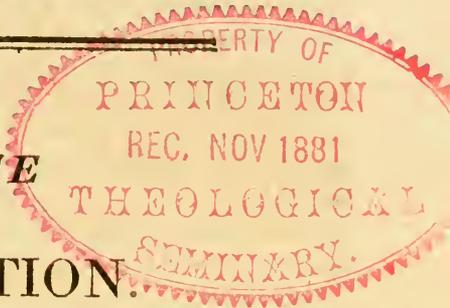


WORKS  
OF  
ISAAC AMBROSE.

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THE  
DOCTRINE  
OF  
REGENERATION.



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

JOHN iii. 3.

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IN the prosecution of these words, we shall follow the order set down by the Holy Ghost; where is,

1. The necessity of it.
2. The generality of it.
3. The manner of it.
4. The issue of it.

First, the necessity of it: *Except a man be new born, he can never be saved.* It is our Saviour's speech, and he avers it with a double asseveration, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee.*

Again, God the Father thus counsels, not only Nicodemus, but all the Jews of the old church, saying, *Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die, O house of Israel?* Ezek. xviii. 31. Notwithstanding all their privileges, yet here is one thing necessary, that must crown all the rest; they must have a new heart, and a new spirit, that is, they must be new born, or there is no way but death.

Nor is this doctrine without reason or ground. For, man is first unholy, and therefore most unfit to enter into heaven; *Without holiness no man shall see God,* Heb. xii. 14. And what is man before he is new born? If we look upon his soul, we may see it deformed with sin, defiled with lust, outraged with passions; and thus is that image of God transformed to the ugly shape of the devil. Should we take a more particular view, every faculty of the soul is full of iniquity; the understanding understands nothing of *the things of God,* 1 Cor. ii. 14. the will

wills nothings *that is good*, Rom. vi. 20. the affections affect nothing of the *Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. In a word, the understanding is darkened, the will enthralled, the affections disordered, the memory defiled, the conscience benumbed, all the inner man is full of sin, and here is no part that is good, no not one. How needful now is a new birth to a man in this case! Can he enter into heaven, that savours all of earth? Will those precious gates of gold and pearls open to a sinner? No, he must be new moulded, and sanctified.

Secondly, Without this, man is God's enemy: no greater opposition than betwixt God and a sinner; his name and nature is altogether opposite to sin and sinners. View we those attributes of God, his justice, truth, patience, holiness, anger, power; his justice in punishing the impenitent according to his deserts, his truth effecting those plagues which he hath spoken in his word, his patience forbearing sinners' destruction till they are grown full ripe, his holiness abhorring all impurities, his anger stirring up revenge against all offered injuries, his power mustering up his forces, yea, all his creatures, against his enemies; and what can we say, but, if all these attributes are at enmity with sinful man, woe to man because of offences! Better he had never been born, than not to be new born.

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

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

So that whether we consider man in regard of himself, or of God, or of Christ, or of Satan, he is (except he be new-born) unholy, God's enemy, out of Christ, in Satan.

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

Such is the necessity of being born again. And as to the generality of it, all men (or all mankind) must be regenerated before they be saved; not one of all the sons of Adam shall ever go to heaven, except he be born again: let your contemplations (guided by God's word) go into the paradise above; all the saints that now walk in the light of it, were first purged by the Lamb, and sanctified by the Spirit; first they were regenerated, and so they were saved.

Secondly, (as all men, so all man) all the members of his body, all the faculties of his soul. Sanctification, if saving, must be perfect and entire, though not in respect to degrees, yet in respect of parts; every part and power of body and soul must have its part of sanctification.

And should we consider man in his parts, every part must bear a part in this birth; his body must be regenerated, his soul must be renewed: he is moulded anew, and all the members of his body are conformed to the sovereignty and rule of grace; yea, his body is preserved blameless, holy, and acceptable unto God; it is a member of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost: happy man that is blest with this body! Sure a man thus born again, shall see the kingdom of God.

Thirdly, as the body, so the soul of this man is to be renewed by grace; *Therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. The body and the spirit must both glorify God; and as all the parts of the body, so all the powers of the soul.

First, the understanding, that in the old man is blind and ignorant about heavenly things, or if it know many things, yet never can attain to saving knowledge; in the new man must be anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit, inspired with the knowledge of divine truths, especially with those sacred and saving mysteries which concern the kingdom of God. Again, the will that in the old man affects nothing but vile and vain things, is froward and perverse in the ways of godliness; in

the new man must prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; yea, it must attend and be subordinate to the grace of God, since God indeed, and God only, *works in us both the will and the deed*, Phil. ii. 13. Again, the memory that in the old is slippery in the things of God, or if naturally good, yet not spiritually useful; in the new man must be sanctified to good performances, and although it cannot increase to a great natural perfection, (for grace doth not this,) yet the perfections it hath must be straight, and right, and guided to Godward: *Remember the Lord thy God*, saith Moses, Deut. viii. 18. Again, the conscience that in the old man sleeps and slumbers, or if it be awake, tears and roars, as if a legion of devils possessed it; in the new man must be calm and quiet, and yet not sleep or slumber, but rather in a friendly loving manner check and control wheresoever sin is, yea, never be quiet, till with kind and earnest expostulations it draws the sinner before God, to confess his fault, and to seek pardon for it. Again, the affections that in the old man are sensual, inordinate, bewitched, and set on wrong objects; in the new man must be turned another way. To sum up all; all must be renewed, the understanding, will, memory, conscience, affections.

First, I say, in the new man the understanding must be renewed; so the apostle, *The new man is renewed in knowledge*, Col. iii. 10. and this knowledge implies two habits, *wisdom and prudence*, Col. i. 9. First, wisdom; that is speculative: secondly, prudence; and that is practical. By the one, the child of God, having the eyes of his mind opened and enlightened, doth see the mysteries of salvation, the secrets of the kingdom, the whole counsel, and the wonders of the law of God; by the other he is enabled, with a judicious sincerity, to determine in cases of conscience, in the practice of piety, and the experimental passages of a christian man. If we consider the first, wisdom; how is it possible that a man unregenerate should know the mysteries of salvation? He may go as far as the power of natural discourse, and light of reason, can bear sway, he may be furnished with store of rare and excellent learning, and yet for all this want the true spiritual wisdom. The man regenerate hath the saving knowledge; he only knows God with a stedfast apprehension, he only knows himself a mean, base, and contemptible thing; his new birth hath learned him how wicked a creature he naturally is, and therefore in that respect is he odious to himself, and loathsome in his own eyes: or if we consider the second, prudence; how is it possible that a man unregenerate should experimentally know the practice of piety? Should we instance in this mystery of regeneration: here is a ruler of the Jews, and a teacher of Israel; yet, as learned as he was, if he confer with Christ about the salvation of his soul, he is strangely childish, and a mere infant;

tell him of the new birth, and he thinks it as impossible as for an old man to return into his mother's womb, and be born: the natural man cannot discern the operations of grace, he knows not that dark and fearful passage, which leads from the state of nature, into the rich and glorious happiness of the kingdom of Christ; and hence it is that many a silly man or woman, whom the worldly-wise pass by with scorn, are in spiritual affairs more wise and learned than the learnedst doctors.

Secondly, the will must be renewed; and this will of the regenerate contains two things, righteousness and readiness: it is first rectified, conformed to the will of God; secondly, it is so inflamed with the love of goodness, that he pursues it with alacrity of spirit. If we consider the first, the rectitude of the will, we see by experience the will of the unregenerate is all out of course, he wills nothing but that which is evil: how should he, considering his want of God's image, his blindness of heart, his proneness to evil, together with the vehemency of his affections, which draw the will after them? but in the man that is regenerate, the will being moved, it afterwards moves itself; God's grace that concurs with it, quickens it, and revives it; so that now his will is nothing but God's will: or if we consider the second, the readiness of the will to good, alas! the will of the unregenerate hath no pleasure in goodness, he understands not the sweetness of it, and therefore nothing is more irksome to him than the ways of godliness; whereas the will of the regenerate is willing, and this willingness indeed is the perfection of his will.

Thirdly, the memory must be renewed; and this memory reflects occasionally on a double object, on God, and the things of God. First, on God, by remembrance of his presence every where. Secondly, on the things of God, by calling them to mind at useful times. If we consider the first object, God; the unregenerate hath no mind on God, God is not in all his thoughts: like the hood-winked fool, that seeing no body, thinks no body sees him; so hath he said in his heart, *How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.* But, contrarywise, the regenerate man remembers his Creator in the days of his youth. And though God, as being a spirit, is absent from his senses, yet by virtue of his sanctified memory, (that makes things absent as present,) his eye is on God, and he considers God as an eye-witness of all his thoughts, and words, and doings. Or, if we consider the second object, (the word of God,) the unregenerate never burdens his memory with it; if sometimes he falls upon it, it is either by constraint or by accident, never with any settled resolution to follow it; but the soul that is regenerate, with Mary, keeps all these things in his heart: whatsoever lessons

he learns, like so many jewels in a casket, he lays them up safe and, as need serveth, makes all the good use of them he may.

Fourthly, the conscience must be renewed, and that two ways, either by drawing the soul to good, or from evil: first, to good, by restraining and bridling. If we consider its first office, (in that it draws and leads the soul to good,) the unregenerate hath not that conscience; for the most part his conscience lies dead in his bosom, or, if it stir sometimes, he labours all he can to smother it. It is otherwise with the regenerate, his conscience excites him to good, and he doth good out of conscience; he stands not upon terms of pleasure or profit, but his conscience being guided by the rule of God's holy truth, he submits to it merely out of his obedience to God: hence it is, that come what will come, his eye is fixed on God; and if man oppose where God commands, he is quickly resolved. Or if we consider the second office of conscience, in drawing the soul from evil, the unregenerate either hears not, or heeds not, his reclaiming conscience: if it speak, he first goes about to lull it asleep again; or if it cry out, and will not peace, then, in spite of goodness, he runs out of one sin into another, and usually from presumption to despair. On the other side, the regenerate hath a conscience that draws him from, and keeps him out of, evil: it is known especially by these two properties, remorse and tenderness; remorse hath an eye on all sins past, and tenderness hath an eye on all sins to come: by remorse is bred sorrow for sin, and loathing of sin; no sooner he considers how by his manifold sins he hath offended God, crucified Christ, grieved the Holy Spirit, but his heart bleeds and breaks that he hath done so wickedly against so gracious a God: this sorrow for sin brings with it a loathing of sin; he hates the very thought of it; every look back is a new addition of detestation, and every meditation makes the wound of his remorse to bleed again: by tenderness of conscience is bred a care and watchfulness to avoid sin to come; for no sooner is sin presented to his conscience, but he startles at its sight, and meditates on that strict account he must one day make for it; which thoughts and sin put together in the balance, he dares not do wickedly for a world of gain: and you may observe it, this tenderness, or easiness to bleed at the apprehension of sin, is peculiar to that conscience that is enlightened, and sanctified, and purged by Christ.

Fifthly, the affections must be renewed, and that is done by setting them upon right objects; I shall instance in some of them, as love, hatred, hope, fear, joy, sorrow. Love I place first, which in the unregenerate man is fastened inordinately upon the creature; and as one sin begets another, so on whatsoever object it falls, it gets some sin; thus the love of riches breeds covetousness, love of beauty breeds sensuality: whatso-

ever he loves, the object being earthly, it brings with it some sin; and thereby, the worst of all, he wickedly prefers earth to heaven, a dunghill to paradise. But the regenerate man settles his love upon other objects: as he that is carnal, minds things carnal, so he that is spiritual, loves things spiritual; no sooner is he turned, by a sound and universal change of the whole man, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, but he presently begins to settle with some sweet contentment, upon the flowers of paradise, saving graces, and his infinite love runs higher and higher, till it embrace him that dwells in the highest, God Almighty: and how sweet is that love that casts itself wholly into the bosom of his Maker! How blessed is that man, that yearns, and melts, and cleaves, and sticks unto his gracious God above all!

The second affection is Hatred, which in the unregenerate is so inordinate, that he is *an hater of God*, Rom. i. 30. not that he hates God in himself, but in some particular respect, because he restrains him from his pleasure, or punisheth him for his sin, or crosseth his appetites by his holy commands. As he hates God, so likewise his brother. Hence arise those envies, emulations, jars, contentions, among those that profess themselves Christians; but of all brethren he hates them most, of whom our Saviour is the first-born. God's faithful ones ever were and ever will be signs and wonders, and monsters, unto many; a scorn, reproach, and derision, to them that are round about them: but he that is regenerate hates sin in whomsoever it rules; in others, and in himself, when after the commission of any evil he begins to repent, and *to abhor himself*, as Job did, *in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 6.

The third affection is Hope. Now this hope in the unregenerate is fastened on this world, and the things of this world; he hopes for preferment, riches, or the like; as for his hope of heaven, it is but a waking man's dream: a dream? said I. Yes, as dreams in the night fill us with illusions, (you know a beggar may dream he is a king,) so hope, abusing the imagination of the unregenerate, fills their souls many a time with vain or empty contentments: but the hope of the regenerate both enjoys the right object, and right means; his eye is fixed on future good; and he endeavours to pursue it, till he get the possession. If in the pursuit he meets with crosses, griefs, disgraces, sicknesses, or any other calamities, his hope is able to sweeten the bitterest misery that can possibly befall him; the afflictions of this life bid him look for a better, a cross here minds him of the glory above.

The fourth affection is Fear, which in the unregenerate is either worldly or servile: if it fasten on the world, then he fears the loss of his credit or of his profit, and because he and the world must part at last, he fears this separation above all

fears: O death, saith the wise man, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things! Or if his fear reflect on God, then it is a servile fear; for as the servant or hireling works not for love of his master, but only for fear of punishment; so he fears God, for fear of punishment due to him from God: it is otherwise with the man that is born again; his fear is either initial or filial: in pangs of the new birth, or in the new-born babe, it is called initial; because then he casts away sin both out of God's love, to which he hath partly attained, and out of the woeful effects of sin, which he hath thoroughly considered; with the right eye he beholds God, and with the left eye he beholds punishment; so that this fear is a middle, as it were, betwixt servile and filial fear; and as the needle draweth in the thread, so this fear draweth in charity, and makes way for filial fear; to which, if by growth in grace he be fully ripened, then he fears God out of love to God, as the prophet *Isaiah* proclaimeth, *The fear of the Lord is his treasure*, Is. xxxiii. 6. Never was treasure more dear to the wordlings, than is God's fear to him: his love of God, his desire to please God, and his fear of being separated from God, keep him in such awe, that though no punishment, no death, no hell, were at all; yet he would not sin for a world of treasures.

The fifth affection is Joy, which in the unregenerate is sensual and brutish; it hath no better objects than gold, greatness, honours, or the like: and what are all these but a shadow, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a post that passeth by? or rather, as crackling of thorns under a pot, as flashes of lightning before everlasting fire? But the joy of the regenerate is a spiritual joy, and the matter of it is the light of God's countenance, righteousness, or the promises of God's word; or, above all, God Almighty, blessed evermore: Thus *David*, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*, Psal. lxxiii. 25. This is that joy which no man can conceive, but he that enjoys it; this is that *white stone*, Rev. ii. 17. whose splendour shines only upon heavenly hearts; this is that glimpse of heaven's glory, which springing up in a sanctified heart, out of the wells of salvation, and carried along with addition of fresh comforts (from the word and sacraments) through a fruitful current and course of man's life, at last falls into the boundless and bottomless ocean of the joys of heaven.

The sixth affection is Sorrow, which in the unregenerate is a worldly sorrow, and the effects of it are death; so the apostle, *The sorrow of the world worketh death*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. In this kind, how endless are the sorrows of men for their losses or crosses that may befall them; and howsoever some may endeavour to comfort them in Christ, nothing can relish with them

that concerns heaven or salvation. But in the regenerate, the beholding of sin breeds sorrow, and this the apostle calls *godly sorrow, working repentance to salvation not to be repented of.*

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

We come now to speak of the manner of it.

Except a man be regenerated, or begotten, saith Valla, as man that is born of a woman is begotten of a man, so he that is born again must have a begetting too. If you ask of whom is the new man begotten, St. James tells you, (Jam. i. 18.) *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth:* the former words note the impulsive cause, the latter the instrument; it was God that begat us, and with the seed of the word.

It was the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but in respect of the last act, it is of the Holy Ghost, and not of the Father or the Son; and thus our Saviour concludes, John iii. 6, 8. *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit; and so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Secondly, as God's spirit is the principal, so God's word is the instrumental, cause of our regeneration, *Ye are born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,* 1 Pet. i. 23. *And this word,* saith the author of the Hebrews, *is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, &c. and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,* Heb. iv. 12. They that are born again, cannot but remember how quick, and powerful, and sharp, God's word was at their regeneration: first, like an hammer it beat on their hearts till it broke them all to

pieces; and then like a sword, by a terrible cutting, piercing power, it struck a shaking and trembling into the very centre of their souls; last of all, like oil it began to supple their wounds, and to heal their bruises, and to refresh the weak and tender heart with all the promises of God revealed in Christ. And thus a man being begotten of the Spirit with the word of truth, he comes at last to the birth; to be born again, to be born after the spirit; and this is that second birth: a man is first born of the flesh, and he must be again born of the Spirit.

Hence appears the difference of the first and second birth—the first birth is of the earth, earthly, the second birth is of the Lord from heaven; the first birth is of nature, full of sin; the second is of grace, full of sanctity; the first birth is originally of flesh and blood, the second birth is originally of the Spirit and water: in a word, the first birth kills, the second gives life; generation lost us, it must be regeneration that recovers us. O blessed birth, without which no birth is happy; in comparison of which, though it were to be born heir of the whole world, all is but misery!

As to the new birth itself, I know it is not wrought in all after one manner, nor is the manner known to us, but only so far as it is sensible in us, and therefore we must consider man before baptism, in baptism, and after baptism.

In some is the new birth wrought before baptism, as in the eunuch under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, Acts viii. 37. and in Cornelius, together with his kinsmen and near friends, Acts x. 47. and so our charity tells us, that every infant dying before baptism, is renewed by the Spirit; but the manner of this working we know not, for it is the secret of the Spirit of God. In others is the new birth wrought in baptism, which indeed is the sacrament of the new birth, and seal of regeneration; but howsoever we see the outward seal, yet we see not the manner of the inward working; for this also is the secret of the Spirit of God. In others is the new birth wrought after baptism; for whensoever men receive Christ by faith, then do they feel the power of God regenerate them, and work all things in them which he offered in baptism: now the manner of this feeling, or of God's Spirit working, proceeds usually thus.

There are certain steps by which it passeth; and howsoever in those whom God hath blessed with great favour of holy education (the Spirit of God dropping grace into their hearts betimes) these steps or degrees are not so easily perceived; yet in those men who have lived long in sin, no sooner come they to a new birth, but they can feel grace work in them step after step, and these steps we shall reckon to the number of eight.

The first is a sight of sin, and this our Saviour reckons the first work of the Spirit: *When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin*, John xvi. 8. Of sin, how? Why thus: no sooner

begins this blessed change from nature to grace, but the conscience, wrought upon by God's word, opens its book, and presents the soul a roll of those many, mighty, heinous sins, committed against God and man: there he may read in bloody burning lines the abominations of his youth, the sins of all his life; and to bring them into method, the commandments of God stand as a remembrancer before his eyes: the first tells him of his loving somewhat above God; the second, of his worshipping a false god, or a true God after a false manner; the third, of his dishonouring the great and mighty name of God; the fourth, of his breaking the Lord's day, either in doing the works of the flesh, or leaving undone the works of the Spirit: nor is this all; as against God, so against his neighbour hath he sinned; the fifth tells him of his stubbornness and disobedience; the sixth, of his passions, and desires of revenge; the seventh, of his lewdness; the eighth, of his covetous thefts; the ninth, of his lies and slanders, backbitings, and rash judgments; the tenth, of his covetous thoughts, and motions of the heart to all manner of evil. Good Lord! what a number of evils, yea, what innumerable swarms of lawless thoughts, and words, and actions, doth he read in his conscience? But above all, his beloved sin is writ in greatest characters; this he finds to have bewitched him most, and to have domineered above all the rest in his wasted conscience; where, that he may read it, together with his other sins, the Spirit of God now opens the eyes of his mind, and lets him see the very mud and filth of his soul, that lay at the bottom before unseen and undiscerned. This is the first working of the new life, to wit, a feeling of the old death of his soul in sins and trespasses: and here the axiom is true, no generation without corruption; a man must first feel this death, before he is born again.

The second step is a sense of divine wrath, begetting in him fear. No sooner hath the man a sight and feeling of his sin, but then God's spirit, now called the spirit of bondage, presents to him the armoury of God's flaming wrath and fiery indignation; this makes him to feel as if he were pricked with the stroke of an arrow, or point of a sword, that he is a most accursed and damnable creature, justly deserving all the miseries of this life, and all the torments of hell in that life to come; yea, this makes him tremble, and stand, and look, as if he were thoroughly frightened with the angry countenance of God Almighty. Would you view him in this case? his conscience hath now awaked him out of his dead sleep, by the trumpet of the law; his heart is now scorched with the secret sense of God's angry face; his soul is now full sorely crushed under the most grievous burden of innumerable sins: his thoughts are now full of fear and astonishment, as if no less than very hell

and horror were ready to seize upon his body and soul. I say not what measure of this wrath is poured on all men, for I suppose some feel more and some less; but I verily believe, some there are that, in these pangs of the new birth, have been scorched, as it were, with the very flames of hell. And no wonder, for this is the time of fear; now it is that Satan strives busily to stifle the new man in the womb; and therefore he that before diminished his sins, and made them appear little in his eyes, when he once sees the man smitten down in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, then he puts into his mind his innumerable sins, and, that which immediately follows, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, which he yet makes more grisly and fierce, with a purpose to plunge him into the abyss of horror and despair. By this means he persuaded Cain to cry out, *My iniquity is greater than can be forgiven.* Thus far the unregenerate goes with the man born again,—both have a sight of sin, and sense of wrath,—but here they part; for the man unregenerate either sinks under it, or labours to allay it with worldly comforts. But the man born again, seeks the right way to cure it, and at last, by the help of God's spirit, he passeth quite through it; I mean, through this hell upon earth, into the spiritual pleasures of the kingdom of grace, which is to be born again.

The third step is, sorrow for sin, and this is more peculiar to God's child; his heart grieves, his eye weeps; the way to God's kingdom is to cry like children coming into the world; the way to be new-born is to feel throes, as a woman in travail; and so is Christ formed in us. Can a man be born again without bitterness of soul? No, if ever he come to a sight of sin, and that God's sanctifying Spirit work in him sorrow for sin, his soul will mourn. True it is, some infants are born with more pain, and some with less: but more or less, it cannot be so little, but the man that labours in these pangs shall mourn.

The fourth step is, seeking rightly for comfort. He runs not to the world, or flesh, or devil, miserable comforters all; but to scripture, to prayer, or to the ministry of God's word; if he finds comfort in scriptures, he meets with it in the gospel: and if it please God that the man, now labouring in his pangs of the new birth, do but rightly settle his thoughts on the gospel of Christ, no doubt but thence he may suck the sweetest comforts that ever were revealed to man. Or if he find comfort in prayer, to which he ever and anon repairs in every step, then is it by Christ, in whose name he only approacheth to that throne of grace: no sooner had the king of Nineveh humbled himself, but his proclamation runs, *Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger?* And thus the man, now wrestling with grievous terrors of con-

science;—who can tell, saith he, if God will turn away his fierce anger? Let me then cry mightily unto the Lord of heaven; let me cry, and continue crying, until the Lord of mercy look upon me: and if for all this God give him a repulse, for reasons best known to himself; if at the first, second, third, fourth, or at many more times, he seem to have cried in vain, at last he flies to the ministry of the word, and if he may have his will, he would hit upon the most soul-searching man amongst God's messengers. At last he comes to God's minister, with a *what shall I do? what must I do to be saved?* Alas! now I feel the wounded conscience, the broken heart, the spiritual blindness, the captivity and poverty, of which often you have told me: if then there be any instruction, direction, or duty, which may tend to my good, now direct me in God's fear, and I will willingly follow it with my utmost endeavours.

And now, and not till now, hath God's minister a strong and seasonable call to magnify the sufficiency of Christ's death and passion: were the blood of Christ, and promise of salvation, proffered to an unwounded conscience, what were it, but like the pouring of a most sovereign balsam upon a sound member of man? It is the only, right, everlasting method, first to wound by the law, and then to heal by the gospel; and therefore when the heart is broken, then hath the man of God his warrant to bind it up again, then may he magnify God's mercy, then may he set out to the height the beauty of Christ's passion and person, and thus by his high and holy art of comforting the afflicted, at last the child of God, prepared for his birth, is born again.

The fifth step, is a clear, I say not a general sight, which he had before, but the clear sight of Christ laid open to the eye of faith: no sooner is the poor wounded soul informed thoroughly in the mystery and mercy of the gospel, but he then looks on his Saviour as the Jews on the brazen serpent, and seeing him lifted up on the cross, he cannot but see in him an infinite treasury of mercy and love, a boundless and bottomless sea of tender-heartedness and pity, a whole heaven of sweetness, happiness, peace, and pleasures. After the spirit of bondage, enters the spirit of adoption; the terrors of the law lead him to the comforts of the gospel; his sorrow for sin brings him to the clear light of his Saviour; and then as a man in death-pangs, that lifts up his eyes to heaven, so he in birth-pangs lifts up his eyes to Christ, who must either help him, or he sinks under his sin to the bottom of hell. And this sight of Christ Jesus to an humbled sinner, together with those glorious privileges which he brings with him, is a most pleasant, ravishing, heavenly sight. Not all the curious sights on earth, nor all those glittering spangles in heaven, can possibly afford such pleasure to the eye of man, as doth

this one object, Christ bleeding on the cross, to the soul of a sinner. Imagine you saw some malefactor led to the place of execution; if this man should suddenly see his king running towards him with his pardon in his hand, what a sight would this be! Thus it is with the man sorrowing for sin; whilst he is weeping his case, and confessing what a little step there is between him and damnation, in amaze he looks upon Christ, whom he sees with a spear in his side, with thorns on his head, with nails in his feet, with a pardon in his hands, offering it to all men, that will but receive it by faith. Oh! here is a sight indeed, able to revive the wickedest man upon earth, dead in trespasses and sins. And now there is hopes of the birth. We may call this the stirrings of God's child, or the first feelings of life, before he is born again.

The sixth step is, an hungering desire after Christ and his merits. O here is a thirst above all thirsts! It breeds ardent desires, vehement longings, unutterable groans, mighty gaspings, just like the dry and thirsty ground, that gasps and cleaves and opens for drops of rain. This is that violent affection that God puts into the hearts of those who seek him in sincerity and truth: never was Ahab more sick for a vineyard, nor Sisera for milk, nor Samson for water, than is a truly humbled soul after Christ; ever thirsting and longing that he may hide himself in that blood which his Saviour shed for him. I have read of a gracious woman, who labouring in these pangs, and longing after Christ Jesus, cried out, "I have borne nine children with as great pains as other women, and yet I would with all my heart bear them all over again, yea, bear them all the days of my life, to be assured of my part in Christ Jesus." One replying, "Doth not your heart desire and long after him?"—"Oh, (said she,) I have an husband and children, and many other comforts; I would give them all, and all the good I shall ever see in this world, or in the world to come, to have my poor thirsty soul refreshed with that precious blood of my Saviour." So eager and earnest is the heart of each man, parched with the angry countenance of God, after this blood of his: I thirst, I faint, I languish, I long, saith he, for one drop of mercy; my spirit is melted in me into tears of blood; my heart, because of sin, is so shaken and shivered,—my soul, because of sorrow, is so wasted and parched,—that my thirst is insatiable, my bowels are hot within me, after Christ. Stay; all these expressions are far short of those longings: no man knoweth them, save he that receives them, save he that is born again.

The seventh step is, a relying on Christ: a man no sooner considers those invitations of our Lord and Saviour; *If any man thirst, let him come unto me: Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters: Come unto me, all ye that are weary and*

*heavy laden*; but, resting himself on these blessed promises, he throws himself into the merciful arms of his crucified Lord. Come life, come death, come heaven, come hell, come what will, here will he stick for ever: *Who, saith Paul, shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, I am persuaded, (not these, nor more than these,) neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, &c. shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.* Thus it is with the man labouring in this birth: What! saith he, doth Christ call the heavy-laden? Why, Lord, I am heavy laden with a weight, a mass of sin; and if he may come that is called, Lord, I come, I come, and now I come; with thee will I build my tabernacle, with thee will I rest for ever. This affiance, dependence, reliance, or whatsoever else we call it, upon the merits of Christ, is the right justifying faith, whither if a man once come, there is but one degree more, and he is then born again.

The last and highest step is, universal obedience to Christ. No sooner hath he cast himself upon him, but he takes him, not only as a Saviour to redeem him from the miseries of sin, but as an husband, a lord, a king, to serve him, love him, honour him, and obey him: now will he take his yoke upon him; now will he bear his cross, and follow him; now will he walk in the holy path; now will he associate himself to that sect that is every where spoken against; now will he oppose himself against all sin whatsoever; now will he shake off his old companions, brethren in iniquity; now will he keep peace and a good conscience towards God and man; now will he watch over his secret sins, occasions of evil; now will he direct his words to the glorifying of God, and to give grace to the hearers; now will he conform all his actions to the sovereignty of grace; now will he delight in the word, the ways, the saints, the services, of God; will sell all, all that he hath, even all his sins, to the last filthy rag of his beloved bosom sin. And now *old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, 2 Cor. v. 17.* His heart, his eye, his ear, his tongue, his understanding, his will, his memory, his conscience, his love, his hatred, his hope, his fear, his joy, his sorrow, (will you any more?) his thoughts, his words, his actions, his affections—are all new; this conversion is universal, this change is a thorough change; now is Christ formed in him, now is he transformed into a new creature, he is made new; God the Father accepts him for his son, God the son stamps upon him the image of his Father, but more immediately God the Holy Ghost hath thus moulded and fashioned him, as I have let you see him, and now he is

born again, which except a man be,—he (shall not) cannot see the kingdom of God.

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

You see how God brings along the man whom he purposeth to make his; and yet let no truly humbled sinner be discouraged if he observe not so distinctly the order of these steps, and especially in that degree as we have related; for if in substance and effect they have been wrought, if he have them in truth, though perhaps not in this degree, I dare pronounce, that he is surely born again. It is one of our worthies has said, “In our humiliations, and other preparative dispositions, we do not prescribe precisely just such a measure and quantity, we do not determine peremptorily upon such or such a degree and height, we leave that to the wisdom of our great Master in heaven. But sure we are, a man must have so much, and in that measure, as thoroughly to humble him, and then to bring him to his Saviour; he must be weary of all his sins, and of Satan’s bondage wholly, willing to pluck out his right eye, and cut off his right hand; I mean, to part with his beloved bosom-lusts, to sell all, and not to leave so much as an hoof behind: he must see his danger, and so haste to the city of refuge; he must be sensible of his spiritual misery, that he may heartily thirst for mercy; he must find himself lost, that Christ may be all in all unto him; and after must follow an hatred of all false and evil ways for the time to come, a thorough change of former courses, company, conversation, and setting himself in the practice of sobriety, honesty, and holiness.” And another speaks, “That the discovery of the remedy as soon as the misery, must needs prevent a great part of the trouble, and make the distinct effects on the soul to be with much more difficulty discerned: nay, the actings of the soul are so quick, and oft so confused, that the distinct orders of these workings may not be apprehended, or remembered. And perhaps the joyful apprehension of mercy may make the sense of misery sooner forgotten.” The sum is—of every soul is required thus much: first, a truly penitent sight, sense, and hatred, of all sin. Secondly, a sincere and insatiable thirst after Christ, and his righteousness, both imputed and inherent. Thirdly, an unfeigned and unreserved resolution of an universal new obedience for the time to come. If any man hath had the experience of these affections and effects in

his own soul, whatsoever the order, or whatsoever the measure be, he may go on comfortably in the holy faith.

Now then let me advise thee, whosoever thou art that readest, to enter into thine own soul, and examine thine own state, whether or no thou art yet born again? Search and see, whether as yet the spirit of bondage hath wrought its effects in thee; whether thou hast been enlightened, convinced, and terrified with a sensible apprehension, and particular acknowledgment, of thy wretched estate? Search and see, whether as yet the Spirit of adoption hath sealed thee for his own; whether, after thy heart being broken, thy spirit bruised, thy soul humbled, thy conscience wounded and awakened, thou hast had a sight of Christ, and hast thirsted after him, and hast followed his ways and commandments by an universal obedience: If upon search thou canst say, without self-deceit, that so it is with thee, then mayest thou bless God that ever thou wast born; certainly, I dare say it, thou art born again. But if not, if all I have spoken are very mysteries to thee, what shall I say? If ever thou meanest to see the kingdom of God, strive, endeavour with all thy might, to become truly regenerate. Thou mayest say, perhaps, it is not in thy power; who can command the Spirit of the Lord, that bloweth where he listeth? I answer, it is indeed the Spirit, and not man, that regenerates or sanctifies; but I answer withal, the doctrine of the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, and wheresoever that is preached, as I preach it now to thee, there is the Holy Ghost present, and thither he comes to regenerate. If then as yet thou feelest not this mighty work of God in thee, and yet fain wouldst feel it; I shall lend thee two wings to bear thee, two hands to lead thee, to the foot of the ladder, where if thou ascend these steps aforesaid, I dare certainly pronounce of thee, thou art born again.

The first wing is prayer, which first brings thee to God's throne, and then to the new birth; Hos. xiv. 2. *Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously;*—and then it follows, *I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.*—The soul may object, I may say thus, and be no better. But I answer, Say it, though you be no better, because God bids you say it: Say it, and say it again; it may be he will come in when you say it.—The soul may object again, How can I pray, and have not faith? I answer, Put thyself upon prayer, and who knows but blessing and faith may come? it is the Lord that converts, and heals, and saves; and prayer is the means to produce this effect: when we are required to pray, to repent, and believe, we are not to seek strength in ourselves, but to search into the covenant, and turn the promise into prayer. Therefore bow thy knees, and humbly, heartily, frequently,

fervently, implore the influence of God's blessed Spirit. Wouldst thou ask, and continue asking, wouldst thou cry, and continue crying, then could I assure thee of the promise which God hath made, and cannot deny; *He that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh* (by continuance and perseverance) *it shall be opened*, Matt. vii. 8.

The second wing that bears thee to these steps of the new birth, is, constant hearing of the word: thou must attend the gates of wisdom, and wait on her posts: thou must come to God's house, and hearken to the ministry of the word; and thou shalt see at one time or other God will remember thee in mercy: it is true I know not when, and therefore I wish thee miss no day to repair to God's house, lest the day of thy neglect might have been the day of thy conversion. Certain it is, no man should expect God's blessing without his ordinances, no eating of bread without ploughing and sowing, no recovering of health without eating and drinking; so no blessing, no grace, no regeneration, without waiting upon God in his ways, and in his ordinances. Now then, as thou desirest heaven, or the way to heaven, to be born again, I beseech thee make high account of this ordinance of God. In preaching of the gospel, light, motion, and power, go out to all, which men resist; and some are destroyed, not because they could not believe, but because they resist, and will not obey, and so die, Acts vii. 51. Luke xiii. 34. Ezek. xxxiii. 11 Hos. xiii. 9. and yet I wish thee not only to hear it, but after thou hast heard, consider of it, ponder on it; and lay the threats and reproofs, the precepts and promises, unto thine own soul: thus if thou hearest and meditatest, I doubt not but God's word will be a word of power to thee, and, together with prayer, bring thee towards the new birth.

To see, is all one as to enjoy; yet a man may see that which he doth not enjoy: but without regeneration there is no sight, much less possession, of the kingdom of God.

If by the kingdom of God, is meant the kingdom of grace, whereof our Saviour speaketh, *The kingdom of God is within you*, Luke xvii. 21. see to what a privilege the new man hath attained; all the graces of God, all the fruits of the Spirit, are now poured into him. If you ask, what graces? what fruits? Paul tells you, Gal. v. 22. *Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*; or, would you have us to contract them? Paul doth it elsewhere, *The kingdom of God is,—righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xiv. 17.

First, Righteousness. No sooner is a man born again, but he enters into the holy path, he declines all evil, and stands at the sword's point with his beloved sin; or if ever any sin, through the violence of temptation, seize on him again, he

is presently put again into the pangs of the new birth, and so renewing his sorrow, and repairing repentance, he becomes more resolute and watchful over all his ways. And as he abhors evil, so he cleaves to that which is good: his faith, like the sun, sets all those heavenly stars on shining,—hope, and love, and zeal, and humility, and patience; in a word, universal obedience, and fruitfulness in all good works: not one, but all good duties, of the first and second table, begin to be natural and familiar to him.

Secondly, no sooner is a man righteous, but he is at peace with man, at peace with God, at peace with himself. He is at peace with man; *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid*, saith the prophet Isaiah, chap. xi. 6. The meaning is, that in the kingdom of Christ, when a man is called into the state of grace, howsoever by nature he is a wolf, or a leopard, or a lion, or a bear, yet he shall then lay aside his cruelty, and live peaceably with all men. He is at peace with God, he hath humbled himself, and confessed his fault, and cried for mercy, and cast himself upon Christ; so that now God, by his word, hath spoke peace to his soul; by the mediation of Christ it is obtained, and by the testimony of the Spirit he feels it within him. This is that peace which passeth all understanding. He is at peace with himself, I mean his own conscience; that which before stirred up the fire, that brought him to a sight of sin and sense of divine wrath, that filled him with fearful terrors, remorse and sorrow, is now quiet. Solomon calls it *a continual feast*, Prov. xv. 15. Who are the attendants, but the holy angels? What is the cheer, but joy in the Holy Ghost? Who is the feaster, but God himself, and his good Spirit dwelling in him? Nor is this feast without music; God's word and his actions make a blessed harmony, and he endeavours to continue it by keeping peace and a good conscience towards God and man.

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

If by *the kingdom of God*, is meant the kingdom of glory, see then what a privilege waits on the new man; no sooner shall his breath and body be divorced, but his soul, mounted on the wings of angels, shall straight be carried above the starry firmament, there to inherit the kingdom of God, truly

called so, for 'tis a kingdom of God's own making, beautifying, and blessing; a kingdom beseeming the glorious residence of the King of kings. But here my discourse must give way to your meditations. In this fountain of pleasure, let the new-born Christian bathe his soul; for his it is, and he it is only that shall see it, enjoy it: *Except a man be born again, no man shall ever see the kingdom of God.*

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

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THE  
DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION,  
*FURTHER EXPLAINED.*

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CHAP. I.

THE OCCASION AND METHOD OF THIS TREATISE.

SOME there are, who, hearing the new birth to be so necessary to salvation, but never feeling in themselves any such change, have desired further helps. I advised them in the former treatise to be frequent in prayer, and hearing of the word: But so we have done, say they, and yet we feel no conversion. It may be so, for not always the doing of them, but perseverance in them, through Christ, obtains the blessing. I shall for their further satisfaction, give them a more particular method.

Two things necessary for them that would have part in the new birth, are, 1. To get into it. 2. To be delivered of it.

1. The means to get into it, are, 1. Examination of themselves. 2. Confession of their sins. 3. Hearty prayer for the softening of their hearts. By which are obtained the three first steps; sight of sin, sense of divine wrath, sorrow for sin.

2. The means to be delivered of it, is, by application of the promises; and these produce their several effects; as, a sight of Christ, a desire after Christ, a relying on Christ; and obedience to Christ.

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CHAP. II.

*The first Means to get into the New Birth.*

1. THE means to get into the new birth, is, first, examination; and the way to examine, is to set before men that crystal-glass of the law for their light and rule: to this purpose I

have here annexed a catalogue; not that I can possibly enumerate all sins, but only the kinds; and if herein I come short, yet conscience may hereby bring into their thoughts those others not mentioned.

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

II. SINS AGAINST THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

In every commandment we must observe both the duties required, and sins forbidden, for both these are implied in every one of the commandments; if in the first thou art guilty, thou must answer negatively; if in the second, thou must answer affirmatively.

Now then to proceed:

*“Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.”*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, first, Hast thou ever took the true God in Christ to be thy God? 2ndly, Hast thou abounded in those graces by which thou shouldst cleave unto God, as in knowledge, and love, and fear, and joy, and trusting in God? 3dly, Hast thou observed God’s mercies, and promises, and works, and judgments upon thee, and, by a particular application, took special notice thereof? 4thly, Hast thou communicated with the godly, and joined thyself to God’s people, and delighted chiefly in them?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes been guilty of blasphemy, or idolatry, or witchcraft, or atheism? 2ndly, Hast thou not been guilty of pride, a sin flatly opposing God, and first committed by devils? 3dly, Hast thou not inward reasonings that there is no God, or that he seeth not, or knoweth not, or that there is no profit in his service? 5thly, Hast thou not trusted in man, or feared man, or loved the world, and thereby alienated thy heart from God? 6thly, Hast thou not resorted to witches, or in the first place to physicians, and not to the living God? 7thly, Hast thou not tempted God, and in the matters of God been either cold, or lukewarm, or preposterously zealous? 8thly, Hast thou not been careless to perform the inward duties of God’s worship in sincerity and truth? If in those thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

III. SINS AGAINST THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

*“Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.”*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, first, Hast thou ever worshipped the true God purely according to his will? 2ndly,

Hast thou observed all those outward duties of his worship, as prayer, and vows, and fasting, and meditating, and the rest? 3dly, Hast thou repaired to God's house, observed family duties, received the preachers of the gospel?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes walked after the imaginations of thy own heart, serving God out of custom? 2ndly, Hast thou not committed idol-worship, conceiving of God in thy mind in the likeness of a creature? 3dly, Hast thou not made an image to liken God to it, or used any gesture of love and reverence to any such images? Hast thou not been careless to worship God, to call upon the Lord, to receive God's ministers, or to perform any other of the outward duties of God's worship? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

#### IV. SINS AGAINST THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

*“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, first, Hast thou been a constant learner, hearer, and doer, of God's word and will? 2ndly, Hast thou prayed with perseverance, understanding, and power of the spirit, without doubting or wavering? 3dly, Hast thou come preparedly to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and being come, hast thou discerned the Lord's body? 4thly, Hast thou used all the titles, and properties, and works, and ordinances, of the Lord with knowledge, faith, reverence, joy, and sincerity.

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes, in thy talk, dishonoured the titles, attributes, religion, word, people, of God, or any thing that hath in it the print of his holiness? 2ndly, Hast thou not caused the name of religion, or people of God, to be ill thought of by thy ill course of life? 3rdly, Hast thou not rashly, or unpreparedly, or heedlessly, read the word, heard sermons, received the sacraments, or performed any other part of the worship of God? 4thly, Hast thou not thought or spoken blasphemously, or contemptuously, of God, or of any thing whatsoever pertaining to God? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

#### V. SINS AGAINST THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

*“Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.”*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, first, Hast thou, according to the equity of this commandment, ever observed the Lord's day, and other days and times set apart for God's service? 2ndly, Hast thou always prepared thy heart, before thou wentest into the house of the Lord, by meditation of God's word and

works, by examination and reformation of thy ways, by prayer, thanksgiving, and holy resolution to carry thyself as in God's presence, and to hear and obey whatsoever thou shouldst learn out of the pure word of God? Hast thou repaired to God's house in due time, and stayed the whole time of prayer, reading, preaching of the word, singing of psalms, receiving of the sacraments? Hast thou performed private religious offices upon the Lord's day; in private prayer and thanksgiving, in acknowledging thy offences to God, in reconciling thyself to those thou hast offended, or with whom thou art at variance; in visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, contributing to the necessity of the poor, instructing thy children and servants, and the rest of thy family, in the fear and nurture of the Lord?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes spent the Lord's day in idleness, or in worldly business, in vanities, or in sin? 2ndly, Hast thou not omitted public duties, or camest in too late, or wentest out too soon? 3dly, Hast thou not employed thy cattle, or servants, or children, or any other, though thou workedst not thyself? Hast thou not profaned the Lord's day, by needless works, words, or thoughts, about thy calling, or about thy recreation? Hath not the strict observance of the duties of that day been tedious unto thee, saying in thine heart, When will the day be gone? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

#### VI. SINS AGAINST THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

*“ Honour thy father and thy mother.”*

FOR THE DUTIES HERE REQUIRED: they are either in the family, commonwealth, or church.

First, for the family: Say, if thou art an husband: 1. Hast thou loved thy wife, and dealt with her according to knowledge, giving honour to her as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life? If thou art a wife: 2. Hast thou submitted to thine own husband, as unto the Lord, in every thing? 3. Hast thou put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit? If thou art a parent: 4. Hast thou brought up thy children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? 5. Hast thou corrected them, yet not provoked them by immoderate correction? 6. Hast thou provided for them in their callings, or outward estates? If thou art a child: 7. Hast thou obeyed thy parents, and received correction with submission and reverence? 8. Hast thou relieved them in their wants? 9. Hast thou observed their instructions, and covered their infirmities? If thou art a master: 10. Hast thou entertained God's servants, and given unto thy servant that which is just and equal? If thou art a servant: 11. Hast thou been obe-

dient to thy master according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity?

Secondly, for the commonweath; if thou art a magistrate: 12. Hast thou executed just laws? 13. Hast thou reformed others' abuses, according to the power that is in thee? If thou art a subject: 14. Hast thou obeyed the higher powers in all just commands? 15. Hast thou been subject unto them, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake?

Thirdly, for the church; if thou art a minister: 16. Hast thou taught in season, and out of season? 17. Hath thy light shined before men, that they might see thy good works? If thou art an hearer: 18. Hast thou communicated to them that teach thee in all good things? 19. Hast thou obeyed them, and prayed for them, and loved them, and followed them, considering the end of their conversation?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—And first, for the family; say, if thou art an husband: 1. Hast thou not sometimes abused thy wife, or injured her in thought, word, or deed? If thou art a wife: 2. Hast thou not been wasteful, or froward, or idle? If thou art a parent: 3. Hast thou not been careless, especially of thy children's souls? If thou art a child: 4. Hast thou not despised thy father's or mother's instructions? 5. Hast thou not mocked them, or shamed them, or grieved them? If thou art a master: 6. Hast thou not governed thy family negligently? 7. Hast thou not withheld that which is just and equal in diet, wages, encouragement? If thou art a servant: 8. Hast thou not been idle and slothful? 9. Hast thou not served grudgingly, and not from the heart?

Secondly, for the commonwealth; if thou art a magistrate: 10. Hast thou not been as a lion, or a bear, roaring and raging over the poor? 11. Hast thou not decreed unrighteous decrees, respecting the persons of the poor, or honouring the persons of the mighty? If thou art a subject: 12. Hast thou not reviled the gods, or cursed the rulers of thy people? 13. Hast thou not disobeyed the higher powers, or denied tribute, or custom, or honour, or fear, to whom they are due?

Thirdly, for the church; if thou art a minister: 14. Hast thou not been profane in thy life and conversation? 15. Hast thou not run before thou wast sent? or being sent, hast thou not been negligent in the gift that is in thee? 16. Hast thou not caused God's people to err? 17. Hast thou not committed simony, or sought indirectly for the fleece, not regarding the flock? 18. Hast thou not strengthened the hands of evil-doers, in preaching peace to wicked men? 19. Hast thou not given heed to fables, or to some unprofitable matter, rather than godly edifying? If thou art an hearer: 20. Hast thou not resisted the minister, and the word preached by him? What-

soever thou art, husband, or wife, or parent, or child, or master, or servant, or magistrate, or subject, or minister, or hearer, if in any of these thou hast transgressed, then thou hast broken this commandment.

VII. SINS AGAINST THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

*“Thou shalt do no murder.”*

THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, Hast thou ever desired and studied, by all lawful means to preserve thine own person, and the person of thy neighbour?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes envied others? 2ndly, Hast thou not offended others in words, by censuring, or reviling, or rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing? 3dly, Hast thou not offended others in deeds, plotting against the just, or doing evil to any man? 4thly, Hast thou not been angry with thy brother without cause, or continued long in anger? 5thly, Hast thou not rejoiced at others' fall? or wished a curse to their souls? 6thly, Hast thou not done evil to thyself, by inordinate fretting, or grieving, or drinking, or saying in thy passions, would to God I were dead? 7thly, Hast thou not been a sower of discord, or some way or other an occasion of the discomfort, or the death, of thy neighbour? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, thou hast then broken this commandment.

VIII. SINS AGAINST THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

*“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, Hast thou ever kept thyself pure in soul and body, both towards thyself and others?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes been defiled with whoredom, adultery, polygamy, or self-pollution? 2ndly, Hast thou not offended in the occasions of uncleanness, as in idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, wanton company, or gay attire? 3dly, Hast thou not sinned in thy senses, or gestures, or words? 4thly, Hast thou not harboured in thy heart impure thoughts, inordinate affections? 5thly, Hast thou not behaved thyself immodestly, using some manner of dalliance and wantonness? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

IX. SINS AGAINST THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

*“Thou shalt not steal.”*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, Hast thou, by all good means, furthered the outward estate of thyself and of thy neighbour?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes got thy living by an unlawful calling? 2ndly, Hast

thou not impoverished thyself by idleness, or unnecessary expenses? 3dly, Hast thou not withheld from thyself, or others, that which should have been expended? 4thly, Hast thou not gotten or kept thy neighbour's goods by falsehood or force, and made no restitution? 5thly, Hast thou not stolen by usury, or oppression, or fraud in buying or selling? 6thly, Hast thou not robbed God of his tithes and offerings? 7thly, Hast thou not some way or other impaired thy neighbour's estate? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

X. SINS AGAINST THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

*"Thou shalt not bear false witness."*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, Hast thou ever by all means sought to maintain thy own and thy neighbour's good name, according to truth and a good conscience?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes loved, or made, a lie? 2ndly, Hast thou not raised a false report? 3dly, Hast thou not censured or judged others? 4thly, Hast thou not flattered thyself and others, saying unto the wicked, thou art righteous? 5thly, Hast thou not condemned some without witness, or forborne to witness for others when thou knewest the truth? 6thly, Hast thou not been uncharitably suspicious, or a despiser of thy neighbour? 7thly, Hast thou not told a lie, whether jestingly, or officiously, or perniciously? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

XI. SINS AGAINST THE LAST COMMANDMENT.

*"Thou shalt not covet."*

FOR THE DUTIES REQUIRED.—Say, first, Hast thou ever been truly contented with thy own outward condition? 2ndly, Hast thou rejoiced at others' good, and loved thy neighbour as thyself?

FOR THE SINS FORBIDDEN.—Say, first, Hast thou not sometimes conceived evil thoughts in thy heart? 2ndly, Hast thou not been discontented with thy own condition? Hast thou not coveted after something or other that was thy neighbour's? If in any of these thou hast transgressed, then hast thou broken this commandment.

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CHAP. III.

*The second Means to get into the New Birth.*

AFTER examination, which may serve thee for one day's work or two, the next duty is, confession. Take a catalogue of

those sins which thou hast noted, and spread thy catalogue before the Lord; there read thou seriously, and particularly, saying, O Lord, I confess I have committed this sin, and the other sin, (as they are before thee in order,) of all these sins I am guilty, especially of those sins wherein I delighted, my darlings, my bosom-sins, (take notice of them, and confess them again,) of all these sins I am guilty; and now, O Lord, standing, as it were, at the bar of thy tribunal, I arraign myself, and accuse myself, and judge myself worthy of the utmost of thy wrath and indignation: for one sin thou castedst Adam out of paradise, for one sin thou castedst the angels out of heaven, and what then shall become of me, that have committed a world of sins?—(Here pause a while, and meditate on thy unworthiness.)—O that I should be so foolish, so brutish, so mad, to commit these sins, these manifold sins! O that by these sins I should break so holy a law, provoke so good and great a majesty? What should I do, but, remembering my evil ways, even loathe myself in my own sight, yea abhor myself in dust and ashes, for my iniquities and my abominations? For conclusion, thou mayest imitate the publican, who, not daring to lift up his eyes, smote his breast: So do thou, and say with him, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### *The third Means to get into the New Birth.*

AFTER confession, which may well serve thee for another day's work, seek for true sorrow and mourning for thy sins: seek thou must, and never leave seeking, till thou feel thy heart melt within thee. To this purpose read some tracts of death, of judgment, of hell, of Christ's passion, of the joys of heaven; last of all, and I take it best of all, resolve to set every day some time apart to beg it of the Lord: and at the time appointed fall down on thy knees, spread thy catalogue, confess, accuse, judge, condemn thyself again; which done, beg of the Lord to give thee that soft heart he promised, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* Say then to thyself, is this the Lord's promise? O Lord, perform it to my heart; take away my stony heart, and give me a heart of flesh, a new heart, a new spirit, &c.—(Here make thine own prayer: be not careful of words, only let the words be the true voice of thy heart.)—Pray, and call, and cry, with vehemency and fervency not to be uttered. When thou hast done, if the Lord do not yet hear thee, pray again the next day, and the

next day, yea, put on this resolution, that thou wilt never leave praying till the Lord hear thee in mercy, till he make thee to feel thy heart melt within thee, yea, if it may be, llit thou seest thy tears trickling down thy cheeks, because of thy offences. The Lord will, perhaps, hear thee at the first time, or at the second time, or, if he do not, be not discouraged, God hath his times; God speaketh once and twice, and man perceiveth not; happy he who relenteth at last; give it not over, persist thou, thy suit is just, and importunity will prevail.

2. *The first Reason for this Sorrow.*—This must be done; first, because “without pangs no birth: the pangs of a penitent man are as the pangs of a woman. Now as there can be no birth without pains of travail going before, so neither true repentance without some terrors of the law, and straits of conscience. *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear*, saith the apostle to the Romans; to shew us they once did receive it. When? but in the very first preparation to conversion: then it was that the Spirit of God in the law did so bear witness unto them of their bondage, that it made them to fear. And certainly thus it is with every man in his first conversion; his contrition must be vehement, bruising, breaking, rending the heart, and feeling the throes, as a woman labouring of child, before there can be a new birth.

3. *The second Reason for this Sorrow.*—Again, without contrition, no Christ; “therefore it was that John Baptist,” saith Chrysostom, “first thoroughly frightened the minds of his hearers with the terror of judgment, and expectation of torment, and when he had thus taken down the stubbornness, then, at length, he makes mention of Christ.” Certainly, the first thing that draws to Christ, is to consider our miserable state without him; no man will come to Christ, except he be hungry; no man will take Christ’s yoke upon him, till he come to know the weight of Satan’s yoke: to this end, therefore, must every man be broken with lashes of conscience, that so despairing of himself, he may fly unto Christ.

4. *The third Reason for this Sorrow.*—Again, without hearty sorrow, no spiritual comfort. We must first be humbled before the Lord, and then he will lift us up. God pours not the oil of his mercy, save into a broken vessel; God never comforts thoroughly, save where he finds humiliation and repentance for sin. “The word of God,” saith one, “hath three degrees of operation in the hearts of his chosen; first, it falleth to men’s ears as the sound of many waters, a mighty, a great and confused sound, and which commonly bringeth neither terror nor joy, but a wondering and acknowledgment of a strange force; this is that which many felt, hearing Christ, when they were astonished at his doctrine. The next effect is, the voice of thunder, which bringeth not only wonder, but

fear also; not only filleth the ears with sound, and the heart with astonishment, but moreover shaketh and terrifieth the conscience. The third effect is, the sound of harping, while the word not only ravisheth with admiration, and striketh the conscience with terror, but also, lastly, filleth it with sweet peace and joy. Now albeit the two first degrees may be without the last, yet none feel the last, who have not in some degree felt both the first." He saith true, in some degree, though commonly the deeper the sense of misery, the sweeter is the sense of mercy.

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## CHAP. V.

### *The Means to be delivered out of the Pangs of the New Birth.*

1. AND now, if, by God's blessing, thou feelest this sorrow and melting of heart, the next thing thou must do, is to seek for the remedy, which remedy consists of these ingredients: first, A sight of Christ. 2ndly, A desire after Christ. 3dly, A relying on Christ. 4thly, An obedience to Christ. 5thly, A comfort in Christ, sought for and obtained. Thou wilt say, these ingredients are pearls indeed, but how should I obtain them? I answer, by application of the promises; and since every ingredient hath its particular promises, I shall let thee see them in order, only do thou apply them thyself: some may object, I dare not look to the promise, I cannot believe; if I could believe, then I could expect good from the promise.—I answer, thou shalt never believe upon these terms; thou must not first have faith, then go to the promise, and from thence receive power to believe. O then go to the promise, and expect faith from thence; this is the rule, "I must not bring faith to the promise, but to receive faith from it, and therefore there will I hang, and wait till the Lord please to work it."

### 2. *The Promises procuring a Sight of Christ.*

The first step that brings comfort to thy heavy soul, is the sight of Christ: and to procure this sight, thou hast these promises.

*Matt. i. 21.* "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

*John i. 29.* "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

*John iii. 16.* "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have life everlasting."

*Rom. iii. 25.* "God hath set forth Christ Jesus, to be reconciliation through faith in his blood."

1 *Cor.* i. 30. "Christ Jesus, of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

1 *Tim.* i. 15. "This is a true saying, and by all men worthy to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

1 *John* ii. 1, 2. "If any sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

All these tell thee, that as thou art a sinner, so thou hast a Saviour; only do thou apply them, and certainly they will help thee in the first step of this remedy, to wit, the sight of Christ.

### 3. *The Promises procuring a Desire after Christ.*

Thou mayest say, I see Christ, and I see that his person, and death, and blood-shed, are precious and saving; but how may I make him mine? how may I know that he is my Saviour? I answer, Thou must hunger and thirst after him; this desire is the second step: and to provoke thee to this duty, consider these promises:

*Isa.* lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price."

*John* vii. 37, 38. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

*Rev.* xxii. 17. "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

These may provoke thee to thirst after Christ, that sovereign fountain, opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

### 4. *The Promises procuring a Relying on Christ.*

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

*Matt.* xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

*Isa.* lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." And lest thou say, I am so far from bringing any thing in my hand, that I bring a world of wickedness in my heart, and my sins, I fear, will hinder my acceptation; No, saith he:—

*Isa.* lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, [and this is thy desire, thy case] and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him," &c. If all this will not do without a more solemn invitation, see how the Lord of heaven sends forth his ambassadors to entreat thee to come in:—

*2 Cor.* v. 20. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God." Or if he cannot woo thee, lo, he commands thee:—

*1 John* iii. 23. "And this is the commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Or yet to drive thee to Christ, he not only commands, but threatens:—

*Heb.* iii. 18. "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?"

How is it possible, but that all, or some of these, should bring in every broken heart to believe, and every one that is weary of his sins, to rely upon the Lord of life for everlasting welfare?

##### 5. *The Promises procuring Obedience to Christ.*

And yet thou mayest say, I have cast myself on Christ; is this all I must do? No, there is yet another step; he is not only to be thy Saviour, but thy husband; thou must love him, and serve him, and honour him, and obey him; thou must endeavour not only for pardon of sin, and salvation from hell, but for purity, obedience, ability to do or suffer any thing for Christ. And to provoke thee to this duty, consider these texts:—

*Jer.* xxxi. 33. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

*Matt.* vii. 21. "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

*Matt.* xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

*Matt.* xvi. 24. "If any man will follow me, let him take up his cross and follow me."

*2 Cor.* v. 15. "He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them."

1 *John* i. 6, 7. "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 *John* ii. 5, 6. "He that keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked."

1 *John* iii. 6, 9. "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not.—Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

All these may invite thee to enter into the holy path, and to fight under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, unto thy life's end.

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## DIRECTIONS TO A MAN IN THE ACT OF THE NEW BIRTH.

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### THE OCCASION OF THIS TREATISE.

HITHERTO I have given the doctrine of the new birth; yet one thing is wanting, to wit, the practice of some saint in this one necessary thing: and what man hath writ more on this subject, than T. Hooker? Therefore I thought fit, not only to contract his books in this appendix; but also, to set before you those pathetic expressions of his soul-pangs in the new-birth, as matter for your imitation.

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### CHAP. I.

#### *The Soul's Preparation.*

BEFORE the soul can share in Christ's merits, (to speak in the author's language, without any alteration,) two things are required:

1. A preparation to receive Christ.
2. An implantation of the soul into Christ.

That there must be a preparation, is the first ground we lay; and herein observe we, the matter, the manner, and the means, of this preparation.

1. For matter: the soul of a sinner must be prepared for Christ, before he can entertain him. When kings go to any place, they send, to make readiness, their harbingers before them: if Christ, the King of saints, come into a soul, there must be a preparation before he enter; and good reason, for he