

"The LORD make his face shine upon thee" (Numbers 6:25) as you seek and search for God as for hidden treasure (Proverbs 2:3-5; Matthew 13:44); and just think, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:3b

The New Birth

edited excerpts from:

Human Nature in its Fourfold State

Thomas Boston

1676 - 1732

&

"The Soul's Growth in Grace"

Joseph Philpot

1837

For full text visit:
<http://www.gracegems.org>

It is every individual's responsibility to study the Bible and pray for the Holy Spirit's illumination of what he reads:

● “[The Bereans] 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.” (Acts 17:11) God invites us personally: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 1:18).

- ⇒ Pray that God would convict you of your sins and your unrighteousness and of the judgment to come (John 16:8); and that you are lost and will perish.
- ⇒ Seek the Lord. (Matthew 6:33)
- ⇒ Pray for the “*fear of the Lord*”, as it “*is the beginning of knowledge*”. (Prov 1:7)
- ⇒ Pray to have your eyes and ears opened to God's Truth. (Mark 8:18)
- ⇒ Pray that God would open the eyes of your understanding. (Luke 24:45)
- ⇒ Pray that you would see yourself as God sees you (dead in sin). (Ephesians 2:1)
- ⇒ Pray that God would make you hate sin and love holiness.
- ⇒ Pray to have a hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)
- ⇒ Pray for a “*broken heart*” and a “*contrite spirit*” (Psalm 34:18; 51:17)
- ⇒ Repent. Make a 180°. Turn from known sin in your life.
- ⇒ Pray with an obedient heart; pray for a willingness to obey.
- ⇒ Start obeying whatever the Lord shows you.
- ⇒ Pray for the gift of faith. (Ephesians 2:8)
- ⇒ Pray that God would make you a “*new creature*” (2 Cor 5:17)
- ⇒ Pray for the miracle of being “*begotten of God*” (“born again”) (1 John 5:18)
- ⇒ Read God's Word (the Bible) and ask the Lord to illuminate It for you and teach you in your heart.
- ⇒ And if you don't feel like it, set your will and seek the Lord anyway and pray that you would want to seek God and that the Lord would find you and that you would find the Lord Jesus Christ.

* all Scripture quotations from the KJV

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed—but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1:23

...The apostle here, to excite the saints to the study of holiness, and particularly of brotherly love, puts them in mind of their spiritual original. He tells them that they were born again; and that of incorruptible seed, the word of God. This shows them to be brethren, partakers of the same new nature: which is the root from which holiness, and particularly brotherly love, springs. We have been once born sinners: we must be born again, that we may be saints.

The simple word signifies "to be begotten;" and so it may be read, Matt. 11:11; "to be conceived," Matt. 1:20; and "to be born," Matt. 2:1. Accordingly, the compound word, used in the text, may be taken in its full latitude, the last idea presupposing the two former: so regeneration is a supernatural real change on the whole man, fitly compared to the natural birth, as will afterwards appear. The ordinary means of regeneration, called the "seed," whereof the new creature is formed, is not corruptible seed. Of such, indeed, our bodies are generated: but the spiritual seed of which the new creature is generated, is incorruptible; namely, "the word of God, which lives and abides forever." The sound of the word of God passes, even as other sounds do; but the word lasts, lives, and abides, in respect of its everlasting effects, on all upon whom it operates. This "word, which by the gospel is preached unto you," ver. 25, impregnated by the Spirit of God, is the means of regeneration: and by it dead sinners are raised to life.

I. Of the Nature of regeneration.

...that as there are false conceptions in nature, so there are also in grace: by these many are deluded, mistaking some partial changes made upon them, for this great and thorough change. To remove such mistakes, let these few things be considered:

- **One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again...** Men may escape the pollutions of the world, and yet be but dogs and swine, 2 Pet. 2:20-22. All the external acts of religion are within the compass of natural abilities. Yes, hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the Spirit: for we read of "true holiness," Eph. 4:24, and "sincere faith," 1 Tim. 1:5; which shows us that there is counterfeit holiness, and a feigned faith.
- **Men may advance to a great deal of strictness in their own way of religion, and yet be strangers to the new birth,** Acts 26:5, "After the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." Nature has its own unsanctified strictness in religion. The Pharisees had so much of it, that they looked on Christ as little better than a mere libertine. A man whose conscience has been awakened, and who lives under the felt influence of the covenant of works, what will he not do that is within the compass of natural abilities? It is a truth, though it came out of a hellish mouth, that "skin for skin, yes all that a man has will he give for his life," Job 2:4.
- **A person may have sharp soul-exercises and pangs, and yet die in the birth.** Many "have been in pain," that have but, "as it were, brought forth wind." (Isaiah 26:18) There may be sore pangs of conscience, which turn to nothing at last. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had such convictions, as made them to desire the prayers of others for them. Judas

- blowing soap bubbles,
- picking daisies,
- building houses of cards, and
- idling life away like an idiot or a madman.

He had been perhaps wrapped up in a religious profession, advanced even to the office of a deacon, or mounted in a pulpit. He had learned to talk about Christ, and election, and grace, and fill his mouth with the language of Zion. But what did he experimentally know of these things? Nothing, absolutely nothing!

Ignorant of his own ignorance (of all kinds of ignorance the worst), he thought himself rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing; and knew not that he was "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*" [Rev 3:17]

Edited excerpt from Joseph Philpot's sermon "*The Soul's Growth in Grace*" preached in 1837
(this sermon may be read in its entirety at <http://www.gracegems.org>)



Let these things sink deeply into your hearts, and improve them diligently. Remember, whatever you are, you must be born again; else it had been better for you, that you had never been born. Therefore, if any of you shall live and die in an unregenerate state, you will be inexcusable, having been fairly warned of your danger.

Edited excerpts from: **Human Nature in its Fourfold State**
by Thomas Boston (1676 - 1732)
(this book may be read in its entirety at <http://www.gracegems.org>)

Consider: When one is spiritually reborn, he sees at one and the same moment . . .

- God and self,
- justice and guilt,
- power and helplessness,
- a holy law and a broken commandment,
- eternity and time,
- the purity of the Creator, and the filthiness of the creature.

And these things he sees, not merely as declared in the Bible, but as revealed in himself as personal realities, involving all his happiness or all his misery in time and in eternity. Thus it is with him as though a new existence had been communicated, and as if for the first time he had found there was a God!

It is as though all his days he had been asleep, and were now awakened; asleep upon the top of a mast, with the raging waves beneath; as if all his past life were a dream, and the dream were now at an end. He has been . . .

- hunting butterflies,

repented: and, under terrors of conscience, gave back his ill-gotten pieces of silver. All is not gold that glitters. Trees may blossom fairly in the spring, on which no fruit is to be found in the harvest: **and some have sharp soul-exercises, which are nothing but foretastes of hell.**

The new birth, however in appearance hopefully begun, may be MARRED two ways.

(1.) **Some have sharp convictions for a while: but these go off**, and they become as careless about their salvation, and as profane as ever, and usually worse than ever; "their last state is worse than their first," Matt. 12:45. They get awakening grace—but not converting grace; and that goes off by degrees, as the light of the declining day, until it issues in midnight darkness.

Others come forth too soon; they are born, like Ishmael, before the time of the promise, Gen. 16:2; compare Gal. 4:22, etc. They take up with a mere law work, and stay not until the time of the promise of the gospel. **They snatch at consolation, not waiting until it be given them**; and foolishly draw their comfort from the law which wounded them. **They apply the healing plaster to themselves, before their wound is sufficiently searched.** The law, that rigorous husband, severely beats them, and throws in curses and vengeance upon their souls; then they fall to reforming, praying, mourning, promising, and vowing; which done, they fall asleep again in the arms of the law: but they are never shaken out of themselves and their own righteousness, nor brought forward to Jesus Christ.

(2.) **There may be a wonderful moving of the affections in souls that are not at all touched with regenerating grace.** When there is no grace, there may, notwithstanding, be a flood of tears, as in Esau, who "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears," Heb. 12:17. There may be great flashes of joy; as in the hearers of the

word, represented in the parable of the stony ground, who "with joy receive it," Matt. 13:20. There may be also great desires after good things, and great delight in them too; as in those hypocrites described in Isa. 58:2, "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways – they take delight in approaching to God." See how high they may sometimes stand—who yet fall away, Heb. 6:4-6. They may be "enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift," "be partakers of the Holy Spirit, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Common operations of the divine Spirit, like a flood, make a strange turning of things upside down: but when they are over, all runs again in the ordinary channel. All these things may be, where the sanctifying Spirit of Christ never rests upon the soul—but the stony heart still remains; and in that case these affections cannot but wither, because they have no root.

But regeneration is a real, thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the goldsmith melts down a vessel of dishonor, and makes it a vessel of honor. Man is, in respect of his spiritual state, altogether disjointed by the fall; every faculty of the soul is, as it were, dislocated. In regeneration, the Lord loosens every joint, and sets it right again. Now this change made in regeneration, is,

1. A change of qualities or DISPOSITIONS. It is not a change of the substance—but of the qualities of the soul. Vicious qualities are removed, and the contrary dispositions are brought in, in their place. "The old man is put off," Eph. 4:22; "the new man is put on," ver. 24. Man lost none of the rational faculties of his soul by sin. He had an understanding still—but it was darkened; he had still a will—but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new substance created—but new qualities or dispositions are infused; light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

2. It is a SUPERNATURAL change. He who is born

thyself wholly to them" 1 Tim. 4:15. receive "it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God," 1 Thess. 2:13. Hear it with application, looking on it as a message sent from heaven, to you in particular; though not to you only, Rev. 3:22, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Lay it up in your hearts; meditate upon it; and be not as the unclean beasts, which chew not the cud. But by earnest prayer, beg that the dew of Heaven may fall on your heart, that the seed may spring up there.

More particularly,

(1.) Receive the testimony of the word of God, concerning the misery of an unregenerate state, the sinfulness thereof, and the absolute necessity of regeneration.

(2.) Receive its testimony concerning God, what a holy and just One he is.

(3.) Examine your ways by it; namely, the thoughts of your heart, the expressions of your lips, and the tenor of your life. Look back through the several periods of your life; and see your sins from the precepts of the word, and learn, from its threatening, what you are liable to on account of these sins.

(4.) By the help of the same word of God, view the corruption of your nature, as in a mirror which manifests our ugly face in a clear manner. Were these things deeply rooted in the heart, they might be the seed of that fear and sorrow, on account of your soul's state, which are necessary to prepare and stir you up to look after a Savior. Fix your thoughts upon him offered to you in the Gospel, as fully suited to your case; having, by his obedience unto death, perfectly satisfied the justice of God, and brought in everlasting righteousness. This may prove the seed of humiliation, desire, hope and faith; and move you to stretch out the withered hand unto him, at his own command.

in their heads, are utterly void of spiritual light in their hearts! If you knew your case, you would cry out, Oh! darkness! darkness! darkness! making way for the blackness of darkness forever! The face-covering is upon you already, as condemned people; so near are you to everlasting darkness. It is only Jesus Christ who can stop the execution, pull the napkin off the face of the condemned malefactor, and put a pardon in his hand; Isa. 25:7, "*And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.*," that is, the face-covering cast over the condemned, as in Haman's case, Esther. 7:8, "*As the word went out of king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.*"

[f.] The chains of darkness you are bound with in the prison of your depraved state. Isa. 61:1, fits you to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Ah, miserable men! Sometimes their consciences stir within them, and they begin to think of amending their ways. But alas! they are in chains, they cannot do it. They are chained by the heart: their lusts cleave so fast to them, that they cannot, nay, they will not shake them off. Thus you see what affinity there is between an unregenerate state, and the state of the damned, the state of absolute and irretrievable misery. Be convinced, then, that you must be born again; put a high value on the new birth, and eagerly desire it.

The text tells you, that the word is the seed, whereof the new creature is formed: therefore, take heed to it, and entertain it, as it is your life. Apply yourself to the reading of the Scriptures. You who cannot read, get others to read it to you. Wait diligently on the preaching of the word, as by divine appointment the special mean of conversion; "*it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*," 1 Cor. 1:21. Therefore cast yourselves in Christ's way; reject not the means of grace, lest you be found to judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Attend carefully to the word preached. Hear every sermon, as if you were hearing for eternity; take heed that the fowls of the air steal away this seed from you, as it is sown. "*Meditate upon these things; give*

again, is born of the Spirit, John 3:5. Great changes may be made by the power of nature, especially when assisted by external revelation. Nature may be so elevated by the common influences of the Spirit, that a person may thereby be turned into another man, as Saul was, 1 Sam. 10:6, who yet never becomes a new man. But in regeneration, nature itself is changed, and we become partakers of the divine nature; and this must needs be a supernatural change. How can we, who are dead in trespasses and sins, renew ourselves, any more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave? Who but the sanctifying Spirit of Christ can form Christ in a soul, changing it into his same image? Who but the Spirit of sanctification can give the new heart? Well may we say, when we see a man thus changed, "This is the finger of God!"

3. It is a change into the LIKENESS OF GOD. 2 Cor. 3:18, "We beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord—are changed into the same image." Everything generates its like: the child bears the image of the parent; and they who are born of God, bear God's image. Man aspiring to be as God, made himself like the devil. In his natural state he resembles the devil, as a child does his father, John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil." But when this happy change comes, that image of Satan is defaced, and the image of God is restored. Christ himself, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is the pattern after which the new creature is made, Rom. 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Hence Christ is said to be formed in the regenerate, Gal. 4:19.

4. It is a UNIVERSAL change. "All things become new," 2 Cor. 5:17. It is a blessed leaven—which leavens the whole lump—the whole spirit, and soul, and body. Original sin infects the whole man; and regenerating grace, which is the cure, goes as far as the disease. This fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness; goodness of the mind, goodness of the will, goodness of the affections, goodness of the whole man. He gets not only a new head, to know and understand true religion; or a new tongue, to talk of it; but a new heart, to love

and embrace it, in the whole of his life. When the Lord opens the sluice of grace, on the soul's new-birth day, the waters run through the whole man, to purify and make him fruitful. In those natural changes spoken of before, there are, as it were, pieces of new cloth put into an old garment; new life to an old heart: but the gracious change is a thorough change; a change both of heart and life.

5. Yet, though every part of the man is renewed, there is no part of him which is perfectly renewed. As an infant has all the parts of a man—but none of them come to a perfect growth; so regeneration brings a perfection of parts, to be brought forward in the gradual advances of sanctification, 1 Pet. 2:2, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." Although, in regeneration, there is heavenly light let into the mind; yet there is still some darkness there. Though the will is renewed, it is not perfectly renewed; there is still some of the old inclination to sin remaining: and thus it will be, until that which is in part is done away, and the light of glory come. Adam was created at his full stature; but those who are born, must have their time to grow up; so those who are born again, come forth into the new world of grace as new-born babes: Adam being created upright, was at the same time perfectly righteous, without the least mixture of sinful imperfection.

6. Nevertheless, it is a LASTING change, which never entirely dies off. The seed is incorruptible, says the text; and so is the creature who is formed of it. The life given in regeneration, whatever decays it may fall under, can never be utterly lost. "His seed remains in him" who "is born of God," 1 John 3:9. Though the branches should be cut down, the root abides in the earth; and being watered with the dew of heaven, shall spout again: for "the root of the righteous shall not be moved," Prov. 12:3.

I [will] show WHY this change is called regeneration, a being born again.

of everlasting burnings.

[b.] Your unfruitfulness under the means of grace, fits you for the axe of God's judgments, Matt. 3:10, "*And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*" The withered branch is fuel for the fire, John 15:6. Tremble at this, you despisers of the Gospel: if you be not thereby made fit for heaven, you will be like the barren ground, bearing briars and thorns, "*nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*" Heb. 6:8.

[c.] The hellish dispositions of mind, which discover themselves in profanity of life, fit the guilty for the regions of horror. A profane life will have a miserable end. "*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Gal. 5:19-21. Think on this, you prayerless people, you mockers of religion, you cursers and swearers, you unclean and unjust people, who have not so much as moral honesty to keep you from lying, cheating, and stealing. What sort of a tree do you think it is, upon which these fruits grow? Is it a tree of righteousness, which the Lord has planted? Or is it not such a one as cumbers the ground, which God will pluck up for fuel to the fire of his wrath?

[d.] Your being dead in sin, makes you fit to be wrapped in flames of brimstone, as a winding-sheet; and to be buried in the bottomless pit, as in a grave. Great was the cry in Egypt, when the first-born in each family was dead; but are there not many families, where all are spiritually dead together? Nay, many there are who are twice dead, plucked up by the root. Sometimes in their life they have been roused by apprehensions of death, and its consequences; but now they are so far on in their way to the land of darkness, that they hardly ever have the least glimmering of light from heaven.

[e.] The darkness of your minds presages eternal darkness. O, the horrid ignorance with which some are plagued; while others, who have got some rays of the light of reason

Heb. 12:14. Will the gates of pearl be opened, to let in dogs and swine? No; their place is outside, Rev. 22:15. God will not admit such into the holy place of communion with him here; and will he admit them into the holiest of all hereafter? Will he take the children of the devil, and permit them to sit with him in his throne? Or, will he bring the unclean into the city, whose street is pure gold? Be not deceived; grace and glory are but two links of one chain, which God has joined, and no man shall put asunder. None are transplanted into the paradise above—but out of the nursery of grace below. If you are unholy while in this world, you will be forever miserable in the world to come.

(3.) All the unregenerate are without Christ, and therefore have no hope while in that case, Eph. 2:12. Will Christ prepare mansions of glory for those who refuse to receive him into their hearts? Nay, *"But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."* Proverbs 1:25-27

(4.) There is an infallible connection between a finally unregenerate state and damnation, arising from the nature of the things themselves; and from the decree of heaven which is fixed and immovable, as mountains of brass, John 3:3; Rom. 8:6, *"For to be carnally minded is death"* An unregenerate state is hell in the bud. It is eternal destruction in embryo, growing daily, though you do not discern it. Death is painted on many a fair face, in this life. Depraved nature makes men fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the damned, in utter darkness.

[a.] The heart of stone within you, is a sinking weight. As a stone naturally goes downward, so the hard stony heart tends downward to the bottomless pit. You are hardened against reproof; though you are told your danger—yet you will not see it, you will not believe it. But remember that the conscience being now seared with a hot iron, is a sad presage

It is so called, because of the resemblance between natural and spiritual birth, which lies in the following particulars.

1. Natural birth is a MYSTERIOUS thing: and so is spiritual birth. John 3:8, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof—but can not tell whence it comes and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The work of the Spirit is felt; but his way of working is a mystery we cannot comprehend. A new light is let into the mind, and the will is renewed; but how that light is conveyed there, how the will is fettered with cords of love, and how the rebel is made a willing captive—we can no more tell, than we can tell "how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child," Eccl. 11:5. As a man hears the sound of the wind, and finds it stirring—but knows not where it begins, and where it ends, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." He finds the change that is made upon him; but how it is produced he knows not. One thing he may know, that whereas he was blind, now he sees. But "the seed of grace" "springs and grows up—he knows not how," Mark 4:26, 27.

2. In both, the creature comes to a being it had not before. The child is not, until it be born; and a man has no gracious being, no being in grace, until he is re-born. Regeneration is not so much the curing of a sick man, as "the quickening of a dead man," Eph. 2:1-5. Man in his depraved state, is a mere nonentity in grace, and is brought into a new being by the power of Him "who calls things that are, not as though they were;" being "created in Jesus Christ unto good works," Eph. 2:10. Therefore, our Lord Jesus, to give ground of hope to the Laodiceans, in their wretched and miserable state, proposes himself as "the beginning of the creation of God," Rev. 3:14, namely, the active beginning of it; "for all things were made by him" at first, John 1:3. From whence they might gather, that as he made them when they were nothing, he could make them over again, when worse than nothing; the same hand that made them his creatures, could make them new creatures.

3. As the child is PASSIVE in birth, so is the child of God in regeneration. The one contributes nothing to its own birth; neither does the other contribute anything, by way of efficiency, to its own regeneration: for though a man may lay himself down at the pool—yet he has no hand in moving the water, no power in performing the cure. One is born the child of a king, another the child of a beggar: the child has no hand at all in this difference. God leaves some in their depraved state; others he brings into a state of grace, or regeneration. If you be thus honored, no thanks to you; for "who makes you to differ from another? and what have you that you did not receive?" 1 Cor. 4:7.

4. There is a wonderful combination of parts in both births. Admirable is the structure of man's body, in which there is such a variety of organs; nothing lacking, nothing superfluous. The psalmist, considering his own body, looks on it as a piece of marvelous work; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," says he, Psalm 139:14, "and marvelously wrought in the womb," ver. 15; where I know not how the bones grow, any more than I know what is doing in the lowest parts of the earth. In natural birth we are marvelously wrought, like a piece of needle-work; as the word imports: even so it is in regeneration. Psalm 45:14, "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work," raiment marvelously wrought. It is the same word in both texts. What that raiment is, the apostle tells us, Eph. 4:24. It is "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This is the raiment which he says, in the same place, we must put on; not excluding the imputed righteousness of Christ. Both are marvelously wrought, as masterpieces of the manifold wisdom of God. O the wonderful combination of graces in the new creature! O glorious creature, new-made after the image of God! It is grace for grace in Christ, which makes up this new man, John 1:16; even as in bodily birth, the child has member for member in the parent; has every member which the parent has in a certain proportion.

5. All this, in both cases, has its rise from that

that trade cannot be managed there.

(5.) **They would never like the employment of heaven, they care so little for it now.** The business of the saints there would be an intolerable burden to them, seeing it is not agreeable to their nature. To be taken up in beholding, admiring, and praising him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb, would be work unsuitable, and therefore unsavoury to an unrenewed soul.

(6.) **They would find this fault with it, that the whole is of everlasting continuance.** This would be a killing ingredient in it to them. How would such as now account the Sabbath day a burden, brook the celebration of an everlasting Sabbath in the heavens!

Regeneration is absolutely necessary to your being admitted into heaven, John 3:3. No heaven without it. Though carnal men could digest all those things which make heaven so unsuitable for them—yet God will never bring them there. Therefore, born again you must be, else you shall never see heaven; you shall perish eternally. For,

(1.) **There is a bill of exclusion against you in the court of heaven,** and against all of your sort; "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" John 3:3. Here is a bar before you, that men and angels cannot remove. To hope for heaven, in the face of this peremptory sentence, is to hope that God will recall his word, and sacrifice his truth and faithfulness to your safety; which is infinitely more than to hope that "*shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?*" [Job 18:4]

(2.) **There is no holiness without regeneration.** It is "*the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*," Eph. 4:24. And no heaven without holiness; for without "*holiness... no man shall see the Lord:*"

ever so homely:" therefore, he minds earthly things, Phil. 3:19. There is a peculiar sweetness in our native soil; and with difficulty are men drawn to leave it, and dwell in a strange country. In no case does that prevail more than in this; for unrenewed men would forfeit their pretensions to heaven, were it not that they see they cannot make a better bargain.

(2.) **There is nothing in heaven that they delight in, as agreeable to the carnal heart,** Rev. 21:27, "*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth*" When Mahomet explained his paradise to be a place of sensual delights, his religion was greedily embraced; for that is the heaven men naturally choose. If the covetous man could get bags full of gold there, and the voluptuous man could promise himself his sensual delights, they might be reconciled to heaven, and fitted for it too; but since it is not so, though they may utter fair words about it, truly it has little of their hearts.

(3.) **Every corner there is filled with that which of all things they have the least liking for; and that is holiness, true holiness, perfect holiness.** Were one who abhors swine's flesh, bidden to a feast where all the dishes were of that sort of meat—but variously prepared, he would find fault with every dish at the table, notwithstanding all the art used to make them palatable. It is true, there is joy in heaven—but it is holy joy; there are pleasures in heaven—but they are holy pleasures; there are places in heaven—but it is holy ground: that holiness which in every place, and in everything there—would mar all to the unregenerate.

(4.) **Were they carried there, they would not only change their place, which would be a great heart-break—but they would change their company too.** Truly, they would never like the company there, who care not for communion with God here; nor value the fellowship of his people, at least in the vitals of practical godliness. Many, indeed, mix themselves with the godly on earth, to procure a name to themselves, and to cover the sinfulness of their hearts; but

which is in itself very small and inconsiderable. O the power of God, in making such a creature of the corruptible seed, and much more in bringing forth the new creature from such small beginnings! It is as "the little cloud, like a man's hand," which spread, until "heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain," 1 Kings 18:44, 45. A man gets a word from God at a sermon, which hundreds besides him hear, and let slip: but it remains with him, works in him, and never leaves him, until the little world is turned upside down by it; that is, until he becomes a new man. It is like the dream which got up into Ahasuerus's head, and cut off sleep from his eyes, Esther 6:1, which proved a spring of such motions as never ceased, until Mordecai, in royal pomp, was brought on horseback through the streets, proud Haman trudging at his foot; the same Haman afterwards hanged, Mordecai advanced, and the church delivered from Haman's hellish plot. "The grain of mustard seed becomes a tree," Matt. 13:31, 32. God loves to bring great things out of small beginnings.

6. Natural birth is carried on by degrees. So is regeneration. It is with the soul, ordinarily, in regeneration, as with the blind man cured by our Lord, who first "saw men as trees walking," afterward "saw every man clearly," Mark 8:23-25. It is true, regeneration being, strictly speaking, a passage from death to life, the soul is quickened in a moment; like as when the embryo is brought to perfection in the womb, the soul is infused into the lifeless lump. Nevertheless, we may imagine somewhat like conception in spiritual regeneration, whereby the soul is prepared for quickening; and the new creature is capable of growth, 1 Peter 2:2, and of having life more abundantly, John 10:10.

7. In both there are new relations. The regenerate may call God, Father; for they are his children, John 1:12, 13, "begotten of him," 1 Pet. 1:3. The bride, the Lamb's wife, that is, the church, is their mother, Gal. 4:26. They are related, as brethren and sisters, to angels and glorified saints; "the family of heaven." They are of the heavenly stock: the lowest of them, "the base things of the world," 1 Cor. 1:28,

the kinless things, as the word imports, who cannot boast of the blood that runs in their veins, are yet, by their new birth, near of kin with the excellent in the earth.

8. There is a likeness between the parent and the child. Everything that generates, generates its like; and the regenerate are "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter 1:4. The moral perfections of the divine nature are, in measure and degree, communicated to the renewed soul: thus the divine image is restored; so that, as the child resembles the father, the new creature resembles God himself, being holy as he is holy.

9. As there is no birth without pain, both to the mother and to the child, so there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more or less of these birth-pains, whereby they are "pricked in their heart," Acts 2:37. The soul has sore pains when under conviction and humiliation. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" The mother is pained; "Zion travails," Isaiah 66:8. She sighs, groans, cries, and has hard labor, in her ministers and members—to bring forth children to her Lord, Gal. 4:19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Never was a mother more feelingly touched with "joy, that a child is born into the world," than she is upon the new birth of her children.

But, what is more remarkable than all this, we read not only of our Lord Jesus Christ's "travail," or toil "of soul," Isaiah 53:11—but, what is more directly to our purpose, of his "pains," or pangs, as of one travailing in childbirth; so the word used, Acts 2:24, properly signifies. Well might he call the new creature, as Rachel called her dear-bought son, Benoni, that is, the son of my sorrow; and as she called another, Naphtali, that is, my wrestling: for the pangs of that travail put him to "strong crying and tears," Heb. 5:7; yes, into an "agony and bloody sweat," Luke 22:44. And in the end he died of these pangs; they became to him "the pains of death," Acts 2:24.

them?

3. Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you for heaven. None go to heaven but those who are made meet for it, Col. 1:12,13. [*"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*] As it was with Solomon's temple, 1 Kings 6:7, so is it with the temple above. "*And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.*" namely, of "*lively stones*" 1 Pet. 2:5, 'wrought for the selfsame thing,' 2 Cor. 5:5; for they cannot be laid in that glorious building just as they come out of the quarry of depraved nature. Jewels of gold are not fit for swine, and far less jewels of glory for unregenerated sinners. Beggars, in their rags, are not fit for kings' houses; nor sinners to enter into the King's palace, without the raiment of needlework, Psalm 45:14, 15. What wise man would bring fish out of the water to feed in his meadows? or send his oxen to feed in the sea? Just as little are the unregenerate fit for heaven, or heaven fit for them. It would never be relished by them.

The unregenerate would find fault with heaven on several accounts. As,

(1.) **That it is a strange country.** Heaven is the renewed man's native country: his Father is in heaven; his mother is Jerusalem, which is above, Gal. 4:26. He is born from above, John 3:3. Heaven is his home, 2 Cor. 5:1; therefore, he looks on himself as a stranger on this earth, and his heart is homeward, Heb. 11:16, "*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly:*" But the unregenerate man is the 'man of the earth', Psalm 10:18; written in the earth, Jer. 17:13. [*"O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters."*] Now, "Home is home, be it

not win them by cursing Israel: but he died the death of the wicked, Numb. 31:8. All you do, while in an unregenerate state, is for yourself: therefore, it will fare with you as with a subject, who having reduced the rebels, puts the crown on his own head, and loses all his good service and his head too.

Objection. "If it be thus with us, then we need never perform any religious duty at all."

Answer. The conclusion is not just. No inability of yours can excuse from the duty which God's law lays on you: and there is less evil in doing your duty, than there is in the omission of it. But there is a difference between omitting a duty, and doing it as you do it. A man orders the masons to build him a house. If they quite neglect the work, that will not be accepted; if they build on the old rotten foundation, neither will that please: but they must raze the foundation, and build on firm ground. "*Go, and do thou likewise.*" Luke 10:37 In the mean time, it is not in vain even for you to seek the Lord: for though he regards you not—yet he may have respect to his own ordinances, and do you good thereby, as was said before.

2. Without regeneration there is no communion with God. There is a society on earth, whose "*fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*," 1 John 1:3. But out of that society, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as you heard before at large. Now, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" Amos 3:3. They are all unholy: and "*for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?*" 2 Cor. 6:14, 15. They may have a show and semblance of holiness; but they are strangers to true holiness, and therefore "*without God in the world.*" [Eph 2:12] How sad is it, to be employed in religious duties—yet to have no fellowship with God in them! You would not be content with your food, unless it nourished you; nor with your clothes, unless they kept you warm: and how can you satisfy yourselves with your duties, while you have no communion with God in

1. In regeneration the MIND is savingly enlightened.

There is a light let into the understanding; so that those who were "once darkness, are now light in the Lord," Eph. 5:8. The beams of the light of life make their way into the dark dungeon of the heart: then the night is over, and the morning light is come, which will shine more and more unto the perfect day.

(1.) Now the man is illuminated, in the knowledge of GOD. He has far other thoughts of God, than ever he had before, Hos. 2:20, "I will even betrothe you unto me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord." The Spirit of the Lord brings him back to this question, "What is God?" and teaches him anew upon that grand point, so that he is made to say, "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees you," Job 42:5. The spotless purity of God, his exact justice, his all-sufficiency, and other glorious perfections revealed in his word, are by this new light discovered to the soul, with a plainness and certainty, which as far exceed the knowledge it had of these things before, as seeing exceeds hearing about something. For now he sees, what he only heard of before.

(2.) He is enlightened in the knowledge of SIN. He has different thoughts of it than he used to have. Formerly his sight could not pierce through the cover Satan laid over it: but now the Spirit of God removes it, wipes off the paint and varnish: and so he sees it in its natural colors, as the worst of evils, exceedingly sinful, Rom. 7:13. O, what deformed monsters—do formerly beloved lusts appear! Were they right eyes, he would pluck them out; were they right hands, he would consent to their being cut off. He sees how offensive sin is to God, how destructive it is to the soul; and calls himself a fool, for fighting so long against the Lord, and harboring that destroyer as a bosom friend!

(3.) He is instructed in the knowledge of HIMSELF. Regenerating grace brings the prodigal to himself, Luke

15:17, and makes men full of eyes within, knowing the plague of his own heart. The mind being savingly enlightened, the man sees how desperately corrupt his nature is; what enmity against God, and his holy law, has long lodged there: so that his soul loathes itself. No open sepulcher so vile and loathsome, in his eyes—as himself, Ezek. 36:31, "Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight." He is no worse than he was before—but the sun is now shining; and so those pollutions are seen, which he could not discern before—when there was no dawning in him, as the word is, Isa. 8:20, while as yet there was no breaking of the day of grace with him.

(4.) He is enlightened in the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST. 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Christ, have not, properly speaking, the knowledge of him—but only an opinion, a good opinion, of him...

But saving illumination carries the soul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Christ and his excellency, 1 Thess. 1:5, "For our Gospel came not unto you in word only—but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." The light of grace thus discovers the suitability of the mystery of Christ to the divine perfections, and to the sinner's case. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of salvation, through Christ crucified; rest their whole dependence upon it, ...for whatever he is to others, he is to them, "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."...

The same light convincingly discovers ...a transcendent glory and excellence in Christ, which darkens all created excellencies—as the rising sun makes the stars hide their heads. It engages the "merchantman to sell all that he has, to buy the one pearl of great price," Matt. 12:45, 46;...

Hosea 7:14. Others take you for a wrestler and prevailer with God; but he can take no delight in you nor your prayers, Isaiah 66:3, "*He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*"

(3.) All you have DONE for God, and his cause in the world, though it may be followed with temporal rewards—yet it is lost as to divine acceptance. This is clear from the case of Jehu, who was indeed rewarded with a kingdom, for his executing due vengeance upon the house of Ahab; as being a work good for the matter of it, because it was commanded of God, as you may see, 2 Kings 9:7; yet was he punished for it in his posterity, because he did it not in a right manner, Hos. 1:4, "*I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu,*" God looks chiefly to the heart: and if so, truly, though the outward appearance be fairer than that of many others—yet the hidden man of your heart is loathsome; you look well before men—but are not, as Moses was, fair to God, as the margin has it, Acts 7:20. O, what a difference is there between the characters of Asa and Amaziah! "*But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.*" 1 Kings 15:14. "*And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.*" 2 Chron. 25:2. It may be you are zealous against sin in others, and do admonish them of their duty, and reprove them for their sin; and they hate you, because you do your duty: but I must tell you, God hates you too, because you do it not in a right manner; and that you can never do, while you are not born again.

(4.) All your STRUGGLES AGAINST SIN in your own heart and life, are nothing. The proud Pharisee afflicted his body with fasting, and God struck his soul, in the mean time, with a sentence of condemnation, Luke 18. Balaam struggled with his covetous temper, to that degree, that though he loved the wages of unrighteousness—yet he would

If you would know whether there is sacred fire in your bosom, or not, you must blow the coal; for although it exist, and be a live coal—yet if it be under the ashes, it will give you no light. Settle in your hearts a firm purpose, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to comply with every known duty, and watch against every known sin, having readiness of mind to be instructed in what you know not.

If gracious souls would thus manage their inquiries into their state, it is likely that they would have a comfortable outcome. And if others would take such a solemn review, and make trial of their state, impartially examining themselves before the tribunal of their consciences, they might have a timely discovery of their own sinfulness; **but the neglect of self-examination leaves most men under sad delusions as to their state, and deprives many saints of the comfortable sight of the grace of God in them.**

If you are not born again,

(1.) **All your REFORMATION is nothing in the sight of God.** You have shut the door—but the thief is still in the house. It may be you are not what once you were; yet you are not what you must be, if ever you would see heaven; for *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* John 3:3.

(2.) **Your PRAYERS are an "abomination to the Lord," Prov. 15:8.** [*"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight"*] It may be, others admire your seriousness; you cry as for your life; but God accounts of the opening of your mouth, as one would account of the opening of a grave full of rottenness, Rom. 3:13, *"Their throat is an open sepulcher."* Others are affected with your prayers; which seem to them, as if they would rend the heavens; but God accounts them but as the howling of a dog: *"And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds,"*

Finally, this illumination in the knowledge of Christ, convincingly discovers to men a fullness in him, sufficient for the supply of all their needs, enough to satisfy the boundless desires of an immortal soul. And they are persuaded that such fullness is in him, and that in order to be communicated: they depend upon it as a certain truth; and therefore, their souls take up their eternal rest in him.

(5.) **The man is instructed in the knowledge of the vanity of the WORLD.** Regenerating grace elevates the soul, translates it into the spiritual world, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yes, a very little thing; even as heaven appeared before, while the soul was groveling in the earth. Grace brings a man into a new world: where this earthly world is reputed but a stage of vanity, a howling wilderness, a valley of tears...

(6.) **To sum up all.** In regeneration, the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of spiritual things. 1 John 2:20, "You have an unction from the Holy One," that is, from Jesus Christ, Rev. 3:18. It is an allusion to the sanctuary, whence the holy oil was brought to anoint the priest, "and you know all things" necessary to salvation. Though men be not book-learned, if they are born again, they are Spirit-learned; for all such are taught of God, John 6:45. The Spirit of regeneration teaches them what they did not know before. And what they knew by the ear only, he teaches them over again as by the eye.

2. The **WILL** is renewed. The Lord takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh, Ezek. 36:26, and so from stones—he raises up children to Abraham. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new turn. It does not indeed force it—but sweetly, yet powerfully draws it, so that his people are willing in the day of his power, Psalm 110:3. There is heavenly oratory in the Mediators lips to persuade sinners, Psalm 45:2, "Grace is poured into thy lips" There are cords of a man, and bands of love in

his hands, to draw them after him, Hos. 11:4. Love makes a net for elect souls, which will infallibly catch them, and bring them to land. The cords of Christ's love are strong cords: and they need to be so, for every sinner is heavier than a mountain of brass; and Satan, together with the heart itself, draws the contrary way. But love is strong as death; and the Lord's love to the soul he died for, is the strongest love; which acts so powerfully, that it must come off victorious.

(1.) The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. While the opening of the prison to those who are bound, is proclaimed in the gospel, the Spirit of God comes and opens the prison door, goes to the prisoner, and, by the power of his grace, makes his chains fall off; breaks the bonds of iniquity, with which he was held in sin, so as he could neither will nor do anything truly good; and brings him forth into a large place, "working in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. 2:13. Then it is that the soul, that was fixed to the earth, can move heavenward; the withered hand is restored, and can be stretched out.

(2.) There is wrought in the will a fixed aversion to evil. In regeneration, a man gets a new spirit put within him, Ezek. 36:26; and that spirit strives against the flesh, Gal. 5:17. The sweet morsel of sin, so greedily swallowed down—he now loathes, and would sincerely be rid of it, even as willingly as one who had drunk a cup of poison would vomit it up again. When the spring is stopped, the mud lies in the well unmoved; but when once the spring is cleared, the waters, springing up, will work the mud away by degrees. Even so, while a man continues in an unregenerate state, sin lies at ease in the heart; but as soon as the Lord strikes the rocky heart with the rod of his strength, in the day of conversion, grace is "in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life," John 4:14, working away natural corruption, and gradually purifying the heart, Acts 15:9...

(3.) The will is endowed with an inclination ...to good...

3. If this love be in us, the more grace any person appears to be possessed of, he will be the more beloved by us. The more vehemently the holy fire of grace does flame in any, the hearts of true Christians will be the more warmed in love to them. It is not with the saints as with many other men, who make themselves the standards for others; and love them so far as they think they are like themselves. But, if they seem to outshine and darken them, their love is turned to hatred and envy, and they endeavor to detract from the due praise of their exemplary piety; because nothing is liked with them, in the practice of religion, that goes beyond their own measure; what of the life and power of religion appears in others, serves only to raise the serpentine grudge and envy in their pharisaical hearts.

But as for those who are born again, their love and affection to the brethren bears proportion to the degrees of the divine image they discern in them.

Now, if you would improve these to the knowledge of your state, I would advise you,

1. To set apart some time, when you are at home, for a review of your case, to try your state by what has been said. Many have comfort and clearness as to their state, at a sermon, who in a little time lose it again; because while they hear the word preached, they make application of it; but do not consider these things more deliberately and leisurely when alone...

2. Renew your repentance before the Lord. Guilt lying on the conscience, unrepented of, may darken all your evidences and marks of grace. It provokes the Spirit of grace to withdraw; and when he goes, our light ceases. It is not a fit time for a saint to read his evidences, when the candle is blown out by some conscience-wounding guilt.

3. Exert the powers of the new nature; let the graces of the divine Spirit discover themselves in you by action.

suffering? Are your affections regulated? Are they, with respect to created comforts, brought down, as being too high; and with respect to God in Christ, raised up, as being too low? Has he the chief seat in your heart? And are all your lawful worldly comforts and enjoyments laid at his feet?

Has your conscience been enlightened and awakened, refusing all ease—but from the application of the blood of a Redeemer? Is your memory sanctified, your body consecrated to the service of God? And are you now walking in newness of life? Thus you may discover whether you are born again or not.

But, for your farther help in this matter, I will discourse a little of another sign of regeneration, namely, **the love of the brethren**; an evidence whereby the weakest and most timorous saints have often had comfort, when they could have little or no consolation from other marks proposed to them. This the apostle lays down, 1 John 3:14, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*"...

Now, in order to set this mark of regeneration in a true light, **consider these three things.**

1. **This love to the brethren, is a love to them as such.** Then do we love them in the sense of the text, when the grace, or image of God in them, is the chief motive of our love to them. When we love the godly for their godliness, the saints for their sanctity or holiness, then we love God in them, and so may conclude were born of God; for "*every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*" 1 John 5:1...

2. **It is a love that will be given to all in whom the grace of God appears.** Those who love one saint, because he is a saint, will have "*love unto all the saints*" Eph. 1:15. They will love all, who, in their view, bear the image of God...

When God made man, his will... was directed towards God... When man unmade himself, his will was framed to the very reverse hereof: he made himself his chief end, and his own will his law.

But when man is new made, in regeneration, grace rectifies this disorder in some measure, though not perfectly. because we are but renewed in part, while in this world. It brings back the sinner out of himself, to God, as his chief end, Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you." Phil. 1:21, "For me to live is Christ." It makes him to deny himself, and whatever way he turns, to point habitually towards God, who is the center of the gracious soul, its home, its "dwelling place in all generations," Psalm 90:1.

By regenerating grace, the will is brought into a conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his ... will, being endowed with holy inclinations, agreeable to every one of his commands. The whole law is impressed on the gracious soul: every part of it is written on the renewed heart...

By regenerating grace, the will is also conformed to his providential will; so that the man would no more be master of his own direction, nor carve out his lot for himself. He learns to say, from his heart, "The will of the Lord be done." "He shall choose our inheritance for us," Psalm 47:4. Thus the will is disposed to fall in with those things which, in its depraved state, it could never be reconciled to. Particularly,

The will is disposed to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. The soul is content to submit to him. Regenerating grace undermines, and brings down the towering imaginations of the heart, raised up against its rightful Lord; it breaks the iron sinew, which kept the sinner from bowing to him; and disposes him to be no more stiff-necked—but to yield. He is willing to have on the yoke of Christ's commands, to take up the cross, and to follow him. He is content to take Christ on any terms, Psalm 110:3, "Your people shall be willing in the day of your power."

The mind being savingly enlightened, and the will renewed, the sinner is thereby determined and enabled to answer the gospel call. So the chief work in regeneration is done; the fort of the heart is taken; there is room made for the Lord Jesus Christ in the inmost parts of the soul; the inner door of the will being now opened to him, as well as the outer door of the understanding.

In one word, Christ is passively received into the heart; he is come into the soul, by his quickening Spirit, whereby spiritual life is given to the man, who in himself was dead in sin. His first vital act we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jesus Christ, discerned in his glorious excellencies; that is a believing on him, a closing with him, as discerned, offered and exhibited in the word of his grace, the glorious Gospel: the immediate effect of which is union with him, John 1:12, 13, "To as many as received him to them gave he power," or privilege, "to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man—but of God." Eph. 3:17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

Christ having taken the heart by storm, and triumphantly entered into it, in regeneration, the soul by faith yields itself to him, as it is expressed, 2 Chron. 30:8. Thus, this glorious King who came into the heart, by his Spirit, dwells in it by faith. The soul, being drawn, runs; and being effectually called, comes.

3. In regeneration there is a happy change made on the AFFECTIONS; they are both rectified and regulated.

(1.) **Regeneration rectifies the affections, placing them on suitable objects.** 2 Thess. 3:5, "*The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.*" The regenerate man's desires are rectified; they are set on God himself, and the things above. He, who before cried with the world, "*Who will shew*

But you will say, How shall we know whether we are born again, or not?

Answer. Were you to ask me, if the sun were risen, and how you should know whether it were risen or not? I would bid you look up to the heavens, and see it with your eyes. And, would you know if the light be risen in your heart? Look in, and see. Grace is light, and discovers itself.

Look into your mind, see if it has been illuminated in the knowledge of God. Have you been inwardly taught what God is? Were your eyes ever turned inward to see yourself; the sinfulness of your depraved state, the corruption of your nature; the sins of your heart and life? Were you ever led into a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Have your eyes seen King Jesus in his beauty; the manifold wisdom of God in him, his transcendent excellence, and absolute fullness and sufficiency, with the vanity and emptiness of all things else?

Next, What change is there on your will? Are the fetters taken off, wherewith it was formerly bound up from moving heavenward? Has your will got a new turn? Do you find an aversion to sin, and an inclination to good, wrought in your heart? Is your soul turned towards God, as your chief end? Is your will new-molded into some measure of conformity to the preceptive and providential will of God? Are you heartily reconciled to the covenant of peace, and fixedly disposed to the receiving of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel?

And as to a change on your affections, are they rectified, and placed on right objects? Are your desires going out after God? Are they to his name, and the remembrance of him? Isaiah 26:8 "*the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.*"

Are your hopes in him? Is your love set upon him, and your hatred set against sin? Does your offending a good God affect your heart with sorrow, and do you fear sin more than

(6.) **This change shines forth in the man's performance of PIOUS DUTIES.** He who lived in the neglect of them will do so no more, if once the grace of God enter into his heart. If a man be new-born, he will desire the sincere milk of the word. [1 Pet. 2:2, 3 says: "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*"] Whenever the prayerless person gets the Spirit of grace, he will be in him a Spirit of supplication. [Zech. 12:10 says: "*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*"] **It is as natural for one that is born again to pray, as for the new-born babe to cry.** Acts 9:11, "*behold, he prayeth*" His heart will be a temple for God, and his house a church. [Isaiah 6:5-7 says: "*Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*"] His devotion, which before was superficial and formal, is now spiritual and lively; for as much as heart and tongue are touched with a live coal from heaven: and he rests not in the mere performance of duties, as careful only to get his task done—**but in every duty seeks communion with God in Christ;** justly considering them as means appointed of God for that end, and reckoning himself disappointed if he miss of it.

I shall now APPLY this doctrine.

Use 1. By what is said, you may try whether you are in the state of grace or not. If you are brought out of the state of wrath or ruin, into the state of grace or salvation, you are new creatures, you are born again.

us any good?" has changed his note, and says, "*LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*" Psalm 4:6. Before, he saw no beauty in Christ, for which he was to be desired; but now Christ is all he desires, "*he is altogether lovely*", Cant. 5:16. The main stream of his desires is turned to run towards God; for there is the one thing he desires. Psalm 27:4: "*One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*"

He **desires** to be holy as well as happy; and rather to be gracious than great.

His **hopes**, which before were low, and fastened down to things on earth—are now raised, and set on the glory which is to be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, grounded on the word of promise, Tit. 1:2. Which hope he has, as an anchor of the soul, fixing the heart under trials, Heb 6:19. It puts him upon purifying himself, even as God is pure, 1 John 3:3. For he is begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. 1:3.

[Psalm 18:1: "*I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.*" Psalm 119:97: "*O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*"] His **love** is raised, and set on God himself; on his holy law, Though it strikes against his most beloved lust, he says, "*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*," Rom. 7:12. He loves the ordinances of God, Psalm 84:1, "*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!*". Being passed from death unto life, he loves the brethren, [1 John 3:14: "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*"] [He loves] "*the people of God*", as they are called, 1 Pet. 2:10. He loves God for himself; and what is God's, for his sake. Yes, as being a child of God, he loves his own enemies ["*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*"]. His heavenly Father is

compassionate and benevolent; "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." therefore, he is in like manner disposed, Matt. 5:44, 45.

His **hatred** is turned against sin—both in himself and others, Psalm 101:3, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." He groans under the body of it, and longs for deliverance, Rom. 7:24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

His **joys and delights** are in God the Lord, in the light of his countenance, in his law, and in his people, because they are like him.

Sin is what he chiefly **fears**: it is a fountain of sorrow to him now, though formerly a spring of pleasure.

(2.) **Regeneration regulates the affections, which are placed on SUITABLE objects.** Our affections, when placed on the creature, are naturally [highly excessive]. When we joy in it, we are apt to overjoy; and when we sorrow, we are ready to sorrow overmuch: but gracebridles these affections, clips their wings, and keeps them within bounds, that they don't overflow all their banks. It makes a man hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also comparatively; that is, to love them less than he loves God, Luke 14:26.

Grace also rectifies LAWFUL affections; bringing them forth from right principles, and directing them to right ends. There may be unholy desires after Christ and his grace; as when men desire Christ, not from any love to him—but merely out of love to themselves. "Give us of your oil," said the foolish virgins, "for our lamps are gone out," Matt. 25:8. There may be an unsanctified sorrow for sin; as when one sorrows for it, not because it is displeasing to God—but only because of the wrath annexed to it, as did Pharaoh, Judas,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" John 4:28, 29.

They have seen and felt the evil of sin, and therefore pity the world lying in wickedness. They would gladly pluck the brands out of the fire, remembering that they themselves were plucked out of it. They labor to commend religion to others, both by word and example; and rather deny themselves the liberty in indifferent things, than, by the uncharitable use of it, destroy others; 1 Cor. 8:13, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Grace teaches to use the conveniences of the present life as pilgrims; and to show a holy moderation in all things. The heart, which formally reveled in these things without fear, is now shy of being over much pleased with them. Being apprehensive of danger, it uses them warily; as the dogs of Egypt run, while they lap their water out of the river Nile, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

(5.) **In their use of LAWFUL COMFORTS, there is a great change.** They rest not in them, as their end; but use them as means to help them in their way. They draw their satisfaction from the higher springs—even while lower springs are running. Thus Hannah, having obtained a son, rejoiced not so much in the gift, as in the giver, 1 Sam. 2:1, "My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD" Yes, when the comforts of life are gone, they can exist without them, and "rejoice in the Lord ...Although the fig tree shall not blossom" Habakkuk 3:17, 18.

Grace teaches to use the conveniences of the present life as pilgrims; and to show a holy moderation in all things. The heart, which formally reveled in these things without fear, is now shy of being over much pleased with them. Being apprehensive of danger, it uses them warily; as the dogs of Egypt run, while they lap their water out of the river Nile, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

wicked men; as one who is healthy will beware of going into an infected house.

(2.) **In his RELATIVE capacity, he will be a new man.** Grace makes men gracious in their several relations, and naturally leads them to the conscientious performance of relative duties. It does not only make good men and good women—but makes good subjects, good husbands, good wives, children, servants, and, in a word, good relatives in the church, commonwealth, and family...

Real godliness will gain a testimony to a man, from the consciences of his nearest relations; though they know more of his sinful infirmities than others do, as we see in the case, 2 Kings 4:1, "*Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD*"

(3.) **In the way of his following his worldly BUSINESS,** there is a great change. It appears to be no more his all, as it was before. Though saints apply themselves to worldly business, as well as others—yet their hearts are not swallowed up in it. It is evident that they are carrying on a trade with heaven, as well as a trade with earth, Phil. 3:20, "*For our conversation is in heaven.*"...

(4.) **Such have a special concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the world:** they espouse the interests of religion, and say "*If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy*" Psalm 137:6. However privately they live, grace gives them a public spirit, will concern itself in the ark and work of God, in the Gospel of God, and in the people of God, even in those of them whom they never saw. As children of God, they naturally care for these things. They have a new concern for the spiritual good of others: no sooner do they taste of the power of grace themselves—but they are inclined to set up to be agents for Christ and holiness in the world; as appears in the case of the woman of Samaria, who when Christ had manifested himself to her, "*went her way into the city, and saith to the men,*

and others. So a man may love his father and mother from mere natural principles, without any respect to the command of God binding him thereto. But grace sanctifies the affections, in such cases, making them to run in a new channel of love to God, respect to his commands, and regard to his glory.

Again, grace raises the affections where they are too low. It gives the chief seat in them to God, and pulls down all other rivals, whether people or things, making them lie at his feet. Psalm 73:25, "*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*" He is loved for himself, and other people or things for his sake. What is lovely in them, to the renewed heart, is some ray of the divine goodness appearing in them: for unto gracious souls they shine only by borrowed light. This accounts for the saints loving all men; and yet hating those who hate God, and despising the wicked as vile people. They hate and despise them for their wickedness; there is nothing of God in that, and therefore nothing lovely nor honorable in it: but they love them for their commendable qualities or perfections, whether natural or moral; because, in whomever these things are, they are from God, and can be traced to him as their fountain.

Finally, regenerating grace sets the affections so firmly on God, that the man is disposed, at God's command, to leave his hold of everything else, in order to keep his hold of Christ; to hate father and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luke 14:26. It makes even lawful enjoyments, like Joseph's mantle to hang loose about a man, that he may leave them, when he is in danger of being ensnared by holding them.

If the stream of our affections has never been turned, we are, doubtless, going down the stream into the pit. If "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*", 1 John 2:16, have the throne in our hearts, which should be possessed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; if we never had so much love to God, as to ourselves; if sin has

been somewhat bitter to us—but never so bitter as suffering, never so bitter as the pain of being weaned from it: truly we are strangers to this saving change of regeneration. For grace turns the affections upside down, whenever it comes into the heart.

4. The CONSCIENCE is renewed. As a new light is set up in the soul, in regeneration, conscience is enlightened, instructed and informed. "*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*" Prov 20:27 That candle of the Lord, is now snuffed and brightened; so that it shines, and sends forth its light into the most retired corners of the heart: discovering sins which the soul was not aware of before; and, in a special manner, discovering the corruption or depravity of nature—that seed and spawn whence all actual sins proceed. This produces the new complaint, Rom. 7:24, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"

Conscience, which lay sleeping in the man's bosom before, is now awakened, and makes its voice to be heard through the whole soul; therefore, there is no more rest for him in the sluggard's bed; he must get up and be doing, arise, 'haste, and escape for his life.' It powerfully incites to obedience, even in the most spiritual acts, which lie not within the view of the natural conscience; and powerfully restrains from sin, even from those sins which do not lie open to the observation of the world. It urges the sovereign authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and which it willingly acknowledges. And so it engages the man to his duty, whatever be the hazard from the world; for it fills the heart so with the fear of God—that the force of the fear of man is broken. This has engaged many to put their life in their hand, and follow the cause of Christ, which they once despised, and resolutely walk in the path they formerly abhorred, Gal. 1:23, "*...That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed*"...

heart, is under a covenant, Job 31:1, to do so no more; but to serve the soul, in viewing the works of God, and reading the word of God. [Job 31:1 says: "*I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*"] The ear, that had often been death's porter, to let in sin, is turned to be the gate of life, by which the word of life enters the soul. [James 3:6 says: "*And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*"] The tongue, that set on fire the whole course of nature, is restored to the office it was designed for by the Creator; namely, to be an instrument of glorifying him, and setting forth his praise. In a word, the whole man is for God, in soul and body, which by this blessed change are made his.

7. This gracious change shines forth in the LIFE. Even the outward man is renewed. A new heart makes newness of life. When "*The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.*," Psalm 45:13. [Matthew 6:22 says: "*The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*"] 'The single eye' makes 'the whole body full of light'. This change will appear in every part of a man's life; particularly in the following things.

(1.) **In the change of his COMPANY.** Formerly, he despised the company of the saints—but now they are "*in whom is all my delight.*" Psalm 16:3. "*I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*" says the royal psalmist, Psalm 119:63. A renewed man joins himself with the saints; for he and they are like-minded, in that which is their main work and business; they have all one new nature: they are all traveling to Immanuel's land, and converse together in the language of Canaan. In vain do men pretend to true religion, while ungodly company is their choice; for "*a companion of fools shall be destroyed*" Prov. 13:20. Religion will make a man shy of throwing himself into an ungodly family, or any unnecessary familiarity with

impress themselves with more force on our memories, Psalm 119:93, "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me."

Grace sanctifies the memory. Many have large—but unsanctified memories, which serve only to gather knowledge, whereby to aggravate their condemnation: but the renewed memory serves to "those that remember his commandments to do them." Psalm 103:18. It is a sacred storehouse, from whence a Christian is furnished in his way to Zion; for faith and hope are often supplied out of it, in a dark hour. It is the storehouse of former experiences; and these are the believer's way-marks, by noticing of which he comes to know where he is, even in a dark time. Psalm 42:6, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan..." It also helps the soul to godly sorrow and self-loathing, presenting old guilt anew before the conscience, and making it bleed afresh, though the sin be already pardoned; Psalm 25:7, "Remember not the sins of my youth," Where unpardoned guilt is lying on the sleeping conscience, it is often employed to bring in a word, which in a moment sets the whole soul on the stir; as when "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." Matt. 26:75. The word of God laid up in a sanctified memory, serves a man to resist temptations, puts the sword in his hand against his spiritual enemies, and is a light to direct his steps in the way of true religion and righteousness.

6. There is a change made on the BODY, and the members thereof, in respect of their use; they are **consecrated to the Lord.** Even "the body is – for the Lord," 1 Cor. 6:13. It is "the temple of the Holy Ghost," ver. 19. The members thereof, which were formerly "instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," become "instruments of righteousness unto God," Rom. 6:13, "servants to righteousness unto holiness," ver. 19. The eye, that conveyed sinful imaginations into the

Guilt now makes the conscience smart [a sharp, stinging pain]. It has bitter remorse for sins past—which fills the soul with anxiety, sorrow, and self-loathing. And every new reflection on these sins is apt to affect, and make its wounds bleed afresh with regret. It is made tender, in point of sin and duty, for the time to come: being once burnt, it dreads the fire, and fears to break the hedge where it was formerly bitten by the serpent.

Finally, the renewed conscience drives the sinner to Jesus Christ, as the only Physician who can draw out the sting of guilt; and whose blood alone can purge the conscience from dead works, Heb. 9:14, refusing all ease offered to it from any other hand. This is an evidence that the conscience is not only awakened—as it may be in an unregenerate state; but oiled also, with regenerating grace.

5. As the MEMORY lacked not its share of depravity, it is also bettered by regenerating grace. The memory is weakened, with respect to those things that are not worth their room therein; and men are taught to forget injuries, and drop their resentments, Matt. 5:44, 45, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

It is strengthened for spiritual things. We have Solomon's receipt for an ill memory, Prov. 3:1, "My son," says he, "forget not my law." But how shall it be kept in mind? "let thine heart keep my commandments". Grace makes a heart-memory, even where there is no good head-memory. Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart" The heart, truly touched with the powerful sweetness of truth, will help the memory to retain what is so relished. If divine truths made deeper impressions on our hearts, they would