

WORKS
OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT

PREPARATORY UNTO REGENERATION.

CHAP. II.

Sundry things preparatory to the work of conversion. Material and formal dispositions with their difference. Things in the power of our natural abilities required of us in a way of duty. Internal, spiritual effects wrought in the souls of men by the word. Illumination. Conviction of sin. Consequents thereof. These things variously taught. Power of the word and energy of the Spirit distinct. Subject of this work; mind, affections, and conscience. Nature of this whole work, and difference from saving conversion farther declared.

FIRST, In reference unto the work of regeneration itself, *positively* considered, we may observe, that ordinarily there are certain *previous* and preparatory works, or workings in and upon the souls of men, that are antecedent and *dispositive* unto it. But yet regeneration doth not consist in them, nor can it be educed out of them. This is, for the substance of it, the position of the divines of the church of England, at the synod of Dort, two whereof died bishops, and others of them were dignified in the hierarchy. I mention it, that those by whom these things are despised, may a little consider whose ashes they trample on and scorn. Lawful doubtless it is for any man, on just grounds, to dissent from their judgments and determinations^a; but to do it with an imputation of folly, with derision, contempt, scorn, and scoff-

^a Sunt quædam opera externa ab hominibus ordinarie requisita priusquam ad statum regenerationis aut conversionis perducantur quæ ab iisdem quandoque libere fieri, quandoque libere omitti solent, ut adire ecclesiam, audire verbi præconium, et id genus alia.

Sunt quædam effecta interna ad conversionem sive regenerationem prævia, quæ virtute verbi spiritusque in nondum regeneratorum cordibus excitantur, qualia sunt notitia voluntatis divinæ, sensus peccati, timor pænæ; cogitatio de liberatione, spes aliqua veniæ. Synod. Dordrec. Suffrag. Theolog. Britan. ad Artic. quartum,

Theſ. 1. 2.

ing, at what they believed and taught, becometh only a generation of new divines amongst us. But to return; I speak in this position only of them that are adult, and not converted until they have made use of the means of grace, in and by their own reasons and understandings: and the dispositions I intend, are only materially so; not such as contain grace of the same nature as is regeneration itself. A material disposition is that which disposeth, and some way maketh a subject fit for, the reception of that which shall be communicated, added, or infused into it, as its form. So wood by dryness and a due composure, is made fit and ready to admit of firing, or continual fire. A formal disposition is where one degree of the same kind, disposeth the subject unto farther degrees of it. As the morning light which is of the same kind, disposeth the air to the reception of the full light of the sun. The former we allow here, not the latter. Thus in natural generation there are sundry dispositions of the matter before the form is introduced. So the body of Adam was formed, before the rational soul was breathed into it; and Ezekiel's bones came together with a noise and shaking before the breath of life entered into them.

I shall in this place give only a summary account of this *preparatory work*; because in the close of these discourses, I shall handle it practically and more at large. Wherefore what I have here to offer concerning it, shall be reduced unto the ensuing observations.

First, There are some things required of us in a way of duty in order unto our regeneration, which are so in the *power of our own natural abilities*, as that nothing but corrupt prejudices and stubbornness in sinning, doth keep or hinder men from the performance of them. And these we may reduce unto two heads: (1.) An *outward attendance*, unto the dispensation of the word of God, with those other external means of grace, which accompany it, or are appointed therein. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;' Rom. x. 17. that is, it is hearing the word of God which is the ordinary means of ingenerating faith in the souls of men. This is required of all to whom the gospel doth come, and this they are able of themselves to do, as well as any other natural or civil action. And where men do it not,

where they despise the word at a distance, yea, where they do it not with diligence and choice, it is merely from supine negligence of spiritual things, carnal security, and contempt of God, which they must answer for. (2.) A diligent *intension* of mind, in attendance on the means of grace, to understand and receive the things revealed and declared as the mind and will of God. For this end hath God given men their reasons and understandings, that they may use and exercise them about their duty towards him, according to the revelation of his mind and will. To this purpose, he calls upon them to 'remember that they are men, and to turn unto him.' And there is nothing herein but what is in the liberty and power of the rational faculties of our souls, assisted with those common aids, which God affords unto all men in general. And great advantages both may be, and are daily, attained hereby. Persons, I say, who diligently apply their rational abilities in and about spiritual things, as externally revealed in the word, and the preaching of it, do usually attain great advantages by it, and excel their equals in other things; as Paul did when he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. Would men be but as intent and diligent in their endeavours after knowledge in spiritual things, as revealed in a way suited unto our capacities and understandings, as they are to get skill in crafts, sciences, and other mysteries of life, it would be much otherwise with many than it is. A neglect herein also is the fruit of sensuality, spiritual sloth, love of sin, and contempt of God, all which are the voluntary frames and actings of the minds of men.

These things are required of us in order unto our regeneration, and it is in the power of our own wills to comply with them; and we may observe concerning them, That, [1.] the omission of them, the neglect of men in them, is the principal occasion and cause of the eternal ruin of the souls of the generality of them to whom, or amongst whom, the gospel is preached. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;' John iii. 19. The generality of men know full well that they do, in this matter, no more what they are able, than what they should. All pleadable pretences of inability and weakness are far from them. They cannot but know here, and they shall be forced to con-

fess hereafter, that it was merely from their own cursed sloth, with love of the world and sin, that they were diverted from a diligent attendance on the means of conversion, and the sedulous exercise of their minds about them. Complaints hereof against themselves will make up a great part of their last dreadful cry. [2.] In the most diligent use of outward means, men are not able of themselves to attain unto regeneration, or complete conversion to God, without an especial, effectual, internal work of the Holy Spirit of grace on their whole souls. This, containing the substance of what is principally proposed unto confirmation in the ensuing discourses, needs not here be insisted on. [3.] Ordinarily God in the effectual dispensation of his grace, meeteth with them who attend with diligence on the outward administration of the means of it. He doth so, I say, ordinarily, in comparison of them who are despisers and neglecters of them. Sometimes indeed he goeth as it were out of the way, to meet with and bring home unto himself a persecuting Saul, taking of him in, and taking him off from, a course of open sin and rebellion. But ordinarily he dispenseth his peculiar especial grace among them who attend unto the common means of it. For he will both glorify his word thereby, and give out pledges of his approbation of our obedience unto his commands and institutions.

Secondly, There are certain *internal spiritual effects*, wrought in and upon the souls of men, whereof the word preached is the immediate instrumental cause, which ordinarily do precede the work of regeneration, or real conversion unto God. And they are reducible unto three heads. 1. *Illumination*. 2. *Conviction*. 3. *Reformation*. The first of these respects the mind only; the second the mind, conscience, and affections; and the third the life and conversation.

1. The first is *illumination*, of whose nature and causes we must afterward treat distinctly; at present I shall only consider it, as it is ordinarily *previous* unto regeneration, and materially disposing the mind thereunto. Now all the light which by any means we attain unto, or knowledge that we have in or about spiritual things, things of supernatural revelation, come under this denomination of illumination. And hereof there are three degrees. (1.) That which ariseth merely from an industrious application of the rational facul-

ties of our souls, to know, perceive, and understand, the doctrines of truth as revealed unto us. For hereby much knowledge of divine truth may be obtained, which others, through their negligence, sloth, and pride, are unacquainted with. And this knowledge I refer unto illumination; that is, a light superadded to the innate conceptions of men's minds, and beyond what of themselves they can extend unto; because it is concerning such things as the heart of man could never of itself conceive, but the very knowledge of them is communicated by their revelation; 1 Cor. ii. 9. 11. And the reason why so very few do exercise themselves to the attaining of this knowledge, according to their abilities, is, because of the enmity which is in the carnal minds of all men by nature unto the things themselves that are revealed. And within the compass of this degree, I comprise all knowledge of spiritual things that is merely natural. (2.) There is an illumination which is an especial effect of the Holy Ghost by the word on the minds of men. With respect hereunto, some who fall totally from God, and perish eternally, are said to have been 'once enlightened;' Heb. vi. 4. This light variously affects the mind, and makes a great addition unto what is *purely natural* or attainable by the mere exercise of our natural abilities.

For, [1.] it adds *perspicuity* unto it, making the things discerned in it more clear and perspicuous to the mind. Hence men endowed with it, are said to 'know the way of righteousness;' 2 Pet. ii. 21. clearly and distinctly to apprehend the doctrine of the gospel as the way of righteousness. They know it not only or merely as true, but as a way of righteousness; namely, the way of God's righteousness, which is therein revealed from faith to faith; Rom. i. 17. and the way of righteousness for sinners in the sight of God; Rom. x. 3, 4. [2.] It adds a greater *assent* unto the truth of the things revealed, than mere natural reason can rise up unto. Hence those thus illuminated are frequently said to believe; their faith being only the naked assent of their minds unto the truth revealed to them. So it is said of Simon the magician; Acts viii. 12. and of sundry of the Jews; John ii. 23, 24. xii. 42. [3.] It adds unto them some kind of *evanid joy*. These receive the 'word with joy,' and yet have 'no root in themselves;' Luke xviii. 13. 'They rejoice in the light of

it,' at least for a season; John v. 35. Persons that are thus enlightened, will be variously affected with the word, so as they are not whose natural faculties are not spiritually excited. [4.] It adds oft-times gifts also, whereof this spiritual light is, as it were, the common matter, which in exercise is formed and fashioned in great variety. I say, this kind of spiritual light, the effect of this illumination, is the subject matter, and contains in it the substance, of all spiritual gifts. One sort of gift it is, when put forth and exercised in one way, or one kind of duty, and another as in another. And where it is improved into gifts, which principally it is by exercise, there it wonderfully affects the mind, and raiseth its apprehensions in and of spiritual things. Now concerning this degree of illumination, I say, first, That it is not regeneration, nor doth it consist therein, nor doth necessarily or infallibly ensue upon it. (3.) A third degree is required thereunto, which we shall afterward explain. Many therefore may be thus enlightened, and yet never be converted. Secondly, That in order of nature it is previous unto a full and real conversion to God, and is materially preparatory and dispositive thereunto. For saving grace enters into the soul by light. As it is therefore a gift of God, so it is the duty of all men, to labour after a participation of it, however by many it be abused.

2. *Conviction of sin* is another effect of the preaching of the word, antecedaneous unto real conversion to God. This in general the apostle describes, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 'If ye prophesy, and one cometh in who believeth not, he is convinced of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God.' And sundry things are included herein, or do accompany it. As, (1.) a disquieting sense of the guilt of sin, with respect unto the law of God, with his threatenings and future judgments. Things that before were slighted and made a mock of, do now become the soul's burden and constant disquietment. 'Fools make a mock of sin;' they traverse their ways, and snuff up the wind like the wild ass; but in their month, when conviction hath burdened them, you may find them. And hereby are the minds of men variously affected with^b fears and anguish in various degrees, according as im-

^b Heu miserum nimisque miserum quem torquet conscientia sua, quam fugere non

pressions are made upon them by the word. And these degrees are not prescribed as necessary duties unto persons under their conversions, but only described as they usually fall out, to the relief and direction of such as are concerned in them. As a man going to give directions unto another, how to guide his course in a voyage at sea; he tells him, that in such a place he will meet with rocks and shelves, storms and cross winds, so that if he steer not very heedfully, he will be in danger to miscarry and to be cast away. He doth not prescribe it unto him as his duty, to go among such rocks, and into such storms, but only directs him how to guide himself in them, where he doth meet with them, as assuredly he will, if he miss not his proper course. (2.) Sorrow or grief for sin committed, because past and irrecoverable, which is the formal reason of this condemning sorrow. This the Scripture calls 'sorrow of the world;' 2 Cor. vii. 10. Divines usually legal sorrow; as that which, in conjunction with the sense of the guilt of sin mentioned, brings men into bondage under fear; Rom. viii. 15. (3.) Humiliation for sin; which is the exercise or working of sorrow and fear in outward acts of confession, fasting, praying, and the like. This is the true nature of legal humiliation; 1 Kings xxi. 29. (4.) Unless by these things the soul be swallowed up in despair, it cannot be but that it will be filled with thoughts, desires, inquiries, and contrivances, about a deliverance out of that state and condition wherein it is; as Acts ii. 27. xvi. 30.

3. Oftentimes a *great reformation of life*, and change in affections, doth ensue hereon; as Matt. xiii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 20. Matt. xii. 43.

All these things may be wrought in the minds of men by the dispensation of the word, and yet the work of regeneration be never perfected in them. Yea, although they are good in themselves, and fruits of the kindness of God towards us, they may not only be lost, as unto any spiritual advantage, but also be abused unto our great disadvantage. And this comes not to pass but by our own sin, whereby we contract a new guilt upon our souls. And it commonly

potest; nimis miserum quem expectat damnatio sua quam vitare non potest, nisi Deus eripiat. Nimis est infelix cui mors æterna est sensibilis; nimis ærumnosus quem terrent continui de sua infelicitate horrores. August. de Contritione Cordis.

so falls out one of these three ways. For, (1.) some are no way careful or wise to improve this light and conviction unto the end whereunto they tend and are designed. Their message is to turn the minds of men, and to take them off from their self-confidence, and to direct them unto Christ. Where this is not attended unto, where they are not used and improved unto the pursuit of this end, they insensibly wither, decay, and come to nothing. (2.) In some they are overborne by the power and violence of their lusts, the love of sin, and efficacy of temptation. They are sinned away every day, and leave the soul in ten times a worse condition than they found it. (3.) Some rest in these things, as though they comprised the whole work of God towards them, and guided them in all the duties required of them. This is the state of many where they extend their power, in the last instance, unto any considerable reformation of life, and attendance unto duties of religious worship. But this, as was said, falls out through the abuse which the carnal minds of men, retaining their enmity against God, do put these things unto. In their own nature they are good, useful, and material preparations unto regeneration, disposing the mind unto the reception of the grace of God.

And the doctrine concerning these things hath been variously handled, distinguished, and applied, by many learned divines and faithful ministers of the gospel. Unto that light which they received into them from the infallible word of truth, they joined those experiences which they had observed in their own hearts, and the consciences of others with whom they had to do, which were suitable thereunto. And in the dispensation of this truth, according to the 'measure of the gift of the grace of Christ,' which they severally received, they had a useful and fruitful ministry in the world, to the converting of many unto God. But we have lived to see all these things decried and rejected. And the way which some have taken therein, is as strange and uncouth as the thing itself. For they go not about once to disprove by Scripture or reason, what hath been taught or delivered by any sober persons to this purpose; nor do they endeavour themselves to declare from, or by the Scriptures, what is the work of regeneration, what are the causes and effects of it, in opposition thereunto. These and such like ways made use of by

all that have treated of spiritual things, from the foundation of Christianity are despised and rejected. But horrible and contemptuous reproaches are cast upon the things themselves, in words heaped together on purpose to expose them unto scorn, among persons ignorant of the gospel and themselves. Those that teach them are ecstatical and illiterate; and those that receive them are superstitious, giddy, and fanatical. All conviction, sense of, and sorrow for sin; all fear of the curse and wrath due unto sin; all troubles and distresses of mind, by reason of these things, are foolish imaginations, the effects of bodily diseases and distempers, enthusiastic notions arising from the disorders of men's brains; and I know not what untoward humours in their complexions and constitutions. The same, or the like account, is also given concerning all spiritual desertions, or joys and refreshments. And the whole doctrine concerning these things is branded with novelty, and hopes expressed of its sudden vanishing out of the world. This contempt and scorn of the gospel have we lived to see, whereof it may be other ages and places have not had experience. For as all these things are plentifully taught by some of the ancients, in their expositions of the Scriptures, wherein they are expressed, especially by Austin, who had occasion particularly to inquire into them; so the doctrine concerning them is in a great measure retained in the church of Rome itself. Only some amongst ourselves are weary of them; who being no way able to oppose the principles and foundations whereon they are built, nor to disprove them by Scripture or reason, betake themselves to these revilings and reproaches. And, as if it were not enough for them to proclaim their own ignorance and personal unacquaintance with those things which inseparably accompany that conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, which our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised to send the Holy Spirit to work in all that should believe, they make the reproaching of it in others a principal effect of that religion which they profess. Nevertheless 'the foundation of God standeth sure:' God knoweth who are his. But we must return to our purpose.

Thirdly, All the things mentioned as wrought instrumentally by the word, are *effects* of the power of the *Spirit* of God. The word itself, under a bare proposal to the minds

of men will not so affect them. We need go no farther, for the confirmation hereof, than merely to consider the preaching (with the effects which it had towards many) of the prophets of old, Isa. xlix. 4. Jer. xv. 30. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. of Jesus Christ himself, John viii. 59. and of the apostles, Acts xiii. 41, 45, 46. Hence to this day, the Jews who enjoy the letter of the Old Testament, without the administration of the Spirit, are as full of blindness, hardness, and obstinacy, as any in the world who are utterly deprived of it. Many amongst ourselves, sit all their days under the preaching of the word, and yet have none of the effects mentioned wrought upon them, when others, their associates in hearing, are really affected, convinced, and converted. It is, therefore, the ministration of the Spirit, in and by the word, which produceth all or any of these effects on the minds of men. He is the fountain of all illumination. Hence they that are enlightened are said to be made 'partakers of the Holy Spirit;' Heb. vi. 4. And he is promised by our Saviour 'to convince the world of sin;' John xvi. 8. which although in that place it respects only one kind of sin, yet it is sufficient to establish a general rule, that all conviction of sin is from and by him. And no wonder, if men live securely in their sins, to whom the light which he gives, and the convictions which he worketh, are a scorn and reproach.

There is, indeed, an objection of some moment, against the ascription of this work, unto the energy of the Holy Spirit. For whereas it is granted, that all these things may be wrought in the minds and souls of men, and yet they may come short of the saving grace of God; how can he be thought to be the author of such a work? Shall we say that he designs only a weak and imperfect work upon the hearts of men? Or that he deserts and gives over the work of grace which he hath undertaken towards them, as not able to accomplish it?

Ans. 1. In many persons, it may be in the most, who are thus affected, real conversion unto God doth ensue; the Holy Spirit by these preparatory actings, making way for the introduction of the new spiritual life into the soul. So they belong unto a work that is perfect in its kind. 2. Wherever they fail and come short of what in their own nature they have a tendency unto, it is not from any weakness

and imperfection in themselves, but from the sins of them in whom they are wrought. For instance, even common illumination and conviction of sin, have in their own nature, a tendency unto sincere conversion. They have so in the same kind, as the law hath to bring us unto Christ. Where this end is not attained, it is always from the interposition of an act of wilfulness and stubbornness in those enlightened and convicted. They do not sincerely improve what they have received, and faint not merely for want of strength to proceed, but by a free act of their own wills, they refuse the grace which is farther tendered unto them in the gospel. This will, and its actual resistance unto the work of the Spirit, God is pleased in some to take away; it is, therefore, of sovereign grace, when and where it is removed; but the sin of men and their guilt is in it, where it is continued. For no more is required hereunto, but that it be voluntary; it is will and not power that gives rectitude or obliquity unto moral actions. 3. As we observed before, the Holy Spirit in his whole work is a voluntary agent. He worketh what, when, and how, he pleaseth. No more is required unto his operations, that they may be such as become him, but these two things. First, That in themselves they be good and holy. Secondly, That they be effectual as unto the ends whereunto by him they are designed. That he should always design them to the utmost length of what they have a moral tendency towards, though no real efficiency for, is not required. And these things are found in these operations of the Holy Spirit. They are in their own nature good and holy; illumination is so, so is conviction, and sorrow for sin, with a subsequent change of affections and amendment of life.

Again, What he worketh in any of these, effectually and infallibly accomplisheth the *end* aimed at; which is no more, but that men be enlightened, convinced, humbled, and reformed, wherein he faileth not. In these things he is pleased to take on him the management of the law, so to bring the soul into bondage thereby, that it may be stirred up to seek after deliverance: and he is thence actively called the 'Spirit of bondage unto fear;' Rom. viii. 15. And this work is that which constitutes the third ground in our Saviour's parable of the sower. It receives the seed and

springs up hopefully, until by cares of the world, temptations and occasions of life it is choked and lost; Matt. xiii. 22. Now, because it oftentimes maketh a great appearance and resemblance of regeneration itself, or of real conversion to God, so that neither the world nor the church are able to distinguish between them, it is of great concernment unto all professors of the gospel, to inquire diligently whether they have in their own souls been made partakers of any other work of the Spirit of God or no. For although this be a good work, and do lie in a good subserviency unto regeneration, yet if men attain no more, if they proceed no farther, they will perish, and that eternally. And multitudes do herein actually deceive themselves, speaking peace unto their souls on the effects of this work, whereby it is not only insufficient to save them, as it is to all persons at all times, but also becomes a means of their present security and future destruction. I shall, therefore, give some few instances of what this work, in the conjunction of all the parts of it, and in its utmost improvement, cannot effect; whereby men may make a judgment how things stand in their own souls in respect unto it.

1. It may be observed, that we have placed all the effects of this work in the *mind, conscience, affections, and conversation*. Hence it follows, notwithstanding all that is or may be spoken of it, that the will is neither really changed, nor internally renewed by it. Now the will is the ruling, governing faculty of the soul, as the mind is the guiding and leading. Whilst this abides unchanged, unrenewed, the power and reign of sin continues in the soul; though not undisturbed, yet unruined. It is true, there are many checks and controls from the light of the mind, and reflections of conscience cast in this state upon the actings of the will, so that it cannot put itself forth in and towards sin, with that freedom, security, and licentiousness, as it was wont to do; its fierceness and rage rushing into sin, as the horse into the battle, running on God, and the thick bosses of his buckler, may be broken and abated, by those hedges of thorns which it finds set in its way, and those buffetings it meets withal from light and convictions. Its delight and greediness in sinning, may be calmed and quieted by those frequent representations of the terror of the Lord on the one hand, and the plea-

sure of eternal rest on the other, which are made unto it. But yet still, setting aside all considerations foreign unto its own principle, the bent and inclination of the will itself, is to sin and evil, always and continually. The will of sinning may be restrained upon a thousand considerations, which light and convictions will administer; but it is not taken away. And this discovers itself where the very first motions of the soul towards sinful objects have a sensible complacency, until they are controlled by light and fear. This argues an unrenewed will, if it be constant and universal.

2. The effects of this work on the *mind*, which is the first subject affected with it, proceeds not so far as to give it *delight, complacency, and satisfaction*, in the lively spiritual nature and excellencies of the things revealed unto it. The true nature of saving illumination consists in this, that it gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight and prospect into spiritual things, as that, in their own spiritual nature, they suit, please, and satisfy it. So that it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of them, and rests in them; Rom. vi. 17. xii. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 6. This the work we have insisted on, reacheth not unto. For notwithstanding any discovery that is made therein of spiritual things unto the mind, it finds not an immediate, direct, spiritual excellency in them, but only with respect unto some benefit or advantage, which is to be attained by means thereof. It will not give such a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace, by Jesus Christ, called, 'his glory shining in the face of Christ,' 2 Cor. iv. 6. as that the soul, in its first direct view of it, should, for what it is in itself, admire it, delight in it, approve it, and find spiritual solace with refreshment in it. But such a light, such a knowledge, it communicates, as that a man may like it well in its effects, as a way of mercy and salvation.

3. This work extends itself to the *conscience* also; but, yet it doth not '*purge the conscience from dead works, that we should serve the living God.*' This is the effect of a real application of the blood of Christ, by faith, unto our souls; Heb. ix. 14. Two things it effects upon the conscience. (1.) It renders it more *ready, quick, and sharp*, in the reprov- ing and condemning of all sin, than it was before. To condemn sin, according unto its light and guidance, is natural

unto; and inseparable from, the conscience of man. But its readiness and ability, to exercise this condemning power, may by custom, and course of sinning in the world, be variously weakened and impeded. But when conscience is brought under the power of this work, having its directing light augmented, whereby it sees more of the evil of sin than formerly, and having its self-reflections sharpened and multiplied, it is more ready and quick in putting forth its judging and condemning power than it was. (2.) Conscience is assisted and directed hereby to condemn *many things in sin*, which before it approved of. For its judging power is still commensurate unto its light. And many things are thereby now discovered to be sinful, which were not so by the mere natural guidance under which before it was. But yet notwithstanding all this, it doth not purge the conscience from dead works; that is, conscience is not hereby wrought unto such an abhorrency of sin for itself, as continually to direct the soul unto an application to the blood of Christ, for the cleansing of itself, and the purging of it out. It contents itself to keep all things in a tumult, disorder, and confusion, by its constant condemning both sin and sinners.

4. This work operates greatly on the *affections*. We have given instances in the *fear, sorrow, joy, and delight*, about spiritual things, that are stirred up and acted thereby. But yet it comes short in two things, of a thorough-work upon the affections themselves. For, (1.) it doth not fix them. And, (2.) it doth not fill them. (1.) It is required that our affections be fixed on heavenly and spiritual things, and true grace will effect it. Col. iii. 1, 2. 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above.' The joys, the fears, the hopes, the sorrows, with reference unto spiritual and eternal things, which the work before mentioned doth produce, are evanid, uncertain, unstable; not only as to the degrees, but as to the very being of them. Sometimes they are as a river, ready to overflow its banks, men cannot but be pouring them out on all occasions. And sometimes as waters that fail, no drop comes from them. Sometimes they are hot, and sometimes cold; sometimes up, and sometimes down; sometimes all heaven, and sometimes all world, without equality, without stability.

But true grace fixeth the affections on spiritual things. As to the degrees of their exercise, there may be and is in them great variety, according as they may be excited, aided, assisted, by grace, and the means of it, or obstructed and impeded by the interposition of temptations and diversions. But the constant bent and inclination of renewed affections, is unto spiritual things, as the Scripture every where testifieth, and experience doth confirm. (2.) The forementioned work doth not fill the affections; however, it may serve to take them up and pacify them. It comes like many strangers to an inn to lodge, which take up a great deal of room, and make an appearance, as if none were in the house but themselves; and yet they turn not out the family which dwelleth there, but there they make their abode still. Light and conviction, with all their train and attendants, come into the mind and affections, as if they would fill them, and possess them for themselves alone. But yet when they have done all, they leave the quiet places of the house for the world, and sin, and self; they do not thrust them out of the affections, and fill up their places with spiritual things, but saving grace fills up the affections with spiritual things, fills the soul with spiritual love, joy, and delight, and exerciseth all other affections about their proper objects. It denies not a room to any other things, relations, possessions, enjoyments, merely as they are natural, and are content to be subordinate unto God, and spiritual things. But if they would be carnal, disorderly, or predominant, it casts them out.

5. This work is oftentimes carried on very far in *reformation of life* and conversation, so that it will express the whole *form of godliness* therein. But herein also it is subject unto a *threefold defect* and imperfection. For, (1.) it will consist with and allow of *raging* and *reigning* sins of ignorance. The conducting light in this work not leading into the abhorrency of all sin as sin, nor into a pursuit of holiness, out of a design to be universally conformable unto Christ; but being gathered up from this and that particular command, it oft-times leaves behind it great sins unregarded. So it left persecution in Paul before his conversion; and so it leaves hatred and a desire of persecution in many at this day. And other sins of the like nature may escape its utmost search to the ruin of the soul. (2.) Its reformation of the

conversation is seldom *universal* as to all *known sins*, unless it be for a season, whilst the soul is under a *flagrant pursuit* of self-righteousness. Paul in that condition had preserved himself, so as that according to the law he was blameless; and the young man thought he had kept all the commandments from his youth. But setting aside this consideration, notwithstanding the utmost that this work can attain unto, after the efficacy of its first impressions begin to abate, lust will reserve some peculiar way of venting and discovering itself, which is much spoken unto. (3.) The *conversations* of persons who live and abide under the power of this work only, is assuredly fading and decaying; coldness, sloth, negligence, love of the world, carnal-wisdom, and security, do every day get ground upon them. Hence, although by a long course of abstinence from open sensual sins, and stating of a contrary interest, they are not given up unto them; yet by the decays of the power of their convictions, and the ground that sin gets upon them, they become walking and talking skeletons in religion, dry, sapless, useless, worldlings. But where the soul is inlaid with real saving grace, it is in a state of thriving continually. Such an one will go on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, and will be fat and flourishing in old age. By these things may we learn to distinguish in ourselves between the preparatory work mentioned, and that of real saving conversion unto God. And these are some of the heads of those operations of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, which oftentimes are preparatory unto a real conversion unto God; and sometimes their contempt and rejection, a great aggravation of the sin and misery of them in whom they were wrought.

And these things as they are clearly laid down in the Scripture, and exemplified in sundry instances, so for the substance of them they have been acknowledged (till of late) by all Christians; only some of the Papists have carried them so far, as to make them *formally dispositive* unto justification, and to have a congruous merit thereof. But this the ancients denied, who would not allow that either any such preparation, or any moral virtues did capacitate men for real conversion, observing that others were often called before

those who were so qualified^e. And in them there are goads and nails, which have been fastened by wise and experienced masters of the assemblies, to the great advantage of the souls of men. For observing the usual ways and means whereby these effects are wrought in the minds of the hearers of the word, with their consequences, in sorrow, troubles, fear, and humiliations, and the courses which they take to improve them, or to extricate themselves from the perplexity of them, they have managed the rules of Scripture with their own and others experience suitable thereunto, to the great benefit of the church of God. That these things are now despised and laughed to scorn, is no part of the happiness of the age wherein we live, as the event will manifest.

And in the meantime, if any suppose that we will forego those truths and doctrines which are so plainly revealed in the Scripture, the knowledge whereof is so useful unto the souls of men, and whose publication in preaching hath been of so great advantage to the church of God, merely because they understand them not, and therefore reproach them, they will be greatly mistaken. Let them lay aside that unchristian way of treating about these things which they have engaged in; and plainly prove that men need not be convinced of sin, that they ought not to be humbled for it, nor affected with sorrow with respect unto it; that they ought not to seek for a remedy or deliverance from it; that all men are not born in a state of sin; that our nature is not depraved by the fall; that we are able to do all that is required of us, without the internal aids and assistances of the Spirit of God, and they shall be diligently attended unto.

^e Nonne advertimus multos fideles nostros ambulantes viam Dei, ex nulla parte ingenio comparari; non dicam quorundam hæreticorum, sed etiam minorum? Item nonne videmus quosdam homines utriusque sexus in conjugali castitate viventes sine querela, et tamen vel hæreticos vel Paganos, vel etiam in vera fide et vera ecclesia sic tepidos, ut eos miremur meretricum et histrionum subito conversorum, non solum sapientia et temperantia, sed etiam fide, spe et charitate superari. August. lib. 2. Quæst. ad Simplician. q. 2.