

WRITINGS OF ISAAC AMBROSE

by Isaac Ambrose

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Isaac Ambrose, compiled for study and devotional reading.

3 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. S. Looking Unto Jesus
2. S. Doctrine of Regeneration Further Explained
3. S. Doctrine of Regeneration

S. Looking Unto Jesus

Looking Unto Jesus

By Isaac Ambrose

"I determined not to know anything among you, (said Paul), except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." He resolved himself, before he preached among the Corinthians, that this should be the only point of knowledge that he would profess himself to have skill in; and that in the course of his ministry he would labor to bring them to. This he made the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of his knowledge; "yea, doubtless, (says he), and I count all things but loss for the excellency of knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Ephesians 3:18, Php_3:8. In this knowledge of Christ, there is an excellency above all other knowledge in the world; there is nothing more pleasing and comfortable, more animating and enlivening, more ravishing and soul contenting; only Christ is the sun and center of all divine revealed truths, we can preach nothing else as the object of our faith, as the necessary element of your soul's salvation, which does not some way or other, either meet in Christ, or refer to Christ; only Christ is the whole of man's happiness, the Sun to enlighten him, the Physician to heal him, the Wall of fire to defend him, the Friend to comfort him, the Pearl to enrich him, the Ark to support him, the Rock to sustain him under the heaviest pressures, "As a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah 32:2.

Only Christ is that ladder between earth and heaven, the Mediator between God and man, a mystery, which the angels of heaven desire to pry, and peep, and look into. 1 Peter 1:12. Here is a blessed subject indeed; who would not be glad to pry into it, to be acquainted with it? "This is life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." John 17:3. Come then, let us look; on this Sun of righteousness: we cannot receive harm but good by such a look; indeed by looking long on the natural sun, we may have our eyes dazzled, and our faces blackened; but by looking unto Jesus Christ, we shall have our eyes clearer, and our faces fairer; if "the light of the eye rejoice the heart." Proverbs 15:30, how much more, when we have such a blessed object to look upon? As Christ is more excellent than all the world, so this sight transcends all other sights; it is the epitome of a Christian's happiness, the quintessence of evangelical duties, "Looking unto Jesus." In the text we have the act and object. The act in the original is very emphatical, (aphorontes eis), the English does not fully express it; it signifies an averting or drawing off the eye from one object to another; there are two expressions (apo and eis); the one signifies a turning off the eye from all other objects; the other is a fixing of the eye upon one object. So it is both a looking off and a looking on. On what must we look? This is the object, a "looking unto Jesus"; a title that denotes His mercy and bounty, as Christ denotes his office and function. I shall not be so curious as to inquire why Jesus, and not Christ is nominated; I suppose the person is aimed at, which implies them both; only this may be observed, that Jesus is the purest gospel-name: Jesus was not the dialect of the Old Testament; the first place that ever we read of this title as given to Christ, is in Matthew 1:21 - "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from

their sins." Some observe that this name Jesus was given Him twice; once till death, Matthew 1:21, and afterwards for ever, Php_2:10. The first was a note of His entering into covenant with God, to fulfill the law for us, and to die for our sins; the second was to honor a person, who for His humility was more exalted than any person ever has been, or shall be. First, Jesus was the humble name of His deserving grace; now Jesus is the exalted name of His transcendent glory: at first the Jews did crucify Jesus and His name; and the Apostles did then distrust, whether Jesus was the true Jesus: but now God has raised Him from the dead, and "has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Php_2:9-10. My meaning is not to insist on this name, in contradiction to other names of Christ; He is often called Christ, and Lord and Mediator, and Son of God, and Emmanuel; why? Jesus is all these, Jesus is Christ, as He is the anointed of God; and Jesus is the Lord, as He has dominion over all the world; and Jesus is Mediator, as He is the reconciler of God and man; and Jesus is the Son of God, as He was eternally begotten before all worlds; and Jesus is Emmanuel, as He was incarnate, and so God with us. Only because Jesus signifies Savior, and this name was given Him upon that very account, "for He shall save His people from their sins," I shall make this my design to look at Jesus more especially as carrying on the great work of our salvation from first to last. This, indeed, is the glad tidings, the gospel, the gospel privilege, and our gospel-duty, "Looking unto Jesus".

But first, we must look off all other things, the note is this, we must take our mind off every thing which might divert us in our Christian race from "looking unto Jesus". (Aphorontes), the first word, or first piece of a word in my text, speaks to us this, hands off, or eyes off from anything that stands in the way of Jesus Christ. This was the Lord's charge to Lot, "Look not behind thee." Genesis 19:17. He was to renounce and detest the lewdness of Sodom and must not even look towards it. "At that day shall a man look to His Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel, and he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands." Isaiah 17:7-8. This was the fruit of God's chastisement on Israel, that he should not give a look to the altars, lest they diverted, or draw his eyes from his Maker. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" said Paul, 2 Corinthians 4:18. A Christian's aim is beyond visible things. Oh when a soul comes to know what an eternal God is, and what an eternal Jesus is, and what an eternal crown is; when it knows that great design of Christ to save poor souls and to communicate Himself eternally to such poor creatures, this takes off the edge of its desires as to visible temporal things; Oh what are they in comparison? The preferring of the world before Christ Himself. This is the height of covetousness, and the height of adultery; what, to make the members of Christ the members of an harlot? Those admiring thoughts are Christ's, those pains are Christ's, that love is Christ's, that time, that care, that earnestness is Christ's; they are all Christ's and will you give that which is Christ's unto the world? And prefer the world before Christ with His own? What, live as professed prostitutes, that prefer every one before their husbands? How will this expose you to the scorn of men and angels? At the last day they will come pointing and say, "This is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches; he is the Gadareen that loved his swine more than Christ Jesus, 'Love not the world,'" said John, 1 John 2:15. Christ is never precious in a man's apprehension, so long as the world seems glorious to him. As we begin to relish sweetness in Christ, the world begins to be bitter to us. The more sweetness we taste in the one, the more bitterness we taste in the other. But why must we look off every thing that diverts our "looking unto Jesus"? Because we cannot look fixedly on Christ, and such things together, and

at once; the eye cannot look upwards and downwards at once in a direct line; we cannot seriously mind heaven and earth in one thought, "No man can serve two masters," Matthew 6:24. Because, while we look on these things, we cannot see the beauty that is in Christ. Indeed beauty is the attraction of the soul, the soul must see a beauty in that which it is desiring; but our wishing looks on other things make Christ vile and contemptible in our eyes.

It is according to the very law of marriage, "Therefore shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife," Genesis 2:24. The Lord Christ marries Himself to the souls of His saints; "I will betroth thee unto Me forever; I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and mercies:" Hosea 2:19. And for this cause the soul must forsake all, and cleave unto Christ, as married wives do, we must leave all for our Husband the Lord Jesus; "Hearken, Oh daughter and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thy own people, and thy father's house," Psalms 45:10.

Christ is a jealous Christ. Now, jealousy is a passion in the soul, that will not endure any sharing in the object beloved: the woman that hath a jealous husband, must leave all her old companions: if she cast any amorous looks or glances after them, the husband will be jealous, and He will be jealous. Christians! Our God "is a jealous God," Exodus 20:5. Our Christ is a jealous Christ; He cannot endure that we should look on any other things, so as to lust after them.

Go forth, Oh you daughters of Zion, lay aside all private and earthly affections, and look upon the Glory of CHRIST. If we will behold the great King, Jesus Christ, in His most excellent Glory (a sight able to satisfy the eye, and to ravish the heart) we must come out of our doors, we must come out of ourselves, otherwise we cannot see His GLORY. We are in ourselves shut up in a dark dungeon, and therefore we are called upon to come forth into the clear light of faith, and with the eyes of faith to behold, in daily meditation, the Glory of Christ Jesus.

S. Doctrine of Regeneration Further Explained

The Doctrine of Regeneration Further Explained

By Isaac Ambrose

CHAP. 1. The Occasion and Method of this Treatise.

SOME there are who, hearing the new birth to be so necessary to salvation, but never feeling in themselves any such change, have desired further helps. I advised them in the former treatise to be frequent in prayer, and hearing of the word: but so we have done, (say they) and yet we feel no conversion. It may be so, for not always the doing of these things, but perseverance in them through CHRIST obtains the blessing. I shall, for their further satisfaction, give them a more particular method. The two things necessary for them that would have a part in the new birth, are, 1, To enter into the experience of it. 2. To be brought through it.

1. The means necessary to enter into the experience of the new birth are, 1, Examination of themselves. 2. Confession of their sins. 3. Hearty prayer for the softening of their hearts. By which are obtained the three first steps sight of sin, sense of Divine wrath, sorrow for sin.

2. The means to be used in order to be brought through it, are an application of the promises; and these produce their several effects; as, a sight of CHRIST; a desire after CHRIST; a relying on CHRIST; and obedience to CHRIST.

CHAP 2 The first Means in order to experience the New Birth. The means to be used as preparatory to this change are, first, examination. And the way to examine, is to set before men that crystal-glass of the law for their light and rule. To this purpose I have here annexed a catalogue; not that I can possibly enumerate all sins, but only the kinds; and if herein I come short, yet conscience may hereby bring into men's thoughts those others not mentioned.

Now, then, (whosoever you art that beginnest' this blessed work,) examine thyself by this catalogue, but do it warily, and truly; and where you findest thyself guilty, either note the particulars in this book, or transcribe them into some paper, that so they may be ready for thine eye when you comest to confession.

I. Sins against the First Commandment.

YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME In every commandment we must observe both the duties required, and sins forbidden, for both these are implied in every one of the commandments; if in the first you art guilty, you must answer negatively; if in the second, you must answer affirmatively.

1. For the ditties required. Have you ever taken the true GOD in CHRIST to be thy GOD? Have you abounded in those graces by which you should cleave unto GOD, as in knowledge and love, and fear, and joy, and trusting in GOD? blast you observed GOD's mercies, and promises, and works and judgments upon thee, and (by a particular application) taken special notice thereof?

Have you communicated with the Godly, and joined thyself to GOD's people, and delighted chiefly in them?

2. For the sins forbidden, Have you not sometimes been guilty of blasphemy, or idolatry, or witchcraft, or atheism? Have you not been guilty of pride, a sin flatly opposing GOD, and first committed by devils? Have you not had inward reasonings that there is no GOD, or that he seeth not, or knows not, or that there is no profit in his service? blast you not trusted in man, or feared man, or loved the world, and thereby alienated thy heart from Cod? Have you not resorted to witches, or in the first place to physicians, and not to the living GOD? Have you not tempted GOD, and in the matters of GOD been either cold, or lukewarm, or preposterously zealous? Have you not been careless to perform the inward duties of GOD's worship in sincerity and truth? If in those you have transgressed, then has you broken this com mandment,

II. Sins against the Second Commandment.

YOU SHALL NOT MAKE TO THYSELF ANY GRAVEN

IMAGE.

1. For the duties required. Have you ever worshipped the true GOD purely according to his will? blast you observed all the outward duties of his worship, as prayer, tend vows, and fasting, and meditating, and the rest? Have you repaired to GOD's house, observed family duties, received the preachers of the gospel?

2. For the sins forbidden, blast you not sometimes " walked after the imaginations of thy own heart," serving GOD out of custom? Have you not committed idol-worship, conceiving of GOD in thy mind in the likeness of a creature? Have you not made an image to liken GOD to it, or used any gesture of love and reverence to any such images? Have you not carelessly neglected to worship GOD, to call upon the Lord, to receive GOD's ministers, or to perform some other of the outward duties of GOD's worship? If in any of these you have transgressed, then have you broken this commandment.

III. Sins against the Third Commandment.

YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY

GOD IN VAIN.

1. For the duties required. Hast you been a constant learner, hearer, and doer of GOD's Word and will? blast you prayed with perseverance, understanding, and power of the Spirit, without doubting or wavering? Hast you come preparedly to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and being come, have you discerned the Lord's body? Have you used all the titles and properties, and works, and ordinances of the Lord with knowledge, faith, reve?rence, joy, and sincerity?

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes in thy talk dishonored the titles, attributes, religion, Word, people of GOD, or any thing that has in it the print of his holiness? Have you not caused the name of religion, or people of GOD to be ill thought of by thy ill course of life? Have you not rashly, or unpreparedly, or heedlessly, read the Word, heard sermons, received the sacraments, or performed any other part of the worship of GOD? Have you not thought or spoken

blasphemously, or contemptuously of GOD, or of any thing whatsoever pertaining to GOD? If in any of these you have transgressed, then have you broken this commandment.

IV. Sins against the Fourth Commandment.

REMEMBER YOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH-DAY.

1. For the duties required. Hast. you (according to the equity of this commandment) always observed the Lord's Day, and other days and times set apart for GOD's service? Have you always prepared thy heart before you wentest into the house of the Lord, by meditation on GOD's Word and works, by examination and reformation of thy ways, by prayer, thanksgiving, and holy resolution to carry thyself as in GOD's presence, and to hear and obey whatsoever you should learn out of the pure Word of GOD? Have you repaired to GOD's house in due time, and stayed the whole time of prayer, reading, preaching of the Word, singing of psalms, receiving of the sacraments? Have you performed private religious offices upon the Lord's Day; in private prayer and thanks-giving, in acknowledging thy offences to GOD, in reconciling thyself to those you have offended, or with whom you art at variance; in visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, contributing to the necessity of the poor, in instructing thy children and servants (and the rest of thy family,) in the fear and nurture of the Lord?

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes spent the Lord's Day in idleness, or in worldly business, in vanities, or in sin? Have you not omitted public duties, or earnest in too late, or wentest out too soon? Have you not employed thy cattle, or servants, or children, or any others, though you workedst not thyself? Have you not profaned the Lord's Day, by needless works, words, or thoughts, about thy calling, or about thy recreation? has not the strict observance of the duties of that day been tedious unto thee, saying in thine heart, When will the day be gone? If in any of these you have transgressed, you have broken this commandment.

V. Sins against the Fifth Commandment.

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

I. For the duties here required. They are either in the family, common-wealth, or church. First, for the family. If you art au husband: -last you loved thy wife, " and dealt with her according to knowledge, giving honor to her as to the weaker vessel, and as being an heir, together with thyself, of the grace of life, so that your prayers were not hindered?" If you art a wife: Have you " submitted to thine own husband, as unto the Lord in every lawful thing?" Hast you put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit? If you art a parent: Have you brought up thy children " in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Have you corrected them, yet not provoked them by immoderate correction? Have you provided for them in their callings, or outward estates? If you art a child: Have you obeyed thy parents, and received correction with submission and reverence? Have you relieved them in their warts? Have you observed their instructions, and covered their infirmities? If you art a master: Have you entertained GOD's servants, and given unto thy servant, or servants, " that which is just and equal?" If you art a servant: Have you been " obedient to thy master according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto CHRIST? Not answering again, nor purloining, but showing all good fidelity." Secondly, for the common-wealth; if you art a magistrate: Have you executed just laws? Have you reformed others' abuses, according to the power that was in thee? If you art a subject: Have you obeyed the higher

powers in all just commands? Have you been " subject unto them, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake?" Thirdly, for the church; if you art a minister: Have you " taught in season, and out of season?" has " thy light shined before men, that they might see thy good works?" If you art an hearer: Have you communicated to them that teach thee in all good things? Have you obeyed them, and prayed for them, and loved them, and followed them, considering the end of their conversation?

2. For the sins forbidden. And first, for the family: If you art an husband: Have you not sometimes abused thy wife, or injured her in thought, word, or deed? If you art a wife: Have you not been wasteful, or froward, or idle? If you art a parent: Have you not been care-less, especially of thy children's souls? If you art a child: Have you not despised thy father's or mother's instruction? Have you not mocked them, or shamed them, or grieved them? If you art a master: Have you not governed thy family negligently? Have you not withheld that which was just and equal in diet, wages, encouragement? If you art a servant, least you not been idle and slothful? Have you not served grudgingly, and not from the heart? Secondly, for the common-wealth. If you art a magistrate: have you not been as a lion, or a bear, roaring and raging over the poor people? Have you not decreed unrighteous decrees? Respecting the persons of the poor, or honoring the persons of the mighty? If you art a subject: has you not " reviled the GODs, or cursed the rulers of thy people?" Have you not disobeyed the higher powers, or denied " tribute, or custom, or honor, or fear, to whom they are due?" Thirdly, for the church. If you art a minister: has you not been profane in thy life and conversation? Have you not run before you vast sent? Or being sent, have you not been negligent in using the gift that was in thee? Have you not caused GOD's people to err? Have you not committed simony, or sought in-directly for the fleece, not regarding the flock? Have you not strengthened the hands of evil doers, in preach ing peace to wicked men? I-last you not "given heed to fables, (or to some unprofitable matter,) rather than Godly edifying which is in faith?" If you art an hearer-bast you not resisted the minister, and the word preached by him? Whatsoever you art, husband or wife, parent or child, master or servant, magistrate or subject, minister or hearer, if in any of these you have trans gressed, then you have certainly broken this command ment.

VI. Sins against the Sixth Commandment.

YOU SHALL DO NO MURDER.

1. The duties required. Have you ever desired aid studied by all means lawful, to preserve thine own per-son, and the person of thy neighbor?

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes envied others? Have you not offended others in words, by censuring, or reviling, or " rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing?" Have you not offended others in deeds, plotting against the just, or doing evil to any man? Have you not been angry with thy brother without cause, or continued long in anger? Have you not rejoiced at others' fall; or wished a curse to their souls? Have you not done evil to thyself, by inordinate fretting, or grieving, or drinking, or saying in thy pas?'sions, " Would to GOD I were dead?" Have you not been a sower of discord, or some way or other, an occasion of the discomfort, or of the death of thy neighbor? If in any of these you have transgressed, you have then broken this commandment.

VII. Sins against the Seventh Commandment.

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

1. For the duties required. Have you ever kept thyself pure in soul and body, both towards thyself and others?

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes been defiled with whoredom, adultery, polygamy, or self-pollution. Have you not offended in the occasions of uncleanness, as in idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, wanton company, or gay attire? Have you not sinned in thy senses, or gestures, or words? Have you not harbored in thy heart impure thoughts, inordinate affections? Have you not behaved thyself immodestly, using some manner of dalliance and wantonness? If in any of these you have transgressed, then have you broken this commandment.

VIII. Sins against the Eighth Commandment.

YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

1. For the duties required. Have you by all good means furthered the outward estate of thyself and of thy neighbor?

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes got thy living by an unlawful calling? Have you not impoverished thyself by idleness, or unnecessary expences? Have you not withheld from thyself, or others, that which should have been expended? Have you not gotten or kept thy neighbor's goods by falsehood or force, and made no restitution? Have you not stolen by usury, or oppression, or fraud in buying or selling? Hast you not robbed GOD of his tythes and offerings? Have you not some way or other impaired thy neighbor's estate? If in any of these you have transgressed,. then have you broken this commandment.

IX. Sins against the Ninth Commandment.

YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS.

1. For the duties required. Have you always, by all means, sought to maintain thy own and thy neighbor's good name, according to truth and a good conscience?

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes loved (or made) a lie? Have you not raised a false report? Have you not censured or judged others? Have you not flattered thyself and others, saying unto the wicked, you art righteous? Have you not condemned some without witness, or forborne to witness for others when you knewest the truth? Have you not been uncharitably suspicious, or a despiser of thy neighbor? Have you not told a lie, whether jestingly, or officiously, or perniciously? If in any of these you have transgressed, then has you broken this commandment.

X. Sins against the last Commandment.

YOU SHALL NOT COVET.

1. For, the duties required. Have you always been truly contented with thy own outward condition? Have you rejoiced at others' good, and " loved thy neighbor as thyself?"

2. For the sins forbidden. Have you not sometimes conceived evil thoughts in thy heart? Have you not been discontented with thy own condition? Have you not coveted after something or other that

was thy neighbor's? If in any of these you have transgressed, then have you broken this commandment.

CHAP. 3 The second Means preparatory to the New Birth.

AFTER examination, (which may serve thee for one day's work or two,) the next duty is confession. Take a catalogue of those sins which you have noted, and spread thy catalogue before the Lord; there read you seriously and particularly, saying, " O Lord, I confess I have committed this sin, and the other sin:" (as they are before thee in order,) " of all these sins I am guilty, especially of those sins wherein I delighted, my bosom-sins; and now, O Lord, standing, as it were, at the bar of thy tribunal, I arraign myself, and accuse myself, and judge myself worthy of the utmost of thy wrath and indignation. For one sin you castedst Adam out of paradise; for one sin you castedst the angels out of heaven; and what then shall become of me, that have committed a world of sins?" Here pause awhile, and meditate on thy unworthiness: " O that I should be so foolish, so brutish, so mad to commit these sins, these manifold sins! O that by these sins I should break so holy a law, provoke so good and great a Majesty! What: should I do, but remembering my evil ways, even loathe myself in my own sight, (yea, abhor myself in dust And ashes,) for my iniquities and my abominations?" For conclusion, you may imitate the publican, who, not daring " to lift up his eyes, smote his breast:" so do You, and say with him, "GOD be merciful to me a sinner."

CHAP. 4 The third Means to be used in order to the New Birth.

AFTER confession, (which may well serve thee for another day's work,) seek for true sorrow and mourning for thy sins. Seek you must, and never leave seeking, till you feel thy heart melt within thee. To this purpose, read some tracts on death, judgment, hell, CHRIST's pas sion, and the joys of heaven; last of all, (and I judge it best of all,) resolve to set every day some time apart to beg it of the Lord. And, at the time appointed, fall down on thy knees, spread thy catalogue, confess, accuse, judge, condemn thyself again; which done, beg of the Lord to give thee that soft heart he promised, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, " A new heart 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." Say then to thyself, " Is this the Lord's pro mise? O Lord perform it to my heart; take away my stony heart, and give me an heart of flesh, a new heart, a new spirit," &c. Here make thine own prayer. Be not careful of words, only let the words be the true voice of thy heart. Pray, and call, and cry with vehemency and fervency not to be uttered. When you have done, if the Lord do not yet hear thee, pray again the next day, and the next day, yea, put on this resolution, that you Wilt never leave praying till the Lord hear thee in mercy, till he make thee to feel thy heart melt within thee, yea, (if it may be,) till you seest thy tears trickling down thy cheeks, because of thy offences. The Lord will, perhaps, hear thee at the first time, or at the second time, or if he do not, be not discouraged, GOD has his times. GOD speaketh once and twice, and a man per ceiveth not; happy he who relenteth at last. Give it not over, persist You, thy suit is just, and importunity will prevail. The first Reason for this Sorrow. This must be done; First, because without pangs there is no birth. The sorrows of a penitent man are as the pangs of a woman. Now as there can be no birth without pains of travail going before, so neither true repentance without some terrors of the law, and straits of conscience. " Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," says the apostle to the Romans; to show us, they once did receive it. When? but in the very first preparation to conversion. Then it

was that the Spirit of GOD in the law did so bear witness unto them of their bondage, that it made them to fear. And certainly thus it is, in some degree, with every man in his first conversion; his contrition must be vehement, bruising, breaking, renting the heart, and causing throws, (as of a woman laboring of child,) before there can be a new birth. The second Reason for this Sorrow.

Again, without contrition there can be no interest in, or union with CHRIST. Therefore it was that John the Baptist, says Chrysostom, " first thoroughly frightened the minds of his hearers with the terror of judgment and expectation of torment, and when he had thus taken down their stubbornness, then at length he made mention of CHRIST." Certainly, the first thing that draws to CHRIST, is to consider our miserable estate without him: no man will come to CHRIST except he be hungry: no man will take CHRIST's yoke upon him, till he come to know the weight of SATAN's yoke. To this end, therefore, must every man be broken with lashes of conscience, that so despairing of himself he may flee unto CHRIST. The third Reason for this Sorrow.

Again, without hearty sorrow there can be no spiritual comfort. We must first be humbled before the Lord; and then he will lift us up. GOD pours not the oil of his mercy save into a broken vessel? GOD never comforts thoroughly, save where he finds humiliation and repentance for sin. "The Word of GOD (says one,) has three degrees of operation in the hearts of his chosen: First, it falleth to men's ears as the sound of many waters, a mighty, a great, and confused sound, and which commonly bringeth neither terror nor joy, but a wondering and acknowledgment of a strange force. This is that which many felt, hearing CHRIST, when they were astonished at his doctrine. The next effect is, the voice of thunder, which bringeth not only wonder, but fear also; not only filleth the ears with sound, and the heart with astonishment, but moreover shaketh and terrifieth the conscience. The third effect is the sound of harping, while the word not only ravisheth with admiration, and striketh the conscience with terror; but also, lastly, filleth it with sweet peace and joy. Now albeit the two first degrees may be without the last; yet none feel the last who have not in some degree felt both the former." He says true, in some degree, though commonly the deeper the sense of misery, the sweeter is the sense of mercy.

I. AND now if (by GOD's blessing,) you feel this sorrow and melting of heart, the next thing you must do is to seek for the remedy, which remedy consists of these ingredients: 1. A sight of CHRIST. 2. A desire after CHRIST. 3. A relying on CHRIST. 4. Obedience to CHRIST. 5. Comfort in CHRIST sought for and obtained. You wilt say, these ingredients are pearls indeed, but how shall I obtain them? I answer, By the application of the promises. And since every ingredient has its particular promises, I shall let thee see them in order only do you apply them thyself. Some may object, I dare not look to the promise, I cannot believe; if I could believe, then I could expect good from the promise. I answer, You wilt never believe on these terms; you must not first have faith, and then go to the promise; but go to the promise, and expect faith from thence: this is the rule; " I must not, bring faith to the promise, but receive faith from it, and therefore there will I hang, and wait till the Lord please to work it."

II. The Declarations and Promises procuring a sight of CHRIST. The first step that brings comfort to thy heavy soul is the sight of CHRIST: and to procure this sight, you have these promises and declarations. Matthew 1:21, "You shall call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world." John 3:16, " GOD so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe

in him should not perish, but have life everlasting." Romans 3:25, " GOD has set forth CHRIST JESUS to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood." 1 Corinthians 1:30, " CHRIST JESUS of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a true saying, and by all men worthy to be received, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners." 1 John 2:1-2, " If any sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

All these tell thee, that, as you art a sinner, so you have a Savior; only do you apply them, and certainly they will help thee in the first step of this remedy, to-wit, the sight of CHRIST.

III. The Invitations and Promises procuring a Desire after CHRIST.

You may say, I see CHRIST, and I see that his person, and death, and blood-shedding are precious and saving; but how may I make him mine? How may I know that he is my Savior? I answer, you must hunger and thirst after him; this desire is the second step. And to provoke thee to this duty, consider these invitations and promises: Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." John 7:37-38, " In the last day, that great day of the feast, JESUS stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Revelation 22:17, " Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

These may excite thee to thirst after CHRIST, that sove reign fountain, opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

IV. The invitations, Declarations, and Promises procuring a relying on CHRIST.

Yet you may say, I thirst indeed, but I dare not drink; I desire, but I dare not come near to lay hold on CHRIST. I am a most vile, unworthy wretch, and my sins are of a scarlet die. True it is, for thee to pretend to a part in CHRIST, while wallowing yet in thy sins: for thee to believe that CHRIST is thy righteousness, while purposing to go on in any one known sin, were a most cursed, horrible presumption indeed; but where all sin is a burden, there a man may be bold. A man may; yes, he must. If you groanest under sin, if you longest after CHRIST, apply these promises, and they will force thee to lay hold on the Rock, to take CHRIST for thine own, to throw thy sinful soul upon the bleeding wounds of JESUS, and to cast thyself with confidence into the bosom of his love.

Matthew 12:28, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that has no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." And lest you say, I am so far from bringing any thing in my hand, that I bring a world of wickedness in my heart, and my sins, I fear, will hinder my acceptation; no, says he; Isaiah 55:7, " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, [and this is thy desire, thy case,] and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our GOD, for he will abundantly pardon." If all this will not do without a more solemn invitation, see how the Lord of heaven sends forth his ambassadors to entreat thee to come in: 2 Corinthians 5:20, " Now then we are ambassadors for CHRIST, as though GOD did beseech you by us; we pray you in CHRIST's stead be ye reconciled

unto GOD." Or, if he cannot woo thee, lo, he commands thee: 1 John 3:23, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son JESUS CHRIST." Or, yet to drive thee to CHRIST, he not only commands, but threatens: Hebrews 3:11, "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believe not." How is it possible, but that all, or some of these, should bring in every broken heart to believe, and every one that is weary of his sins, to rely upon the Lord of life for everlasting welfare?

V. The Declarations and Promises procuring Obedience to CHRIST. And yet you may say, I have cast myself on CHRIST; is this all I must do? No, there is yet another step; he is not only to be thy Savior, but thy Husband; you must love him, and serve him, and honor him, and obey him; you must endeavor not only for pardon of sin, and salvation from hell, but for purity, obedience, ability to do or suffer any thing for CHRIST. And to pro voke thee to this duty, consider these texts. Jeremiah 31:33, " This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, says the Lord, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people." Matthew 7:21, " Not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 16:24, " If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow inc." 2 Corinthians 5:15, " He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." 1 John 1:6-7,

If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we and do not love the truth, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another: and the blood of JESUS CHRIST his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 2:5-6, " He that keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of GOD perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that says, he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked." 1 John 3:6, 1 John 3:9, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever is born of GOD does not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of GOD." All these may invite thee to enter into the holy path, and to fight; under CHRIST's banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil unto thy life's end.

S. Doctrine of Regeneration

The Doctrine of Regeneration

By Isaac Ambrose

John 3:3.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom

of GOD. IN the prosecution of these words, we shall follow the order set down by the Holy Ghost: where is, I. The necessity of it.

II. The generality of it.

III. The manner of it.

IV. The issue of it.

First, the necessity of it; " Except a man be new born, he can never be saved." It is our Savior's speech, and he avers it with a double asseveration, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee." Again, GOD the Father thus counsels not only Nicodemus, but all the Jews of the old church, saying, " Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 18:31. Notwithstanding all their privileges, yet here is one thing necessary, that must crown all the rest; they must have a new heart, and a new spirit, that is, they must be new born, or there is no way but death. Nor is this doctrine without reason or ground. For, man is first unholy, and therefore most unfit to enter into heaven; " without holiness no man shall see GOD," Hebrews 12:14. And what is man before he is new born? If we look upon his soul, we may see it deformed with sin, defiled with lust, outraged with passions; and thus is that image of GOD transformed to the ugly shape of the devil. Should we take a more particular view, every faculty of the soul is full of iniquity; the understanding understands nothing of the things of GOD, 1 Corinthians 2:14; the will wills nothing that is good, Romans 6:2 O; the affections affect nothing of the Spirit, Galatians 5:17. In a word, the understanding is darkened, the will enthralled, the affections disordered, the memory defiled, the con-science benumbed, all the inner man is full of sin, and here is no part that is good, no, not one. How needful now is a new birth to a man in this case? Can he enter into heaven, that savours all of earth? Will those precious gates of gold and pearls open to a sinner? No, he must be new moulded and sanctified.

Secondly, without this, man is GOD's enemy; no greater opposition than between GOD and a sinner; his name and nature is altogether opposite to sin and sinners. View we those attributes of GOD, his justice, truth, patience, holiness, anger, power; his justice in punishing the impenitent according to his deserts, his truth effecting those plagues which he has spoken in his time, his patience forbearing sin's destruction, till they are grown full ripe, his holiness abhorring all impurities, his anger stirring up revenge against all offered injuries, his power mustering up his forces, yea, all his creatures against his enemies; and what can we say, but if all these attributes

are at enmity with sinful man, woe to man because of offences? Better he had never been born, than not to be new born.

Thirdly, Except by a new birth, man is without CHRIST; for " if any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature:" and if he be not in CHRIST, what hopes of that man? It is only CHRIST that opens heaven, it is only CHRIST that is the way to heaven; besides him there is no way, no truth, no life.

Fourthly, Except a man be born again, he is a very limb of SATAN, a child of darkness, and one of the family of hell. Consider this, ye that are out of the state of grace, in what miserable thralldom are your souls? Should any call you servants of SATAN, you would take it highly in disdain; but take it as you please, if you are not regenerate, you are in no better case. Paul appeals to your own knowledge, " Know you not, that to whom?'soever you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom you obey?" Romans 6:16; Romans 6:23. If then ye obey the devil's suggestions, what are you but the devil's servants? And if he be your master, what is your wages? " The wages of sin is death;" death of the body, and death of the soul: death here, and death hereafter in hell-fire. Alas, that SATAN should have this power on man! that he who is the enemy, and means nothing to a sinner but death and damnation, should be his lord, and tyrannize it over him at his own will and pleasure! Would any man be hired to serve lions and tigers? And is not the devil " a roaring lion, walking about, and seeking whom he may devour?" To serve him that would devour his servant, is a most miserable bondage; and what pay can one expect from devils, but roaring, and devouring, and tearing souls? So that whether we consider man in regard of himself, or of GOD, or of CHRIST, or of SATAN, he is (except he be new born, unholy, GOD's enemy, out of CHRIST, in SATAN.

And if the new birth be thus necessary, how should we labor to be born again? Now then, as you tender your souls, and desire heaven at your ends, endeavor to attain this one thing necessary. Lift up your hearts unto GOD, that you may be washed, justified, sanctified, in the name of the Lord JESUS; and that by the Spirit of GOD you may walk in new ways, talk with new tongues, as being new creatures, created unto good works. If you would thus wait on GOD in his way, I trust the Lord in mercy would remember you, and his Spirit would blow upon you, and then you would find and feel such a change within you, as that you would bless GOD for ever, that you were thus born again.

Such is the necessity of being born again. And as to the generality of it, all men (or all mankind,) must be regenerated before they be saved; not one of all the sons of Adam shall ever go to heaven, except he be born again. Let your contemplations (guided by GOD's Word,) go into the paradise above. All the saints that now "walk in the light of it," were first purged by the Lamb, and sanctified by the Spirit; first they were regenerated, and so they were saved. And should we consider man in his parts, every part must bear a part in this birth; his body must be regenerated, his soul must be renewed. He must be moulded anew, and all the members of his body be conformed to the sovereignty and rule of grace; yea, his body pre-served blameless, holy, and acceptable unto GOD; made a member of CHRIST, the temple of the Holy Ghost: Happy man that is blessed with this body! Sure, a man thus born again, shall see the kingdom of GOD.

Secondly, as the body, so the soul of this man is to be renewed by grace; " Therefore glorify GOD in your body and your spirit," 1 Corinthians 6:20. The body and the spirit must both glorify GOD; and as all the parts of the body, so all the powers of the soul. The understanding, that in the old

man is blind and ignorant about heavenly things, or if it know many things, yet never can attain to saving knowledge, in the new man must be anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit, inspired with the know-ledge of Divine truths, especially with those sacred and saving mysteries which concern the kingdom of GOD. Again, the will, that in the old man affects nothing but vile and vain things, is froward and perverse in the ways of GODliness; in the new man must prove what " is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of GOD;" yea, it must attend and be subordinate to the grace of GOD, since GOD indeed, and GOD only, works in us both the will and the deed, Php_2:13. Again, the memory, that in the old is slippery in the things of GOD, or if naturally good, yet not spiritually useful; in the new man must be sanctified to good performances; and although it cannot increase to a great natural perfection, (for grace does not this,) yet the perfections it has must be straight, and right, and guided GODward; " Remember the Lord thy GOD," says Moses, Deuteronomy 8:18. Again, the conscience, which in the old man sleeps and slumbers, or if it be awake, tears and roars, as if a legion of devils possessed it; in the new man must be calm and quiet; and yet not sleep or slumber, but rather, in a friendly loving manner, check and controul wheresoever sin is, yea, never be quiet, till with kind and yet earnest expostulations, it draw the sinner before GOD to confess his fault, and to seek pardon for it. Again, the affections that in the old man are sensual, inordinate, and set on wrong objects; in the new man must be turned another way. To sum up all, all must be renewed, the understanding, will, memory, conscience, affections.

First, I say, in the new man the understanding must be renewed; so the apostle, "The new man is renewed in knowledge," Colossians 3:1 O; and this knowledge implies two habits, wisdom and prudence, Colossians 1:9. First, Wisdom, that is speculative; Secondly, Prudence, and that is practical. By the one the child of GOD, having the eyes of his mind opened and enlightened, does see the mysteries of salvation, the secrets of the kingdom, the whole counsel, and the wonders of the law of GOD; by the other he is enabled, with a judicious sincerity, to determine in cases of conscience, in the practice of piety, and the experiential passages of a Christian man. If we consider the first (wisdom) how is it possible that a man unregenerate should know the mysteries of salvation? He may go as far as the power of natural discourse and light of reason can bear sway, he may be furnished with store of rare and excellent learning, and yet for all this want the true spiritual wisdom. The man regenerated has the saving knowledge; he knows GOD with a steadfast apprehension, he knows himself a mean, base, and contemptible thing; his new birth has learned him how wicked a creature he naturally is, and therefore in that respect is he odious to himself, and loathsome in his own eyes: or if we consider the second, (prudence.) How is it possible that a man unregenerate should experimentally know the practice of piety? Should we instance in this mystery of regeneration; here is a ruler of the Jews, and a teacher of Israel; yet as learned as he was, if he confer with CHRIST about the salvation of his soul, he is strangely childish, and a mere infant. Tell him of the new birth, and he thinks it as impossible as for an old man to return into his mother's womb, and be born. The natural man cannot discern the operations of grace, he knows not that dark passage, which leads from the state of nature, into the rich and glorious happiness of the kingdom of CHRIST. And hence it is that many a silly man or woman, whom the worldly-wise pass by with scorn, are in spiritual affairs more wise and learned than the most learned doctors.

Secondly, the will must be renewed; and this will of the regenerate contains two things, righteousness and readiness. It is first rectified, conformed to the will of GOD; secondly, it is so

inflamed with the love of goodness, that he pursues it with alacrity of spirit. If we consider the first, (the rectitude of the will,) we see by experience the will of the unregenerate is all out of course, he wills nothing but that which is evil. How should he, considering his want of GOD's image, his blindness of heart, his proneness to evil, together with the vehemency of his affections, which draw the will after them? But in the man that is regenerate, the will being moved, it afterwards moves itself, GOD's grace, that concurs with it, quickens it, and revives it; so that now his will is nothing but GOD's will. Or if we consider the second, (the readiness of the will to good,) alas! the will of the unregenerate has no pleasure in goodness, he understands not the sweetness of it, and therefore nothing is more irksome to him than the ways of GODliness; whereas the will of the regenerate is willing, and this willingness indeed is the perfection of his will.

Thirdly, the memory must be renewed; and this memory reflects occasionally on a double object, on GOD, and the things of GOD. First, on GOD, by remembrance of his presence every where. Secondly, on the things of GOD, by calling them to mind at useful times. If we consider the first object, GOD, the unregenerate has no mind on GOD, "GOD is not in all his thoughts," like the hood-winked fool, that seeing nobody, thinks nobody sees him; so has he said in his heart, "How Both GOD know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walks in the circuit of heaven." But contrariwise, the regenerate man remembers his Creator. And though GOD, as being a Spirit, is absent from his senses, yet by virtue of his sanctified memory, (that makes things absent as present, his eye is on GOD, and he considers GOD as an eye-witness of all his thoughts, and words, and doings. Or, if we consider the second object, (the Word of GOD,) the unregenerate never burdens his memory with it; if sometimes he falls upon it, it is either by constraint, or by accident, never with any settled resolution to follow it; but the soul that is regenerate, with Mary, «keeps all these things in his heart." Whatsoever lessons he learns, like so many jewels in a casket, he lays them up safe, and as need serveth, makes all the good use of them he may.

Fourthly, the conscience must be renewed, and that two ways, either by drawing the soul to good, or from evil: first, to good, by restraining and bridling. If we consider its first office, (in that it draws and leads the' soul to good,) the unregenerate has not that conscience; for the most part his conscience lies dead in his bosom, or if it stir sometimes, he labors all he can to smother it. It is otherwise with the regenerate, his conscience excites him to good, and he does good out of conscience; he stands not upon terms of pleasure or profit, but his conscience being guided by the rule of GOD's holy truth, he submits to it merely out of his obedience to GOD. Hence it is that come what will, his eye is fixed on GOD; and if man oppose where GOD commands, he is quickly resolved. Or if we consider the second office of conscience, (in drawing the soul from evil,) the unregenerate either hears not, or heeds not his reclaiming conscience. If it speak, he first goes about to lull it asleep again; or if it cry out, and will not be at peace, then (in spite of goodness,) he runs out of one sin into another, and usually from presumption to despair. On the other side, the regenerate has a conscience that draws him from, and keeps him out of evil. It is known especially by these two properties, remorse and tenderness. Remorse has an eye on all sins past, and tenderness has an eye on all sins to come. By remorse is bred sorrow for sin, and loathing of sin. No sooner he considers how, by his manifold sins, he has offended GOD, crucified CHRIST, grieved the Holy Spirit, but his heart bleeds and breaks that he has done so wickedly against so gracious a GOD. This sorrow for sin brings with it a loathing of sin; he hates the very thought of it;

every look back brings a new addition of detestation, and every meditation makes the wound of his remorse to bleed again. By tenderness of conscience is bred a care and watchfulness to avoid sin to come; first, no sooner is sin presented to his conscience, but he startles at its sight, and meditates on that strict account he must one day make for it; which thoughts and sin put together in the balance, he dares not do wickedly for a world of gain. And this tenderness, (or easiness to bleed at the apprehension of sin, peculiar to that conscience that is enlightened, and sanctified, and purged by CHRIST.

Fifthly, the affections must be renewed, and that is done by setting them upon right objects. I shall instance in some of them, as love, hatred, hope, fear, joy, sorrow. Love I place first, which in the unregenerate man is fastened inordinately upon the creature; and as one sin begets another, so on whatsoever object it falls, it begets some sin: thus the love of riches breeds covetousness, love of beauty breeds sensuality: whatsoever he loves, (the object being earthly,) it brings with it some sin, and thereby (the worst of all,) he wickedly prefers earth to heaven, a dunghill to paradise. But the regenerate man fixes his love upon other objects; as he that is carnal minds things carnal, so he that is spiritual loves things spiritual; no sooner is he turned (by a sound and universal change of the whole man,) " from darkness to light, and from the power of SATAN unto GOD," but he presently begins to settle with some sweet contentment, upon the flowers of paradise, saving graces, and his love runs higher and higher, till it embrace him that dwells in the highest, GOD Almighty; and how sweet is that love that casts itself wholly into the bosom of its Maker How blessed is that man that yearns, and melts, and cleaves, and sticks unto his gracious GOD above all? The second affection is hatred, which in the unregenerate is so inordinate, that he is an hater of GOD, Romans 1:3 O; not that he hates GOD in himself, but in some particular respect, because he restrains him from his pleasure, or punisheth him for his sin, or crossed' his appetites by his holy commands. And as he hates GOD, so likewise his brother. Hence arise those envies, emulations, jars, contentions, amongst those that profess themselves Christians; but of all brethren he hates them most, of whom our Savior is the first-born. GOD's faithful ones ever were and ever will be " signs, and wonders, and monsters unto many; a scorn, reproach, and derision to them that are round about them but he that is regenerate hates sin in whomsoever it rules, in others, and in himself, when after the commission of any evil he begins to repent, and " to abhor himself," as, Job did, " in dust and ashes," Job 42:6. The third affection is hope. Now this hope in the unregenerate is fastened on this world, and the things of this world; he hopes for preferment, riches, or the like; as for his hope of heaven, it is but a waking man's dream; a dream, said I? Yes, as dreams in the night fill us with illusions (you know a beggar may dream he is a king,) so hope, abusing the imagination of the unregenerate, fills their souls many a time with vain or empty satisfactions; but the hope of the regenerate both enjoys the right object; and right, means; his eye is fixed on future good, and, he endeavors to pursue it, till he get the possession. If in the pursuit he meet with crosses, griefs, disgraces, sicknesses, or other calamities, his hope is able to sweeten the bitterest misery that can possibly befall him; the afflictions of this life bid him look for a better, a cross here minds him of the glory above. The fourth affection is fear, which in the unregenerate is either worldly or servile. If it fasten on the world, then he fears the loss of his credit or of his profit, and because he and the world must part at last, he fears this separation above all fears; " O death, (says the wiser man,) how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that has nothing to vex him, and that has prosperity in all things!" Or if his fear reflect on GOD, then it is a servile fear; for as the slave or hireling works not for love of his

master, but only for fear of punishment; so he fears GOD through fear of punishment due unto him from GOD. It is otherwise with the man that is born again; his fear is either initial or filial. In pangs of the new birth, or in the new-born babe, it is called initial; because then he casts away sin both from a sense of GOD's love, to which he has partly attained, and of the woful effects of sin, which he has thoroughly considered; with the right eye he beholds GOD, and with the left eye he beholds punishment; so that this fear is a middle, (as it were,) between servile and filial fear; and as the needle draweth in the thread, so this fear draweth in charity, and makes way for filial fear; to which, if by growth in grace he be fully ripened, then he fears GOD out of love to GOD, and as the prophet Isaiah proclaimeth, "The fear of the Lord is his treasure," Isaiah xxxiii. 6. Never was treasure more dear to the worldlings, than is GOD's fear to him; his love of GOD, his desire to please GOD, and his fear of being separated from GOD, keep him in such awe, that though no punishment, no death, no hell were at all; yet he would not sin for a world of treasures. The fifth affection is joy, which in the unregenerate is sensual and brutish; it has no better objects than gold, greatness, honors, or the like. And what are all these but a shadow, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a post that passes by? Or rather, "as crackling of thorns under a pot," as flashes of lightening before everlasting fire? But the joy of the regenerate is a spiritual joy, and the matter of it is the light of GOD's countenance, righteousness, or the promises of GOD's Word; or, above all, GOD Almighty, blessed evermore. Thus David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," Psalms 73:25. This is that joy which no man can conceive, but he that enjoys it; this is that white stone, Revelation 2:17, whose splendor shines only upon heavenly hearts; this is that glimpse of heaven's glory, which springing up in a sanctified heart, out of the wells of salvation, and carried along with addition of fresh comforts (from the word and sacraments? in a fruitful current through the course of man's life, at last falls into the boundless and bottomless ocean of the joys of heaven. The sixth affection is sorrow, which in the unregenerate is a worldly sorrow, And the effects of it are death; so the apostle, "the sorrow of the world worketh death," 2 Corinthians 7:10. In this kind flow endless are the sorrows of men for the losses or crosses, that befall them? And howsoever some may endeavor to comfort themselves in CHRIST, nothing can relish with them that concerns heaven or salvation. But in the regenerate, the beholding of sin breeds sorrow, and this the apostle calls "Godly sorrow, working repentance to salvation, not to be repented of."

Examine then yourselves, you that desire heaven at your end. Would you inherit the kingdom? Would you live with angels? Would you save your souls? Examine and try whether your bodies and souls be sanctified; and if you have no sense or feeling of the new birth, (for it is a mystery to the unregenerate) then never look to see (in that state) the kingdom of GOD; but if you perceive the working of saving grace effectually in you, (and you cannot but perceive it if you have it,) if you feel the power of GODliness first seizing the heart, and after dispersing itself over all the parts and powers of body and soul; if your hearts be softened by the Spirit, if your eyes wait upon GOD, if your ears listen to his Word, if your tongues show forth his praise, if your understandings attain to saving knowledge, if your wills conform to the will of GOD, if your memories be stored with heavenly doctrine, if your consciences be tender and sensible of the least sin, if you love that which is good, if you hate that which is evil, if you hope for his blessings above, if you fear him that can destroy both body and soul; in a word, if you joy in goodness, if you sorrow for sin, then are you born again. Happy is the man in this case that ever he was born; and thus every man must be, or he cannot be happy. "Except a man," (every man, every part of man,) "be born again, he

cannot see the kingdom of GOD."

We come now to speak of the manner of it.

Except a man be regenerated, or begotten (says Yalla:) " As man that is born of a woman is begotten of a man, so he that is born again must have a begetting too." if you ask of whom is the new man begotten? t, James tells you, James 1:18, " Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth." The former words denote the impulsive cause, the latter the instrument; it was GOD that begat us, and with the seed of the Word. It was the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but in respect of the last act, it is of the Holy Ghost, and not of the Father, or the Son; and thus our Savior concludes, John 3:6, S, " That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," and " so is every man that is born of the Spirit." And, as GOD's Spirit is the principal, so GOD's Word is the instrumental cause of our regeneration, " Ye are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Peter 1:23. And this Word (says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews) is " quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Hebrews 4:12. They that are born again, cannot but remember how quick and powerful, and sharp GOD's Word was at their regeneration. First, perhaps, like an hammer it heat on their hearts till it broke them all to pieces, and then like a sword, by a terrible cutting, piercing power, it struck a shaking and trembling into the very centre of their souls; last of all, like oil it began to supple their wounds, and to heal their bruises, and to refresh the weak and tender heart with all the promises of GOD revealed in CHRIST. And thus a man being begotten of the Spirit with the Word of truth, he comes at last to the birth; to be born again, to be born after the Spirit; and this is that second birth: a man is first born of the flesh, and he must be again born of the Spirit.

Hence appears the difference of the first and second birth, the first birth is of the earth, earthly; the second birth is of the Lord, from heaven; the first birth is of nature, full of sin; the second is of grace, full of sanctity; the first birth is originally of flesh and blood, the second birth is originally of the Spirit and water. In a word, the first birth kills, the second gives life: generation lost us, it must be regeneration that recovers us. O blessed birth, without which no birth is happy, in comparison of which (though it were to be born heir of the whole world) all is but misery! As to the new birth itself, I know it is not wrought in all after one manner, nor is the manner known to us, only so far as it is sensible in us, and therefore we must consider man before baptism, in baptism, and after baptism. In some is the new birth wrought before baptism, as in the eunuch under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, Acts 8:37; and in Cornelius, together with his kinsmen and near friends, Acts 10:47; and so our charity tells us, that every infant dying before baptism, is renewed by the Spirit. But the manner of this working we know not, for it is the secret of the Spirit of GOD. In others is the new birth wrought in baptism, which indeed is the sacrament of the new birth and seal of regeneration; but howsoever we see the outward seal, yet we see not the manner of the inward working; for this also is the secret of the Spirit of GOD. In others is the new birth wrought after baptism; for whensoever men receive CHRIST by faith, then do they feel the power of GOD regenerate them, and work all things in them which he offered in baptism. Now the manner of this feeling (or of GOD's Spirit working) proceeds usually thus: there are certain steps by which it passes; and howsoever in those whom GOD has blessed with great favor of a holy education, (the Spirit of GOD dropping grace into their hearts betimes,) these steps or degrees are not so easily

perceived; yet in those men who have lived long in sin, no sooner come they to a new birth but they can feel grace work in them step after step, and these steps we shall reckon to the number of eight. The first is a sight of sin, and this our Savior reckons the first work of the Spirit, " When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin," John 16:8. Of sin, how? Why thus: no sooner begins this blessed change from nature to grace, but the conscience (wrought upon by GOD's Word,) opens its book, and presents to the soul a roll of those many, mighty, heinous sins, committed against GOD and man. There he may read in bloody, burning lines, the abominations of his youth, the sins of all his life; and to bring them into method, the command ments of GOD stand as a romembrancer before his eyes. The first tells him of his loving somewhat above GOD; the second, of his worshipping a false GOD, or a true GOD after a false manner; the third, of his dishonoring the great and mighty name of GOD; the fourth, of his breaking the Lord's day, either in doing the works of the flesh, or leaving undone the works of the Spirit: nor is this all; as against GOD so against his neighbor has he sinned the fifth tells him of his stubbornness and disobedience the sixth of his passions and desires of revenge; the seventh, of his lewdness; the eighth, of his covetous thefts; the ninth, of his lies and slanders, back-bitings, and rash judgments; the tenth, of his covetous thoughts, and motions of the heart to all manner of evil. Good Lord! what a number of evils, yea, what innumerable swarms of lawless thoughts, and words, and actions, does he read in his conscience? But above all, his beloved sin is writ in greatest characters; this he finds to have bewitched him most, and to have domineered above all the rest in his wasted conscience; where, that he may read it, together with his other sins, the Spirit of GOD now opens the eyes of his mind, and lets him see the very mud and filth of his soul, that lay at ke bottom before unseen, and undiscerned. This is th nrst working of the new life, to wit, a feeling of the old death of his soul in sins and trespasses; and here the axiom is true, no generation without corruption; a man must first feel this death before he is born again. The second step is, a sense of Divine wrath, which begets in him fear. No sooner has the man a sight And feeling of his sin, but then GOD's Spirit, (now called the Spirit of bondage) presents to him the armory of GOD's flaming wrath and fiery indignation; this makes him to feel (as if he were pricked with the stroke of an arrow, or point of a sword, or sting of an adder,) that he is a most accursed and damnable creature, justly deserving all the miseries of this life, and all the torments of hell in that life to come; yea, this makes him tremble, and stand, and look, as if he were thoroughly frightened with the angry countenance of GOD Almighty. Would you view him in this case? His conscience has now awaked him out of his dead sleep, by the trumpet of the law; his heart is now scorched with the secret sense of GOD's angry face; his soul is now full sorely crushed under the most grievous burthen of innumerable sins; his thoughts are now full of fear and astonishment, as if no less than very hell and horror were ready to seize upon his body and soul, I say not what measure of this wrath is poured on all men, for I suppose some feel more and some less; but I verily believe, some there are that (in these pangs o the new birth) have been scorched (as it were) with the very flames of hell. And no wonder, for this is the time of fear. Now it is that Satan strives busily to stifle the new man in the womb; and therefore he that before diminished his sins, and made them appear little in his eyes, when he once sees the man smitten down " into the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death," then he puts into his mind his innumerable sins, and (that which immediately follows) the curse of the law, and the wrath of GOD, which he yet makes more grisly and fierce, with a purpose to plunge him into the abyss of horror and despair. By this means he persuaded Cain to cry out, " My iniquity is greater than can be forgiven," Genesis 4:13. Thus far the unregenerate goes with the

man born again; both have a sight of sin, and sense of v Nth, but here they part; for the man unregenerate either sinks under it, or labors to allay it with worldly comforts. But the man born again, seeks the right way to cure it, mid at last (by the help of GOD's Spirit) he passes quite through it; I mean through this hell upon earth into the spiritual pleasures of the kingdom of grace, which is to be born again. The third step is sorrow for sin, and this is more peculiar to GOD's child; his heart grieves, his eye weeps; the way to GOD's kingdom is to cry like children coining into the world; the way to be new born is to feel throes (as a woman laboring of child) and so is CHRIST formed in us. Can a man be born again without bitterness of soul? No, if ever the come to a sight of sin, and that GOD's sanctifying Spirit work in him sorrow for sin, his soul will mourn. True it is, some infants are born with more pain, and some with less: but more or less, it cannot be so little, but the man who labors in these pangs shall mourn. The fourth step is, seeking rightly for comfort. He runs not to the world, or flesh, or devil, miserable comforters all; but to the Scriptures, to prayer, or to the ministry of GOD's Word. If he find comfort in Scriptures, he meets with it in the gospel. And if it please GOD that the man, now laboring in his pangs of the new birth, do but rightly settle his thoughts on the gospel of CHRIST, no doubt but thence he may suck the sweetest comforts that ever were revealed to man. Or if he find comfort in prayer (to which he ever and anon repairs in every step,) then it is by CHRIST, in whose name he only approacheth to that throne of grace. No sooner had the king of Nineveh, *, himself, but his proclamation ran, " Let man ands, Jut be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto Go~'rWho can tell if GOD will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" And thus the man now wrestling with grievous terrors of conscience, " Who can tell" (says he) " but GOD will turn away his fierce anger Let me then cry mightily unto the Lord of heaven; let me cry, and continue crying until the Lord of mercy look upon me. And if, notwithstanding all this, GOD give him a repulse, for reasons best known to himself; if at the first, second, third, fourth, or at many more times, he seem to have cried in vain, at last he flies to the ministry of the Word, and if he may have his will, he would hear the most soul-searching man amongst GOD's messengers. At last he comes to GOD's minister, with a " What shall I do; what must I do to be saved?" Alas! Now I feel the wounded conscience, the broken heart, the spiritual blindness, the captivity and poverty, of which often you have told me. If then there be any instruction, direction, or duty which may tend to my good, now direct me in GOD's fear, and I will willingly follow it with my utmost endeavors. And now, (and not till now,) has GOD's minister a strong and seasonable call to magnify the sufficiency of CHRIST's death and passion. Were the blood of CHRIST, and promise of salvation proffered to an unwounded conscience, what were it, but like the pouring of a most sovereign balsam upon a sound member of a man? It is the only, right, everlasting method, first to wound by the law, and then to heal by the gospel; first to cause smart for sin, and then to lay to a plaister of CHRIST's blood; and therefore, when the heart is broken, then has the man of GOD his warrant to bind it up again, then may he magnify GOD's mercy, then may he set out to the height the beauty of CHRIST's passion and person, and thus by his high and holy art of comforting the afflicted, at last the child of GOD (prepared for his birth) is born again. The fifth step is a clear, (I say not a general sight, which he had before, but) a clear sight of Christ laid open to the eye of faith. No sooner is the,r wounded soul informed thoroughly in the mystery and mercy of the gospel, but he then looks on his Savior as the Jews on the brazen serpent, and seeing him lifted upon the cross, he cannot but see in him an infinite treasury of mercy and love, a boundless and bottomless sea of tender-hearted less and pity, a whole heaven of sweetness, happiness, peace, and pleasures. After the spirit of bondage,

enters the spirit of adoption; the terrors of the law lead him to the comforts of the gospel; his sorrow for sin brings him to the clear light of his Savior; and then as a man in death pangs, that lifts up his eyes to heaven, whence cometh his help, so he in birth-pangs lifts up his eyes to CHRIST, who must either help him, or he sinks under his sin to the bottom of hell. And this sight of CHRIST JESUS to an humbled sinner, (together with those glorious privileges which he brings with him,) is a most pleasant, ravishing, heavenly sight. Not all the curious sights on earth, nor all those glittering spangles in heaven, can possibly afford pleasure to the eye of man, as (does this one object (CHRIST bleeding on the cross) to the soul of a sinner. Imagine you saw some malefactor led to the place of execution; if this man should suddenly see his king running towards him with his pardon in his hand, what a sight would this be! Thus it is with the man sorrowing for sin; whilst he is bewailing his case, and confessing what a little step there is between him and damnation, in a maze he looks upon CHRIST, whom he sees with a spear in his side, with thorns on his head, with nails in his feet, with a pardon in his hands, offering it to all men that will but receive it by faith. Oh! here is a sight indeed, able to revive the wickedest man upon earth, dead in sins and trespasses. And now there is hope of the birth. We may call this the stirrings of GOD's child, or the first feelings of life, before he is born again. The sixth step is, an hungering desire after CHRIST and his merits. O here is a thirst above all thirsts! It breed: ardent desires, vehement longings, unutterable groans, mighty gaspings, just like the dry and thirsty ground, that gasps and cleaves, and opens for drops of rain. This is that violent affection that GOD puts into the hearts of those who seek him in sincerity and truth. Never was Ahab more sick for a vineyard, nor Sisera for milk, nor Sampson for water, than is a truly humbled soul after CHRIST; ever thirsting and longing, that he may hide himself in that blood which his Savior shed for him. I have read of a gracious woman, who laboring in these pangs, and longing after CHRIST JESUS, cried out, " I have borne nine children with as great pain as other women, and yet I would with all my heart bear them all over again, yea, bear them all the days of my life, to be assured of my part in CHRIST JESUS." One replying, Does not your heart desire and long after him? " Oh" (said she) " I have an husband and children, and many other comforts, I would give them all, and all the good I shall ever see in this world, or in the world to come, to have my poor thirsty soul refreshed with that precious blood of my Savior." So eager and earnest is the heart of each man (parched with the angry countenance of GOD) after this blood of his; " I thirst, I faint, I languish, I long," (says he) " for one drop of mercy; my spirit is melted in me into tears of blood; my heart, because of sin, is so shaken and shivered; my soul, because of sorrow, is so wasted and parched, that my thirst is insatiable, my bowels are hot within me after CHRIST." Stay! All these expressions are far short of those longings; no man knows them, save he that receives them, save he that is born again. The seventh step is, a relying on CHRIST. A man no sooner considers those invitations of our Lord and Savior: " If any man thirst, let him come unto me: ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters: come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden;" but, (resting himself on these blessed promises) he throws himself into the merciful arms of his crucified Lord. Come life, come death, come heaven, come hell, come what will, here will he stick for ever: " Who," (says Paul) shall separate us from the love of CHRIST? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No, " I am persuaded" (not these, nor more than these) " neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our Lord," Romans 8:35; Romans 8:39. Thus it is with the man

laboring in this birth; What? (says he) does CHRIST call the heavy-laden? " Why, Lord, I am heavy-laden with a weight, a mass of in; and if he may come that is called, Lord, I come, I come, and now I come, with thee will I build my folio' - nacre, with thee will I rest for ever." This affiancing, dependence, reliance, (or whatever else we call it) upon the merits of CHRIST, is the right justifying faith, whither if a man once come, there is but one degree more, and he is then born again. The last and highest step is, universal obedience to CHRIST. No sooner hath he cast himself upon him, but he takes him (not only as a Savior to redeem him from the miseries of sin, but) as an husband, a lord, a king, whom he will serve, love, honor, and obey: now will he take his yoke upon him; now will he bear his cross, and follow him; now will he walk in the holy path; now will he associate himself to that sect that is every where spoken against; now will he oppose himself against all sin what soever; now will he shake off his old companions, brethren in iniquity; now will he keep peace and a good conscience towards GOD and man, now will he watch against secret sins, occasions of evil; now will he direct his words to the glorifying of God, and to give grace to the hearers; now will he conform all his actions to the sovereignty of grace; now will he delight in the Word, the ways, the saints, the services of GOD; will sell all, all that he has, even all his sins, to the last filthy rag of his beloved bosom-sins And now " Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," 2 Corinthians 5:17. His heart, his eye, his ear, his tongue, his understanding, his will, his memory, his conscience, his love, his hatred, his hope, his fear, his joy, his sorrow; will you have any more? His thoughts, his words, his actions, his affections, are all new; this conversion is universal. This change is a thorough change; now is CHRIST formed in him, now is he transformed into a new creature, he is made new; GOD the Father accepts him for his Son, GOD the Son stamps upon him the image of his Father, but more immediately GOD the Holy Ghost has thus moulded and fashioned him, as I have let you see him, and now he is born again, which except a man be, "he (shall not) " cannot see the kingdom of GOD."

Lo here those steps that raise up a man to the state of regeneration, a sight of sin, sense of misery, sorrow for sin, seeking for comfort, a sight of CHRIST, desire after CHRIST, relying on CHRIST, obedience to CHRIST. One word more before we have done.

You see how GOD brings along the man whom he purposeth to make his; and yet let no truly humbled sinner be discouraged if he observe not so distinctly the order of these steps, and especially in that degree as we have related; for if in substance and effect they have been wrought, if he have them in truth, (though perhaps not in this degree,) I dare pronounce that he is surely born again. It is one of our worthies has said, " In our humiliations, and other preparative dispositions, we do not prescribe precisely just such a measure and quantity; we do not determine peremptorily upon such or such a degree and height, we leave that to the wisdom of our great Master in heaven. But sure we are, a man must have so much, and in that measure, as thoroughly to humble him, and then to bring him to his Savior; he must be weary of all his sins, and of SATAN's bondage wholly, willing to pluck out his right eye, and cut off his right hand; I mean, to part with his beloved, bosom-lusts, to sell all, and not to leave so much as an hoof behind; he must see his danger, and so haste to the city of refuge; he must be sensible of his spiritual misery, that he may heartily thirst for mercy he must find himself lost, that CHRIST may be all in all unto him; and after must follow an hatred of all false and evil. ways for the time to come, a thorough change of former courses, company, conversation, and setting himself in the practice of sobriety, honesty, and holiness." And another observes, "That the discovery of the remedy, as soon as the misery,

must needs prevent a great part of the trouble, and make the distinct effects on the soul to be with much more difficulty discerned. Nay, the actings of the soul are so quick, and oft so confused, that the distinct orders of these workings may not be apprehended, or remembered. And perhaps the joyful apprehension of mercy may make the sense of misery sooner forgotten." The sum is, of every soul is required thus much: first, a truly penitent sight, sense, and hatred of all sin. Secondly, a sincere and insatiable thirst after JESUS CHRIST and his righteousness, both imputed and inherent. Thirdly, an unfeigned and unre served resolution of an universal new obedience for the time to come. If any man has had the experience of these affections and effects in his own soul, whatsoever the order, or whatsoever the measure be, he may go on comfortably in the holy faith.

Now, then, let me advise thee, (whosoever you art that readest,) to enter into thine own soul, and examine thine own state, whether or not you art yet born again. Search and see, whether as yet the spirit of bondage has wrought its effects in thee; whether you have been enlightened, convinced, and terrified with a sensible apprehension, and particular acknowledgment of thy wretched estate. Search and see, whether as yet the spirit of adoption has sealed thee for his own; whether, (after thy heart was broken, thy spirit bruised, thy soul humbled, thy con-science wounded and awakened,) you have had a sight of CHRIST, and has thirsted after him, and has followed his ways and commandments by an universal obedience. If upon search you can say (without self-deceit) that so it is with thee, then may you bless GOD that ever you wast born; certainly, (I dare say it,) you art born again. But if not, if all I have spoken are very mysteries to thee, what shall I say? If ever you meanest to see the kingdom of GOD, strive, endeavor with all thy might to become truly regenerate. You may say, perhaps, it is not in thy power; who can command the Spirit of the Lord, that " bloweth where he listeth?" I answer, it is indeed the Spirit, and not man, that regenerates or sanctifies. But I answer withal, the doctrine of the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, and wheresoever that is preached (as I preach it now to thee,) there is the Holy Ghost present, and thither he comes to regenerate. If then as yet you feelest not this mighty work of GOD in thee, and yet fain wouldst feel it; I shall lend thee two wings to bear thee, two hands to lead thee to the foot of the ladder, where if you ascend these steps aforesaid, I dare certainly pronounce of thee, you art born again. The first wing is prayer, which first brings thee to GOD's throne, and then to the new birth; Hosea 14:2, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously:"--and then it follows, " I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." The soul may object, " I may say thus, and be no better:" but I answer, Say it though you be no better, because GOD bids thee say it. Say it, and say it again; it maybe he will come in when you sayest it. The soul may object again, How can I pray and have not faith? I answer, Put thyself upon prayer, and who knows but blessing and faith may come? It is the Lord that converts, and heals, and saves; and prayer is the means to produce this effect in thee. When we are required to pray, to repent and believe, we are not to seek strength in our-selves, but to search into the covenant, and turn the promise into prayer. Therefore bow thy knees, and humbly, heartily, frequently, fervently implore the influence of GOD's blessed Spirit. Wouldst you ask, and continue asking, wouldst you cry, and continue crying, then could I assure thee of the fulfilment of the promise which GOD has made, and cannot deny, " He that asks receiveth;" and, " he that seeketh finds, and to him that knocketh," (by continuance and perseverance,) " it shall be opened," Matthew 7:8. The second wing that bears thee to these steps of the the new birth, is, constant hearing of the Word: you must attend the gates of wisdom, and wait on her posts. You must come to GOD's house, and hearken to the ministry of the Word. And

you shall see, at one time or other, GOD will remember thee in mercy. It is true, I know not when; and therefore I wish thee miss no day to repair to GOD's house, lest the day of thy neglect might have been the clay of thy conversion. Certain it is, no man should expect GOD's blessing without his ordinances, no eating of bread without ploughing and sowing; no recovering of health without eating and drinking; so no blessing, no grace, no regeneration, without waiting upon GOD in his ways, and in his ordinances. Now, then, as you desirest heaven or (the way to heaven) to be born again, I beseech thee make high account of this ordinance of GOD. In preaching of the gospel, light, motion, and power go out to all, which men resist. And some are destroyed, not because they can not believe, but because they resist, and will not obey, and so die, Acts 7:51, Luke 13:34, Ezekiel 33:11, Hosea 13:9; and yet I wish thee not only to hear it, but after you have heard consider of it, ponder on it; and lay the threats and reproofs, the precepts and promises, unto thine own soul. Thus if you Nearest and meditatest, I doubt not but GOD's Word will be a Word of power to thee, and (together with prayer) bring thee towards the new birth, whither except a man come, " he cannot see the kingdom of GOD." To see, is all one as to enjoy. Yet a man may see that which he does not enjoy. But without regeneration there is no sight, much less possession of the kingdom of GOD.

If by the kingdom of GOD is meant the kingdom of grace, (whereof our Savior speaketh, "the kingdom of GOD is within you," Luke 17:21.) See to what a privilege the new man has attained; all the graces of GOD, all the fruits of the Spirit are now poured into him. If you ask, What graces? What fruits?. Paul tells you, Galatians 5:22, " Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" or would you have us to contract them? Paul does it elsewhere, " The kingdom of GOD is; righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Romans 14:17.

First, righteousness. No sooner is a man born again, than he enters into the holy path, he declines all evil, and stands at the sword's point with his beloved sin; or if ever any sin (through the violence of temptation) seize on him again, he is presently put again into the pangs of the new birth, and so renewing his sorrow, and repairing repentance, he becomes more resolute and watchful over all his ways. And as he abhors evil, so he cleaves to that which is good; his faith like the sun, sets all those heavenly stars on shining, hope, and love, and zeal, and humility, and patience; in a word, universal obedience, and fruit-fulness in all good works. Not one, but all good duties of the first and second table, begin to be natural and familiar to him.

Secondly, no sooner is a man righteous than he is at peace with man, at peace with GOD, at peace with himself. He is at peace with man; " The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid," says the prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 11:6. The meaning is, that in the kingdom of CHRIST, when a man is called into the state of grace, (however by nature he was a wolf, or a leopard, or a lion, or a bear, yet) he shall then lay aside his cruelty, and live peaceably with all men. He is at peace with GOD, he has humbled himself and confessed his fault, and cried for mercy, and cast himself upon CHRIST; so that now GOD, by his Word, has spoken peace to his soul; by the mediation of CHRIST it is obtained, and by the testimony of the Spirit he feels it within him. This is that " peace which passes all understanding;" it made the angels sing " peace upon earth;" it makes his soul reply, " My peace is in heaven." He is at peace with himself, I mean his own conscience; that which before stirred up the fire, that brought him to a sight of sin, and sense of Divine wrath, that filled him with fearful terrors, remorse, and sorrow, is now quiet. Solomon calls it a continual feast,

Proverbs 15:15. Who are the attendants, but the holy angels? What is the cheer, but joy in the Holy Ghost? Who is the feast-maker, but GOD himself, and his good Spirit dwelling in him? Nor is this feast without music; GOD's Word and his actions make a blessed harmony, and he endeavors to continue it by keeping peace, and a good conscience towards GOD and man.

Thirdly, from this peace issueth " joy in the Holy Ghost." No sooner is a man at peace with man, with GOD, with himself, but he is filled with joy that no man can take from him; this joy I take to be those blessed stirrings of the heart, when the seal of remission of sins is first set unto the soul by the Spirit of adoption. For thus it is, the soul having newly passed the pangs of the new birth, it is presently hased in the blood of CHRIST, lulled in the bosom of GOD's mercies, assured by the Spirit of its inheritance, and so ordinarily follows a sea of comfort, a sensible taste of everlasting pleasures.

If by the kingdom of GOD is meant the kingdom of glory, see then what a privilege waits on the new man. No sooner shall his breath and body be divorced, but his soul, mounted on the wings of angels, shall straight be carried above the starry firmament, there to inherit the kingdom of GOD, truly called so, for it is a kingdom of GOD's own making, beautifying, and blessing; a kingdom beseeming the glorious residence of the King of Kings. But here my discourse must give way to your meditations. In this fountain of pleasure, let the new-born Christian hase his soul; for his it is, and he it is only that shall see it, enjoy it; " Except a man be horn again," no man shall ever " see the kingdom of GOD."

Thus far of the privileges of the new birth. There waits on it faith, and righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; in a word, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net