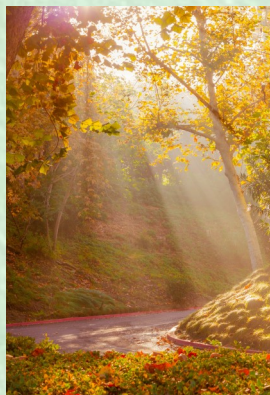


THE GREAT CHANGE PART THREE



A. W. Pink

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Section Five

“Search the Scriptures” (John 5:39), “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:13). *That* is what we sought to heed in the preceding articles. Therein twenty-five different passages were collated—all of which we are persuaded treat of some aspect or other of “the miracle of grace” or the great change—and in varying measure, engaged our attention. It will be observed that in some of them, it is the illumination of the understanding which is in view (Acts 26:18); in others, the searching and convicting of the conscience (Rom. 7:9); and in others, the renovation of the heart (Ezek. 36:26). In some, it is the subduing of the will (Psa. 110:3) which is emphasized; in others, casting down reasonings and bringing our thoughts into subjection (2 Cor. 10:5); and in others, the writing of God’s laws in our minds and hearts. In some, the miracle of grace appears to be a completed thing (1 Cor. 6:11); in others, the great change is seen as a gradual process (2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 1:6). In one, something is removed from its subject (Deut. 30:6); while in another, something is communicated (Rom. 5:5). In different passages, the figures of creation (Eph. 2:10), of renewing (Tit. 3:5), and of resurrection (1 John 3:14) are employed.

If it be asked, Why has it pleased the Holy Spirit to describe His work so diversely and use such a variety of terms and figures? several answers may be suggested. First, because the work itself, though one, is so many-sided. Its subject is a complex creature, and the process of salvation radically affects every part of his

composite being. Just as sin has marred each part of our constitution and has corrupted every faculty the Creator gave us, so grace renews and transforms every part of our constitution and purifies every faculty we possess. When the apostle prayed, “And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23), he was asking that God would graciously preserve and perfect that which He had already wrought in His people, and the terms he there used intimated the comprehensiveness and entirety of the grand miracle of grace. This is a gem possessing many facets, and our estimate of it is certain to be most faulty if we confine our view to only one of them.

Second, because God would thereby warn us from supposing that He acts according to a stereotyped plan or method in His saving of sinners. Variety rather than uniformity marks all the ways and workings of God, in creation, providence, and grace. No two seasons are alike—no field or tree yields the same crop in any two years. Every book in the Bible is equally the inspired Word of God, yet how different in character and content is Leviticus from the Psalms, Ruth from Ezekiel, Romans from the Revelation! How varied the manner in which the Lord Jesus gave sight to different ones who were blind: different in the means used and the effect produced—one, at first, only seeing men as though they were trees walking (Mark 8:24)! How differently He dealt with religious Nicodemus in John 3 and the adulterous woman of John 4, pressing on the one his imperative need of being born again; convicting the other of her sins and telling her of “the gift of God” (John 4:10)! The great God is not confined to any rule, and we must not restrict His operations in our thoughts: if we do, we are certain to err.

Third, because God would thereby teach us that, though the work of grace be essentially and substantially the same in all its favoured subjects, yet in no two of them does it appear identical in all its circumstantials—neither in its operations, nor manifestations. Not only does endless variety mark all the ways

and workings of God, but it does so equally in His *workmanship*. This is generally recognized and acknowledged in connection with the material world, where no two blades of grass or two grains of sand are alike. But in the spiritual realm, it is very far from being perceived and owned: rather is it commonly supposed that all truly regenerate persons conform strictly unto one particular pattern, and those who differ from it are at once suspected of being counterfeits. This should not be. The twelve foundations of the new and holy Jerusalem—in which are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb—are all composed of “precious” stones, but how diverse is each! The first jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth emerald, etc. (Rev. 21)—different in colour, size, and brilliancy. Each Christian has his own measure of faith and grace “according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph. 4:7).

Fourth, because God would thereby make it easier for His children to recognize themselves in the mirror of the Word. Possessed of honest hearts and fearful of being deceived, some find it no simple matter to be thoroughly convinced that they have truly experienced the great change. So far from sneering at their trepidation, we admire their caution: where the eternal interests of the soul are concerned, only a fool will give himself the benefit of the doubt. But if a miracle of grace has been wrought in the reader, there is no good reason why he should long be in uncertainty about it. As in water, face answers to face, so the character of the renewed soul corresponds to the description of such furnished by the Word of Truth. That description, as we have seen, is given with considerable variety—sometimes one feature or aspect being made prominent, sometimes another. It is like a photographer taking a number of different pictures of the same person: one with his countenance in repose, another with him smiling; one a full-face view, another of his profile. One may appear to do him “more justice” than another, or be more easily “recognized,” yet all are likenesses of himself.

Let then the exercised reader impartially scrutinize himself in the mirror of the Word, and see if he can discern in himself some

of the marks of the regenerate, as those marks are there delineated. Observe well, we say “some of” those marks, and not all of them. Though you may not be sure that Ezekiel 36:26 has taken place in you, perhaps you know something of what is recorded in Acts 16:14 and Romans 5:5. Because your first conscious “experience” was not like that of Romans 7:9, perhaps it closely resembled that of Zaccheus who came down from the tree and “received him *joyfully*” (Luke 19:6). Commenting on the quickness of his conversion, George Whitefield (1714-1770) aptly said to those who queried whether any were genuine Christians who had not undergone some “terrible experience” of conviction or terror of the wrath to come, “You may as well say to your neighbour you have not had a child, for you were not in labour all night. The question is, whether a real child is born, not how long was the preceding pain!”

There is nothing in the sacred record to show that either Lydia or Zaccheus felt anything of the terrors of the Law before their conversion, yet from what is said of them in the sequel, we cannot doubt the reality of their conversion. Though you may not be sure whether God has put His laws into your mind and written them on your heart, yet you should have no difficulty in perceiving whether or no you “love the brethren” as such; and if you *do*, then you may be fully assured on the Word of Him that cannot lie, you have “passed from death unto life” (1 John 3:14). The fact that you are afraid to aver that God has renewed you after His image and created you “in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24) does not of itself warrant you inferring you are still in a state of nature. Test yourself by *other* passages, and see if you can discern in your soul some of *their* marks of regeneration—such as a grieving over sin, a hungering after righteousness, a panting for communion with God, a praying for fuller conformity unto Christ. Has the world lost its charm, are you out of love with yourself, is the Lamb of God a desirable Object in your eyes? If so, you possess at least some of the distinctive marks of the regenerate.

Since we are seeking to write these articles for the benefit of young preachers, as well as the rank and file of God’s people, let

us point out that the nature of this great change may also be determined by contemplating it as *the begun reversal of the Fall*: “begun reversal,” for what is commenced at regeneration is continued throughout our sanctification and completed only at our glorification. While it be true that those who are renewed by the Holy Spirit gain *more* than Adam lost by the Fall, yet we have clear Scripture warrant for affirming that the workmanship of the new creation is God’s *answer* to man’s ruination of his original creation. Great care needs to be taken in cleaving closely to the Scriptures in developing this point, particularly in ascertaining exactly what was the moral and spiritual condition of man originally, and precisely what happened to him when he fell. We trust that a patient perusal of what follows will convince the reader of both the importance and value of our discussion of these details at this stage—the more so since the children have sadly departed from the teaching of the fathers thereon.

Even those sections of Christendom which boast the most of their soundness in the faith are defective here. Mr. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and his followers hold that Adam was merely created innocent (a negative state), and not in (positive) holiness. Mr. Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869) said: “I do not believe that Adam was a spiritual man, that is, that he possessed those spiritual gifts and graces which are bestowed upon the elect of God, for they are new covenant blessings in which he had no share” (*Gospel Standard*, 1861, page 155). One error ever involves another. Those who deny that fallen man possesses any responsibility to perform spiritual acts (love God, savingly believe in Christ) must, to be consistent, deny that unfallen man was a spiritual creature. Far different was the teaching of the Reformers and Puritans: “And where Paul treats of the restoration of this image (2 Cor. 3:18), we may readily infer from his words that man was conformed to God not by an influx of His substance, but by the grace and power of His Spirit.” And again, “As the *spiritual life* of Adam consisted in a union to his Maker, so an alienation from Him was the death of his soul” (John Calvin, 1509-1564, *Institutes*).

“Adam had the Spirit as well as we: the Holy Spirit was at the making of him and wrote the image of God upon his heart, for where holiness was, we may be sure the Spirit of God was too... the same Spirit was in Adam’s heart to assist *his graces* and cause them to flow and bring forth, and to move him to live according to those principles of life given him” (Thomas Goodwin, 1600-1680, volume 6, page 54). And again, commenting on Adam’s being made in the image and likeness of God, and pointing out that such an “image” imports a thing “permanent and inherent,” he asked, “what could this be but habitual inclinations and dispositions unto whatsoever was holy and good, insomuch as *all holiness radically dwelt in him*” (page 202). So too Stephen Charnock (1628-1680): “The righteousness of the first man evidenced not only a sovereign power, as the Donor of his being, but a holy power, as the pattern of His work...The law of love to God, with his whole soul, his whole mind, his whole heart and strength, was originally writ upon his nature. All the parts of his nature were framed in a moral conformity with God, to answer His Law and imitate God in His purity” (volume 2, page 205).

In his *Discourse on the Holy Spirit* (chapter 4, His “Peculiar works in the first creation”)—when treating of “the image of God” after which Adam was created (namely, “an ability to discern the mind and will of God,” an “unentangled disposition to every duty,” and “a readiness of compliance in his affections”)—John Owen (1616-1683) said: “For in the *restoration* of these abilities unto our minds in our renovation unto the image of God in the Gospel, it is plainly asserted that the Holy Spirit is the imparter of them, and He doth thereby restore His own work. For in the new creation, the Father, in the way of authority, designs it and brings all things unto a head in Christ (Eph. 1:10), which *retrieves* His original work. And thus, Adam may be said to have had the Spirit of God in his innocency: he had Him in those peculiar effects of His power and goodness, and he had Him according to the tenor of that covenant whereby it was possible that he should utterly lose Him, as accordingly it came to pass.” The superiority of the new covenant lies in its gifts being

unforfeitable, because secured in and by Christ.

“God hath made man *upright*” (Eccl. 7:29)—the same Hebrew word as in Job 1:8 and Psalm 25:8: “This presupposes a law to which he was conformed in his creation, as when anything is made regular or according to rule, of necessity the rule itself is presupposed. Whence we may gather that this law was no other than the eternal indispensable law of righteousness, observed in all points by the second Adam...In a word, this law is the very same which was afterwards summed up in the Ten Commandments...called by us the Moral Law, and man’s righteousness consisted in conformity to this law or rule” (Thomas Boston, 1676-1732, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*). “When God created man at first, He gave him not an outward law, written in letters or delivered in words, but an inward law put into his heart and concreated with him, and wrought in the frame of his soul...*spiritual* dispositions and inclinations, in his will and affections, carrying him on to pray, love God and fear Him, to seek His glory in a spiritual and holy manner” (Thomas Goodwin). The external command of Genesis 2:17, was designed as the *test* of his responsibility, and at the same time, it served to make manifest that his “uprightness” was mutable.

When Adam left the Creator’s hand, the law of God was in his heart—for he was endowed with holy instincts and inclinations, which tended unto his doing that which was pleasing unto God, and an antipathy against whatever was displeasing to Him. That “law of God” within him was his original *character* or constitution of his soul and spirit—as it is the “law” or character of beasts to care for their young, and of birds to build nests for theirs. Should it be asked, Is there any other Scripture which teaches that God placed His law in the heart of unfallen Adam?—we answer, Yes, by clear and necessary implication. Christ declared, “thy law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8), and Romans 5:14 tells us that Adam was “the figure of him that was to come.” Again, just as we may ascertain what grain a certain field bore from the stubble in it, so we may discover what was in unfallen

man by the ruins of what is still discernible in fallen humanity: “The Gentiles, which have not the law, do *by nature* the things contained in the law” (Rom. 2:14)—their consciences informing them that immorality and murder are crimes: there is still a shadow in his descendants of the character originally possessed by Adam.

But Adam did not continue as God created him. He fell, and terrible were the consequences. But it is only by adhering closely to the terms used in the Word that we can rightly apprehend the nature of those consequences; yea, unless we allow Scripture itself to interpret those terms for us, we are certain to err in our understanding of them. Possibly, the reader is ready to exclaim, There is no need to make any mystery out of it: the matter is quite simple—those “consequences” may all be summed up in one word—“death.” Even so, we must carefully inquire what is meant there by “death.” “Spiritual death,” you answer. True, and observe well that presupposes spiritual life; and that, in turn, implies a spiritual person, for surely one endowed with spiritual life must be so designated. However, our inquiry must be pressed back a stage farther, and the question put, Exactly what is connoted by “spiritual death?” It is at this point so many have gone wrong and, departing from the teaching of Holy Writ, have landed in serious error.

It is to be most carefully noted that God did not say to Adam, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thy spirit or thy soul shall surely die,” but rather “*thou shalt surely die*” (Gen. 2:17). It was not some *thing* in or some part of Adam which died, but Adam himself! That is very, very far from being a distinction without any difference: it is a real and radical difference, and if we tamper with Scripture and change what it says, we depart from the truth. Nor is “death” an extinction or annihilation; instead, it is a *separation*. Physical death is the severance or separation of the soul from the body, and spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. The prodigal son was “dead,” so long as he remained in “a far country” (Luke 15:24), because he was away from his Father. 1 Timothy 5:6 tells us, “But she that liveth in

pleasure is dead while she liveth”—that is, she is spiritually dead, dead godwards, while alive and active in sin. For the same reason, “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” is called “the second death” (Rev. 21:8), because those cast into it are “punished with everlasting destruction *from the presence of the Lord*” (2 Thess. 1:9).

Man was created a tripartite being, composed of “spirit and soul and body” (1 Thess. 5:23). That is unmistakably implied in the divine account of his creation: “And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness” (Gen. 1:26); the Triune God made man a trinity in unity! And when man fell, he *continued to be* a tripartite being: no part of his being was extinguished; no faculty was lost when he apostatized from God. It cannot be insisted upon too strongly that no essential element of man’s original constitution was forfeited; no component part of his complex make-up was annihilated at the Fall—for multitudes are seeking to hide behind a misconception at this very point. They would fain believe that man lost some vital part of his nature when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and that it is the absence of this part in his descendants which explains (and excuses!) all their failures. They console themselves that they are more to be pitied than blamed: the blame rests on their first parents; and they, forsooth, are to be pitied, because he deprived them of the faculty of working righteousness. Much preaching encourages that very delusion.

The truth is that fallen man today possesses identically the same faculties as those with which Adam was originally created: his accountability lies in his making a good use of those faculties, and his criminality consists in the evil employment of them. Others seek to evade the onus of man by affirming that he *received a nature* which he did not possess before the Fall, and all the blame for his lawless actions is thrown upon that evil nature: equally erroneous, and equally vain is such a subterfuge. No material addition was made to man’s being at the Fall, any more than some intrinsic part was taken from it. That which man lost at the Fall was his primitive *holiness*, and that which then entered into his

being was *sin*; and thus, sin has defiled every part of his person—but for that, we are to be blamed and not pitied. Nor has fallen man become so helplessly the victim of sin that his accountability is cancelled; rather does God hold him responsible to resist and reject every inclination unto evil, and will justly punish him because he fails to do so. Every attempt to negative human responsibility and undermine the sinner’s accountability, no matter by whom made, must be steadfastly resisted by us.

It is by persuading men that the spirit died at the Fall—or that some concrete but evil thing was then communicated to the human constitution—that Satan succeeds in deceiving so many of his victims: and it is the bounden duty of the Christian minister to expose his sophistries, drive the ungodly out of their refuge of lies, and press continually upon them the solemn fact that they are without the vestige of an excuse for their own rebellion against God. In the day of his disobedience, Adam himself died—died spiritually—and so did all his posterity in him. But that spiritual death consisted not of the extinction of anything in them, but of their separation from God: no part of Adam’s being was annihilated, but every part of him was *vitiating* [corrupted; made imperfect]. It was not the essence, but the rectitude [uprightness of character] of man’s soul and spirit which sin destroyed. By the Fall, man relinquished his honour and glory, lost his holiness, forfeited the favour of God, and was severed from all communion with Him; but he still retained *his human nature*. All desire godwards, all love for his Maker, all real knowledge of Him was gone. Sin now possessed him; and to the love and exercise of it, he devoted himself. Such too is *our* natural condition.

Section Six

Let none conclude from the last few paragraphs that we do not believe in the “total depravity” of man, or that we do so in such a manner as practically to evacuate that expression of any real meaning. Most probably, the writer believes more firmly in the utter ruin of fallen human nature than do some of his readers, and views the plight of the natural man as being more desperate than

they do. We hold that the state of every unregenerate soul is such that he *cannot* turn his face Godward or originate a single spiritual thought, and that he has not even so much as the wish or will to do so. Nor let it be inferred from our preceding remarks that we deny the evil principle or “the flesh” as being existent and dominant in the natural man: we most emphatically believe—both on the testimony of the Word of truth, and from personal experience of its awful potency and horrible workings—that it is. But we also hold that great care should be taken when seeking to visualize or define in our minds what “the flesh” consists of. It is a principle of evil and not a concrete or tangible entity. The moment we regard it as something material, we confuse ourselves.

It is because all of us are so accustomed to thinking in the terms of matter that we find it difficult to form a definite concept of something, which, though immaterial, is *real*. Nor is it by any means a simple task for one to express himself thereon, so that he will be coherent unto others. Man lost no part of his tripartite nature when he fell, nor was a fourth part then communicated to him. Instead, sin—which is not a material entity—entered into him, and vitiated and corrupted his entire being. He was stricken with a loathsome disease which defiled all his faculties and members, so that his entire spirit and soul became precisely like one whose body is thus described: “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores” (Isa. 1:6). A potato is still a potato even when frozen, though it is no longer edible. An apple remains an apple when decayed within. And man still retained his human nature when he apostatized from God, died spiritually, and became totally depraved. He remained all that he was previously, minus only his *holiness*.

When man fell, he died spiritually; and as we have shown, death is not annihilation, but separation. Yet that word “separation” does not express the full meaning of what is signified by “spiritual death.” Scripture employs another term—“*alienation*;” and that, too, we must take fully into

account. “Alienation” includes the thought of severance, but it also imports an *opposition*. A dear friend may be separated from me physically, but a cruel enemy is bitterly antagonistic to me. Thus it is with fallen man: he is not only cut off from all communion with the Holy One, but he is innately and inveterately hostile to Him—“alienated” in his affections. We are not here striving about mere “words,” but calling attention to a most solemn truth and fact. It is thus that the Scripture depicts the condition of fallen mankind: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18); yea, it solemnly declares that “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7), and “enmity” is not a negative and passive thing, but a positive and active one.

“Dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1) is the fearful diagnosis made of fallen man by the divine Physician. Yet though that language be true to fact and is no exaggeration, still it is a *figure*; and unless we interpret it in strict accord with Scripture, we shall falsify its meaning. It is often said that the spiritual state of the natural man is analogous to that of a corpse buried in the cemetery. From one standpoint, that is correct; from another, it is utterly erroneous. The natural man is a putrefying creature, a stench in the nostrils of the Holy One; and he can no more perform a spiritual act godwards than a corpse can perform a physical act manwards. But there the analogy ends! There is a contrast between the two cases, as well as a resemblance. A corpse has no responsibility, but the natural man *has*! A corpse can perform *no* actions; far different is the case of the sinner. He *is* active—active against *God*! Though he does not love Him (and he ought!), yet he is filled with enmity and hatred against Him. Thus, spiritual death is not a state of passivity and inactivity, but one of aggressive hostility against God.

Here then, as everywhere, there is a balance to be preserved; yet it is rarely maintained. Far too many Calvinists, in their zeal to repudiate the free-willism of Arminians, have at the same time repudiated man’s moral agency; anxious to enforce the utter

helplessness of fallen men in spiritual matters, they have virtually reduced him to an irresponsible machine. It has not been sufficiently noted that in the very next verse after the statement, “who were dead in trespasses and sins,” the apostle added, “Wherein [i.e. that state of spiritual death] in time past ye *walked* [which a corpse in the grave could not!] according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation [‘conduct’] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:1-3). So that in one sense, they were dead (i.e. Godward) while they lived (i.e. in sin); and in another sense, they *lived* (a life of self-seeking and of enmity against God), while *dead* to all spiritual things.

By the Fall, man both lost something and acquired something. Term that something a “nature” if you will, so long as you do not conceive of it as something material. That which man lost was holiness, and that which he acquired was sin; and neither the one nor the other is a substance, but rather a moral quality. A “nature” is not a concrete entity, but instead, that which characterizes and impels an entity or creature. It is the “nature” of gravitation to attract; it is the nature of fire to burn. A “nature” is not a tangible thing, but a power impelling to action, a dominating influence—an “instinct” for want of a better term. Strictly speaking, a “nature” is that which we have by our *origin*, as our partaking of *human nature* distinguishes us from the celestial creatures who are partakers of angelic nature. Thus we speak of a lion’s “nature” (ferocity), a vulture’s nature (to feed on carrion), a lamb’s nature (gentleness). A “nature,” then, describes more what a creature is by birth and disposition; and therefore, we prefer to speak of holiness or imparted grace as a “*principle* of good,” and indwelling sin or “the flesh” as a principle of evil—a prevalent disposition which moves its subjects to ever act in accord with its distinguishing quality.

If it be kept in mind that, strictly speaking, a “nature” is that which we have *by our origin*, as partaking of human

nature—which distinguishes us from the celestial creatures on the one hand, and from the beasts of the field (with their animal nature) on the other—much confusion of thought will be avoided. Furthermore, if we distinguish carefully between what our nature intrinsically consists of and what it “accidentally” (non-essentially) became and becomes by virtue of the changes passing upon it at the Fall and at regeneration, then we should have less difficulty in understanding what is signified by the Lord’s assuming *our nature*. When the Son of God became incarnate, He took unto Himself human nature. He was, in every respect, true Man, possessed of spirit (Luke 23:46), soul (John 12:27), and body (John 19:40): “in *all* things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:17)—otherwise, He could not be their Surety and Mediator. This does not explain the miracle and mystery of the divine incarnation, for that is incomprehensible, but it states the fundamental fact of it. Christ did not inherit our corruption, for *that* was no essential part of manhood! He was born and ever remained immaculately pure and holy; nevertheless, He took upon Him our nature intrinsically considered, but *not* as it had been defiled by sin; and therefore is denominated “the son of *Adam*” (Luke 3:38).

When, then, we say that by the Fall, man became possessed of a “sinful nature,” it must not be understood that something comparable to his spirit or soul was *added to* his being; but instead, that a principle of evil entered into him which defiled every part of his being, as frost entering into fruit ruins it. Instead of his faculties now being influenced and regulated by holiness, they became defiled and dominated by sin. Instead of spiritual propensities and properties actuating his conduct, a carnal disposition became the law of his being. The objects and things man formerly loved, he now hated; and those which he was fitted to hate, he now desires. Therein lies both his depravity and his criminality. God holds fallen man responsible to mortify every inclination unto evil, to resist and reject every solicitation unto sin, and will justly punish him because he fails to do so. Nay more, God requires him and holds him accountable to love him

with all his heart, and to employ each of his faculties in serving and glorifying Him: his failure so to do consists solely in a voluntary refusal—and for that, He will righteously judge him.

Now the miracle of grace is *God's answer* to man's ruination of himself, His begun reversal of what happened to him at the Fall. Let us now establish that fact from the Scriptures and show this concept is no invention of ours. The very fact that Christ is denominated, "the last Adam," implies that He came to right the wrong wrought by the first Adam—though only so far as God's elect are concerned. Hence, we find Him saying by the Spirit of prophecy, "I *restored* that which I took not away" (Psa. 69:4). A lengthy article might well be written on those comprehensive words: suffice it now to say that He recovered both unto God and His people what had been lost by Adam's defection—to the One, His manifestative honour and glory; to the other, the Holy Spirit and holiness in their hearts. What Christ did for His people is the meritorious ground of what the Spirit works in them; and at regeneration, they begin to be restored to their pristine purity, or brought back to their original state. Therefore, it is that the great change is spoken of as the "*renewing* of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5)—that is, a renovating and restoring of spiritual life to the soul.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10). Those to whom the apostle was writing had, by their profession and practice, "put off" or renounced "the old man," and by lip and life, had avowed and exhibited the new. That new man is here said to be "*renewed* in knowledge," which cannot be the obtaining of a knowledge which man never had previously, but rather, the recovery and restoration of that spiritual knowledge of God which he had originally. That is confirmed by what follows: "*after* the image of him that created him"—i.e. at the beginning. Man was originally made "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27), which imported at least three things: First, he was constituted a tripartite being by the Triune God; and this, he

continued to be after the Fall. Second, he was created in His *natural* image, being made a moral agent, endowed with rationality and freedom of will; and this, too, he retained. Third, he was created in God's *moral* image, being "made upright," endued "with righteousness and true holiness;" and this, which was lost when man became a sinner, is restored to him by the miracle of grace.

That which takes place in the elect at regeneration is the *reversing* of the effects of the Fall. The one born again is, through Christ and by the Spirit's operations, restored to union and communion with God (1 Pet. 3:18). The one who previously was spiritually dead, alienated from God, is now spiritually alive, reconciled to God. Just as spiritual death was brought about by the entrance into man's being of a principle of evil, which darkened his understanding and hardened his heart (Eph. 4:18), so spiritual life is the introduction of a principle of holiness into man's soul, which enlightens his understanding and softens his heart. God communicates a *new principle*—one which is as real and potent unto good as indwelling sin is unto evil. Grace is now imparted, a holy disposition is wrought in the soul, a new temper of spirit is bestowed upon the inner man. But no new faculties are communicated unto him: rather are his original faculties (in measure) purified, enriched, elevated, empowered. Just as man did not become less than a threefold being when he fell, neither does he become more than a threefold being when he is renewed. Nor will he in heaven itself: his spirit and soul and body will then be *glorified*—completely purged from every taint of sin, and perfectly conformed unto the image of God's Son.

But is not a "new nature" received by us when we are born again? If that term (in preference to "another principle") be admitted and used, we must be careful lest we carnalize our conception of what is connoted by that expression. Much confusion has been caused at this point through failure to recognize that it is a *person*—and not merely a "nature"—who is born of the Spirit: "*he* is born of God" (1 John 3:9). The selfsame person who was spiritually dead Godwards (separated and

alienated from Him) is now spiritually alive Godwards—reconciled and brought back into union and communion with Him. The same person whose entire being (and not merely some part of him!) was “dead in trespasses and sins,” wherein he “walked according to the course of this world,” according to the evil spirit who “now worketh in the children of disobedience,” fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Eph. 2:1-3); his entire being is now alive in holiness and righteousness, and he walks according to the course of God’s Word, according to the power and promptings of the Holy Spirit, who worketh in the children of obedience, moving them to fulfil the dispositions and develop the graces of the spirit or “new nature.”

This must be so, or otherwise, there would be no preservation of the *identity* of the individual: we repeat, it is the individual himself who is born again, and not merely something *in* him. The person of the regenerate is constitutionally the same as the person of the unregenerate, each having a spirit and soul and body. But just as in fallen man, there is *also* a principle of evil which has corrupted each part of his threefold being—which principle may be styled his “sinful nature” (if by that, be meant his evil disposition and character), as it is the “nature” of swine to be filthy; so when a person is born again, another and new principle is introduced into his being, which may be styled a “new nature,” if by it be meant a disposition which propels him in a new direction—Godwards. Thus, in both cases, “nature” is a moral principle rather than a tangible entity. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6)—spiritual and not material, and must not be regarded as something substantial, distinct from the soul of the regenerate, like one part of matter added to another; rather is it that which *spiritualizes* his inward faculties as the “flesh” had carnalized them.

When treating of regeneration under the figure of the new birth, some writers (ourselves included in earlier days) have introduced analogies from natural birth, which Scripture by no means warrants; and which, by its employment of *other* figures, it disallows. Physical birth is the bringing forth into this world of a

creature, a complete personality, which, before conception, had no existence whatever. But the one regenerated by God *had* a complete personality before he was born again! To that statement, it may be objected, Not a *spiritual* personality. True, but keep steadily in mind that spirit and matter are opposites; and we only confuse ourselves if we think or speak of that which is “spiritual” as being something concrete. Regeneration is not the creating of a person who hitherto had no existence, but the spiritualizing of one who had—the renewing and renovating of one whom sin had unfitted for communion with God; and this, by the imparting to him of a principle, or “nature,” or *life*, which gives a new and different bias to all his faculties. Ever beware of regarding the Christian as made up of two distinct personalities.

A century ago, a booklet was published in England purporting to prove that “a child of God cannot backslide,” and many in a reputedly orthodox circle were evilly affected by it. Its author argued, “a regenerated man possesses two natures: an old man of sin, and a new man of grace; that the old man of sin never made any progress in the divine life nor ever can; consequently, he can never go back from that in which he had never made any advances. The new man of grace never sinned, nor ever can sin, so that he likewise can never go back or imbibe the least taint or particle of sin. How then can the child of God backslide?” A reviewer exposed this sophistry by mentioning a Papist in Germany who was a royal bishop that was very fond of hunting, and who was friendly admonished of the inconsistency of the chase with the mitre. His reply was, “I do not hunt as bishop, but as prince;” to which it was answered, “If the prince should break his neck while a-hunting and went to hell, what would become of the bishop!” That was answering a fool according to his folly!

The “old man” and the “new man” indwell and belong to the same individual, and can no more be divorced from *his person*, than the bishop could be separated from the prince. It is not merely something *in* the Christian, but the Christian *himself* who backslides. What we have called attention to above is but the corollary—a carrying out to its logical conclusion of another error

(equally mischievous and reprehensible, though not so fully developed): namely, wherein the “two natures” in the believer are made so prominent and dominant that the person possessing them is largely lost sight of, and his responsibility repudiated. Thus, it is just as much an idle quibble to reason that neither “the flesh” or old nature, nor “the spirit” or new nature, is capable of backsliding. It is the person possessing those two natures (or principles) who backslides; and for that, God holds him accountable and chastens him accordingly. Unless believers are much on their guard, they will eagerly snatch at any line of teaching which undermines their accountability and causes them to slur over the exceeding sinfulness of *their* sins, by finding a pretext for supposing they are more to be pitied than blamed.

The youth differs much from the infant, and the adult from the immature youth; nevertheless, it is *the same individual*, the same human person, who passes through those stages. Human beings we are; moral agents, responsible creatures we shall ever remain. No matter what be the precise nature of the internal change we experienced at regeneration (nor how the character of that experience be defined or expressed), or whatever change awaits the body at resurrection: we shall never lose our essential personality or *identity* as God created us at the first. Let that be clearly understood and firmly grasped: we remain *the same persons* all through our history. Neither the deprivation of spiritual life at the Fall, nor the communication of spiritual life at the new birth, affects the reality of our being in possession of *human nature*. By the Fall, we did not become less than men; by regeneration, we do not become more than men—though our relation to God is altered. That which essentially constitutes our manhood was not lost, and no matter what be imparted to us at regeneration, our individuality and personal identity as a responsible being remains unchanged.

Section Seven

We will now endeavour to summarize all that has been set before the reader concerning the great change which takes place

in one who is born again, renewed spiritually, resurrected, by the operations of the Spirit of God. Perhaps this can best be accomplished by making some epitomized statements, and then offering some further remarks on those against which certain of our readers may be most inclined to take issue. *Negatively*, that great change does not consist of any constitutional alteration in the make-up of our being, no essential addition being made to our persons. We regard it as a serious mistake to consider the natural man as possessed of but soul and body, and as only having a “spirit” communicated to him when he is regenerated. Again, it is a still worse error to suppose that indwelling sin is eradicated from the being of a born-again person: not only does Scripture contain no warrant to countenance such an idea, but the uniform experience of God’s children repudiates it. Nor does the great change effect any improvement in the evil principle. The “flesh”—with its vile properties and lust, its deceiving and debasing inclinations, its power to promote hypocrisy, pride, unbelief, opposition unto God—remains unchanged unto the end of our earthly course.

Yet it would be utterly wrong for us to conclude from those negatives that regeneration is not entitled to be designated a “miracle of grace,” or that the change effected in its subject is far from being a *great* one. A real, a radical, a stupendous, a glorious change *is* wrought, yet the precise nature of it can only be discovered in the light of Holy Writ. While it is indeed an experimental change, yet the subject of it must interpret the same by the teaching of Scripture, and not by either his own reason or feelings. Nor should that statement be either surprising or disappointing. The miracle of grace effects a great change godwards in the one who experiences it; and God is not an Object of sense, nor can He be known by any process of reasoning. We may then summarize by saying the great change, positively considered, consists first of a radical *change of heart godwards*. God discovers Himself unto the soul, makes Himself a living reality unto it, reveals Himself both as holy and gracious, clothed with authority, and yet full of mercy. That personal and powerful

revelation of God unto the soul produces an altered disposition and attitude toward Him: the one alienated is reconciled. The one who shrank from and was filled with enmity against Him, now desires His presence and longs for communion with Him.

Such a vital and radical change in the disposition and attitude of a soul godwards is indeed a miracle of grace, and cannot be described as anything less than a great change. It is as real and great as was the change when man apostatized from his Maker; as vivid and blessed a change spiritually as the resurrection will effect physically: when that which was sown in corruption, in dishonour, in weakness, shall be raised in incorruption, glory, and power; when our vile body shall be changed, “that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). For one who was a total stranger to the ineffably glorious God to now become experimentally and savingly acquainted with Him, for one who sought to banish Him from his thoughts to now find his greatest delight in meditating upon His perfections, for one who lived in total disregard of His righteous claims upon him to be made a loyal and loving subject, is a transformation which human language—with all its adjectives and superlatives—cannot possibly do justice unto. In the words of divine inspiration, it is a passing “from death unto life” (1 John 3:14), a being “called...out of darkness into his [God’s] marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9), a being “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10).

Second, that great change consists in a *moral purification of the inner man*. Though this be the most difficult aspect of it for us to understand, yet the teaching of the Word thereon is too clear and full to leave us in any uncertainty as to the same. Such expressions as, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezek. 36:25), “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified” (1 Cor. 6:11), “ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth” (1 Pet. 1:22) would be meaningless if there had been no internal transformation. Our characters are formed by the truth we receive: our thoughts are more or less moulded, our affections directed, and our wills regulated by what we heartily believe.

Truth has a vital, effectual, elevating influence. Any man who professes to take the Word of God for his Guide and Rule and is not altered by it, both internally and externally, is deceiving himself. “The truth shall make you free” (John 8:32): from the dominion of sin, from the snares of Satan, from the deceits of the world. The tastes, the aims, the ways of a Christian are assimilated to and fashioned by the Word.

A radical change godwards, which is accompanied by a moral purification within, necessarily consists, in the third place, of a thoroughly altered attitude toward the *divine Law*. It cannot be otherwise. “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7): it is completely dominated by ill will unto Him. The evidence adduced by the Spirit in demonstration of that fearful indictment is this, “for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:” the one is the certain outcome of the other—hatred for the Lawgiver expresses itself in contempt for and defiance of His Law. Before there can be any genuine respect for and subjection to the divine Law, the heart’s attitude towards its Governor and Administrator must be completely changed. Conversely, when the heart of anyone has been won unto God, His authority will be owned, His government honoured, and his sincere language will be, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man”—i.e. the soul as renewed by the Spirit (Rom. 7:22). Thus, while the unregenerate are denominated “the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2), the regenerate are called “obedient children” (1 Pet. 1:14), for obedience is one of their characteristic marks, evidencing as it does the general tenor and course of their lives.

After all that has been said in previous articles, it ought not to be necessary for us to interrupt our train of thought at this point and consider a question which can only prove wearisome unto the well-taught reader; but others who have drunk so deeply from the foul pools of error need a word thereon. Are there not two “minds” in a born-again person: the one carnal and the other spiritual? Certainly not, or he would have a dual personality, and a divided responsibility. By nature, his mind was, spiritually

speaking, *deranged*—how else can a mind which is “enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7) be described? But by grace, his mind has been restored to sanity: illustrated by the demoniac healed by Christ, “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15); or as 2 Timothy 1:7 expresses it, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of *a sound mind*.” It is true his original carnality (“the flesh”) still remains, ever seeking to regain complete control of his mind; but divine grace suffers it not to *so* succeed that his mind ever becomes “enmity against God.” There will be risings of rebellion against His providences, but a renewed person will nevermore hate God.

A real and radical change of heart godwards will, in the fourth place, be marked by a thoroughly altered attitude *towards sin*. And again, we say, it cannot be otherwise. Sin is that “abominable thing” which God hates (Jer. 44:4); and therefore, that heart in which the love of God is shed abroad (Rom. 5:5) will hate it too. Sin is “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4); and therefore, each one who has been brought to “delight in the law” (Rom. 7:22) will detest sin and earnestly seek to resist its solicitations. That which formerly was his native element has become repugnant to his spiritual inclinations. Sin is now his heaviest burden and acutest grief. Whereas the giddy worldling craves after its pleasures, and the covetous seek after its riches, the deepest longing of the renewed soul is to be completely rid of the horrible activities of indwelling sin. He has already been delivered from its reigning power, for God has dethroned it from its former dominion over the heart; but it still rages within him, frequently gets the better of him, causes him many a groan, and makes him look forward with eager longing to the time when he shall be delivered from its polluting presence.

Another important and integral part of the great change consists in the soul’s deliverance from the toils of *Satan*. Where the heart has really undergone a radical change of disposition and attitude toward God, toward His Law, and toward sin, the great Enemy has lost his hold on that person. The devil’s power over mankind lies in his keeping them in ignorance of the true God, in the

scorning of His Law, in holding them in love with sin; and hence, it is that he “hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4). While God permits him to succeed therein, men are his captives, his slaves, his prisoners, held fast by the cords of their lusts. But it was announced of the coming Saviour that He would “proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isa. 61:1). Accordingly, when He appeared, we are told that He not only healed the sick, but also “all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38). The regenerate have been delivered “from the power of Satan” (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13) and each made “the Lord’s freeman” (1 Cor. 7:22). True, he is still suffered to harass and tempt them from without, but cannot succeed without their consent; and if they steadfastly resist him, he flees from them.

In those five aspects of the great change, we may perceive the *begun reversal* of what took place at man’s apostasy from God. What were the leading elements in the Fall? No doubt they can be expressed in a variety of ways, but do they not consist, essentially, of these? First, in giving ear unto Satan and heed to the senses of the body, instead of to the Word of God. It was in parleying with the Serpent that Eve came under his power. Second, in preferring the pleasures of sin (the forbidden fruit which now made such a powerful appeal to her affection—Genesis 3:6) rather than communion with her holy Maker. Third, in transgressing God’s Law by an act of deliberate disobedience (Rom. 5:19). Fourth, in the loss of their primitive purity: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). Their physical eyes were open previously (!), but now they had a discovery of the consequences of their sin: a guilty sense of shame crept over their souls, their innocence was gone, they perceived what a miserable plight they were now in—stripped of their original righteousness, condemned by their own conscience.

Fifth, in becoming alienated from God: “And they heard the

voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (Gen. 3:8). And what was their response? Did they rejoice at His gracious condescension in thus paying them a visit? Did they welcome their opportunity to cast themselves upon His mercy? Or did they even fall down before Him in brokenhearted confession of their excuseless offence? Far otherwise. When the Serpent spoke, Eve promptly gave ear to and conferred with him; but now that the voice of the Lord God was audible, she and her guilty partner fled from Him. “And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (Gen. 3:8). A guilty conscience warned them that it was the approach of that Judge whose Law they had broken; and they were terror-stricken at the prospect of having a face-to-face meeting with the One against whom they had rebelled. They dared not look upon Holiness incarnate, and therefore, sought to escape from His presence. Thereby, they evidenced they had *died spiritually*—their hearts being separated and alienated from Him! Their understanding was “darkened” and their hearts in a condition of “blindness” (Eph. 4:18); a spirit of madness now possessed them, as appears in their vain attempt to hide among the trees from the eyes of Omniscience.

Those then were the essential elements in the Fall, or the several steps in man’s departure from God. A parleying with and coming under the power of the devil, sin’s being made attractive in their sight, inclining unto the act of disobedience, resulting in the loss of their primitive purity and their consequent alienation from God. The attentive reader will observe those things are in the inverse order of those mentioned above as constituting the five leading characteristics of the great change wrought in those who are the favoured subjects of the miracle of grace. Nor is the reason for that far to seek: *conversion* is a turning around, a right-about face, a being restored to a proper relation and attitude toward God. Let us employ a simple illustration. If I journey five miles from a place and then determine to return to it, must I not re-traverse the fifth mile before coming to the fourth, and tread again the fourth before I arrive at the third, and so on, until I reach

the original point from which I departed? Was it not thus with the ragged and famished prodigal who had journeyed into the far country: he must return unto the Father's House if he would obtain food and clothing.

If the great change be the *reversing* of what occurred at the Fall, then the order of its constituents should necessarily be viewed *inversely*. First, being restored to our original relation unto God, which was one of spiritual union and communion with Him. That is made possible and actual by renewing us after His image, which consists of "righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24), a saving and experimental knowledge of His ineffable perfections; or in other words, by the renovation and moral purification of our souls, for it is only the "pure in heart" (Matt. 5:8) who see God as He actually is—our rightful Lord, our everlasting Portion. Only then does the divine Law have its due and true place in our hearts: its authority being owned, its spirituality esteemed, the fulfilling of its holy and just requirements being our sincere and resolute aim. Obviously, it cannot be until we have a right attitude toward God, until our hearts truly love him, until after His Law becomes the rule and director of our lives, that we can perceive the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and consequently loathe, resist, and mourn over it. And just so far as *that* be the case with us, are we morally delivered from the power of Satan: while the heart beats true to God, the solicitations of His enemy will be repellent to us, rather than attractive.

But let us point out once more that this great change is not completed by a single act of the Spirit upon or within the soul, but occurs in distinct *stages*: it is commenced at regeneration, continues throughout the whole process of our experimental sanctification, and is only consummated at our glorification. Thus, regeneration is only the *begun* reversing of what occurred at the Fall. The very fact that regeneration is spoken of as a divine begetting and birth at once intimates there is then only the beginning of the spiritual life in the soul, and that there is need for the growth and development of the same. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform [finish] it" (Phil. 1:6) is the plain

declaration and blessed assurance of what is implied by the “birth;” and such statements as “the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16) and our being “changed into the same image *from glory to glory*, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18) tell us something of the divine operations within the souls of the regenerate, while the great change is continued and brought, little by little, unto completion. That miracle of grace which was begun at regeneration is gradually carried forward in us by the process of sanctification, which appears in our growth in grace or the development of our graces.

If the reader desires a more detailed analysis and description of what that process consists of, how the great change is carried forward in us by sanctification, we may delineate it thus. First, by the illumination of the understanding which enables the believer to grow “in the knowledge of our Lord” (2 Pet. 3:18), and gives him a clearer and fuller perception of His will. Second, by the elevation and refining of the affections, the Spirit drawing them forth unto things above, fixing them on holy objects, assimilating the heart thereto. Third, by the emancipation of the will, God working in the soul “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13), giving us both the desire and the power to concur with Him, for He deals with us not as mere automatons, but ever as moral agents. Thus, it is our responsibility to *seek* illumination, to prayerfully study His Word for the same, to occupy our minds (by constant meditation) and exercise our hearts with spiritual objects, and to diligently seek His enablement to avoid everything which would hinder (and use all the means appointed for) the promotion of our spiritual growth. As we do so, that process will issue and appear, fourth, in the rectification of our life.

From what has just been pointed out, it plainly appears that they err greatly who suppose that regeneration consists of nothing more than the communication of a new nature or principle to an individual, leaving everything else in him just as it was before. It is the person himself who is regenerated, his whole soul which is renewed, so that all its faculties and powers are renovated and

enriched thereby. How can everything else in him be unchanged, how otherwise can we designate the blessed transformation which the miracle of grace has wrought in him, than by styling it “a great change”—a real, radical, and thorough one; since his understanding (which was previously darkened by ignorance, error, and prejudice) is now spiritually enlightened, since his affections (which formerly were fixed only on the things of time and sense) are now set upon heavenly and eternal objects, since his will (which hitherto was enslaved by sin, being “free *from* righteousness”—Rom. 6:20) is now emancipated from its bondage, being “free *from sin*” (Rom. 6:18). That glorious transformation, that supernatural change, is what we chiefly have in mind when we speak of “the moral purification” of the soul.

Just as the Fall introduced the principle of sin into man’s being, which resulted in the death of his soul godwards—for death is ever the wages of sin—so in the reversing of the Fall, a principle of holiness is conveyed to man’s soul, which results in his again being spiritually alive unto God. Just as the introduction of sin vitiated and corrupted all the faculties of the soul, so the planting of a principle of holiness within vitalizes and purifies all its faculties. We say again that man lost no portion of his original tripartite nature by the Fall, nor was he deprived of any of his faculties, but he did lose all *power* to use them godwards and for His glory, because they came completely under the dominion of sin and were defiled by it. And again, we say that man receives no addition to his original constitution by regeneration, nor is any new faculty then bestowed upon him, but he *is* now empowered (to a considerable degree) to use his faculties godwards and employ them in His service, because so long as he maintains communion with God, they are under the dominion of grace and are ennobled, elevated, and empowered by the renewing of the Spirit.

Section Eight

That which occasions the honest Christian the most difficulty and distress, as he seeks to ascertain whether a miracle of grace

has been wrought within him, is the discovery that so much remains what it always was; yea, often his case appears to be much *worse* than formerly—more risings of opposition to God, more surgings of pride, more hardness of heart, more foul imaginations. Yet that very consciousness of and grief over indwelling corruptions is, itself, both an effect and an evidence of the great change. It is proof that such a person *has* his eyes open to see and a heart to feel evils, which previously he was blind unto and insensible of. An unregenerate person is not troubled about the weakness of his faith, the coldness of his affections, the stirrings of self within. *You* were not yourself so, while you were dead godwards! But if such things now exercise you deeply, if your eyes be open to and you mourn over that within, to which no fellow creature is privy, must you not be very different now from what you once were?

But, asks the exercised reader, if I have been favoured with a supernatural change of heart, how can such horrible experiences consist therewith? Surely, if my heart had been made pure, there would not still be a filthy and foul sea of iniquity within me! Dear friend, that filth has been in you from birth, but it is only since you were born again that you have become increasingly *aware* of its presence. A pure heart is not one from which all sin has been removed, as is clear from the histories of Abraham, Moses, David. The heart is not made wholly pure in this life: as the understanding is only enlightened in part (much ignorance and error still remaining), so at regeneration, the heart is cleansed but in part. Observe that Acts 15:9 does not say, “purified their hearts by faith,” but “purifying”—a continued process. A pure heart is one which is attracted by “the beauty of holiness” (Psa. 29:2) and longs to be fully conformed thereunto; and therefore, one of the surest proofs I possess a pure heart is my abhorring and grieving over impurity—as Lot dwelling in Sodom “*vexed* his righteous soul” by what he saw and heard there (2 Pet. 2:8).

Then are we not obliged to conclude that the Christian has *two* “hearts”—the one pure, and the other impure? Perhaps the best way for us to answer that question is to point out what is imported

by the “heart,” as that term is used in Scripture. In a few passages, where it is distinguished from the “mind” (1 Sam. 2:35; Heb. 8:10) and from the “soul” (Deut. 6:5), the heart is restricted to the affections; but generally, it has reference to *the whole inner man*, for in other places it is the seat of the intellectual faculties too, as in “I gave my heart to know wisdom,” etc. (Eccl. 1:17)—I applied my *mind* unto its investigation. In its usual and wider signification, the “heart” connotes the one indwelling the body. “The heart in the Scriptures is variously used: sometimes for the mind and understanding, sometimes for the will, sometimes for the affection, sometimes for the conscience. *Generally*, it denotes the whole soul of man and all the faculties of it” (John Owen, 1616-1683). We have carefully tested that statement by the Word and confirmed it. The following passages make it clear that the “heart” has reference to the man himself as distinguished from his body.

Its first occurrence is, “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the *thoughts* of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). “I had done speaking in mine heart” (Gen. 24:45) plainly means “within myself.” It does so in “Esau said in his heart” (Gen. 27:41)—determined in himself. “Now Hannah, she spake in her heart” (1 Sam. 1:13). “Examine *me*, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my *heart*” (Psa. 26:2)—my inner man. “With my whole heart [my entire inner being] have I sought thee” (Psa. 119:10). In the New Testament, the “mind” often has the same force. On Romans 12:2, Charles Hodge (1797-1878) pointed out, “The word *nous* [‘mind’] is used, as it is here, frequently in the New Testament (Rom. 1:28; Eph. 4:17, 23; Col. 2:18, etc.). In all these and similar cases, it does not differ from the heart—i.e., in its wider sense, for *the whole soul*.” Ordinarily, then, the “heart” signifies the whole soul, the “inner man,” the “hidden man of the heart” (1 Pet. 3:4) at which God ever looks (1 Sam. 16:7).

Now “the heart” of the natural man (that is, his entire soul—understanding, affections, will, conscience) is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9), which is but

another way of saying he is “totally depraved”—the whole of his inner being is corrupt. And therefore, God bids us, “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart...*wash thine heart* from wickedness [in true repentance from the love and pollution of sin], that thou mayest be saved” (Jer. 4:4, 14). Yea, He bids men, “Cast away from you all your transgressions...and make you a new heart” (Ezek. 18:31), and holds them responsible so to do. That man cannot effect this change in himself by any power of his own, is solely because he is bound by the cords of his sins: the very essence of his depravity consists in being of the contrary spirit. So far from excusing him, that only aggravates his case, and compliance with those precepts is as much man’s duty and as proper a subject for exhortation as is faith, repentance, love to God. So in the New Testament, “purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8).

“Make you a new heart” (Ezek. 18:31). But, says the awakened and convicted sinner, that is the very thing which I am unable to produce: alas, what shall I do? Why, cast yourself upon the mercy and power of the Lord, and say to Him as the leper did, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Matt. 8:2). Beg Him to work *in* you what He requires *of* you. Nay, more, lay hold of His Word and plead with Him: Thou hast made promise, “A new heart also will I give you” (Ezek. 36:26), so “do as thou hast said” (2 Sam. 7:25). It is a most blessed fact that God’s promises are as large as His exhortations; and for each of the latter, there is one of the former exactly meeting it. Does the Lord bid us circumcise our hearts (Deut. 10:16)? Then He assures His people, I “will circumcise thine heart” (Deut. 30:6). Does He bid us purify our heart (James 4:8)? He also declares, “From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezek. 36:25). Are Christians told to cleanse themselves “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1)? Then they are promised, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

God, then, does not leave the hearts of His people as they were when born into this world, and as they are described in Jeremiah

17:9. No, blessed be His name, He works a miracle of grace within them, which changes the whole of their inner man. Spiritual life is communicated to them, divine light illumines them, a principle of holiness is planted within them. That principle of holiness is a fountain of purity, from which issue streams of godly desires, motives, endeavours, acts. It is a supernatural habit residing in every faculty of the soul, giving a new direction to them, inclining them godwards. Divine grace is imparted to the soul subjectively, so that it has entirely new propensities unto God and holiness, and newly created antipathies to sin and Satan, making us willing to endure suffering for Christ's sake, rather than to retain the friendship of the world. To make us partakers of His *holiness* is the substance and sum of God's purpose of grace for us, both in election (Eph. 1:4), regeneration (Eph. 4:24), and all His dealings with us afterwards (Heb. 12:10). Not that finite creatures can ever be participants of the essential holiness of God, either by imputation or transubstantiation, but only by fashioning us in the *image* thereof.

It is the communication of divine grace—or the planting within us of the principle and habit of holiness—which both purifies the heart or soul, and which gives the death-wound unto indwelling sin. Grace is not only a divine attribute of benignity and free favour that is exercised *unto* the elect, but it is also a powerful influence that works *within* them. It is in this latter sense the term is used when God says, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:9), and when the apostle declared, “But by the grace of God, I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10). That communicated grace makes the heart “honest” (Luke 8:15), “tender” (2 Kings 22:11), “pure” (Matt. 5:8). An *honest* heart is one that abhors hypocrisy and pretence, that is fearful of being deceived, that desires to know the truth about itself at all costs, that is sincere and open, that bares itself to the Sword of the Spirit. A “tender” heart is one that is *pliant* godwards: that of the unregenerate is likened unto “the nether millstone” (Job 41:24), but that which is wrought upon by the Spirit resembles wax—receptive to His impressions upon it (2 Cor. 3:3). It is *sensitive*—like a tender plant—shrinking

from sin and making conscience of the same. It is compassionate, gentle, considerate.

In addition to our previous remarks thereon, we would add that a heart (or “soul”) which has been made inchoately, yet radically, pure—and which is being continually purified—is one in which the love of God has been shed abroad, and therefore, it loathes what He loathes; one wherein the fear of the Lord dwells, so that evil is hated and departed from. It is one from which the corrupting love of the world has been cast out. A pure heart is one wherein faith is operative (Acts 15:9), attracting and conforming it unto a Holy Object, drawing the affections unto things above. It is one from which self has been deposed and Christ enthroned, so that it sincerely desires and earnestly endeavours to please and honour Him in all things. It is one that is purged, progressively, from ignorance and error by apprehending and obeying the truth (1 Pet. 1:22). A pure heart is one that makes conscience of evil thoughts, unholy desires, foul imaginations, which grieves over their prevalency and weeps in secret for indulging them. The purer the heart becomes, the more is it aware of and distressed by inward corruptions.

The Puritans were wont to say that at regeneration, sin receives its “death-wound.” We are not at all sure what exactly they meant by that expression, nor do we know of any Scripture which expressly warrants it—certainly such passages as Romans 6:6-7, and Galatians 5:24, do not; yet we have no objection to it, providing it be understood something like this: When faith truly lays hold of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the soul is for ever delivered from the condemnation and guilt of sin, and it can never again obtain legal “dominion” over him. By the moral purification of the soul, it is cleansed from the prevailing love and power of sin, so that the lusts of the flesh are detested and resisted. Sin is divested of its reigning power over the faculties of the soul, so that full and willing subjection is no longer rendered to it. Its dying struggles are hard and long, powerfully felt within us, and though God grants brief respites from its ragings, it breaks forth with renewed force and causes us many a groan.

In our earlier days, we rejected the expression, “a change of heart,” because we confounded it with “the flesh.” The heart *is* changed at regeneration, but “the flesh” is *not* purified or spiritualized, though it ceases to have uncontrolled and undisputed dominion over the soul. Indwelling sin is not eradicated, but its reign is broken and can no longer produce hatred of God. The appetites and tendencies of “the flesh” in a Christian are precisely the same after he is born again as they were before. They are indeed “subdued” by grace; and conversion is often followed by such inward peace and joy that it appears as though they were dead, but they soon seek to reassert themselves, as Satan left Christ “for a season” (Luke 4:13), but later renewed his assaults. Nevertheless, grace opposes sin, the “spirit” or principle of holiness strives against the flesh, preventing it from having full sway over the soul. As life is opposed to death, purity to impurity, spirituality to carnality, so there is henceforth experienced within the soul a continual and sore conflict between sin and grace, each striving for the mastery.

While, then, it be true that there are two distinct and diverse springs of action in the Christian, the one prompting to evil and the other unto good, it is better to speak of them as two “principles” than “natures.” To conceive of there being two minds, two wills, or two hearts in him, is no more warrantable than to affirm he has two souls, which would mean two moral agents, two centres of responsibility, which would destroy the identity of the individual and involve us in hopeless confusion of thought. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb. 3:12) would be meaningless if the saint possessed *two* “hearts”—the one incapable of anything *but* unbelief, the other incapable *of* unbelief. The Christian is a unit, a person with one heart or soul; and he is responsible to watch and be sober, to be constantly on his guard against the workings of his corruptions, to prevent sin hardening his heart so that he comes under the power of unbelief and turns away from God.

“Incline my heart [my whole soul] unto thy testimonies, and not

to covetousness” (Psa. 119:36). This is another one of many verses which expose the error of a Christian’s having two “hearts”—the one carnal and the other spiritual—and making them synonymous with “the flesh” and the “spirit.” It would be useless by my asking God to incline “the flesh” (indwelling sin) unto His testimonies, for it is radically opposed unto them. Equally unnecessary is it for me to ask God *not* to incline “the spirit” (indwelling grace) unto covetousness, for it is entirely holy. But no difficulty remains if we regard the “heart” as the inner man: “incline *me* unto thy testimonies,” etc. The saint longs after complete conformity unto God’s will, but is conscious of much within him that is prone to disobedience; and therefore, he prays that the habitual bent of his thoughts and affections may be unto heavenliness, rather than worldliness: Let the reasons and motives unto godliness Thou hast set before me in Thy Word be made effectual by the powerful operations of Thy Spirit.

The heart of man must have an object unto which it is inclined or whereto it cleaves. The thoughts and affections of the soul cannot be idle or be without some object on which to place them. Man was made for God, to be happy in the enjoyment of Him, to find in Him a satisfying portion; and when he apostatized from God, he sought satisfaction in the creature. While the heart of fallen man be devoid of grace, it is wholly carried out to the things of time and sense. As soon as he is born, he follows his carnal appetites, and for the first few years, is governed entirely by his senses. Sin occupies the throne of his heart, and though conscience may interpose some check, it has no power to incline the soul godwards, and sin cannot be dethroned by anything but a miracle of grace. That miracle consists in giving the soul a prevailing and habitual bent godwards. The heart is taken off from the *love of* base objects and set upon Christ, yet *we* are required to keep our hearts with all diligence, mortify our lusts, and seek the daily strengthening of our graces.

Great as is the change effected in the soul by the miracle of grace, yet, as said before, it is neither total nor complete, but is carried forward during the whole subsequent process of

sanctification—a process that involves a daily and lifelong conflict within the believer, so that his “experience” is like that described in Romans 7:13-25. The Christian is not the helpless slave of sin, for he resists it—to speak of a “helpless victim” *fighting* is a contradiction in terms. So far from being helpless, the saint can do all things through Christ strengthening him (Phil. 4:13). As a new object has won his heart, his duty is to serve his new Master: “Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13)—use to His glory the same faculties of soul as you formerly did in the pleasing of self. The Christian’s responsibility consists in resisting his evil propensities and acting according to his inclinations and desires after holiness.

The great change in and upon the Christian will be completed when dawns that “morning without clouds” (2 Sam. 23:4), when the Day breaks “and the shadows flee away” (Song of Solomon 2:17). For then shall he not only “see the king in his beauty” (Isa. 33:17), see Him “face to face,” but he shall be made like Him, “fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21), fully and eternally “conformed to the image of his [God’s] Son” (Rom. 8:29).

The third of three booklets.

