, is it any marvel that all their life-time they should be in bondage, through slavish doubts and fears? Fears that they should never attain to the "stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus," that they should never rise to the humble boldness, the unwavering confidence, the blest assurance and the holy dignity of the sons of God? O no! They rest short of this blessing. They stay at the door of the ark; they remain upon the border of the goodly land, and not entering fully in, they experience the effects which we have described. But the richest ore lies buried the deepest; the sweetest fruit is on the higher branches, the strongest light is near the sun. In other words, if we desire more knowledge of Christ, of our full pardon and complete acceptance, if we desire the earnest of our inheritance, and even now would taste the "grapes of Eshcol," we must be "reaching forth unto those things that are before." We must "press toward the mark," and not rest until our rest is found in a clear, unclouded, immovable and holy assurance of our being in Christ; and this is only experienced in the sealing of the Spirit. Again, we say, with all the earnestness which a growing sense of the vastness of the blessing inspires, seek to be sealed of the Spirit. Seek the "earnest of the Spirit"; seek to be "filled with the Spirit"; seek the "anointing of the Spirit"; seek the "Spirit of adoption." Do not say that it is too immense a blessing, too high an attainment for one so small, so feeble, so obscure, so unworthy as you. O do not thus malign the grace of God. All His blessings are the bestowments of grace; and grace means free favor to the most unworthy. Anyone who reads this page may, under the blessed sealing of the Spirit, look up through Jesus to God as a Father. Low views of self, deep consciousness of vileness, poverty of state or of spirit, are no objections with God, but rather strong arguments that prevail with Him to give you the blessing. Only ask, only believe, only persevere, and you shall obtain it. It is in the heart of the Spirit to seal "unto the day of

redemption all who believe in Jesus. May it be in the heart of the reader to desire the blessing, seeing that it is so freely and richly offered.

Reader, whose superscription do you bear? It may be your reply is—"I want Christ; I secretly long for Him; I desire Him above all beside." Is it so? Then take courage, and go to Jesus. Go to Him simply, go to Him unhesitatingly, go to Him immediately. That desire is from Him, let it lead you to Him. That secret longing is the work of the Spirit; and having begotten it there, do you think that He will not honor it and welcome you when you come? Try Him. Bring Him to the touch-stone of His own truth. "Prove me now herewith" is His gracious invitation. Take His promise, "Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out"; plead it in wrestlings at the mercy-seat, and see if He will not "open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Go to Him just as you are. If you cannot take to Him a pure heart, take an impure one; if you cannot take to Him a broken heart, take a whole one; if you cannot take to Him a soft heart, take a hard one; only go to Him. The very act of going will be blessed to you. And oh, such is the strength of His love, such is His yearning compassion and melting tenderness of heart for poor sinners, such is His ability and willingness to save, that He will no more cast you out than deny His own existence. "Precious Lord Jesus! set us as a seal upon Your heart, and by Your Spirit, seal Yourself upon our hearts; and give us, unworthy though we are, a place among "those who are sealed."

**"Jesus the True God, and His Work All-sufficient"
or "The Witness of the Spirit"**

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. 1 John 5:10

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. 1 John 5:10

All who believe in the Son of God know that this is true. 1 John 5:10

The Spirit witnesses to the atoning work of Jesus in His priestly office. We have already seen that the foundation of the work of Christ is the Godhead of His nature. It is important that the eye be kept immovably fixed upon this, as we survey the atoning work of our Lord. Every step we take in developing that work introduces us to new wonders as we keep the glory of the person of

Christ in view. The transcendent efficacy of the sacrifice arose from the infinite dignity of the Priest. The priests under the law could impart no personal efficacy or glory to their sacrificial offerings. Their sacrifices were only available for the atonement of transgression, as they were offered up in obedience to the command of God. But the sacrifice which Christ presented derived all its efficacy and glory from His person. It is this doctrine that attaches such importance to the death of Jesus and that throws such surpassing glory around His obedience. The blood of the Lord Jesus "cleanses us from all sin" because it is the blood of the God-Man; the righteousness of the Lord Jesus "justifies us from all things" because it is the "righteousness of God." From this arises the costliness of the sacrifice which Jesus presented to God.

It was also an entire sacrifice. It was Himself He offered. "Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Eph. 5:2. It was Himself He offered up. More He could not give, less would not have sufficed. He gave Himself—all that He possessed in heaven, and all that belonged to Him on earth, He gave in behalf of His people. His life of obedience, His death of suffering, He gave as "an offering and a sacrifice to God." It was an entire surrender. It was a voluntary offering. "He gave Himself." It was not by compulsion or by constraint that He surrendered Himself into the hands of Divine justice; he did not go as a reluctant victim to the altar, they did not drag Him to the cross. He went voluntarily. It is true that there existed a solemn necessity that Jesus should die in behalf of His people. It grew out of His covenant engagement with the Father. Into that engagement He voluntarily entered. His own ineffable love constrained Him. But after the compact had been made, the covenant of redemption ratified, and the bond given to justice, there was a necessity resting upon Jesus compelling Him to finish the work. His word, His honor, His truth, His glory, all were pledged to the entire fulfilment of His suretyship. He had freely given Himself into the power of justice; He was therefore, on His taking upon Him the form of a servant, under obligations to satisfy all its claims; He was legally bound to obey all of its commands.

And yet it was a voluntary surrender of Himself as a sacrifice for His people. It was a willing offering. If there was a necessity, and we have shown that there was, it grew out of His own voluntary love to His church. It was, so to speak, a voluntary necessity. See how this blessed view of the death of Jesus is sustained by the Divine Word. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he

opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opens not his mouth." Isaiah 53:7. His own declaration confirms the truth. "Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John 10:17, 18.

Nor was it a voluntariness founded on ignorance. He well knew what the covenant of redemption involved and what stern justice demanded. The entire scene of His humiliation was before Him, in all its dark and somber hues—the manger, the blood-thirsty king, the scorn and reproach of His countrymen, the unbelief of His own kinsmen, the mental agony of Gethsemane, the bloody sweat, the bitter cup, the waywardness of His disciples, the betrayal of one, the denial of another, the forsaking of all; the mock trial, the purple robe, the crown of thorns, the infuriated cry, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him"; the heavy cross, the painful crucifixion, the cruel taunts, the vinegar and the gall, the hidings of His Father's countenance, the concentrated horrors of the curse, the last cry of anguish, the bowing of the head, the giving up the spirit—all, all was before the omniscient mind of the Son of God, with a vividness equal to its reality, when He exclaimed, "Save him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." And yet He willingly rushed to the rescue of ruined man. He voluntarily (though He knew the price of pardon was His blood) gave Himself up thus to the bitter, bitter agony. And did He regret that He had undertaken the work? Never! It is said that it repented God that He had made man, but in no instance is it recorded that it repented Jesus that He had redeemed man. Not an action, not a word, not a look betrayed an emotion like this. Every step He took from Bethlehem to Calvary did but unfold the willingness of Jesus to die. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!"

Oh, how amazing was the love of Jesus! This, this was the secret why He loved not His own life unto the death. He loved sinners too well. He loved us better than Himself. With all our sinfulness, guilt, wretchedness and poverty, He yet loved us so much as to give Himself an offering and sacrifice unto God for us. Here was the spring head where flowed these streams of mercy. This was the gushing fountain that was opened when He died. And when they taunted Him, and said, "If you be the King of the Jews, save yourself," O what a reply did His silence give: "I came not to save myself, but my people. I hang here, not for My own sins, but for theirs. I could save myself, but I came to give My life a ransom for many." They thought the nails alone kept Him to the cross; He

knew it was His own love that fastened Him there. Behold, reader, the strength of Immanuel's love. Come, fall prostrate, adore and worship Him. O what love was His! O the depth! Do not be content merely to stand upon the shore of this ocean: enter into it, drink deeply from it. It is for you, if you are truly feeling your nothingness, your poverty and your vileness; this ocean is for you! It is not for angels, it is for men. It is not for the righteous, but for sinners. Then drink to the full from the love of Jesus. Do not be satisfied with small supplies. Take a large vessel to the fountain. The larger the demand, the larger the supply. The more needy, the more welcome. The more vile, the more fit to come. Then plunge into this ocean, and count all things else but loss for Jesus, and sing, as you do so—

The cross! the cross! oh that's my gain,
Because on that, the Lamb was slain;
'Twas there my Lord was crucified,
'Twas there my Savior for me died.
What wondrous cause could move Your heart
To take on You my curse and smart?
Well knowing that my soul would be
So cold, so negligent to Thee!
The cause was love, I sink with shame
Before my sacred Jesus's name;
That You should bleed and slaughtered be,
Because, because You lovest me. (Clare Taylor.)

We have yet to show in what way the Spirit witnesses to the atoning work of Jesus. He does so by leading the guilty, condemned and broken-hearted sinner to rest on Jesus alone for salvation. In this way He testifies of Christ. He first convinces the soul of sin, bringing the holy law of God with a condemning, slaying power into the conscience; then, having wounded and laid low, He leads the soul to Jesus as an all-sufficient Savior. He opens the understanding to comprehend, and the heart to welcome, His own recorded testimonies of that all-sufficiency, and the readiness of the Lord Jesus Christ to save the vilest of the vile. He leads to the fountain of Immanuel's precious blood, plunges the guilty sinner beneath its cleansing stream, and then raises him to newness of life—"washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." And this is the testimony: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in

him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:14-16. "All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. "He that believes...shall be saved." Mark 16:16.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Heb. 7:25. What a witness is this to the power and readiness of Christ to save! And this is the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the blessed Son of God. But He does more than this. He brings home the record with power to the soul. He Writes the testimony on the heart. He converts the believing soul itself into a witness that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

And what a gospel is this for a poor sinner! "There is not," says an old divine, "an ill word in it against a poor sinner stripped of his self-righteousness." It speaks of pardon, of acceptance, of peace, of full redemption here, and unspeakable glory hereafter. It proclaims a Savior to the lost; a Redeemer to the captive; a Surety to the insolvent; a Physician to the sick; a Friend to the needy; an Advocate to the criminal—all that a self-ruined, sin-accused, law-condemned, justice-threatened, broken-hearted sinner needs, this "glorious gospel of the blessed God" provides. It reveals to the self-ruined sinner, One in whom is his help, Hos. 13:9. To the sin-accused, One who can take away all sin, 1 John 1:7. To the law-condemned, One who saves from all condemnation, Rom. 8:1. To the justice-threatened, One who is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, Isa. 32:2. To the broken-hearted, One who binds up, and heals, Isa. 61:1. That One is Jesus. O name ever dear, ever sweet, ever precious, ever fragrant, ever healing to the "poor in spirit"!

The blessed Spirit witnesses to the all-sufficiency of Christ, for all the needs of His people. He testifies that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the believer. Perhaps this is His greatest witness to a child of God in reference to Jesus. And why? because the highest act by which a believing soul glorifies Christ is a life of daily faith upon Him. There is a vast difference between an acknowledgment of Christ in the judgment, a bowing of the knee to Him outwardly, and a real, experimental, daily living upon Him. The very essence of experimental religion is living upon Christ daily as a poor, empty sinner. We live in a day of easy and splendid profession, a day in which the many can speak well of Christ and "profess and call themselves Christians." But all is not gold; there is much tinsel, much that is only dross, much that is counterfeit. And while many a man has been applauded for his money, admired for his philanthropy, worshiped for his talent and followed for his eloquence, God has said, "I see no lowliness of spirit, no brokenness of heart,

no humbling views of self; I hear no voice of prayer, no acknowledgment of My power; I behold no crowning of My Son, no honoring of Me with the glory." And while many a man has been as the scum and the offscouring of all things; despised for his feeble gifts, his poor talents, his humble sphere; looked down upon by the great and the wise and the haughty; the " high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy," has said, "I see a broken heart, I see a lowly mind, I see the work of My Spirit, I see the image of My Son, I dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit." O yes! a poor believer, going to Jesus in all his emptiness and weakness; going to Him, leaning on His blood and righteousness, going to Him in the face of all opposition, pleading His worth and worthiness; going with all his sins, with all his infirmities, with all his backslidings, with all his wants, has more real glory in it than all the glory of all worlds collected in one blazing focus. What a witness, then, is this which the eternal Spirit bears to Jesus! He assures the believer that all he can possibly want is treasured up in Christ, that he has no cross but Christ can bear it, no sorrow but Christ can alleviate it, no corruption but Christ can subdue it, no guilt but Christ can remove it, no sin but Christ can pardon it, no want but Christ can supply it. Lift up your heads, you who are poor, needy and disconsolate! Lift up your heads, and rejoice that Christ is ALL to you, all you need in this valley of tears, all you need in the deepest sorrow, all you need under the heaviest affliction, all you need in sickness, all you will need in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. Indeed, Christ is in all too. He is in all your salvation, He is in all your mercies, He is in all your trials. He is in all your consolations and in all your afflictions. What more can you want? What more do you desire? A Father who loves you as the apple of His eye! A full Savior to whom to go, moment by moment! A blessed indwelling, sanctifying, comforting Spirit to reveal all to you, and to give you Himself as the "earnest of your inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory"! "Happy is that people that is in such a case: yes, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

Another and an important witness which the eternal Spirit bears for Christ is when He impresses upon the believer the image of Christ. It is the peculiar work of the Spirit to glorify Christ; and this He does in various blessed ways, but perhaps in none more strikingly than in drawing out the likeness of Christ upon the soul. He glorifies Christ in the believer. He witnesses to the power of the grace of Christ in its influence upon the principles, the temper, the daily walk and the whole life of a man of God. The image of Christ—what is it? In one word, it is HOLINESS. Jesus was the holiness of the law embodied. He

was a living commentary on the majesty and purity of the Divine law. The life He lived, the doctrines He proclaimed, the precepts He enjoined, the announcements He made, the revelations He disclosed; all, all were the very inspiration of holiness. Holiness was the vital air He breathed. Although in a world of impurity, all of whose influences were hostile to a life of holiness, He yet moved amid the mass of corruption, not only untouched and untainted, but reflecting so vividly the luster of His own purity, as to compel the forms of evil that everywhere flitted athwart His path either to acknowledge His holiness and submit to His authority or to shrink away in their native darkness. And this is the image the Holy Spirit seems to draw, though it be but an outline of the lineaments, upon the believing soul. What a testimony He bears for Christ, when He causes the image of Jesus to be reflected from every faculty of the soul, to beam in every glance of the eye, to speak in every word of the tongue, and to invest with its beauty every action of the life! O that every child of God might more deeply and solemnly feel that he is to be a witness for Jesus! A witness for a cross-bearing Savior, a witness to the spotless purity of His life, the lowliness of His mind, His deep humility, self-denial, self-annihilation, consuming zeal for God's glory, and yearning compassion for the salvation of souls, a witness to the sanctifying tendency of His truth, the holiness of His commands, the purifying influence of His precepts, the elevating power of His example. It may not be that all these Divine characteristics center in one person, or that all these lovely features are reflected in a single character. All believers are not alike eminent for the same peculiar and exalted graces of the Spirit. It was not so in the early and palmy days of the Gospel, when Jesus Himself was known in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit descended in an extraordinary degree of sanctifying influence upon the church. It would therefore be unwise to expect it now. And yet we have a right to look for one or more of the moral features of our dear Lord's character in His people: some resemblance to His image; something that marks the man of God; some lowliness of mind, gentleness of temper, humility of deportment, charity, patience in the endurance of affliction, meekness in the suffering of persecution, forgiveness of injuries, returning good for evil, blessing for cursing—in a word, some portion of "the fruit of the Spirit" which is "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." If one or more of these are not "in us and abound, so that they make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," and in a resemblance to His likeness, we have great reason to doubt whether we have ever "known the grace of God in truth." That is indeed a melancholy profession in which can be traced nothing that identifies the man with Jesus; nothing in his principles, his motives, his tone of mind, his spirit,

his very looks, that reminds one of Christ, that draws the heart to Him, that makes the name of Immanuel fragrant and that lifts the soul in ardent desires to be like Him too. This is the influence which a believer exerts who bears about with him a resemblance to his Lord and Master. A holy man is a blessing wherever he may go. He is a savor of Christ in every place. It is a mercy to be brought in contact with him. We extract a blessing from him. We get, it may be, a drop of oil from his vessel, or a single ray from his heart. And although it is more blessed to possess the solar beam, to ascend to the "fountain of light," yet a reflected warmth in this wintry world is too valuable and blessed to be lightly esteemed. Would that the saints of God who may have drawn largely upon the fulness of Christ, who have been made to possess some peculiar manifestations of His loving kindness, some special revivings of His Spirit, were more ready to pass on the same blessing to others. A believer is not his own, nor is he to live to himself. And when the Lord imparts a gift or a grace to any one member, it is for the edification and comfort of the whole body. "Come and hear, all you that fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my soul" is an invitation that has often refreshed the spirit, revived the heart, kindled the love and "strengthened the things that remained that were ready to die," in the saints of God. Thus is the Spirit a Witness for Christ in His people by conforming them to His image.

(The history of American revivals presents a striking and beautiful illustration of this fact. The author can testify, from personal observation—and experience, that some of the most gracious and remarkable outpourings of the Spirit with which that honored land has been favored, have resulted from the simple testimony to a special reviving of the Lord's work in his own soul, borne by some individual member of the church, moving, it may be, in a humble and limited sphere of influence. God has honored his testimony. His narrative has awakened interest, his zeal has rebuked indolence, his fervor has excited to prayer, his tears and pleadings have moved to exertion; and thus an impulse has been created which has gone on strengthening and expanding until it has embraced and blessed an entire community. It was but as a small pebble cast into the stagnant water: yet the circle included a family, it widened, until it embraced a church, and still it grew wider, until an entire village, or town, felt the power of the Spirit, and every house became vocal with "thanksgiving and the voice melody.")

It would only be presenting a limited view of the Spirit's work as a witness if we confined His work in this character to the testimony He bears for Christ. He is not only a witness for Christ, but He witnesses to the saints of God. This

is clear from His own sacred word, "He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself." "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." "Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." But the most direct allusion to this truth is this: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16. Let us present a brief outline of this subject; beyond this, we cannot venture.

The doctrine of an assured belief of the pardon of sin, of acceptance in Christ and of adoption into the family of God, has been, and still is, regarded by many as an attainment never to be expected in the present life; and when it is expressed, it is viewed with a suspicion unfavorable to the character of the work. But this is contrary to the Divine word, and to the actual experience of millions, who have lived and died in the full assurance of hope. The doctrine of assurance is a doctrine of undoubted revelation, implied and expressed. That it is enforced as a state of mind essential to the salvation of the believer, we cannot admit; but that it is insisted upon as essential to his comfortable and holy walk, and as greatly involving the glory of God, we must strenuously maintain. Otherwise why do we have these marked references to the doctrine? In Col. 2:1, 2, Paul expresses "great conflict" for the saints, that their "hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." In the epistle to the Hebrews, the writer says, "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope, unto the end." And he exhorts them, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." And to crown all, the apostle Peter thus earnestly exhorts his readers, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election SURE." No further proof from the sacred Word is required to authenticate the doctrine. It is written as with a sunbeam that "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Let us present a brief explanation of these words.

Three important things are involved in them, first, the Witness; second that with which He witnesses; and lastly, the great truth to which He witnesses.

First, **THE WITNESS.** "The Spirit Himself bears witness." The great business of making known to a poor sinner his acquittal in the high court of heaven and his adoption into the King's family is entrusted to no inferior agent. No angel is commissioned to bear the tidings, no mortal man may disclose the secret. None but God the Holy Spirit Himself! "The Spirit Himself!" He that rests short of this testimony, wrongs his own soul. See that you rely on no

witness to your "calling and election" but this. Human testimony is feeble here. Your minister, your friend, schooled as they may be in the evidences of experimental godliness, cannot assure your spirit that you are "born of God." God the eternal Spirit alone can do this. He alone is competent, He alone can fathom the "deep things of God," He alone can rightly discern between His own work and its counterfeit, between grace and nature, He alone can make known the secret of the Lord to those who fear Him. All other testimony to your sonship is uncertain, and may fearfully and fatally deceive. "It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth." Again and yet again would we solemnly repeat it; take nothing for granted touching your personal interest in Christ; do not rest satisfied with the testimony of your own spirit, or with that of the holiest saint on earth; seek nothing short of "the Spirit Himself." This alone will do for a dying hour.

The second thing to be observed in the declaration is, **THAT WITH WHICH THE SPIRIT WITNESSES**—"the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit." It is a personal testimony, not borne to others, but to ourselves, "with our spirit." The adoption of the believer into the family of God is so great a privilege, involving blessings so immense, for beings so sinful and in all respects unworthy, that, if their heavenly Father did not assure them by His own immediate testimony of its truth, no other witness would suffice to remove their doubts, quiet their fears and satisfy them as to their real sonship. The eternal Spirit of God descends and enters their hearts as a witness to their adoption. He first renews our spirit, applies the atoning blood to the conscience, works faith in the heart, enlightens the understanding, and thus prepares the believing soul for the revelation and assurance of this great and glorious truth—his adoption into the family of God. As it is "with our spirit" the Holy Spirit witnesses, it is necessary that, in order to perfect agreement and harmony, he who has the witness within himself should first be a repenting and believing sinner. He who says that he has this witness, but who still remains "dead in sins"—a stranger to faith in the Lord Jesus, to the renewings of the Holy Spirit, in a word, who is not born of God—is wrapping himself up in an awful deception. The witness we plead for, is the holy testimony, in concurrence with a holy gospel, by a holy Spirit, to a holy man, and concerning a holy truth. There can be no discrepancy, no lack of harmony between the witness of the Spirit and the Word of God. He witnesses according to, and in agreement with, the truth. Vague and fanciful impressions, visions and voices, received and rested upon as evidences of salvation are fearful delusions. Nothing is to be viewed as an evidence of our Divine sonship which does not square and harmonize with the revealed Word

of God. We must have a "thus says the Lord" for every step we take in believing that we are the children of God. Let it be remembered, then, that the Spirit bears His testimony to believers. His first step is to work repentance and faith in the heart; then follows the sealing and witnessing operation: "In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

The last aspect is the great truth to which He testifies, namely "that we are the children of God." The Spirit is emphatically spoken of as a Spirit of adoption. "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8:25. And again, "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:6. Now it is the peculiar office of the Spirit to witness to the adoption of the believer. Look at the blessed fact to which He testifies—not that we are the enemies, the aliens, the strangers, the slaves, but that we are "the CHILDREN of God." High and holy privilege!

"The children of God"! Chosen from all eternity—"having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," all their iniquities laid on Jesus their blessed Surety, justified by the "Lord our righteousness," called by the effectual operation of the eternal Spirit, inhabited, sanctified and sealed by God the Holy Spirit. O exalted state! O holy privilege! O happy people! Pressing on, it may be, through strong corruptions, deep trials, clinging infirmities, fiery temptations, sore discouragements, dark providences and often the hidings of a Father's countenance—and yet "the children of God" now, and soon to be glorified hereafter.

Reader, in closing, let me ask you, have you the witness of the Spirit? Has He convinced you of sin by the law? Has He made you acquainted with your guilt and pollution? Is it written upon your conscience as solemnly and as undoubtedly as it is written in the Bible, that you are guilty and condemned, lost and undone, and must finally and awfully perish, without Christ? Have you sought a secret place for humiliation and confession and supplication before God, the eternal and holy God, the Sovereign of all worlds, the judge of the living and dead, at whose tribunal you soon must stand? Ah, solemn, searching questions! You may evade them, you may frame some vain excuse, you may wait for "a more convenient season," you may even seek to stifle the seriousness and the thoughtfulness which these questions have occasioned, by

another and a deeper plunge into the world; but they will follow you there, and will be heard amid the din of business and the loud laugh of pleasure. They will follow you to your dying bed, and they will be heard there, amid the gloom and the silence and the terror of that hour. They will follow you up to the judgment-seat, and will be heard there amid the gatherings and the tremendous disclosures of that scene. They will follow you down to the abode of the lost, and will be heard there, amid the "weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth." Sinner! from an enlightened, but guilty and accusing conscience, you can never escape. It will be the "worm that never dies"! From the wrath of God you can then find no shelter. It will be the "fire that never shall be quenched." Again we earnestly inquire—have you the witness of the Spirit? Has He testified to you of Jesus, of His renewing grace, pardoning love, sin-cleansing blood, justifying righteousness and full redemption? Have you joy and peace in believing?

To the child of God we would say, covet earnestly the witness of the Spirit. Do not be cast down, nor cherish rash and hasty conclusions as to your adoption, if you do not possess it so fully and clearly as others. The holiest believer may walk for many days without the sun. Read the record of the experiences of David and of Job and of Jeremiah, and of the last moments of our dear and adorable Immanuel, and mark what shadows at times fell upon their souls, how a sense of comfort failed them, how joys fled, and they mourned an absent God. But were they the less dear to the heart of Jehovah? Were they the less His beloved children because they were thus tried? No! God forbid! Still, we plead for the full enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit. It is the high privilege of the children of God—let no one rob them of it to look up to God, and humbly yet unceasingly cry, "Abba, Father!"

**"The Believer Drawing near to God"
or "The Spirit the Author of Prayer"**

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:26

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Romans 8:26

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we

should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. Romans 8:26

That God should have erected in this lower world a throne of grace, a mercy-seat, around which may gather, in clustering and welcome multitudes, the helpless, the burdened, the friendless, the vile, the guilty, the deeply necessitous—that no poor comer, be his poverty ever so great, his burden ever so heavy, or his case ever so desperate, should meet with a refusal of a hearing or a welcome, does greatly develop and magnify the riches of His grace, His wisdom and His love to sinners. What a God our God must be, thus to have appointed a meeting-place, an audience chamber for those upon whom all other doors are closed!

More wonderful still is it that He should have appointed Jesus the door of approach to that throne, should have given His only begotten and well-beloved Son to be the "new and living way" of access; thus removing all obstruction in the way of the soul's coming, both on the part of Himself, and on the part of the sinner, that the door should be a crucified Savior—the wounds of the Son of God—that through blood (and that blood the blood of the incarnate Deity) the guilty should approach. Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!

Shall we say even more than this? For there is a yet lower depth in this love and condescension of God—His sending of His Spirit into the heart, the Author of prayer, putting the petition into words, breathing in the soul, implanting the desire, convincing of the existing necessity, unfolding the character of God, working faith in the heart and drawing it up to God through Jesus, all of which seems the very perfection of His wisdom, benevolence and grace.

It must be acknowledged by the spiritual mind that all true prayer is of the leading of the Spirit—that He is the Author of all real approach of the soul to God. And yet how perpetually we need to be reminded of this! Prayer is one of the most spiritual employments that can possibly engage the mind. It is that holy act of the soul which brings it immediately in contact with a holy God. It has more directly to do with the "high and lofty One" than any other exercise. It is that state of mind, too, that most deeply acknowledges its dependence on God. Prayer is the expression of need, the desire of destitution, the acknowledgment of poverty, the language of dependence, the breathing of a soul that has nothing in itself, but hangs on God for all it needs. It must

therefore be a highly spiritual and holy exercise. But this will appear still more so if we consider that true prayer is the breathing of the life of God in the soul of man. It is the Spirit dwelling and breathing in him. It is the new nature pouring out its vital principle, and that into the ear of the God where it came from. It is the cry of the feeble child turning to the Father it loves, and in all its conscious weakness, dependence and need, pouring out the yearnings of its full heart into the bosom where dwells nothing but love. In a word, it is God and the creature meeting and blending in one act of blessed, holy and eternal fellowship.

Now, that on a subject so spiritual and involving so deeply the happiness and the holiness of a child of God, the believer should at times be greatly and seriously harassed and tempted, as much by the weaknesses of his nature as by the influence of Satan, is not to be wondered at. We desire therefore, before going into the consideration of the Spirit's operation in this holy exercise, to glance at some of those peculiar INFIRMITIES which so frequently and so painfully lessen the habit, and weaken the power, and keep back the answer of prayer. May the Spirit now teach us!

There is a state of mind often enfeebling to the exercise of prayer, arising from the difficulty of forming proper views of the spiritual nature of the Divine Object of prayer. Through the weakness of our nature, the spirituality of God has been felt by some to be a stumbling-block in the approach of the soul. "God is a Spirit" is the solemn announcement that meets them at the very threshold, and so completely overawes and abashes the mind as to congeal every current of thought and of feeling, and well-near to crush the soul with its inconceivability. Nor is this surprising. Prayer is the approach of finity to Infinity; and although it is the communing of spirit with Spirit, yet it is the finite communing with the Infinite, and that through the organs of sense. Is it any marvel, then, that at periods a believer should be baffled in his endeavor to form some just conception of the Divine existence, some faint idea of the nature of that God to whom his soul addresses itself; and, failing in the attempt, should turn away in sadness, sorrow and despair? The remedy for this state of mind we believe is at hand. It is simple and scriptural. To enlarge our thoughts with any adequate idea of the nature and the appearance of the Divine Spirit is an utter impossibility. He that attempts it, and thinks he has succeeded, lives in the region of fancy and opposes himself to the revelation of God Himself, which expressly declares, "No man has seen God at any time." "Who alone has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see." 1 Tim. 6:16. This being

then admitted, as it must be by all reflective minds, the question arises, "How am I to view God? what idea am I to form of His existence in approaching Him in prayer?" In reply, two things are necessary in getting proper thoughts of God as the Object of prayer. First, that the mind should resign all its attempts to comprehend the mode of the Divine existence, and should concentrate all its powers upon the contemplation of the character of the Divine existence. In what relation God stands to the creature, not in what way he exists in Himself, is the point with which we have to do in approaching Him. Let the mind be wrapped in devout contemplations of His holiness, benevolence, love, truth, wisdom, justice, and there will be no room for vain and fruitless imaginations respecting the fathomless and inconceivable mode of His existence.

The second thing necessary is that the mind should view God in Christ. If it is baffled and perplexed, as it surely will be, in its attempts to unravel the spiritual nature of God, let it seek a resting-place in the "incarnate mystery." This was one part of the gracious design of God in assuming human nature. It was to bring, so to speak, the Infinite in a direct angle with the finite, so that the two lines should not merely run parallel, but that the two extremes of being should meet. It was to embody His essential and surpassing glories in such a way as to present an object which man could contemplate without fear, worship without distraction, and look upon and not die. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person." "He that has seen Me" (His own declaration) "has seen the Father." Wondrous stoop of the great God! In all approach to God, then, in prayer, as in every other kindred exercise, let the eye of faith be fixed upon Him who fills the middle seat upon the throne—the Day's-Man—the Mediator—the incarnate Son of God. How quieting to the mind of a praying soul is this view of God! What a mildness invests the throne of grace, and what an easy access to it presents itself, when the eye of faith can behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"! And if the mind be embarrassed in its attempts to conceive an idea of His spiritual nature, it can soothe itself to repose in a believing view of the glorified humanity of Jesus, "God manifest in the flesh." To this resting-place He Himself invites the soul—"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me." And thus too He calmed the fears of His exiled servant who, when the splendor of His glorified humanity broke upon his view, fell prostrate to the earth: "And when I saw him," says John, "I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first, and the last: I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore,

Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Another infirmity which often impedes the free course of prayer, is the manifest lack of wisdom that may mark the petition of a child of God. For example, when Paul prayed for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, he asked that of God which betrayed a lack of wisdom in his petition. Who would have suspected this in the apostle of the Gentiles? But the Lord knew best what was for the good of His dear servant, and saw that, on account of the special revelations that were given him in his visit to glory, the discipline of the covenant was needed to keep him low in the dust. When His child petitioned three times for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, he for a moment overlooked, because of the painful nature of the discipline, its needed influence to keep him "walking humbly with God." So that we see even an inspired apostle may ask those things of God which He may see fit to refuse. We may frequently expect some trial, something to keep us low before God, after a season of peculiar nearness to Him or some other manifestation of his loving-kindness to our souls. There is a proneness to rest in self-complacency after close communion with God, and the gentle hand of our Father is needed to shield us from ourselves. It was so with Paul; why may it not be with us? We may be assured of this, however, that in withholding the thing we ask of Him, He will grant us a perfect equivalent. The Lord saw fit to deny the request of the apostle, but He granted him an equivalent, indeed more than an equivalent to that which He denied him He gave him His all-supporting grace. "My grace is sufficient for you." Have you asked many times for the removal of some secret, heavy, painful cross? Perhaps you are still urging your request; and yet the Lord does not seem to answer you. And why? because the request may not be in itself wise. Were he now to remove that cross, He might, in taking away the cross, close up a channel of mercy which you would never cease to regret. O what secret and immense blessing may that painful cross be the means of conveying into your soul! Is it health you have often petitioned for? And is the request denied you? It is wisdom that denies. It is love too, tender unchangeable love to your soul, that refuses a petition which a wise and gracious God knows, if granted, would not be for your real good and His glory. Do you not think that there is love and tenderness enough in the heart of Jesus to grant you what you desire, and ten thousand times more, if He saw that it would promote your true holiness and happiness? Could He resist that request, that desire, that sigh, that tear and that beseeching look, if infinite wisdom did not guide Him in all His dealings with your soul? O no! But He gives you an equivalent to the denied request. He gives you Himself. Can He give you more? His grace sustains you, His arm supports you, His love soothes

you, His Spirit comforts you; and your chamber of solitude, though it may not be the scene of health and buoyancy and joyousness, may yet be the secret place where a covenant God and Father pours His grace into your soul, and where Jesus meets you with the choicest unfoldings of His love. Could He not, would He not, heal you in a moment, if it would be for your good? Then ask for a submissive spirit, a will swallowed up in God your Father's. It may be that when the lesson of secret and filial submission has been learned, so that health is only desired as a means of glorifying God, He may put forth His healing power and grant you your request. But do not forget the Lord best knows what will most promote His own glory. You may have thought that health of body would better enable you to glorify Him. He may think that the chamber of solitude and the bed of languishing are most productive of glory to His name. The patience, resignation, meek submission and child-like acquiescence which His blessed Spirit through this means works in your soul, may more glorify Him than all the active graces that ever were brought into exercise.

A believer may urge a request that is in itself wrong. The mother of Zebedee's children did so, when she asked the Lord that her two sons might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on the left, in His kingdom, Matt. 20:20, 21. Who does not notice the self that appears in this petition? And although it was a mother's love that prompted it, and, as such, presents a beautiful and touching picture, yet it teaches us that a parent, betrayed by his love for his child, may ask that of God which is really wrong in itself. He may ask worldly distinction, honor, influence, wealth for his child (which a godly parent should never do), and this may be a wrong request, which God in His infinite wisdom and love withholds. Such was the petition of the mother, which our Lord saw fit to deny. Her views of the kingdom of Christ were those of earthly glory. To see her children sharing in that glory was her high ambition, which Jesus promptly but gently rebuked. Let a Christian mother ask for spiritual blessings for her children, and whatever else is needful the Lord will grant. Let converting, sanctifying and restraining grace be the constant petition presented at the footstool of mercy, and then she cannot ask too much, or press her suit too frequently or too fervently.

To allude to another illustration of our remark—It was wrong of Job to ask the Lord that he might die. "Oh that I might have my request!" (are his words) "and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off." Job 6:8, 9. It was an unwise and sinful petition, which the Lord in great

mercy and wisdom denied him. Truly "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." What a mercy that there is One who knows!

A child of God may ask for a wise and good thing in a wrong way. There may be no faith in asking. There may be a wrong attitude of mind: no sense of God's freeness in bestowing, no filial approach, no going as a child, as one pardoned and "accepted in the Beloved," as one dear to the heart of God. There may be no honoring of the Father in Himself, no honoring of Him in the Son, no honoring of the blessed Spirit. There may be no resting upon the cross, no pleading of the atoning blood, no washing in the fountain, no humble, grateful recognition of the "new and living way" of access. There may be a lack of humility in the mind, of brokenness in the spirit, of sincerity in the heart, of reverence in the manner and of sobriety in the words. There may be no confession of sin, no acknowledgment of past mercies and no faith in the promised blessing. Oh, how much there may be in the prayer of a dear child of God that operates as a blight upon his request, that seems to close the ear and the heart of God! But oh, to go to Him with filial confidence, with sweet faith, with love flowing from a broken heart; to go to Him as the people of His choice, dear to Him as the apple of His eye, as those who are viewed each moment in His Son who would, for the love He bears us, undeify Himself, if that would be for our real good, and His own glory. Did He not once empty Himself of His glory, did He not become poor, did He not humble himself, did He not take upon Him human nature—all for the love He bore His people? That was approaching so near, in appearance, the cessation of Deity, that, as we gaze upon the spectacle, we wonder what another step might have produced! We might well think that He could not have gone further without ceasing to be God. Behold the broad basis, then, upon which a child of God may approach Him in prayer. His love, O how immense! it is past finding out!

Yet again, a believer may present a right petition in a right way, and yet he may not wait for the Lord to answer in His own time. The believer may appoint a time, and if the Lord does not answer within that period, he turns away, resigning all expectation of an answer. There is such a thing as waiting for the Lord. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Lam. 3:26. And the apostle alludes to, and enjoins the same holy patience, when he speaks to the Ephesians of "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." A believer may present his request, may have some degree of nearness in urging it, may press it with fervency, and yet, forgetting the hoping, quiet, waiting patience which ought invariably to mark a praying

soul, he may lose the blessing he has sought. There is such a thing as "waiting upon the Lord." O how long have we made Him wait for us! For years, it may be, we kept Him knocking and standing and waiting at the door of our hearts, until His own Spirit took the work in His own hands and unlocked the heart and the Savior entered. The Lord would now often have us wait His time in answering prayer. And, if the vision tarry, let us still wait, hope and expect. Let the delay stimulate hope, and increase desire, and exercise faith, and multiply petitions at the mercy-seat. The answer will come when the Lord sees best.

Lastly, a believer may lose the answer to his prayer by dictating to the Lord the mode as well as the time of answering. The Lord has His own mode of blessing His people. We may prescribe the way the Lord should answer, but He may send the blessing to us through an opposite channel, in a way we never thought of and would never have selected. Sovereignty sits ruling upon the throne, and in no aspect is its exercise more manifestly seen than in selecting the way and the means by which the prayers of the saints of God are answered. Do not dictate to the Lord. If you ask a blessing through a certain channel or in a prescribed way, let it be with the deepest humility of mind and with perfect submission of the will to God. Be satisfied to receive the blessing in any way which a good and covenant God may appoint. Be assured that it will be in the way that will most glorify God Himself, and secure to you the greatest amount of blessing.

Many and endearing are the characters or offices ascribed to the Spirit in the Word, but none are found more sweet or appropriate by a child of God than that which He fills as the Intercessor for His saints. We have already remarked that all true prayer is put into words by the Spirit. He is the Author of prayer in the soul. A brief reference to the Divine testimony will clearly substantiate this. "Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26, 27. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2:18. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Eph. 6:18. "But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." Jude 20. And our dear Lord encouraged His disciples in view of their approaching persecutions, with the same truth—"It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you."

The consideration of two or three points will sufficiently unfold His work as THE AUTHOR OF PRAYER in the believer.

First, it is the Spirit who leads the soul to an acquaintance with its needs. Such is the fallen condition of the soul and such is its poverty, ignorance and infirmity that it does not know its real weakness and deep necessity until taught it by the Holy Spirit. This is even so after conversion. A dear child of God (and it is awfully true, without any qualification, of an unrenewed man) may fall into the state of the Laodicean church, to whom it was said, "Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. 3:17. A believer may not know his real condition, his absolute need. There may be a secret declension in his soul, the enfeebling and decay of some spiritual grace, the slow but effective inroad of some spiritual enemy, the cherishing (like Achan) of some forbidden thing, the feeding of some worm at the root of his holiness—and all the while he may remain ignorant of the solemn fact. And how is he to know it unless someone teaches him? And who is that teacher but the Spirit? As He first convicted of sin, so in each successive stage of the believer's experience He convicts of the daily need, the spiritual necessity, the growing infirmity, the increasing power of sin and the deepening poverty. Do not overlook this important part of His work. To go to the throne of grace, we must have something to go for, some errand to take us there, some sin to confess, some guilt to mourn over, some need to supply, some infirmity to make known and (we must not leave this out) some blessing to acknowledge. How is all this to be brought about but by the blessed Spirit? O what an unspeakable mercy to have One who knows us altogether, and who can make us acquainted with ourselves! It is a far advanced step in grace when we know our real undisguised condition. A man may lose a grace, and may travel far and not be aware of his loss. The world has come in and filled up the space. Some carnal joy or pursuit has occupied the mind, engrossed the affections and the thoughts; and the soul has not been conscious of the loss it has sustained. Thus have many lost the sense of adoption, pardon and acceptance. The graces of faith, love and humility have become enfeebled until the description of Ephraim may truly and painfully apply to them— "Ephraim, he has mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knows it not; yes, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knows it not." Hos. 7:8, 9. But the blessed Spirit at length reveals to the soul its loss, convinces it of its departure, makes known its real condition, and in this way leads it to the throne of grace. Cherish high views of the work of the Spirit. To have one near at hand, indeed in you, as He is; to detect so faithfully and lovingly as He does, the waning

grace, the feeble pulse, the spiritual decay; to awaken the conscience, arouse godly sorrow, and draw out the heart in confession, is to possess one of the most valuable blessings. Honor the blessed Spirit, praise Him for his work, extol His faithfulness and love, and treat Him as your tenderest, dearest Friend.

He stirs up the slumbering spirit of prayer. This is either perpetually declining, or exposed to declension in the believer. And it needs as perpetual a supply of grace from the Author of prayer to keep it in vigor, as to restore it when it has declined. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications." Zech. 12:10.

He teaches the believer to plead the atoning blood of Christ. He puts this great and prevailing argument in his mouth; and when sin seems a mountain, and unbelief would suppress the aspiration, and a deep consciousness of unworthiness would cause the soul to "stand afar off," He opens to his view this precious encouraging truth—the prevalence of the blood of Jesus with God on behalf of His people. In a moment the mountain is leveled, unbelief is checked, and the soul, unfettered and unrestrained, draws near to God, yes, rushes into the bosom of its Father. What a view does this give us of the love of the Spirit as the Author of prayer! Who has not experienced it, who is not a stranger to the blessed exercise of communion with God? How often has guilt caused the head to hang down, and a sense of utter vileness and worthlessness covered the soul with shame! Even the sense of destitution has kept back the believer, just as the penury, the wretched covering and the loathsomeness of the poor beggar have kept him from the door! Then does the blessed Spirit, in the plenitude of His grace and tenderness, unfold Jesus to the soul as being all that it needs to give it full, free and near access to God. He removes the eye from self, and fixes and fastens it upon the blood that pleads louder for mercy than all his sins can plead for condemnation; He brings, too, the righteousness near, which so clothes and covers the soul as to fit it to appear in the presence of the King of kings, not merely with acceptance but with delight. Beholding him thus washed and clothed, God rests in His love and rejoices over him with singing.

Nor must we overlook the understanding which exists between God the Father and the Spirit. "And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." There is a perfect agreement or understanding between the Father and

the interceding Spirit. First, the Father, the Searcher of hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit. He understands the desire and the meaning of the Spirit in the souls of the saints. He understands the "groanings which cannot be uttered." He can interpret their sighs; He can read the meaning of their very desires. And when feeling has been too deep for utterance, and thought too intense for expression, and the soul could but groan out its needs and desires, then has God understood the mind of the Spirit. O the inconceivable preciousness of a throne of grace! To have a God to go to, who knows the mind of the Spirit, a God who can interpret the groan and read the language of desire; to have promise upon promise inviting the soul to draw near—how precious this is! When from the fulness of the heart the mouth has been dumb, and from the poverty of language thought could not be expressed, then God, who searches the hearts and knows what is the mind of the Spirit, has said, "Never before did you, My child, pray to Me as you did then; never before was your voice so sweet, so powerful, so persuasive; never before were you so eloquent as when My Spirit made intercession for you with groanings which you could not utter." It was, perhaps, your last resource. Refuge failed you, no man cared for your soul. Friends failed you, feelings failed you, all forsook you and fled, and in your extremity you went to God—and He did not fail you. You found the throne of grace accessible; you saw a God of grace upon it, and the sweet incense of the Redeemer's precious merits going up; and you drew near, sighing and groaning and breathing out your needs, and said, "It is good for me to draw near to God." Yes! "He knows the mind of the Spirit." The secret desire for Jesus, the longing for Divine conformity, the hidden mourning over the existence and power of indwelling sin, the feeblest rising of the heart to God, the first sign of the humble and contrite spirit—all are known to God. "He searches the heart, and he knows the mind of the Spirit." O let this encourage you, when you feel you cannot pray by reason of the weakness of the flesh, or the depth of your feeling; if the Spirit is interceding in you, your heavenly Father knows the mind of the Spirit, and not a sigh or a groan can escape His notice.

There is yet another vital principle connected with the perfect agreement of the Father and the Spirit in this important matter of prayer, it is that the Spirit "makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Whatever the Spirit may say, the believer can be assured that it is according to God's will. The worldly desires which sometimes take possession of a child of God must not be included in this. He may sometimes be left to ask God for worldly distinction, influence and wealth, and for places of temporal honor and aggrandizement, as the mother of Zebedee's children did. But who will

dare assert that, in presenting such petitions, he is asking for those things which are "according to the will of God"? No believer, if he is in a truly spiritual frame, thirsting for God, crucifying the world, and living as a stranger and a pilgrim here; can go to the throne of grace and plead for these. It would be a carnal petition for carnal things, and there must be a dearth of spirituality in the soul that can urge it.

But, in spiritual things, how vastly different is it! When we draw near to God, and ask for more love, more zeal, an increase of faith, a reviving of God's work within us, more resemblance to Christ, the subjection of some enemy, the mortification of some evil, the subduing of some iniquity, the pardon of some guilt, more of the spirit of adoption, the sprinkling of the atoning blood, the sweet sense of acceptance, we know and are assured that we ask for those things which are according to the will of God, and which it is in the heart of God fully and freely to bestow. There need be no backwardness here, there need be no restraint here, there may be no misgiving here. When the believer is pleading for such blessings and spreading out such needs before the Lord, he may with "boldness enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." He may draw near to God, not standing afar off, but, in the spirit of a child, drawing near to God. He may come with large requests, large desires, hopeful expectation. He may open his mouth wide, because he asks those things which it is glorifying to God to give, which glorify Him when given, and which we know from His own Word it is according to His blessed will to bestow. O the unspeakable encouragement of going to God with a request which we feel assured it is in His heart, and according to His will, freely to grant!

Do not forget that it is the throne of grace to which you come in prayer. It is a THRONE, because God is a Sovereign. He will ever have the suppliant recognize this perfection of His nature. He hears and answers as a Sovereign. He hears whom He will, and answers what and when He will. There must be no dictation to God, no refusing to bow to His sovereignty, no rebelling against His will. If the answer be delayed, or God should seem to withhold it altogether, remember that "He gives no account of any of his matters," and that He has a right to answer or not to answer, as seems good in His sight. Glorious perfection of God, shining from the mercy-seat!

But it is also a throne of GRACE. And why? Because a God of grace sits upon it, and the scepter of grace is held out from it, and all the favors bestowed there are the blessings of grace. God has many thrones. There is the throne of creation, and the throne of providence, and the throne of justice, and the

throne of redemption; but this is the throne of grace. Just the throne we need! We are the poor, the needy, the helpless, the vile, the sinful, the unworthy. We have nothing to bring but our deep wretchedness and poverty, nothing but our complaints, our miseries, our crosses, our groanings, our sighs and tears. But it is the throne of grace. For just such is it erected. It is set up in a world of woe, in the midst of the wilderness, in the very land of the enemy, in the valley of tears. It is a God of grace who sits upon it, and all the blessings He dispenses from it are the gifts of grace. Pardon, justification, adoption, peace, comfort, light, direction—all, all is of grace. No worth or worthiness in the creature extracts these blessings; no price he may bring purchases them; no tears or complainings or misery move the heart of God to compassion—all is of grace. God is so full of compassion, and love, and mercy, He does not need to be moved to pour it forth. It gushes from His heart as from a full and overflowing fountain, and flows into the bosom of the poor, the lowly, the humble and the contrite, enriching, comforting and sanctifying their souls. Therefore whatever your case, you may come. If it is a throne of grace (as indeed it is) then why not come? Why, stand a long way off? If the poor, the penniless, the disconsolate and the guilty are welcome here, if this throne is crowded by such—why make yourself an exception? Why not come too? What is your case, what is your sorrow, what is your burden? Ah! perhaps you can disclose it to no earthly ear. You can tell it to God only. Then take it to Him. Let me tell you for your encouragement that God has His secret audience chamber, where He will meet you alone, and where no eye shall see you and no ear shall hear you but His, where you may open all your heart, and reveal your real case, and pour all your secrets into His ear. Precious encouragement! It comes from those lips into which grace was poured: "You, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret, shall reward you openly." Then, armed with this promise, go to the throne of grace. Whether the need is temporal or spiritual, take it there. God loves your secrets. He delights in your confidence and will honor the soul that thus honors Him.

Remember, the throne of grace is near at hand. You have not to travel far to reach it; there is no lengthy and painful journey, no wearisome and mortifying pilgrimage. It is near at hand. Lying down or rising up, going out or coming in, in the streets or in the house, in public or in private, in the chamber or in the sanctuary, God is everywhere; and where He is, there is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. In a moment, in the greatest emergency, you may lift up your heart to the Lord, and in a moment your cry

shall be heard and your request shall be granted. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near unto those who are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm. 34:15, 17, 18. Remember that the throne of grace is everywhere. On the land and on the sea, at home or abroad, in the publicity of business or in the privacy of retirement, "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Wherever a believer goes, he carries about with him the intercession of the Spirit below, and he has the consolation of knowing that he has the intercession of Jesus above.

Do not stay away from the throne of grace because of an unfavorable state of mind. If God is ready to receive you just as you are, if no questions are asked, and no examination is instituted, and no exceptions are made on account of the badness of the state, then count it a great blessing to be able to go to God even when you feel at your worst. To keep away from the throne of grace because of unfitness and unpreparedness to approach it, is to alter its character from a throne of grace to a throne of merit. If the Lord's ears are only open to the cry of the righteous when they seek Him in a certain good and acceptable state of mind, then He hears them because of their state of mind, and not because He is a God of grace. But He can never alter His character or change the foundation of His throne. It is the mercy-seat; the throne of grace; and not for any attitude either good or bad in the suppliant does He bow His ear, but for His own mercy's sake. Do not yield then to this device of your adversary to keep you from prayer. It is the privilege of a poor soul to go to Jesus at his worst, to go in darkness, to go in weak faith, to go when everything says "stay away," to go in the face of opposition, to hope against hope, to go in the consciousness of having walked at a distance, to press through the crowd to the throne of grace, to take the hard, the cold, the reluctant heart and lay it before the Lord. O what a triumph this is of the power and the grace of the blessed Spirit in a poor believer! What is your state? Are you weak in prayer? Are you tried in prayer? And yet is there anything at all of real need, of real desire in your heart? Is this so? Then draw near to God. Your state of mind will not be more favorable tomorrow than it is today. You will not be more acceptable or welcome at any future period than you are at this moment. Give yourself to prayer. Supposing your state is the worst that can be, your frame of mind the most unfavorable, your cross the heaviest, your corruption the strongest, your heart the hardest; still go to

the throne of grace, and opening your case to the Lord with groanings that cannot be uttered, you shall adopt the song of David, who could say in the worst state, and in most pressing times, "But I give myself unto prayer " "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Psalm. 34:3-6.

The throne of grace is for the needy. It is always a time of need with a child of God. "Without me," says Jesus, "you can do nothing." There is not a moment when, if he knows his real state, he is not in need of something. What a blessing then is the throne of grace! It is for the needy. It is for those who are in need, those to whom all other doors are closed, with whom all other resources have failed, who have nowhere else to look, nowhere else to fly. To such is the throne of grace always open. Is it a time of trial with you? then it is a time of need. Take your trial, whatever it be, simply to God. Do not brood over it. This will not make it sweeter or more easy to be borne, but taking it to Jesus will. The very act of taking it will lighten it, and casting it upon His tenderness and sympathy will make it sweet. Is it a time of spiritual darkness with you? Then it is a time of need. Take your darkness to the throne of grace, and "in His light " who sits upon it, you "shall see light." Is it a time of adverse providences? Then it is a time of need. And where can you go for guidance, for direction, for counsel and for light upon the intricacies of the way, but to the God of grace?

Is it a time of temporal distress with you? Then it is a time of need. Take your temporal cares and necessities to the Lord, for He who is the God of grace is also the God of providence. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Thank the Lord for every errand that takes you to the throne of grace. Whatever that be which sends you to prayer, count it one of your choice blessings. It may be a heavy cross, a painful trial, a pressing need; it may be a disappointment, a cold look, an unkind expression; yet, if it leads you to prayer, regard it as a mercy sent from God to your soul. Thank God for an errand to Him. It may be that you have not felt like praying for yourself. You have not been conscious of any special sense of being drawn to the throne for your own soul, but you have gone on behalf of another. The burden, the trial, the affliction or the immediate need of some member of God's family has

pressed upon you, and you have taken his case to the Lord; you have borne him in your arms to the throne of grace, and, while interceding for your brother, the Lord has met you, and blessed your own soul. Perhaps you have gone and prayed for the church, for the peace of Jerusalem, for the prosperity of Zion, that the Lord would build up her waste places, and make her a joy and a praise in the whole earth. Perhaps it has been to pray for your minister, that the Lord would teach him more deeply and experimentally, and anoint him more fully with the rich anointing and unction of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it has been to pray for Christian missions and for hard-working and self-denying missionaries, that the Lord would make them eminently successful in spreading the knowledge of a precious Savior, and in calling in His people. And thus, while you have been besieging the throne of grace for others, and pouring out your heart before the Lord, the Lord Himself has drawn near to your own soul and you have been made to experience the blessing that ever goes with and rewards intercessory prayer. Then let every event, every circumstance, every providence be a voice urging you to prayer. If you have no needs, others have; take them to the Lord. If you are borne down by no cross, smitten by no affliction, or suffering from no need, others are; go and plead for them with your heavenly Father, and the petitions you send up to the mercy-seat on their behalf may return into your own soul laden with rich covenant blessings. Turn everything into an occasion for prayer. Whether it is a dark providence or a bright one, let it take you to God. Make the falls, the weaknesses and the declensions of others grounds for prayer. Thus, and thus only, can you expect to grow in grace, and grace to grow in you.

Above all, cultivate the habit of secret prayer. No other prayer can take its place. There are confessions that can be made, desires that can be expressed, sins that can be lamented, and needs that can be disclosed only in the secret place, shut in with God. He that confines himself to the altar of the sanctuary, the family, or the social circle, will find leanness come into his soul. It must necessarily be (the very nature of the case proves it) that there are states of mind which the believer can unfold to none but God, sins that can only be acknowledged in His presence, and needs that can only be poured into His ear. What a loser, then, is that professing Christian who lives in the daily and habitual neglect of secret prayer! It is the close and secret walk with God that marks the true and advancing believer. It is in that walk, and that only, that fresh grace, strength and love are poured into the soul. It is in secret communion with God that the believer becomes girded for the conflict, strengthened for the hour of trial, and prepared for the joys of heaven.

Let it be remembered that one essential and important part of the Spirit's work as the Author of prayer is to unfold Jesus as the medium of prayer. There is no access to God but through Jesus. If there is no honoring of Christ in His person, blood, righteousness and intercession in prayer, we can expect no answer to prayer. The great encouragement to draw near to God, is Jesus at the right hand of God. Jesus is the door. Coming through Him, the poorest, the vilest and the most abject may approach the throne of grace, and ask what he will. The glorious Advocate is on the throne to present the petition and urge its acceptance, and plead for its answer on the basis of His own infinite and atoning merits. Come then, you who are poor; come, you who are disconsolate; come, you who are tried and afflicted; come, you who are wounded; come, you who are needy; come and be made welcome at the mercy-seat; for Jesus waits to present your petition and plead your cause. Ask nothing in your own name, but ask everything in the name of Jesus; "ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." The Father may reject you, but His Son He cannot reject. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High priest over the house of God, let us draw near." Draw near, then, seeking soul, with boldness; not the boldness of a presumptuous, self-righteous man, but that of one chosen, called, pardoned and justified. Draw near with the lowly boldness of a child, with the humble confidence of a son. You are dear to your Father. Your voice is sweet to Him. You are precious to Him because you have been accepted in His Beloved. You cannot come too boldly, you cannot come too frequently, you cannot come with too large requests. You are coming to a King; that King is your Father; that Father sees you in His beloved Son. Do not hang back. Do not stand afar off. He now holds out the golden scepter and says, "Come near, what is your request? Come with your temporal need. Come with your spiritual need. Ask what you will, it shall be granted you. I have an open hand and a large heart." Is this your desire—"Lord, I need more grace to glorify You. I need more simplicity of mind, singleness of eye. I need a more holy, upright, honest walk. I need more meekness, patience, lowliness, submission. I want to know more of Jesus, to see more of His glory, to feel more of His preciousness and to live more simply upon His fulness. I want more of the sanctifying, sealing, witnessing and anointing influences of the Spirit?" Blessed, holy desires! It is the Spirit making intercession in you according to the will of God; and as you enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, the Lord will fulfil the desires of your heart.

Watch diligently against the least declension in the spirit of prayer. If there be

declension here, there will also be declension in every part and department of the work of the Spirit in your soul. It is prayer that keeps every grace of the Spirit in active, holy and healthy exercise. It is the stream, so to speak, that supplies refreshing vigor and nourishment to all the plants of grace. It is true that the fountain-head of all spiritual life and "grace to help in time of need," is Christ; "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And Paul's encouragement to the Philippians was, "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." But the channel through which all grace comes is prayer—ardent, wrestling, importunate, believing prayer. Allow this channel to be dry, permit any object to narrow or close it up, and the effect will be a withering and a decay of the life of God in the soul. Every plant will droop, every flower will fade and lose its fragrance, and the state of the soul will no longer resemble that of the church thus so beautifully described: "You are like a private garden, my treasure, my bride! You are like a spring that no one else can drink from, a fountain of my own. You are like a lovely orchard bearing precious fruit, with the rarest of perfumes: nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, myrrh and aloes, perfume from every incense tree, and every other lovely spice. You are a garden fountain, a well of living water, as refreshing as the streams from the Lebanon mountains." "Awake, north wind! Come, south wind! Blow on my garden and waft its lovely perfume to my lover. Let him come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits." Song 4:12-16. This is the true and glowing picture of a believing soul in which the spirit of prayer is flourishing and vigorous. Reverse this, and how melancholy would it appear! And yet that would be the exact state of every prayerless professing Christian. Guard, then, against the slightest decline of prayer in the soul. If prayer family prayer, social prayer, most of all, secret prayer is declining with you, no further evidence is needed of your being in a backsliding state of mind. There may not yet have been the outward departure, but you are on the way to it, and nothing but a return to prayer will save you. Oh, what alarm, what fearfulness and trembling, should this thought produce in a child of God, "I am on my way to an awful departure from God! Such is the state of my soul at this moment, such my present state of mind, such the loss of my spirituality, such the hold which the world has upon my affections, there is no length in sin to which I may not now go, there is no iniquity which I may not now commit. The breakers are full in view, and my poor weak vessel is heading for and rapidly nearing them!" What can shield you from the commission of that sin, what can keep you from wounding Jesus afresh, what can preserve you from sinking and making shipwreck of your faith, but an immediate and fervent return to prayer? Prayer is your only safety. Prayer for grace to help in your time of need.

Prayer for reviving grace, for quickening, restraining, sanctifying grace. Prayer to be kept from falling—to be held up in the slippery paths. Prayer for the lowly mind, for the contrite spirit, for the broken heart, for the careful, close and humble walk with God.

Do you ask what are some of the symptoms of a decline of the spirit of prayer? We reply that the decay of any one grace of the Spirit in the soul—faith, love, zeal, patience, meekness, temperance, lowliness—marks the low and feeble pulse of prayer in a believer. There may not be a decay of all the graces at once, and because of this the believer may be greatly deceived. Outward zeal may continue long after other more hidden and spiritual graces have withered; and because this remains, the soul is deceived as to its real state before God. A secret and a fearful process of spiritual declension may be going forward in the soul, while for a time there may be nothing outward to mark it. There are many evidences, known only to the individual himself, by which the declining spirit of prayer may be detected. A distaste for the Word of God, for a spiritual and searching ministry, for communion with spiritual minds, for holy thought and meditation; all, and many more which cannot be unknown to the backsliding soul, indicate a neglected throne of grace.

Are you a prayerless professing Christian? Oh, what is all your profession worth if you are a prayerless soul? What is your zeal, your church membership, your talking well and loud, your gifts, your reputation as a 'live' Christian, while you are dead to the true spirit and life of prayer, living in awful neglect of family prayer, social prayer and secret prayer? All your profession of godliness: your outward zeal, your splendid gifts, all is but a "fair show in the flesh," an empty name, while you live in neglect of prayer. Prayer is the breathing of the life of God in the soul. It is the pulse of the renewed man. It is the turning of the soul to God. Where this is missing, the great evidence of the actual existence of life is missing too.

This may catch the eye of someone who has never yet truly prayed; who all his life so far has neglected the throne of grace. What an awful condition! What a sad sight! Your life, reader, has been a prayerless life. It has been a life devoted to self, to sin, to rebellion against God, to impenitence and unbelief, to hardness of heart, and contempt of God's Word, to a neglect of the great salvation, to a despising of Christ, to a pursuit of happiness in a poor, dying, present evil world. Not a breath of prayer has ever risen from your soul to God. Not one pulse of love has ever beaten in your breast for Jesus. You have lived as a lover of self, a lover of the world, a lover of sin, a lover of wealth,

pleasure and ambition, rather than as a lover of God. And why are you at this moment out of hell? You have long been preparing for it. Your character for years has been molding for the society and the sufferings of the lost. Why are you not there now, calling for a drop of water to cool that parched tongue which never once called in earnest supplication upon God? It is of the Lord's mercies that you are not consumed. And because His patience has borne with you so long, you are yet within the region of hope. "What do you mean, O sleeper? arise, and call upon God." The wrath of God here, and its fearful outpouring hereafter, rests upon the soul that does not come to the throne of grace. The hell of an unpraying man is a fearful hell. To go from the means of grace, from the ordinances of religion, from a preached Gospel, from a praying family, to the judgment-seat, an unpraying, unrepenting, unbelieving soul, is to go to a special hell. The untaught, unenlightened and unwarned heathen, does not go to the hell of that soul that dies surrounded by the means of saving grace, rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, and a stranger to prayer. "Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those," who have heard of the throne of grace only to slight it; of Jesus only to despise him; of the Gospel only to reject it; of God's love, patience and grace only to trample it under his feet? "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment" than for that soul. "And now about these enemies of mine who didn't want me to be their king—bring them in and execute them right here in my presence." "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done. The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the grave gave up the dead in them. They were all judged according to their deeds. And death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:11-15. This will be the doom and the portion of an unpraying soul! Remember, reader, that without prayer in your family, your family is cursed; that without prayer in your business, your business is cursed, that without prayer for your own soul, the curse of God rests upon you. If you have not time for prayer, then seek time, find time, make time. You must pray, or be lost! You must pray, or be eternally condemned! You must pray, or sink down overwhelmed with the wrath of God forever and

forever! Seek time, find time, make time for prayer. Abstract it from business, take it from pleasure, even steal it from sleep. You must pray, or go to an awful, a special hell. A sorer punishment than all others will be yours, if you die a prayerless soul!

Are you conscious of the slightest movement of your heart towards God? Cherish it as your most valuable mercy. It is the first gentle breathing of the blessed Spirit in your soul. It is the first pulse of spiritual life. It may be feeble; it may be only a desire, a misgiving, a solemn thought, a feeling after God; a cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Oh, it is the life-giving Spirit overshadowing you; let it lead you to the mercy-seat. O precious longing after God! O blessed and gentle drawing of the Spirit! Let it lead you at once to the throne of grace. Go there and spread your case before the Lord. Confess your sins, acknowledge your iniquity, humble yourself at His feet, and for Jesus' sake God will receive you graciously, pardon you freely and seal you as His child.

Lastly, pray expectantly, diligently and perseveringly. Expect an answer to your prayer, a promise to your request, a compliance with your suit. Be as much assured that God will answer, as that you have asked or that He has promised. Ask in faith; only believe; watch daily at the gates for the answer; look for it at any moment, and through any providence; do not expect it in your own way, but in the Lord's; do not be astonished if He should answer your prayer in the very opposite way that you had anticipated and (it may be) dictated. With this view, watch every providence, even the smallest. You do not know when the answer may come, at what time, or in what way. Therefore watch. The Lord may answer in a great and strong wind, in an earthquake, in a fire, or in a still small voice; therefore watch every providence to know which will be the voice of God to you. Do not pray as if you asked for or expected a refusal. God delights in your holy fervency, your humble boldness and your persevering importunity. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Pray submissively, expect hopefully, watch vigilantly, and wait patiently.

Behold, then, the throne of grace! Was ever spot so verdant and so sunny? Was ever resting-place so sacred and so sweet? Could God Himself invest it with a richer or greater attraction? Behold it yet again. It is the throne of grace. There are dispensed all the blessings of sovereign grace—pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, and all that connects the present state of the believer with eternal glory. There is dispensed grace itself—grace to guide,

to support, to comfort and to help in time of need. There sits the God of grace, proclaiming Himself "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." There is extended the scepter of grace, welcoming the sons and daughters of need, the weary and the heavy laden, the guilty, the broken in heart, the poor, the friendless, the bereaved. There stands Jesus the High priest and Mediator, full of grace and truth, waving to and fro his golden censer, from which pours forth the fragrant incense of His atoning merits, wreathing in one offering as it ascends the name, the needs and the prayer of the lowly worshiper. And there, too, is the Spirit of grace, breathing in the soul, making known the need, putting the petition into words, and making intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Behold, then, the throne of grace, and draw near! You are welcome. Come with your cross, come with your infirmity, come with your guilt, come with your need, come with your wounded spirit, come with your broken heart, come and welcome to the throne of grace! Come without price, come without worthiness, come without preparation, come without fitness, come in a bad state of mind, come with a hard heart, come and welcome to the throne of grace! God, your Father, makes you welcome. Jesus, your Advocate, makes you welcome. The Spirit, the Author of prayer, makes you welcome. All the happy and the blessed who cluster around it make you welcome. The spirits of just men made perfect in glory make you welcome. The ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation make you welcome. All the holy below, and all the holy above, all, all make you, poor trembling soul, welcome, thrice welcome, to the throne of grace!

The Broken Heart Bound Up or The Spirit a Comforter

"The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit." John 14:26.

In several parts of this work, we have had occasion to touch upon the sanctifying tendency of the discipline of the covenant. We have been led to trace the goodness, and to justify the wisdom of God, and to mark some of the blessed results in His appointing the suffering state to be the special allotment of His children. But there is one important view of the subject yet reserved. It is this: That in no one aspect does the happy tendency and indispensable necessity of that discipline more manifestly appear, than in the fact that through this channel the believer is brought into communion with, and into

the enjoyment of, the tenderness and sympathy of the Spirit. The wisdom, the faithfulness and the power of the Spirit, the soul has been brought to acknowledge and experience in conversion; but to know the Spirit as a Comforter, to experience His tenderness and sympathy, His kindness and gentleness, we must be placed in those special circumstances that call it into exercise. In a word, we must know what sorrow is, to know what comfort is; to know what true comfort is, we must receive it from the blessed and eternal Spirit, the Comforter of the church.

The God and Father of His people foreknew all their circumstances. He knew that He had chosen them in the furnace of affliction, that this was the particular path along which they should all walk. As He foreknew, so He also fore-arranged for all those circumstances. In the eternal purposes of His wisdom, grace and love, He went before His church, planning its history, allotting its path and providing for every possible position in which it could be placed; so that we cannot imagine an exigency, a trial, a difficulty or a conflict which is not amply provided for in the covenant of grace. Such is the wisdom and the goodness of God towards His covenant family!

The great provision for the suffering state of the believer is the Holy Spirit, the special, personal and abiding Comforter of the church. It was to this truth our dear Lord directed the sorrowing hearts of His disciples, when on the eve of His return to glory. He was about to withdraw from them His bodily presence. His mission on earth was fulfilled, His work was done, and He was about to return to His Father and to their Father, to His God and to their God. The prospect of separation absorbed them in grief. Thus did Jesus speak of it, and thus, too, he consoled them: "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asks me, Where are you going? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Note the circumstances of the disciples; it was a season of deep sorrow. Then observe how Jesus mitigated that sorrow, and chased away the dark cloud of their grief—by the promise of the Spirit as a Comforter—assuring those who the presence and abiding of the Spirit as a Comforter would more than recompense the loss of His bodily presence. What the Spirit then was to the sorrowing disciples, He has been in every successive age, is at the present moment, and will continue to be to the end of time—the personal and abiding Comforter of the afflicted family of God. May He now sanctify and comfort our hearts, by leading us into the consideration of this great and most

precious doctrine.

In the sacred Word great stress is laid upon the subject of comfort. It is clearly God's revealed will that His people should be comforted. The fulness of Christ, the exceeding great and precious promises of the Word, the covenant of grace and all the dealings of God are closely related to the comfort and consolation of the saints. A brief reference to the Divine Word will convince us of this. This is the very character God Himself bears, and this is the blessed work He accomplishes. Thus, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God." Similarly we have those striking words in Isaiah, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." This was God's command to the prophet. It was His declared will that His people should be comforted, even though they dwelt in Jerusalem, the city which had shed the blood of the prophets, and more than that, which was later to witness the crucifixion of the Lord of life and glory. What an unfolding does this give us of Him who is the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, and that, too, in every place!

The comforting of the saints is one important purpose of the Scriptures. "Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." And thus the exhortation runs—"Comfort the feeble minded." "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do." "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Thus has the Holy Spirit testified to this subject. Thus it is clear that it is the will of God and in His heart that His people should be comforted.

The necessity of comfort springs from the existence of sorrow in some one or more of its varied and multiplied forms. For each and every kind of sorrow the blessed Spirit is the Comforter; but as He comforts in various ways according to the nature of the sorrow, we would select a few of the prominent sources of grief, common alike to all the Lord's people, and show how He binds up, heals and comforts.

With regard to the spiritual sorrows of a child of God, those peculiar to a believer in Jesus, we believe that a revelation of Jesus is the great source of

comfort to which the Spirit leads the soul. He comforts all the spiritual grief of a believer, dries up all his spiritual tears, by testifying of Christ, and that according to the peculiar feature of the case. Our Lord told His sorrowing disciples this: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me." Notice that He was to comfort their hearts by testifying of Jesus. Here is the true source of comfort. What higher comfort do we need? What more can we have? This is enough to heal every wound, to dry up every tear, to assuage every grief, to lighten every cross, to fringe with brightness every dark cloud, and to make the roughest place smooth—that a believing soul has Jesus. Having Jesus, what has a believer? He has the entire blotting out of all his sins. Is not this a comfort? Tell us what can give comfort to a child of God apart from this. If this fail, where can he look? Will you tell him of the world, of its many schemes of enjoyment, of its plans for the accumulation of wealth, of its domestic happiness? Wretched sources of comfort to an awakened soul! Poor empty channels to a man made acquainted with the inward plague of sin! That which he needs to know is, the sure payment of the ten thousand talents, the entire cancelling of the bond held against him by stern justice, the complete blotting out, as a thick cloud, of all his iniquity. Until this great fact is made sure and certain to his conscience, all other comfort is but as a dream of boyhood, a shadow that vanishes, a vapor that melts away. But the Holy Spirit comforts the believer by leading him to this blessed truth—the full pardon of sin. This is the great controversy which Satan has with the believer. To bring him to doubt the pardon of sin, to unhinge the mind from this great fact, is the constant effort of this arch-enemy. And when unbelief is powerful, and inbred sin is powerful, and outward trials are many and sore, and, in the midst of it all, the single eye is removed from Christ, then is the hour of Satan to charge home upon the conscience of the believer all the iniquity he ever committed. And how does the blessed Spirit comfort at that moment? By unfolding the greatness, perfection and efficacy of the one offering by which Jesus has forever blotted out the sins of His people, and perfected those who are sanctified. O what comfort does this truth speak to a fearful, troubled, anxious believer, when (the Spirit working faith in his heart) he can look up and see all his sins laid upon Jesus in the solemn hour of atonement, and no condemnation remaining! However poor and worthless you may feel yourself to be, this truth is still for you. O rise to it, welcome it, embrace it, do not think that it is too costly for one so unworthy. It comes from the heart of Jesus, and cannot be more free. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Having Jesus, what has the believer more? He possesses a righteousness in which God views him complete and accepted, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Is it not a comfort to stand "complete in Him," in the midst of many and conscious imperfections, infirmities, flaws and proneness to wander? What a comfort for the sorrowing and trembling heart to turn and take up its rest in this truth, that "he that believes is justified from all things," and stands accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of Divine grace. God beholds him in Jesus without a spot, because He beholds His Son in whom He is well pleased, and viewing the believing soul in Him, can say, "You are all beautiful, my love; there is no spot in you!" The blessed Comforter unfolds this truth to the troubled soul, bringing it to take up its rest in it. And as the believer realizes his full acceptance in the righteousness of Christ, and rejoices in the truth, he weeps as he never wept and mourns as he never mourned, over the perpetual bias of his heart to wander from a God that has so loved him. The very comfort poured into his soul from this truth lays him in the dust, and draws out the heart in ardent longings for holiness.

And what a Comforter is the Spirit in seasons of temptation! Few of the children of God are ignorant of Satan's devices. Few are exempt from the "fiery darts" of the adversary. Our Lord Himself was not. Many, varied and great are Satan's temptations. They are often those which touch the very vitals of the gospel, which attempt to undermine the believer's faith in the fundamentals of Christianity, and which affect his own personal interest in the covenant of grace. Satan is the sworn enemy of the believer. He is his constant, unwearied foe. There is a subtlety, a malignity, which is not present with other enemies of the soul. The Holy Spirit, in Rev. 2:24, speaks of the "depths of Satan." There are "depths" in his malice, in his subtlety, in his sagacity, which many of the beloved of the Lord are made in some degree to plumb. The Lord may allow them to go down into those "depths," just to convince them that there are depths in His wisdom, love, power and grace which can out-fathom the "depths of Satan."

But what are some of the devices of the wicked one? What are some of his fiery darts? Sometimes he fills the mind of the believer with the most blasphemous and atheistical thoughts, threatening the utter destruction of his peace and confidence. Sometimes he takes advantage of periods of weakness and trial and perplexity to stir up the corruptions of his nature, bringing the soul back as into captivity to the law of sin and death. Sometimes he suggests unbelieving doubts respecting his adoption, beguiling him into the belief that

his professed conversion is all a delusion, that his religion is all hypocrisy, and that what he had thought was the work of grace is only the work of nature. But by far the greatest and most general controversy which Satan has with the saint of God, is to lead him to doubt the ability and the willingness of Christ to save a poor sinner. If the anchor of his soul is removed from this truth, he is driven out upon a rough sea of doubt and anguish, and is at the mercy of every wind of doctrine and of every billow of unbelief that may assail his storm-tossed bark. But in the midst of it all, where flows the comfort and the victory of the tempted believer? From the promise which assures him that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." And what is the standard which the Spirit, the Comforter, lifts up to stem this flood? A dying, risen, ascended, exalted and ever-living Savior. This is the standard that strikes terror into the foe; this is the gate that shuts out the flood. So the disciples proved. This is their testimony: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through your name." Immanuel is that name which puts to flight every spiritual foe. And the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, leads the tempted soul to this name, to shelter itself beneath it, to plead it with God, and to battle with it against the enemy. Are you a mark against which the fiery darts of the devil are leveled? Are you strongly tempted? Do not be astonished as though some strange thing had happened unto you. The holiest of God's saints have suffered as you are now suffering; indeed even your blessed Lord your Master, your Pattern, your Example, and He in whose name you shall be more than conqueror—was once assailed as you are, and by the same enemy. And let the reflection console you, that temptations only leave the traces of guilt upon the conscience, and are only regarded as sins by God, as they are yielded to. The mere suggestion of the adversary, the mere presentation of a temptation, is no sin, so long as (in the strength that is in Christ Jesus) the believer firmly and resolutely resists it. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "Above all, take the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Jesus has already fought and conquered for you. He well knew what the conflict with Satan was. And He remembers too what it is. Lift up your head, tempted soul! You shall obtain the victory. The Seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head, has crushed him so that he can never obtain supremacy over you again. He may harass, annoy and distress you, but pluck you from the hollow of the hand that was pierced for you he never can.

But in seasons of deep trial and affliction, the Spirit specially shows Himself the Comforter of His people. It was under circumstances of peculiar and keen

trial that Jesus promised the Spirit as a Comforter. Nor is He confined to any peculiar trial. Whatever is a cause of depression to the believer, whatever grieves his heart, wounds his spirit or casts him down, is a trial. If it is only a cold look from eyes that once shone with love, it is still a trial. If it is only an unkind word from the tongue that once flowed with affection, it is still a trial; and in proportion to the heart's tenderness the keenness of the trial is felt.

Many of the saints of God tend to forget the appointed path of believers through the world. They forget that that path is to be one of tribulation; that far from being a smooth, a flowery and an easy path, it is rough, thorny and difficult. The believer often expects all his heaven on earth. He forgets that whatever spiritual enjoyment there may be here, related in its nature to the joys of the glorified, and of this he cannot expect too much—the present is only the wilderness state of the church. The life that now is is only that of a pilgrimage and a journey. Kind was our Lord's admonition "In the world you shall have tribulation"; and equally so that of the apostle, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom." Affliction, in some of its many and varied forms is the lot of all the Lord's people. If we do not have it, we lack an evidence of our true sonship, for the Father "scourges every son whom He receives." But whatever the trial or affliction is, the Spirit is the Comforter.

Now, how does He comfort the afflicted soul? He unfolds the love of his God and Father in the trial. He shows the believer that his sorrow, so far from being the result of anger, is the fruit of love; that it comes from the heart of God, sent to draw the soul nearer to Himself, and to unfold the depths of His own grace and tenderness; that "whom He loves He rebukes." And oh, how immense the comfort that flows into a wounded spirit when love—deep, unchangeable, covenant love—is seen in the hand that has stricken; when the affliction is traced to the covenant, and through the covenant to the heart of a covenant God!

He comforts by revealing the purpose for which the affliction is sent. He convinces the believer that the discipline, though painful, was yet needed; that the world was, perhaps, making inroads upon the soul, or earthly love was shutting out Jesus; some indulged sin was perhaps crucifying Him afresh, or some known spiritual duty was neglected. The Comforter opens the believer's ears to hear the voice of the rod, and Him who has appointed it. He begins to see why the Lord has smitten, why He has caused His rough wind and His east wind to blow, why He has blasted, why He has wounded. And now the Achan is discovered, cast out, and stoned. The heart, disciplined, returns from its

wanderings and, wounded, bleeding, suffering, seeks more fondly than ever a wounded, bleeding, suffering Savior. Who can fully estimate the comfort which flows from the sanctified discipline of the covenant when the purpose for which the trial was sent is accomplished? Accomplished, it may be, in the discovery of some departure, or in the removal of an obstruction to the growth of grace, of some object that obscured the glory of Jesus, and that suspended His visits of love to the soul. "Blessed discipline," he may exclaim, "that has produced so much good; gentle chastisement that has corrected so much evil; sweet medicine that has produced so much health!"

But it is in unfolding the tenderness and sympathy of Jesus that the Spirit most effectually restores comfort to the tried, tempted and afflicted soul. He testifies of Christ especially in the sympathy of His manhood. There can be no question that, in His assumption of our nature, Jesus had in view, as one important end, a closer affinity with the suffering state of His people with a view to their more immediate comfort and support. The great object of His incarnation, we are well assured, was obedience to the law in its precept, and the suffering of its penalty. But connected with, and resulting from this, is the channel that is thus open for the outflowings of that tenderness and sympathy of which the saints of God so constantly stand in need, and as constantly receive. Jesus is the "brother born for adversity" "it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High priest" "in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to support those who are tempted" "we have not a High priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Here is the true and blessed source of comfort in the hour and the circumstance of sorrow. The Lord's people are a tried people, Jesus was a tried Savior. The Lord's people are an afflicted people; Jesus drank deeply of affliction's bitter cup. The Lord's people are a sorrowing family; Jesus was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He brought Himself down on to a level with the circumstances of His people. He completely identified Himself with them. However, we are not to suppose that in every peculiarity of trial there is an identity with our dear Lord. There are trials growing out of peculiar circumstances and relations in life to which he was a stranger. But Jesus took upon Himself pure humanity in its suffering form and was deeply acquainted with sorrow as sorrow—and from these two circumstances He became fitted in all points to support, to sustain and to sympathize with His afflicted, sorrowing people, whatever the cause of that affliction or sorrow

was. It is enough for us that He was "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." It is enough for us that His heart was composed of all the tenderness and sympathy and gentleness of our nature, and that, too, freed from everything growing out of the infirmity of sin that could weaken, impair and blunt the sensibilities. It is enough for us that sorrow was no stranger to His heart, that affliction had deeply furrowed His soul, and that grief had left its traces upon every line of His countenance. What more do we require? What more can we ask? Our nature? He took it. Our sicknesses? He bore them. Our sorrows? He felt them. Our crosses? He carried them. Our sins? He pardoned them. He went before His suffering people, trod out the path and left his footprint, and now invites them to walk in no way, to sustain no sorrow, to bear no burden and to drink no cup in which He has not Himself gone before. It is enough for Him that you are a child of grief, that sorrow is the bitter cup that you are drinking. He asks no more. A chord is in a moment touched in His heart, which vibrates to that chord touched in yours, whether its note be a pleasing or a mournful one. For let it be ever remembered that Jesus has as much sympathy for the joys as He has for the sorrows of His people. He rejoices with those that rejoice and He weeps with those that weep. But how does Jesus sympathize? Not in the sense in which some may suppose, that when we weep He actually weeps, and that when we suffer He actually suffers. This may once have been so, but we no more know Christ in the flesh, as He was once known. Ah! there was a period when "Jesus wept"! There was a period when His heart wrung with anguish, and when His body agonized in pain. That period is no more. However there still is a sense (and an important one) in which Jesus feels sympathy. When the believer suffers, the tenderness of Jesus is drawn forth. His sustaining strength, sanctifying grace and comforting love are all unfolded in the experience of His child while passing through the furnace. The Son of God is with him in the flames. Jesus of Nazareth is walking with him on the billows. He has the heart of Christ. And this is sympathy—this is fellowship—this is to be one with Christ Jesus.

What is your sorrow? Has the hand of death smitten? Is the beloved one removed? Has the desire of your eyes been taken away with a stroke? But who has done it? Jesus has done it. Death was only His messenger. Your Jesus has done it. The Lord has taken away. And what has He removed? Your wife? Ah, Jesus has all the tenderness that your wife ever had. Hers was only a drop from the ocean that is in His heart. Is it your husband? Jesus is better to you than ten husbands. Is it your parent, your child, your friend, your all of earthly bliss? Is the cistern broken? Is the earthen vessel dashed to pieces? Are all your streams dry? Jesus is still enough. He has not taken Himself from

you, and never, never will. Take your bereaved, stricken and bleeding heart to Him, and rest it upon His, once bereaved, stricken and bleeding, too; for He knows how to bind up the broken heart, to heal the wounded spirit and to comfort those that mourn.

What is your sorrow? Has health failed you? Has property forsaken you? Have friends turned against you? Are you tried in your circumstances? Perplexed in your path? Are providences thickening and darkening around you? Are you anticipating seasons of approaching trial? Are you walking in darkness, having no light? Simply go to Jesus. He is an ever open door. A tender, loving faithful friend, ever near. He is a brother born for your adversity. His grace and sympathy are sufficient for you. The life you are called to live is that of faith; that of sense, you have done with. You are now to walk by faith and not by sight. This, then, is the great secret of a life of faith—to hang upon Jesus daily, to go to Him in every trial, to cast upon Him every burden, to take the infirmity, the corruption, the cross as it arises, simply and immediately to Jesus. You are to set Christ before you as your Example to imitate; as your Fountain to wash in; as your Foundation to build upon; as your Fulness to draw from; as your tender, loving and confiding Brother and Friend, to go to at all times and under all circumstances. To do this daily, constitutes the life of faith. O to be enabled with Paul to say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." O holy, happy life! O unearthly, heavenly life! The life Jesus Himself lived when below, the life all the patriarchs and prophets and apostles and martyrs and the spirits of just men made perfect once lived, and the life every true-born child of God is called and privileged to live, while yet a stranger and pilgrim on the earth!

There are three important aspects in which a believer should never fail to view his present lot. The first is to remember that the present is, by the appointment of God, the afflicted state of the believer. It is God's ordained, revealed will that His covenant children should be here in an afflicted condition. When called by grace, they should never take into their account any other state. They become the disciples of the religion of the cross; they become the followers of a crucified Lord; they put on a yoke, and assume a burden. They must, then, expect the cross inward and the cross outward. To escape it, is impossible. To pass to glory without it, is to go by another way than God's ordering, and, in the end, to fail of arriving there. The gate is strait, and the way is narrow, which leads to life, and a man must become

nothing if he would enter and be saved, Matt. 7:14. He must deny himself. He must become a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. 3:18. He must receive the sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself, 2 Cor. 1:9. The wise man must cease to glory—in his wisdom, the mighty man must cease to glory in his might, the rich man must cease to glory in his riches. Their only ground of glory in themselves must be their insufficiency, infirmity, poverty and weakness; and their only ground of glory out of themselves must be that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The believer in Jesus, then, must not forget that if the path he treads is rough and thorny, if the sky is wintry and the storm is severe, and if the cross he bears is heavy, that this is the road to heaven. He is only in the wilderness; why should he expect more than belongs to the wilderness state? He is on a journey; why should he look for more than a traveler's fare? He is far from home; why should he murmur and complain that he has not all the rest, the comfort and the luxuries of his Father's house? If your covenant God and Father has allotted to you poverty, be satisfied that it should be your state; indeed, rejoice in it. If bitter adversity, if deep affliction, if the daily and the heavy cross, still do not breathe one murmur, do not shed one tear, do not heave one sigh, but rather rejoice that you are led into the path that Jesus Himself walked in, that you "go forth by the footsteps of the flock," and that you are counted worthy thus to be one in circumstance with Christ and His people.

The second aspect in which the suffering believer should view his present lot is that a state of humiliation or casting down is invariably followed by a state of exaltation or lifting up. The Lord empties before He fills. He makes room for Himself, for His love and for His grace. He dethrones the rival, casts down the idol and claims to occupy the temple, filled and radiant with His own ineffable glory. Thus does He bring the soul into great straits, lays it low, but only to school and discipline it for richer mercies, higher service and greater glory. Be sure of this, that when the Lord is about to favor you with some great and peculiar blessing, he may prepare you for it by some great and peculiar trial. If He is about to advance you to some honor, He may first lay you low that He may exalt you. If He is about to place you in a sphere of great and distinguished usefulness, he may first place you in His school, that you may know how to teach others. If He is about to bring forth your righteousness as the noon-day, He may cause it to pass under a cloud, that, emerging from its momentary obscuration, it may shine with richer and more enduring luster. Thus does He deal with all His people.

Thus He dealt with Joseph. Intending to elevate him to great distinction and influence, He first cast him into a dungeon, and that, too, in the very land in which he was so soon to be the gaze and the astonishment of all men. Thus, too, he dealt with David and Job; and thus did God deal with his own Son, whom He advanced to His own right hand from the lowest state of humiliation and suffering. "It is the way of God to work by contraries, to turn the greatest evil into the greatest good. To grant great good after great evil, is one thing, and to turn great evils into the greatest good, that is another, and yet that is God's way. The greatest good that God intends for His people, many times He works it out of the greatest evil; the greatest light is brought out of the greatest darkness."

The third aspect is to regard the present suffering as only preparatory to future glory. This will greatly mitigate the sorrow, reconcile the heart to the trial and tend materially to secure the important purpose for which it was sent. The life of a believer is only a disciplining for heaven. All the covenant dealings of his God and Father, are only to make him a partaker of His holiness here, and thus to prepare him to be a partaker of His glory hereafter. Here he is only being trained for a high position in heaven. He is only preparing for a more holy and (for all we know) a more active and essential service in the upper world. So every infirmity overcome, every sin subdued, every weight laid aside and every step advanced in holiness only strengthens and matures the life of grace below, until it is fitted for, and terminates in, the life of glory above. Let the suffering believer then see that he emerges from every trial of the furnace with some dross consumed, some iniquity purged and with a deeper impress of the blessed Spirit's seal of love, holiness and adoption on his heart. Let him see that he has made some advance towards the state of the glorified; that he is more perfected in love and sanctification—the two great elements of heaven; and that therefore he is becoming fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. "Every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Blessed and holy tendency of all the afflictive dispensations of a covenant God and Father towards a dear and covenant child!

But there is a sorrow, even keener and deeper than this, in which the Spirit the Comforter is seen directly and manifestly to work. It is the sorrow of a heart broken on account of sin. A wounded conscience, a humble and contrite spirit, a broken heart—who can adequately describe? Though he may have experienced it, yet no mortal can fully unfold it, as no mortal can alone heal and comfort it. It is the deep and wonderful work of God the Holy Spirit; and

he who approaches a spirit wounded by sin, either to describe the state, or to attempt its healing, has need of much wisdom, tenderness and sympathy. This part of our work addresses itself especially to the poor in spirit, to the humble and the contrite, to the wounded conscience, to the broken heart; let it then be read, as it is written, in the spirit of prayer, that the Comforter (who is the Holy Spirit) may take the work into His own hands, and heal where He has wounded and bind up where He has broken.

Shall we attempt a faint description of your feelings? Allow one who has walked to some degree the path you are now treading, and who is prepared to sympathize with every tear and sigh that comes from a convinced and wounded conscience, with all tenderness and humility to draw aside the veil which conceals the deep and conflicting emotions that now agitate your heart, with a view to leading you to Jesus, whose voice alone can hush the tempest, and say to the waves of conviction and guilt, "Peace, be still."

You feel yourself to be the very chief of sinners. You seem to stand out from the great mass a lone and solitary being, more vile, polluted, guilty and lost than all the rest. Your sentiments in reference to yourself, to the world, to sin, to God and to Christ, have undergone a rapid, total and surprising change. Yourself, you see to be guilty and condemned; the world, you feel to be a worthless portion, a cheat and a lie; sin, you see to be the blackest and most hateful of all things; God, you regard in a light of holiness, justice and truth, as you never did before; and Christ, as possessing an interest entirely new and overpowering. Your views in relation to the law of God are reversed. You now see it to be immaculately holy, strictly just and infinitely wise. Your best attempts to obey its precepts you now see are not only utterly powerless, but in themselves are so polluted by sin, that you cannot look at them without the deepest self-loathing. The justice of God shines with a glory unseen and unknown before. You feel that, in now bringing the condemnatory sentence of the law into your conscience, He is strictly holy, and were He now to send you to eternal woe, He would be strictly just. But ah! what seems to form the greatest burden? What is that which is more bitter to you than wormwood or gall? Oh, it is the thought that you should ever have lifted your arm of rebellion against so good, so holy, so just a God as He is. That you should ever have cherished one treasonable thought, or harbored one unkind feeling. That your whole life, thus far, should have been spent in bitter hostility to Him, His law, His Son, His people, and that yet, in the midst of it, yes, all day long, He has stretched out His hand to you, and you did not regard it! O the guilt that rests upon your conscience! O the burden that presses your soul! O the sorrow

that wrings your heart! O the pang that wounds your spirit! Is there a posture of humility more lowly than all others? You would assume it. Is there a place in the dust more humiliating than all others? You would lie in it. Now you are looking wistfully around for a refuge, a resting place, a balm, a quietness for the conflict in your soul. Is this your real state?

Are these your true feelings? Then the Lord is blessing you!

"Blessing, do you say?" Yes! Those tears are a blessing! Those convictions are a blessing! Those humbling, lowly views are a blessing! That broken heart, that contrite spirit, that awakened, convicted and wounded conscience, despite all its guilt, is a blessing! Why? because the Spirit that convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment has entered your soul and worked this change in you. He has opened your eyes to see yourself lost and wretched. He has broken the spell which the world has woven around you. He has dissolved the enchantment, unveiled the delusion and made you feel the powers of the world to come. Then you have received a blessing.

But "is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" There is! The Physician is Jesus, the balm is His own most precious blood. He binds up the broken heart, He heals the wounded spirit. See how the Holy Spirit testifies to this, and how He comforts by the testimony: "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair." Isaiah 61:1-3.

And if the reader will compare this precious announcement with Luke 4 from the 16th verse, he will find our Lord quoting it, and declaring that it was then fulfilled in Himself. "This day," says He, "is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Jesus is the binder-up of a broken heart. All the skill, all the efficacy, all the tenderness and acute sympathy needed for the office, meet and center in Him in their highest degree. Here then you can bring your wounded heart. Bring it simply to Jesus. One touch of His hand will heal the wound. One whisper of His voice will hush the tempest. One drop of His blood will remove the guilt.

Nothing but applying to Him in faith will do for your soul now. Your case is beyond the skill of all other physicians. Your wound is too deep for all other remedies. It is a question of life and death, heaven or hell. It is an emergency, a crisis, a turning point with you. Oh, how solemn, how eventful is this moment! Eternity seems suspended upon it. All the intelligences of the universe, good spirits and bad, seem to be gazing upon it with intense interest. Decide the question by closing immediately with Jesus. Submit to God. All things are ready. The blood is shed, the righteousness is finished, the feast is prepared, God stands ready to pardon, indeed He advances to meet you, His returning child, to fall upon your neck and embrace you with the assurance of His full and free forgiveness.

Do not let the simplicity of the remedy keep you back. Many stumble at this. It is only a look of faith: "Look unto me, and be saved." It is only a touch, even though with a paralyzed hand: "And as many as touched Him were made whole." It is only believing the broad declaration that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." You are not called to believe that He came to save you; but that He saves sinners. Then if you inquire, "But will He save me? How do I know that if I come I shall meet a welcome?" Our reply is, only test Him. Do not settle down with the conviction that you are too far gone, too vile, too guilty, too unworthy, until you have gone and tried Him. You do not know how you wound Him, how you dishonor Him, and grieve the Spirit, by yielding to a doubt, even a shadow of a doubt, as to the willingness and the ability of Jesus to save you, until you have gone to Him believingly and put His readiness and His skill to the test.

Do not let the freeness of the remedy keep you away. This, too, is a stumbling-block to many. Its very freeness holds them back. But it is "without money, and without price." The simple meaning of this is that no worthiness on the part of the applicant, no merit of the creature, no tears, no convictions, no faith, is the ground on which the healing is bestowed. O no! It is all of grace—all of God's free gift, irrespective of any worth or worthiness in man. Your warrant to come to Christ is your very sinfulness. The reason why you go to Him is that your heart is broken, and that only He can bind it up, your spirit is wounded, and only He can heal it; your conscience is burdened, and only He can lighten it; your soul is lost, and only He can save it. And that is all you need to recommend you. It is enough for Christ that you are covered with guilt; that you have no plea that springs from yourself; that you have no money to bring in your hand, but have spent your all upon physicians and are no better; that you have wasted your substance in riotous living and are now

insolvent; and that you really feel a drawing towards Him, a longing for Him. You ask, you seek, you crave, you earnestly implore His compassion—that is enough for Him. His heart yearns, His love is moved, His hand is stretched out. Come and welcome to Jesus, come.

Let this thought keep you from despair: your present convictions, being the work of the blessed Spirit, must end in your full conversion to God. The Lord never leaves His work unfinished. He never wounds except to heal. He never convicts of sin except to lead the soul into the pardon and peace of the Gospel. Do not think that He has brought you thus far, to leave you and abandon you; that He has excited emotions only to smother them, and has awakened hopes only to disappoint. Oh no! The first tear of godly sorrow you shed was a link in the golden chain of eternal glory. The first sigh you heaved from your broken heart was a pulse of that life that shall never end. May you be encouraged to go on (like the author of Psalm 138) by the thought that the Lord will perfect that which concerns you; He will conduct you out of the dark storm into the serene sunlight of His precious love. Only we would remind you that He chooses His own way and time. Do not be impatient. Press hard after Him—seek Him in His word, seek Him at the throne of grace, seek Him diligently but seek Him with a patient, submissive and childlike spirit. It is as certain that you will find Him as it is that He is now exalted upon His throne, "a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

A word in conclusion. The Spirit comforts the believer by revealing the nearness of the coming glory. Heaven is near at hand. It is only a step out of a poor, sinful, sorrow—stricken world into the rest that remains for the people of God. It is only a moment, the twinkling of an eye—and we are absent from the body and present with the Lord. Then will the days of our mourning be ended, then sin will grieve no more, affliction will wound no more, sorrow will depress no more, and God will hide Himself no more. There will be the absence of all evil, and the presence of all good; and they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall take their stand before the throne of God, and shall "serve him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will live among them and shelter them. They will never again be hungry or thirsty, and they will be fully protected from the scorching noontime heat. For the Lamb who stands in front of the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe away all their tears." Rev. 7:15-17. Wherefore, beloved in the Lord, let us comfort one

another with these words and with this prospect.