

ORIGINAL SERMONS;

BY

Presbyterian Ministers,

IN

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

Now, I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

PAUL.

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SERMON II.

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THE CHARACTER OF MAN.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked 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 in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by *nature* the children of *wrath*, even as *others*.

EPH. ii. 1, 2, 3.

THE condition of man is here painted, in shades of "*darkness which may be felt.*" The picture is drawn, the circumstances delineated, by the pencil of inspiration. To be by *nature* children of *wrath*, under the power of Satan, habitual practitioners in vice, slaves to sinful desires and lusts, *dead* in trespasses and sins, is a condition of *helpless* depravity. And this condition would be as *hopeless* as it is *helpless*, were it not that there is ONE, who has life in himself, who quickens and raises up whomsoever he will. John v. 21, 25.

Those whose condition is here described, may, perhaps, in the pride and levity of their hearts, smile at a seeming incongruity in our text. They may ask, how can the *dead* walk and talk, and *live* in lusts? Let such souls be once *quickened*, and their smile of levity will be changed into the most solemn inquiry. Acts ii. 37. They will confess their deeds. Acts xix. 18. They will own themselves by *nature* children of *wrath*. Ps. li. 5. They will feel, that a condition of spiritual death, which is the state of all unregenerated men, is the very condition described in our text—*dead in tres-*

passes and sins. Mat. viii. 22, 1 Tim. v. 6, 1 John iii. 14. Compare Ephesians i. 19, 20, and ii. 5, 6, and John v. 24.

It is not uncommon for the inspired writers, in presenting several important topics, in a single sentence; to place that first, in the order of words, which is last, in the order of events; and sometimes that event, which is first in the order of time, is last in the order of description. Thus, in speaking of the power of God, in connexion with the gospel, it is said, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. Here, the purpose of God, in Christ, for the salvation of sinners, is first, in God's plan, but last, in the apostle's description. So in our text, the native character of man, *first* in the order of events, is placed last in the order of language.

Therefore, in the discussion of the subject, the following method is proposed:

I. THE NATIVE CHARACTER OF MAN. *By nature children of wrath.*

II. THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF MAN. *Dead in sins, wherein ye walked.*

III. THE RENEWED CHARACTER OF MAN. *You hath he quickened, who were dead.*

I. We are to consider the native character of man.

By character, I mean personal qualities, natural or acquired. By native character, I mean, the temper of mind, and disposition of soul, in which we are born; and the natural inclination or tendency we have to any particular course of conduct—qualities which precede

knowledge and conscience, which are neither imitations nor the effects of example. A native place is the place of one's birth. A native body is that substance, all the members of which were written in God's book and curiously fashioned, before one is brought into the world. And a native character is the state, temper, and disposition of mind in which any one is ushered into life and brought upon the stage of action. This character is antecedent to any moral conduct, in view of obligation, arising from the knowledge of any law, human or divine. Some, with great ingenuity, learning, and labor, have attempted to show that "*by nature*" means *custom*. But the tenor of the scriptures and the confessions of the pious incontestably prove that "*by nature*" signifies those *innate propensities* from which our evil customs or practices flow, as feculent streams from a corrupt fountain. The difference between *nature* and *practice* lays the foundation for the twofold definition of *sin*—"Sin is any want of conformity unto the law of God, or any transgression of the law of God." To come short of the glory of God, that is, to be unholy, is *sin* (Rom. iii. 23) just as much as any actual transgression. 1 John iii. 4.

To be born under the guilt of Adam's first sin, entirely destitute of that righteousness in which man was created; with a *nature* so corrupted as to be "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually," is a miniature picture of the *native character* of man. This is "*original sin*. From this do proceed all actual transgressions." Larger Catechism, Ques. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and scripture proofs there.

It is asserted by some that a *nature* cannot be holy or

unholy.* But this is assertion without proof. What is a nature? A nature consists in the essential properties of any existence which constitute it what it is; which discriminate and distinguish that sort or species from all others. The logical definition of a *nature* is not different from that of a *substance*. It is *that* which constitutes a thing or being what it is; and makes it differ from another thing or being. Bread and a stone are of different *natures*, and hence their different uses. A dove and a vulture are of different *natures*; hence their different propensities and *customs*. The same may be said of the lamb and the lion, of a man and an angel.

When God created man "*upright*" and formed him in his "own image," one part of that image is particularly specified to be "true holiness." Eph. iv. 24, and Lar. Cat. Ques. 17. Holiness is not a single perfection of God, as wisdom, power, goodness, justice, and truth are single perfections; but holiness is essential to God's *nature*, and pervades all his perfections; hence Jehovah is "glorious in holiness." But all created *natures* may change or be changed. God alone is immutable. None but God can say, "I am Jehovah; I change not." Water can be changed into wine. A stone can be made bread. But the wine would not remain water, nor the bread continue a stone. These changes, in the *nature* of things, if they take place, are produced by the direct agency and power of God. But when a holy angel changes into a devil, or a holy man into a sinner, the change from a *holy* to a *sinful nature* is produced by the departure of the creature from the creator when left to himself, that is, when left to the freedom of his own will.

* Dr. Beecher and Mr. Finney,

That the *native character* of man is what I have stated, can be proven,

1. From a scriptural inquiry. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Job xiv. 4. "This inquiry forms a decisive testimony that Job believed in the *doctrine of original sin*." When Eliphaz reproved Job for supposed impiety, he never disputed the correctness of his views on this subject, but consented to the doctrine in its full extent, by asking a similar question, "what is man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" Job xv. 14. Bildad, who also disputed with Job, did not contradict him on this point, but asked in his turn, "how can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job xxv. 4.

There can be no propriety in these questions, no truth in the doctrine they imply, if it were true, as some now affirm, that "the nature of man is neither *holy* nor *unholy*;" that "the *first sin* in every man could be prevented by himself;" that "there is no sin but what is *voluntary*." These *moderns* in theology have become wiser than the *ancients*!!!

2. That the native character of man is as has been stated, is proven from one single exception to this general doctrine of *original sin*. God manifest in flesh forms this exception. It is affirmed that he was "born of a woman;" that he was "holy and undefiled;" that he took on him man's nature, with all the essential properties and innocent infirmities thereof, yet without sin." Con. Faith, chap. viii. sec. 2, and proof texts there. And to put a seal upon the lips of some modern theorists, and prevent them from saying, "O very true,

the Son of God was holy, in all his voluntary exercises; but his *nature*, like all other *natures*, was neither *holy* nor *unholy*;" the celestial messenger said to Mary, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35. It was not said *that thing*, which is neither *holy* nor *unholy*, shall be born of thee, and become *holy* by *voluntary moral exercises*; but *that HOLY THING* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. That *holy thing* was no doubt *a nature*. We know it was not "*the nature* of angels." It was the "Word made flesh;" and by the power of the Highest brought into the world *holy*. This single and *only* exception forms a most conclusive argument in support of the doctrine of *original sin*, as it is stated in the standards of our church.

3. The *native character of man* is proven to be as above stated, by the doctrine of the new birth. If the nature of man was not depraved, if sin consisted only in a series of wrong volitions and *practices*, in view of known rules of duty; if, "to say of an accountable creature, that he is depraved by nature, is only to say, that, rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability;"* then there is indeed great need of *reformation*, but no need of *regeneration*. To talk of being "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "created anew," "transformed into the image of God," is very consistent with the doctrine of a depraved *nature*, and the necessity of a radical change, produced by supernatural agency; but

* Dr. Beecher.

all this is supremely absurd, if nothing is wrong but a misdirection of our "capabilities." All that is to be done in that case, is to induce the sinner to change his "governing purpose," and thus "make himself a *new heart*."* And this he can do, for he "is rendered capable by his Maker of obedience," and "ability to obey is indispensable to moral obligation;"† and he "has more power to love God than hate him;"‡ and therefore it is highly absurd to pray that "God would enable sinners to repent and believe."§ It may fairly be presumed that nothing could have induced so many learned writers since the days of Pelagius to cherish such unscriptural opinions, but a strong desire to avoid the doctrine of original sin, and the doctrine of regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost—two doctrines so peculiarly offensive to the pride of the human heart.

4. The sanctification of Jeremiah and John before they were born, proves the native character of man to be as above described. Jer. i. 4, and Luke i. 15. What was the matter with them? These children, like Esau and Jacob, "were not yet born, neither had done good or evil." Rom. ix. 11. The period of their accountability had not yet arrived; but God sanctified them, and kept them alive, and kept them from sin, and kept them for singular usefulness. They were not, like the Son of God, without sin; but they were sanctified before they were born, and through life furnished an evidence of supernatural grace, by their unfeigned obedience.

God thus demonstrated that infants need regeneration; that the Holy Spirit can operate upon them

* Finney. † Dr. Beecher. ‡ Rev. F. A. Ross.

§ Dr. Skinner and Rev. E. Beecher.

directly, without the use of means; and that if he did save two, in this way, who lived long in his service here on earth, he can save thousands, in the same way, on whom "death passed" before they committed actual transgression. Multitudes of infants have been subjected to death, who had never broken any law "after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" that is, knowingly, wilfully, and deliberately. But God, who is rich in mercy, has given us a comfortable hope, that "As infants die in Adam without their own personal transgression, so they will be saved in Christ without their own personal exercise of faith in him; yet they must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.* But if their *natures* were neither *holy* nor *unholy*, they could not be fit for heaven nor hell.

If they were not lost, by the sin of the *first* Adam, they cannot be saved by the righteousness of the *SECOND*. If they did not *fall* by the breach of the covenant of works, they cannot be *raised* by the fulfilment of the covenant of grace.

But those who deny original sin, imputed and conveyed,† must deny also imputed righteousness,‡ in order to appear consistent. Hence it is manifest that they form a system different from that which is adopted by the Presbyterian Church, and preach another gospel.

5. The *native character of man*, as above stated, is proven by the confession of David and the declarations of Christ.

David not only acknowledged his transgressions, but his *sin* was ever before him. He as bitterly lamented that he was conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity as that he had sinned and done evil against heaven and

* Con. F. ch. x. sec. 3. † Ib. ch. vi. sec. 3. ‡ Ib. ch. xi. sec. 1.

in the sight of God. Ps. li. 3—5. How different was this from the language of those who declare “they never repented nor will they ever repent for original sin.” What says our Lord? “A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” It is perfectly fair to determine the *nature* of the tree by the fruit that it bears. Change the *nature* of the tree, and you change the fruit. If a good tree *cannot* produce evil fruit, and if a corrupt tree *cannot* bring forth good fruit, does it not follow that the fruit of a tree neither *good* nor *corrupt* will be like the tree itself, neither *good* nor *evil*? Has this been the case with the fruits produced by the human race? Have their fruits been so harmless and useless as to prove that the nature of the tree was neither holy nor unholy? Have not all actual transgressions demonstrated the original corruption of our whole nature? * Let universal experience, observation, and the word of God answer the question.

Having seen clearly, in the scriptures of truth, in the conduct of all unregenerate men, in the peculiar purity of the son of God, in the sanctification of children before they were born, in the confessions of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and David, in the illustration given by Christ, and in the words of our text, that original sin is the source of all actual sin; I must ask your attention to the next topic of discourse, viz:

II. THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF MAN—*Dead in sins, wherein ye walked.*

A dead body is incapable of the pursuits of life. Those objects which engross the attention of the living are in vain presented to attract the notice of the dead.

* Con. Faith ch. vi. sec. 4.

The senseless corpse, left to itself, possesses one uniform tendency to decay. This tendency increases as decay advances, with a rapidity equal to the increased velocity of a globe in motion on an inclined plane. But let this body be embalmed, and decay is retarded. Let the same body be animated, and it is sensitive. Let it be restored to health, and it performs immediately the ordinary functions of life. Light and darkness, beauty and deformity, pleasure and pain, rest and toil, safety and danger, are all perceived and felt, and all produce their appropriate effects. Thus it is with sinful man. While dead in sins, he is incapable of the pursuits and pleasures of the godly. He has eyes, but sees not; ears, but hears not; a heart, but understands not. The light shines, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. The deformity of sin and beauty of holiness are alike unperceived by him. The pains of the second death and the pleasures of eternal life are alike unfelt and unheeded. The natural and habitual tendency of the sinner is downward to perdition. The rolling ball descends the declivity with no more rapidity towards the abyss, than the "dead in trespasses and sins" precipitate to ruin. In a thousand ways he is checked and hindered, and almost stopped in his progress to ruin, like the embalmed body; but never, never does he perform the operations of spiritual life until "quickened together with Christ, by God, who is rich in mercy." Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.

Nevertheless, it is evident from our text, and from all experience, that men, *dead*, being under sentence of death—*dead*, being exposed to eternal death—*dead*, being as incapable of performing the operations of spiritual life as a corpse is of animal actions—*men, dead*

in sins, can “walk according to the course of this world;” can act under the influence of “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;” can “have their conversation in the lusts of the flesh;” can be engaged in fulfilling the desires of the carnal mind. “To be carnally minded is death.”

The indubitable evidence of this *death* is **INSENSIBILITY TO ETERNAL THINGS**. To produce instances for proof and illustration, we need not select, from a world in wickedness, the most rare specimens of vice. We need not suppose wealth obtained by injustice, power maintained by oppression, eloquence employed in seduction, treachery concealed under the mantle of piety, or malice ending in murder. We only have to exhibit souls drawn away from God by the enticements of the world. Let us select, as one example, the man of business.

Business, as opposed to idleness, assumes an honorable appearance. The man of business, contrasted with the man of dissipation, feels the dignity of his own pursuits, and exults in a fair and natural consciousness of comparative merit. The sober air of business resembles the garb of sanctity. Diligence, industry, saving of time, order, patience, self-denial, all necessary to success in business, are the very habits of morality. But habits of morality, without the true principles of piety, are like the body without the spirit—*dead*. The man of the world, engrossed in business, forgets God, forgets eternal things, neglects the “great salvation,” heaps up riches to indulge his lusts, and labors for heirs who are, too frequently, ruined by their inheritance. The uncertainty of human life leads him to be exact in his contracts and regular in his accounts, and to risk nothing but his own soul, on the precarious tenure of earthly existence.

Under the spirit of the world, his time, talents, and affections are all absorbed by earthly things, and his chief happiness consists in expectations of greater wealth. All this industry, sobriety, punctuality, and economy exhibit a fearful example of that *insensibility to eternal things*, which places the man of business among the “dead in trespasses and sins.” How does this man spend the Lord’s days—the *holy Sabbaths*? Unless he engage in his usual pursuits of life, or seek relief by company and amusements, are they not days of dulness to his soul and sluggishness to his body? Are not the ministry of reconciliation and the means of *eternal life* “dull decencies” and “shadowy forms” to him? Look at him in the house of God; for he sometimes there appears; can you believe him the same man whom yesterday you saw on his farm, in his shop, or behind the counter? His whole soul was then awake, his energies were vigorously employed, his capacities had objects, worthy, in his esteem, of their highest efforts. Yesterday he breathed his native air, beheld “the brilliant images of earth’s gay glory” play before his vivid imagination; and heart and soul, and mind and strength were passionate devotees at the shrine of MAMMON. To-day he slumbers. It is the Lord’s day. The Bible, to him, is cheerless as the desert; the Saviour, a root out of dry ground; the sermon, a glass before the face of a natural man; he goeth away, and “straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” The doctrines of original sin, actual transgression, the incarnation of God’s eternal son, the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our reconciliation to God, the resurrection for our justification, the ascension and exaltation of our great high priest, for our encouragement; the renewing, sanctify-

ing, and consoling power of the Holy Ghost, for our salvation; the faith, repentance, humility, and holiness required by the gospel, as evidences of our being fruitful branches united to the true vine; the rewards of the righteous, and eternal damnation of the wicked, are unintelligible mysteries, to the worldly man, whose heart is choked with the cares of avarice, the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things; he is "dead in trespasses and sins."

Take another example. The man of pleasure. The scriptures declare that "she who liveth in pleasure, is *dead* while she liveth." This is as true of men as of women. Pursuits of carnal gratification are as destructive of the principles as they are opposed to the spirit of piety. A round of fashionable entertainments, however harmless in the eyes of the world, clearly demonstrate an *insensibility to eternal things*. Alienated from God, disgusted with holiness, unfitted for heaven, life is spent "after the course of this world, according to the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation, in times past, in the lusts of our flesh." "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" are classed in the blackest list of offenders, to whom God says, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter;" yet these are so *dead* in sins, so *insensible* to the doom that awaits the hypocrite, "when God shall take away his soul," that not a few assume a "*form of godliness*," but deny "the *power*."

The man of business deludes himself by a comparison with the man of pleasure. The comparison is, in some respects, just; but the inference is erroneous.

One has a lawful calling; the *other* pursues forbidden objects. *One* is industrious; the *other* worse than idle. *One* is frugal; the *other* prodigal. *One* is sober; the *other*, a reveller. Thus they differ. Yet they are alike. *Both* walk after the course of this world. *Both* fulfil the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. *Both* neglect the "great salvation." *Both* are void of the spirit of Christ. Thus they are alike. And yet they differ. The man of pleasure can hardly believe himself right; the man of business can scarcely think himself wrong. The man of pleasure hurries on, without calculation, as appetite leads or passion propels; the man of business makes due calculation for every thing but heaven, and thus shows himself *insensible* to the gain or loss of his immortal soul.

The prophet Ezekiel once saw "the whole house of Israel," as a valley of dry bones. They were very many and very dry. No "human ability" to unite bone to bone, and make themselves stand up. No "self-determining power" to cover their ghastly skeletons, with all the wonderful, commingled organizations, essential to human forms. No "governing purpose," to bring the "breath of life" into their own *dead* carcasses. *Dead* they were, and *dead* they must ever remain, unless the life-giving God quicken them. A just emblem of our whole race, in their native and practical characters. The whole house of Israel was made up of individuals who were living, and walking, and talking after the course of this world; but *dead* while they *lived*; *insensible* to their present condition, indifferent to the possession and enjoyment of spiritual and eternal life. Can they live? Lord thou knowest. What must be done? Say, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." "For this cause was the gospel preached

to them that were *dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but *live* according to God in the spirit." I Pet. iv. 6. I shall now consider,

III. THE RENEWED CHARACTER OF MAN. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in sins wherewith ye walked.*

When Ezekiel, as he was commanded, prophesied to the *dry bones*, there was a *noise* and a *shaking*, "bone came to his bone." And "lo, sinews and flesh came upon them and skin covered them." When he prophesied to the wind, as he was commanded, "breath came into them; and they *lived*, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Thus it is when the gospel is preached according to the command of its divine author. "God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us when we were dead in sins." Thus there is formed by the power of God a *new character* in man. In the language of the word of God, the man is a "*new creature*." "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17.

The power to *create* belongs to God alone. The adoring intelligences cast their crowns before the throne of HIM "who liveth for ever and ever," saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power; for *thou hast created ALL THINGS*, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. iv. 11.

1. *To create* is to bring into being or existence something that before had no existence. "In the beginning God *created* the heaven and the earth." Gen. i. 1.

2. *To create* is to change the form, or state, or situation of matter, which cannot change itself, and requires as great power as to make it exist at first. "And God

created great whales, which the waters brought forth abundantly, &c. Gen. i. 21. "God *created* man—and the Lord God *formed* man of the dust of the ground." Gen. i. 27. Compare ii. 7. "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman." Genesis ii. 22.

3. *To create* means also to bring about the miraculous conception, and produce the mysterious person, of God manifested in flesh. "The Lord hath *created* a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man!" Jeremiah xxxi. 22.

4. *To create* is to give and work saving grace in the ruined children of the first Adam, in whom they *died*, by uniting them to Christ, the second Adam, in whom all true believers live. "God——when *we*"—(Paul and other true Christians)—"when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ." "For we are his *workmanship*, *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. ii. 4, 5, 10.

5. *To create* is to cleanse the heart of a servant of God from remaining corruption, by the power of the Holy Spirit. "*Create* in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Ps. l. 10, 11.

I know of no sixth definition to the word *create*. All these prove that to *create* is the prerogative of God. The fourth and fifth definitions apply to the subject before us, and suggest to our minds the following facts.

1. The *renewed character* of man evinces a great change. Men sometimes undergo political, commercial, physical, and mental changes which are remarkable and very great. Joseph passed very rapidly

from the dungeon to the palace; Job, from a state of great affluence to a condition of poverty; Lazarus, from being a putrid corpse, was instantly restored to life and health; and Legion, in a moment, sat down at the feet of Christ, clothed and in his right mind. These changes, whatever might have been the second causes, or whatever might have been the passive or active condition of those who passed through them, are ascribed to the power of God, but not called *creations*. They are changes wrought in the conditions of men, all of which might be accomplished without the creation of a *new heart*, without the production of a *new character*. If Joseph, Job, Lazarus, and Legion were among the people which the Lord hath "*created* for his praise," "*created* for his glory," then they had undergone a change of character distinct from and far superior to the changes above specified. Psalm cii. 18. Compare Isa. xliii. 6, 7.

2. The *renewed character* of man is produced by the immediate power of God. Those who are *created anew* in Christ Jesus unto good works, receive Christ, believe on his name, and walk in him. These are voluntary exercises, which exhibit a *new character*; but what took place before these exercises? The persons "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 12, 13.

Not of blood. Not by descent from pious parents; for sin, not holiness, is conveyed by ordinary generation; not by the typical sacrifices, for the blood of slain beasts could not purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; not by the blood of the cross. for that was shed to reconcile things in heaven

and things on earth, and not to change the hearts of either party.

Nor of the will of the flesh. Not born by the “governing purpose” of the whole corrupt nature of man. “For when we were in the *flesh*,— a condition of *native character*,—“the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members,” not to regenerate us, but “to bring forth fruit unto death.” For “they that are in the *flesh*” “cannot please God.” Romans vii. 5, viii. 8, 13.

Nor of the will of man. “A natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, has no *will* to any spiritual good, accompanying salvation, and no *strength* to convert himself, nor prepare himself for conversion, but on the contrary chooses evil continually. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them.” “No man can come to me (Christ) except the Father who hath sent me draw him.” John vi. 44, 1 Cor. ii. 14, Con. F. ch. ix. sec. 3.

But were born of God. Whatever be the means and subordinate agents employed, God is the immediate and only efficient agent. “That which is born of the spirit is spirit.” “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,” (an unrenewed heart,) “hath he quickened together with him,” (Christ,) “having forgiven you all trespasses.” “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to “the hope of eternal life.” John iii. 6, Col. iii. 13, Tit. iii. 5, 7, Con. F. ch. x. sec. 1, 2.

3. The *renewed character* of man is the evidence of a mysterious change. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." John iii. 8.

Those who discard mystery in religion must reject the Bible; those who discard mystery in nature must reject the book of creation; those who discard mystery in theology must reject God. "Who by searching can find out God? Who can know the Almighty to perfection?"

4. The *renewed character* of man is inseparable from good motives and right volitions. "Thy people shall be *willing* in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." Ps. cx. 3. "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Rom. vii. 22. "I was not *disobedient* unto the heavenly vision." Acts xxvi. 19. "To *will* is present with me." They who are in Christ Jesus "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "It is God that worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure." Yet by reason of remaining corruption, the *will* is not made immutably free to good *alone* till the saint shall arrive in a state of glory. Con. F. ch. ix. sec. 4, 5, and proofs there.

5. The *renewed character* of man is formed after the most perfect model; agreeably to an eternal purpose, and for the brightest illustration of God's glory.

At first man was created in the image of God. By sin that image was lost. In the *renewed character* that image is restored. "Ye put off concerning the former conversation the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be *renewed* in the spirit of your mind; and put on the *new man*, which after God

is *created* in righteousness and true holiness; which is *renewed* in knowledge after the *image* of him that created him." Eph. iv. 24, and Col. iii. 10.

The formation of this new character was decided in the election of grace. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the *image* of his son." This is the best model. Rom. viii. 28. "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 2. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy* and without *blame* before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace; being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of him who worketh all things after the *counsel* of his OWN WILL." Eph. i. 3--12.

The formation of this *new character* is begun in regeneration. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are *changed* into the same *image* from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians iii. 18 and iv. 6.

The formation of this *new character* is carried on by the power of God in the perseverance of the saints.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. i. 6. “If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Rom. v. 10. “Because I live ye shall live also.” John xiv. 19. “Kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Pet. i. 5.

The formation of this *new character* was intended by Christ when he gave his life a ransom for many. Mat. xx. 28. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Tit. ii. 14. “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having *spot* or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be *holy* and without *blemish*.” Eph. v. 25—27. “Lo, I come to do thy *will*, O God;” “by the which *will* we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once*.” “For by *one offering* he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” “Wherefore the Holy Ghost is a witness to us.” “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” “Now where remission of these *is*, there is no more offering for sin.” Hebrews x. 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18.

This *new character* is formed by the use of means and subordinate agents.

Means are God's ordinances—his word, sacraments, prayer, and whatever he has commanded to be said or done. Agents are men and angels, sent to “minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation.” “And he gave—

apostles—prophets—evangelists—pastors—teachers—helps—governments—for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. Compare 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28, and Lar. Cat. Q. 154, 155, and proofs there.

6. The formation of this *new character* is for the highest glory of God. On this point we have the testimony of the angels at the birth of Christ. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.” Luke ii. 14. The testimony of Paul—“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which, from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, by whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him.” Eph. iii. 8—12. The testimony of all the heavenly hosts, and the redeemed in glory. “And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and

the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Rev. v. 5—13. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, AMEN." Rev. vii. 9—12.