

THE
SOUTHERN PREACHER :

A COLLECTION
OF
SERMONS,

FROM THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF SEVERAL EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,
RESIDING IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS, WITH THE CONSENT AND
APPROBATION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AUTHORS.

TOGETHER WITH

A FEW POSTHUMOUS SERMONS,

FROM THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF EMINENT DECEASED MINISTERS,
Who, when living, had resided in the Southern States.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,
WITH THE CONSENT AND APPROBATION OF THOSE IN WHOSE POSSESSION THEY WERE
FOUND.

BY THE REV. COLIN M'IVER.

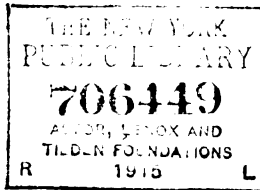
PHILADELPHIA :

PUBLISHED BY THE EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

William Fry, Printer.

.....

1824..



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, } DISTRICT OF CAPE-FEAR,
NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT. } *To wit :*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that, on the 7th day of March, in the forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1823, the Rev. Colin M'Iver, of the said District, has deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, viz :—

“The Southern Preacher: a collection of Sermons, from the Manuscripts of several eminent Ministers of the Gospel, residing in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of their respective authors. Together with a few Posthumous Sermons from the Manuscripts of eminent deceased Ministers, who, when living, had resided in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of those in whose possession they were found. By the Reverend Colin M'Iver.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;” and also to an act entitled “An act, supplementary to an act, entitled an act, for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching, Historical and other prints.” Witness Carleton Walker, Clerk of the District of Cape-Fear.

CARLETON WALKER.

CONTENTS.

Preface. ix

SERMON I.

On the Perfection of the Divine Law. By the Reverend Joseph Caldwell, D. D. President of the University of North Carolina. *Matthew*, v. 48.—“Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven, is perfect.” 15

SERMON II.

On the guilt and danger of delaying to keep God's Commandments. By the Reverend Adam Empie, Minister of the Episcopal Church in Wilmington, North Carolina. *Psalms*, cxix. 60.—“I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy Commandments.” 33

SERMON III.

On keeping the Heart. By the Reverend Joseph Caldwell, D. D. President of the University of North Carolina. *Proverbs*, iv. 23.—“Keep thy Heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of Life.” 49

SERMON IV.

On the Atonement. By the same. *2nd Corinthians*, v. 21.—“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 65

SERMON V.

On the deceitfulness and wickedness of the Heart. By the Reverend William Hooper, A. M. Minister of the Episcopal Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina. *Jeremiah*, xvii. 9.—“The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” . 81

SERMON VI.

On the way of Acceptance, as announced in the Gospel. By the same. *Romans*, viii. 3, 4.—“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” . 93

SERMON VII.

On the Doctrine of a Particular Providence. By the Reverend Arthur Buist, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Psalms*, xcvi. 1.—“The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.” 107

SERMON VIII.

On the Character and Doom of the Wicked. By the Reverend Adam Empie, Minister of the Episcopal Church in Wilmington, North Carolina. *Ezekiel*, xxviii. 8.—“O wicked Man, thou shalt surely die.” 125

SERMON IX.

On the vanity of Life, and the folly of the Worldling. By the same. *Job*, vii. 16.—“I would not live alway.” 142

SERMON X.

On the necessity of Preparation for Death. By the Reverend John S. Capers, Minister of a Methodist Church near Georgetown, South Carolina. *Matthew*, xxiv. 44.—“Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” 154

SERMON XI.

On the Blessedness of not being offended in Christ. By the Reverend Eleazar Harris, A. M. Minister of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in York District, S. Carolina. *Matthew*, xi. 6.—“And blessed is he, whosoever is not offended in me.” 173

SERMON XII.

On the reasons which Christians have, for Mourning the sudden removal of Men, who have been distinguished, for the excellence of their Characters, and the usefulness of their Lives. By the Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer, D. D. Minister of the First Independent, or Congregational Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *2 Samuel*, iii. 32, 33, 34.—“ And they buried Abner in Hebron : and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters : as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.” 194

SERMON XIII.

On Repentance. By the late Reverend Andrew Flinn, D. D. former Minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Luke*, xiii. 5.—“ I tell you, nay ; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” 212

SERMON XIV.

On Regeneration. By the Reverend Benjamin Gilderslieve, a Presbyterian Minister, residing at Mount Zion, Hancock County, Georgia, and editor of a weekly religious paper, entitled “ THE MISSIONARY.” *John*, i. 13.—“ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” 225

SERMON XV.

On true Greatness of Mind, as exemplified in the character of the Bereans. By the late Reverend Oliver Hulberd, former Minister of the Congregational Church in Waynesborough, Georgia. *Acts*, xvii. 11.—“ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” 242

SERMON XVI.

On the Redeemer’s Benevolence, in the Salvation of lost Sinners. By the same. *Luke*, xix. 10.—“ For the Son of Man is come, to seek and to save that which was lost.” 255

VI

SERMON XVII.

On Early Piety. By the Reverend Nathan S. S. Beman, former Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Mount Zion, Georgia. 1 *Kings*, xviii. 12.—“I thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth.” 263

SERMON XVIII.

On the proper Agency of Reason, in matters of Religion. By the Reverend Aaron W. Leland, D. D. Minister of the Presbyterian Church on James' Island, South Carolina. *Job*, xxxii. 8.—“But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” 281

SERMON XIX.

On the Boundaries which limit the Inquiries of Reason, in matters of Religion. By the same. *Proverbs*, iii. 5.—“Trust in the Lord, with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding.” 299

SERMON XX.

On the Resurrection of the Body. By the Reverend Allan M'Dougald, Minister of the United Presbyterian Churches of Bluff, Barbecue, Ayerasborough, and Tirza, North Carolina. *John*, v. 28, 29.—“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which, all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” 318

SERMON XXI.

On the Consequence of Unbelief. By the Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer, D. D. Minister of the First Independent, or Congregational Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Mark*, xvi. 16.—“He that believeth not, shall be damned.” 327

SERMON XXII.

On the Admonition administered to Elijah, for his Despondency. By the same. 1 *Kings*, xix. 9.—“And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there: and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, *What dost thou here, Elijah?*” 342

VII

SERMON XXIII.

On the Curse pronounced against the Serpent ; including the First Promise of a Saviour, made to our first Parents. By the Reverend Francis Cummins, D. D. Minister of a Presbyterian Church in Green County, Georgia. *Genesis*, iii. 15.—“ And I will put
“ enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed
“ and her seed ; it (he) shall bruise thy head ; and thou shalt
“ bruise his heel.” 356

SERMON XXIV.

On Buying, and not Selling the Truth. By the same. *Proverbs*, xviii. 23.—“ Buy the truth, and sell it not.” 377

SERMON XXV.

On the Analogy between the Dispensations of Grace by the Gospel, and a Royal Marriage Feast. By the Reverend Richard Furman, D. D. Minister of the Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina. *Matthew*, xxii. 9.—“ Go ye, therefore, into the high-
“ ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the Marriage.” 395

The Editor's Concluding Address. 413

SERMON XIV.

ON REGENERATION.

JOHN I. 13.

“Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the Flesh, nor of the will of Man, but of God.”

THE Evangelist commences his Gospel, with a *brief* description of *Jesus Immanuel*. He notices his eternal existence with the Father; considers him as the fountain of *light*, of *life*, and of *creation*, and alludes to the *character* and *ministry* of his *harbinger*. He then relates the *fact*, that Christ, the predicted and expected Messiah, “came to his own, and his own received him not.” They *rejected*, they *despised*, they *crucified* this Prince of Glory, who is now exalted to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. There were, however, *some* of that highly distinguished nation, who hailed his advent with transports of gratitude. They welcomed him as the Prince of Peace, as their Saviour and their God. They considered him the *only* medium of reconciliation between God and man; the *end* of the law for righteousness to all that believe; and they received from him, the *unspeakable* privilege of becoming the heirs of an inheritance in the Heavens. They were the *heirs* of this inheritance, because they “were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” And *none but* heirs can be made partakers of this inheritance.

The doctrine which our text is designed to illustrate, is usually denominated *Regeneration*. Every one will readily perceive the *importance*, of having distinct views on this subject ; because a practical error here, will exclude them from the kingdom of Heaven ; and seal their doom *forever* in the world of woe.

With an *humble reliance* on the spirit of God, and with prayerful solemnity, let us endeavour to make this subject as *useful* as possible ; that each individual may learn *his own character* ; and appropriate to himself, the *promises*, or the *threatenings* of the Bible.

The condition of man, *antecedent* to a work of grace upon his heart, is every where represented in the Scriptures, as *deplorable* and *wretched* ; as at enmity with God, and exposed to his wrath and curse. We are taught, that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” that “there is none righteous, no not one ;” that “every imagination of the thoughts of the heart, is only evil continually ;” that “we go astray as soon as we be born, speaking lies ;” that “the carnal mind is enmity against God ; is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be :” and that “cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Can characters, then, whom the law thus *judicially* condemns, expect to stand not only *acquitted*, but justified in the presence of an Holy God ? Can he who rejoices in iniquity, be an *heir* of Heaven ? Can an *unreconciled rebel* be admitted into the Paradise of God ? Can he, who is dead in trespasses and sins, have a title to a crown of life ? The *very nature* of the case forbids us to draw *any* such conclusion. To suppose it *thus*, were to suppose, that principles opposite as light and darkness, could coalesce and mix permanently together. It were to suppose that Devils and sanctified Spirits, could unite in singing the praises of God,

without a jarring sound, or discordant note, in the regions of blessedness.

The language of Scripture on the subject of Regeneration, presupposes that the heart of man is *totally* depraved ; and that *a way* is provided for the restoration of his fallen nature. The design of Regeneration, therefore, is to *slay* the natural enmity of the heart : and reconcile us to God, by the blood of Christ. Let it be granted, that man is totally depraved ; that the law condemns every transgression ; and that holiness is a requisite qualification for the kingdom of Heaven ; and we come to this unavoidable conclusion, that our nature must be radically changed, before we can receive the approbation of our God, or be admitted into his presence. In corroboration of this conclusion, we are assured, that no unclean thing can enter the kingdom of Heaven, and that “without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.”

The doctrine of Regeneration, as taught in the Bible, depends not on *one* or *two* passages of *doubtful import*, but forms one of the *prominent traits* in the economy of Redemption. It is so clearly inscribed on the pages of inspiration, that he who runs may read. It is illustrated in such *variety* of language, and insisted on with such *force* of expression, as to carry conviction to every heart, which is not hardened under the influence of sin.

By the Prophet Ezekiel, it is represented under the figure of a *new heart*, and a new spirit ; of taking away the *stony* heart out of the flesh ; and of giving a heart of flesh. By Paul, this new heart is said to be produced by the “washing of regeneration, and renewing of the “Holy Ghost.” At one time, the subjects of Regeneration, are said to have “passed from *death* to life ; from “darkness to light ; and from the power of Satan, into “the kingdom of Jesus Christ.” At another, they are called, “the workmanship of God created in Christ

“Jesus unto good works.” They are “renewed in the Spirit of their minds ; and created after God, in righteousness, and true holiness. Our Saviour, moreover, has excluded *all* from the kingdom of Heaven, who do not follow him in the Regeneration. You recollect the repeated asseveration which he made to a ruler of the Jews—“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” In explanation of this new birth, we are further informed, that “that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.” The *flesh* here, is doubtless to be considered as at enmity with God ; and the *Spirit*, the operating cause of that life, which is by faith in Jesus Christ.

To describe the new birth, except by its *effects* on the heart and conduct of man, the Scriptures have never attempted. “The wind bloweth where it listeth ; and thou hearest the sound thereof ; but canst not tell, whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The effect is produced. The author of this effect, is the Spirit of God. We *know* that it is the Spirit of God. There are some, I trust, now present, who know it from *experience*. There are probably others, who are willing to acknowledge the fact. But should there be any who are disposed to doubt its reality, I would ask them, upon *what natural principle* of the human mind, they account for the change which takes place, in the *moral system* of those, who cordially embrace the Gospel of our Lord ? There *is* a change. The fact is incontrovertible ; a *change* in the whole man ; in his disposition, principles, and pursuits ; and a change too, which renders him, in every respect, a better man. All who embrace the Gospel, moreover, with *one heart*, and with *one voice*, testify, that they have *new* views of their own characters, of the character of God, and of the

way of salvation; that they have new hopes, new joys, and new fears; that, in fine, “old things are done away; and “all things have become new.” These *sudden* and *entire revolutions*, we ourselves have witnessed; and we can attribute them to nothing less, than the supernatural agency of Divine power.

But, taken in conjunction with *other* circumstances, the evidence is *clear* as light, *convincing* as demonstration, and *certain* as the principles of eternal truth. Were only a particular class of people made the subjects of Regeneration, and these, in no respects distinguished by a holy life and conversation, from the common mass of mankind; and were many *temporal* advantages to result from the profession of a change of sentiments and feelings, the doctrine might be objected to, with some shadow of plausibility. But the very *reverse* is true. This change has been experienced, by persons of all ages, and of every state of manners and habits; by persons subject to various prejudices and laws; and influenced by different interests and passions; and the *result* has been uniformly the *same*. The young have been arrested in their thoughtless hours of festive gaiety, by the power of Divine truth; they have seen the *folly* and *wickedness* of their pursuits, and they have consecrated the morning of their days unto God. The aged, while tottering on the verge of the unseen world, have looked back with sorrow, upon a life spent in sin; and, grasping their Redeemer, have died in the triumphs of faith. The infidel, has been constrained to abandon his refuges of lies, and fly for deliverance, to the arms of a crucified Redeemer. The idolater, has often broken down and destroyed the images, to which he had looked for protection and mercy; avouched the Lord Jehovah to be his God; and found rest to his soul, beneath the banner of the Cross. And even the moralist, has, not unfrequently, disclaimed all

merit, and all hope of justification, except through the peace-speaking blood of the Redeemer. Nor is it confined to persons of a particular genius or disposition. Characters of every description, from the most base to the most refined, from the beggar to the prince, from the unlettered peasant to the philosopher, have alike been made to sing that new song, even praise to our God, for redeeming grace and dying love. In support of any other point, which the natural disposition of man leads him to contest, is there such a variety of characters united? On any other subject, do they speak the same language? In support of any other sentiments, will they, rather than renounce them, suffer every temporal calamity; nay, even all the agonies of torture; not only with fortitude, but with composure and joy? When the Saviour of sinners expired on the Cross, the Centurion exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God!" And thousands of the faithful followers of Christ, expiring in similar agonies, have wrested a testimony of their righteousness from the mouths, even of their very enemies. Let reason now be asked, if she can assign any natural cause *adequate* to produce these effects. Reason may exhaust her resources in vain; but, with candour, she must acknowledge, that they are not only distinct from, but far superior to the common operations of nature. And even unbelief itself, must be almost constrained to acknowledge, the supernatural agency of Divine power.

Having premised these general observations, we shall consider more particularly what Regeneration is; but, in a subject of so much importance, and in respect to which, some specific errors are apt to be admitted, permit me, previously, to concentrate your minds upon the truth, by guarding you against some of the mistakes into which we are *liable* to fall.

Regeneration is not any thing derived from our pa-

rents ; “ for we are born not of blood,” or of *bloods* as it is in the original. Our parents may repose sweetly on the bosom of Jesus ; they may be interested in the covenant of Redemption ; while we, their guilty offspring, may be spurned from the presence of the Lord, and reserved as “ vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.”

The phrase, “ born not of blood,” may have an allusion to the ceremonial cleansings of the law. If this be the case, we are assured, by Divine authority, that it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. There is no fountain, in which we can wash and be clean, but the blood of atonement. He who does not follow Christ in the Regeneration, no matter how *exalted* his parentage—how extensive his privileges, nor how numerous and costly his sacrifices, is not an heir of the kingdom ; but is “ a stranger, and an alien from “ the commonwealth of Israel.”

Regeneration is not effected by the will of the flesh. For “ the carnal mind is enmity against God, is “ not subject to his law, neither indeed can be ; so “ then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in truth. There is no *will* or *desire* of the heart, that the Spirit approves, which does not presuppose the heart already changed. There can be no holy affection, no holy desire, antecedent to Regeneration. For the prevailing inclination of the natural heart is opposed to God. And to suppose a person capable of changing his prevailing inclination, is the greatest of all absurdities ; is, in fact, to suppose him capable of doing that, which is attributed solely to the agency of the Divine Spirit. It is the Spirit of the living God, and not the will of the flesh, which melts and moulds the heart anew ; and brings it into a willing subjection to the obedience of Christ.

The new birth is not effected by the will of man. The prayers, the entreaties, the instructions, and the example of pious parents, and Ministers of the Gospel, may tend to overawe and restrain the sinner ; but they cannot convert his soul. They may plead for him, with importunity, at the throne of grace ; but, after all, they must submit and say, "Not my will, but thine, O God ! be done." If to be born again, consists in Baptism, in the observance of any ceremony, or in the performance of any external rite, then, that ceremony, or that rite, becomes essential to salvation ; which is contrary to that covenant, which was ratified and sealed by the blood of Christ ; that covenant which is established on better promises, which is all our salvation, and all our desire.

Regeneration is not effected by the powers of reason, or moral suasion. Reason may convince ; but cannot persuade. The understanding may assent to all the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, while the heart remains a stranger to its influence, and even the passions may be kindled into a flame, which, in some respects, resembles real love, by animated and glowing descriptions of the upper Temple ; by a lively view of the unspeakable love and infinite condescension of the Saviour of sinners, or by any other representation of prospects, or of character, which is strikingly sublime ; but joys thus excited, are transient as the occasion which gave them birth, unless a principle of grace be implanted in the heart. They will not, they cannot, abide the storms of temptation and trial. Like the morning cloud and the early dew, they pass away, without producing the least fruit of real and genuine gratitude.

But to be born of God, implies something specifically different, from those exercises of the mind, which can be accounted for, on natural principles. Regeneration, con-

sidered as the immediate act of the Holy Spirit, is, and ought to be discernible, only by its effects. But without it, there will be no conversion of a soul, dead in sin, unto God. The effects of truth, in convicting, illuminating, and guiding the regenerated to peace, and glory, may, and ought to be seen, and felt ; and may be described in the following manner.

The renewed mind, is convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; that is, the sinner generally feels a deep and pungent sense of the plague of his own heart ; sees something of the infinite demerit of sin ; and is weighed down under the ponderous load of his own guilt. He learns, that righteousness, or deliverance from the body of this death, can only be obtained, through the merits and mediation of Christ. He sees the way in which he is directed to come ; and the danger to which delays are exposing him. He generally attempts to merit salvation, by his own works. He reforms his life. He attends, with punctilious exactness, to the external duties of religion. And thus, he hopes, to advance in the Divine life, and secure to himself, a title to a Heavenly inheritance. Mistaken soul ! He has not yet learnt, that the law is *Spiritual* and *Holy*. But the eyes of his understanding, are, at length, opened. He then sees, what he is by nature ; and what he is by practice. He is surrounded with blackness, and darkness, and tempest. At last he finds, that all his exertions are impotent and unavailing ; and that he is utterly lost and ruined, as it regards any hope in himself. He then throws himself at the feet of sovereign mercy ; and yields, unconditionally, to the terms of the Gospel. It is a *dark* and *gloomy* night which the soul spends here, on the precincts of despair. It is the garden of Gethsemane, where the Father, for a moment, forsakes ; and where the powers of darkness, make their last, grand effort. But the morn-

G g

ing which succeeds, far transcends, in brightness, all powers of description. It is the dawn of an everlasting day; which, though sometimes interrupted with clouds and storms, continues to shine, with increasing splendour. New hopes, new views, and new desires, now take the place of the old and corrupt inclinations of the heart. The soul thus redeemed from the power of sin, and beating high with love, gratitude, and filial fear, adores the riches of that grace, which rescued him from the gates of Hell, and placed him on the rock of ages. He now cries, in the language of the Psalmist, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name, give glory, for thy mercy, and thy truth's sake."

These bright views, and this triumphant faith, however, are not enjoyed by all who have really passed from death unto life. Some go mourning all the days of their lives; and for *their* encouragement, it is written, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." The experience of one Christian, cannot be the unerring standard, by which others are to be judged: For what is generally termed *experience*, embraces, not only those feelings which are consonant to the temper of the Gospel, but also the dejected and rebellious state of the mind, previous to Regeneration; which does not properly belong to religious experience. The evidence of the new birth, therefore, depends more upon that habitual temper and state of mind, which the Gospel requires, than upon any particular feelings which we may have experienced. For it cannot be supposed, that Jeremiah, who was sanctified from the womb, ever felt those deep convictions of his own sins, which the wicked Manasses felt; or that Timothy, who was made acquainted with the Scriptures from a child, ever felt as severe compunctions of conscience, as Saul of Tarsus; yet the one might have equal evidence with the other, that he was a child of grace.

To talk of being born again, however, in ordinary cases, without any conflict of sentiments, or agony of feeling, is perfectly frivolous and vain. If we are slain by the law, we must feel something like the arrows of death, something like the waves of Divine wrath, beating upon our souls. And if we are made alive by the Gospel, we must feel some of the joys attending the new birth. I do not say, joys unutterable, and full of glory; for we have not yet attained; neither are we perfect: but the mind must be calmed. It must taste the comfort of pardoned sin. It must have a hope in Christ. It must take pleasure in contemplating the scenes of the Cross. It must discern spiritual things. It must feel that its dearest interests are wrapped up in the glory of God; and in the salvation of souls. Take away Christ from an heir of Heaven; and you destroy all his pleasure. There is none to whom he can pour out his soul. There is none that can save him from death. There is none, in the whole universe of God, that can supply the place of his Redeemer.

Regeneration, I would further observe, is not an operation on the hearts of men, *various* in its effects. The malady it removes, is every where the same. The cure is effected by the same life-giving power, for the *very same* purpose. The means of grace, however, are extremely various; and the conflict, *previous* to a radical change, may be more or less severe, as the great Physician of souls, sees most suitable for the manifestation of his own glory. But there must be a conflict. The nature of the case demands it. Not that I would limit Divine power; for God's ways, are not as our ways. He can dispense with the ordinary means of conversion; and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, subdue the most rebellious sinner: But we have no reason to expect it; since faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word

of God ; since he has appointed the means, and blesses, to this end, the words of eternal truth.

Nor is this conflict of so singular a nature, as to render it incredible ; for it is perfectly analogous to the operations of the mind in other circumstances. We never abandon a theory of Government, or a system of Philosophy, and embrace another diametrically opposite, without a struggle of feelings and sentiments. A condemned criminal at the foot of the gallows, cannot hear his reprieve, without the deepest emotions. And, can we, who are condemned by the righteous law of our God, and every moment in danger of being punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, receive the welcome message, that our sins are forgiven, with indifference ? Should we not rather fall at the feet of our deliverer, wash them with our tears, and wipe them with the hair of our heads ? If there is no gratitude here, the heart of man is incapable of gratitude. If, upon remembrance of the rock, from which we were hewn, and the hole of the pit from which we were digged, we are not furnished with a new song of praise, there can be no praise in Heaven ; or, we have no part, or lot in the matter.

Does it not, I would ask, appear perfectly consistent and rational, that a man should feel heavy laden with his iniquities, and that he should be in an agony, when we consider the character of the Being against whom he has offended, and the nature and aggravation of his crimes ? The infidel may endeavour to assuage the anguish of his sin-sick soul ; and the sceptic may laugh him to scorn ; but wisdom affords no such poor, pitiful, and incompetent succours. With tears of sympathy, she exposes the malignity of the disease ; and directs to the only, the infallible cure, the blood of Christ. The frequent happy termination of a deep concern for the welfare of the soul,

is an evidence, that it is not irrational ; that it is not the effect of a disordered imagination, but that it is the work of God. Attribute it, if you please, to the influence of fear, or any other natural passion of the human heart ; but did ever fear produce love ? Can an object which is dreaded become agreeable ? Did fear ever destroy the reigning power of iniquity in the heart, and implant there the grace of life ? It may be the instrument of bringing a sinner to the knowledge of his situation ; and so may any other passion ; but nothing, except the Almighty energy of Divine grace, can deliver him from that situation ; and give him the spirit of adoption, whereby he can cry, Abba Father.

It is hoped, my brethren, that there are none present professing the name of Christ, who consider Regeneration unimportant. But important as we may consider it, do we know, my brethren, how liable we are to be deceived ; how artful the enemy is, with which we have to contend ; and how dangerous it is to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think ? Let us, then, scrutinize our feelings ; let us, examine our motives ; let us, watch over our hearts, knowing that, out of them are the issues of life. The self-deceiver is no less in danger than the hypocrite. Both alike are condemned with the ungodly, by him who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins.

When bowed down under a sense of guilt, is peace whispered to your souls ? Does the recurrence of some passage of God's word afford you momentary comfort ? This, I would observe, is by no means an incontestible evidence that your sins are forgiven. For many have exulted in these delusive hopes, for a season ; and then, growing weary of restraint, have relapsed into their former course of iniquity. Have you, when overwhelmed with darkness and doubts, been comforted by a ray of light,

from some unknown quarter? Marvel not at this; for Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. Trust not to momentary impulses; for, where the spirit of God has found a residence, he abides. Trust not solely, to any glowing, or ardent emotions of the heart, or to a great zeal, or boldness, in defence of the principles of Christianity. Rely not on dreams, visions, and raptures; on voices heard, or fancied to be heard, or any thing of a transient nature, which you may experience. Religion, true religion, is lasting. It is not the mere morning cloud, or early dew; it has a more substantial basis. It is not a light, which bursts like a meteor, in the darkness of night, and unveils surrounding objects, to wrap them again in greater obscurity; but it is the light which continues to brighten; and will continue to brighten forever. It is the commencement of that pure and operating principle of holiness in the heart, which slays its natural enmity; and causes its growing energies to expand, and will cause them to expand in the moral image of Christ, till it arrives at the precincts of infinite perfection.

I appeal now to those who have a principle of grace implanted in their hearts; and would ask them, if they do not remember the wormwood and the gall? Have you always felt as you now feel, on the subject of religion? Have you always esteemed the Lord Jesus, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely? No; No, is the answer of your looks and of your hearts. There was a time, Alas! it is painful to recollect, when your hands were raised in rebellion against your Saviour and your God. You were arrested in your career to ruin. You were subdued by the mighty power of God. You were brought to cry for mercy, at the foot of the Cross; and perhaps, in an unexpected moment, mercy beamed upon your distracted, agitated souls. And would you now exchange the humble hope that you are

born of God, that you were redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, and that, through riches of grace, you have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, for all the honours, the pleasures, and the riches, which this world can afford? No; you would tread the earth, sun, and moon, under your feet, and cling fast to the throne of God. In comparison with the exalted privileges which you enjoy, there is nothing which this world calls great, or magnificent, or splendid, that can even once be named. All these perish with their using; but yours is "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge," will give you, on the day of final retribution, when he welcomes you to his presence; and makes you kings and priests forever.

Live, then, my brethren, I intreat you, as if this were not your abiding place. Slumber no more, upon the watch tower, where God has placed you. Let your ardent desires and prayers ascend the holy hill of Zion, that the influences of renewing and sanctifying grace may fall upon us in copious showers. Act in conformity to your desires and prayers; and then, with patience and with faith; wait for the blessing of the Lord.

But are there not many here, who have not followed Christ in the Regeneration, who have no part or lot in the matter? I pretend not to point them out by name. I leave it with your own hearts, to decide. But should there be any, who are condemned at the tribunal of their own consciences, I beg of them, the privilege of calling their attention, seriously, to the subject before us. You are not born of God, you yourselves being judges. You have often been warned of your danger. Perhaps divine truth has fallen so frequently on your ears, that you mistake the forbearance of God for his reconciliation; or what is still more alarming, you may have blunted the tender feelings of your hearts, by resisting the operations of the



spirit. There is no other consolation left you, but a mere peradventure, that religion is a delusion. But, if it be a delusion, it is a sweet delusion. If it be a dream, as you may imagine, it is a dream which will last forever. It has been the dream of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles. It is the dream of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, who have been born of God. It is the dream of all who shall escape the damnation of Hell.

You have been constrained to acknowledge the reality of religion. You acknowledge it, every time you enter the sanctuary; and yet, you have not been born of God. You have thought that religion was the one thing needful; and yet, you have never secured an interest in the blood of Christ. You may have resolved to work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling; and perhaps you may have appointed the time when you would commence; and perhaps, furthermore, you may have even paid the homage of your lips to your God; and *yet*, you are out of the ark of safety. Remember, my friends, that you are soon to pass the grand ordeal; and that, unless you receive the righteousness of Christ, you will be weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Your portion, then, will be, with the hypocrite and unbeliever, in the regions of despair. If this be your doom, no friend shall pour the oil of consolation into your bleeding heart: No tender Parent shall endeavour to assuage your anguish: No bosom-companion will sympathize in your miseries: Every cord of tenderness, affection, and love, shall be sundered, in those flames which God has kindled in his wrath. And alas! who can bear the wrath of Almighty God? We often flee from the *wrath* of a man. We should dread, worse than death, to have the mighty arm of Gabriel raised against us. Who, then, can endure the wrath of him who is able to destroy, both soul and body in Hell! For you, there is but one way of escape. Unless you are born of God, even he that

formed you will not have mercy on you, and he that made you will shew you no favour. The stone cut out of the mountain, without hands, will fall on you; and grind you to powder.

Unless you are born of God, he will treat you as his enemy; for he has declared, that "whosoever is not for him is against him." Unless you are born of God, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." And, "Can you stand before his indignation? Can you abide the fierceness of his anger?" "O, consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, when there shall be none to deliver you."

May God, of his infinite mercy, impress your hearts, with a suitable consideration of these solemn and awful realities, bring you to a knowledge of himself; and make you the heirs of his kingdom. *Amen.*