

# REGENERATION.

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“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 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. 6—8.

THE shades of evening have descended like a funeral pall and wrapped in the gloom of night the city of Jerusalem. The streets which had so lately resounded with the hum of industry, the glad shouts of childhood, and the wild, discordant cries of revelry, are now deserted and silence reigns, almost unbroken, in the great Jewish metropolis. One distinguished citizen, however, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, cannot sleep because his mind is disturbed by perplexing thoughts. He had listened to the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth and witnessed some of the miracles wrought by that great Healer, and notwithstanding the baneful power of deeply-rooted Pharisaical prejudices, this member of the Hebrew Sanhedrim is fully convinced that the despised Nazarene is a “Teacher come from God.” Moreover, the earnest words of the Prince of Preachers have convinced Nicodemus that his religion of mere form and ceremony is worthless in the sight of God, and in teaching others he has only been “a blind leader of the blind.” These truths greatly startle and distress the mind of the Jewish teacher, and the longer he contemplates them in view of coming death and judgment the more terribly significant do they become, and consequently his perplexity of mind and agitation of spirit proportionately increase. At length his distress becomes so great that he resolves to go to Jesus. Passing out of his chamber into the darkness of the night, with stealthy step, this sin-darkened soul goes for spiritual enlightenment to the Light of the World. The feelings of this proud Pharisee can be better imagined than described as he enters the temporary abode of the Friend of Sinners, and stands before the carpenter’s Son waiting to be instructed concerning the deep things of God. The conversation is opened by Nicodemus, who says: “Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 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.” The Jewish teacher is utterly confounded and bewildered by the plain, unvarnished statement of truth that falls from the lips of the “Teacher come from God.” All the man of culture and refinement can say in reply to the words of wisdom which fall from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake is, “How can these things be?” This is almost invariably the first effect of Gospel truth upon the natural man. He may be distinguished for the vigour of his intellect or the plenitude or variety of his knowledge, but he “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” There

is only *one true* religion in the world, and only *one way* of being saved. That way the great Teacher unfolded to Nicodemus, and it startled him, because what Jesus said was contrary to all the moralists' preconceived notions of religion. What Christ said to the Ruler of the Jews is applicable to all who are descended from Adam by ordinary generation. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Hence all who would enter heaven "*must be born again.*" Keeping this important truth before our minds we shall proceed to consider in the first place—

#### I. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH.

There is a natural life that all mankind living possess. This life is spoken of in Scripture as "the flesh," "the old man," "the old nature," "the natural man." Of this life many good things may be said by man, but according to the judgment of God, the natural man is blind and dead to the realities of religion. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." In contrast to this natural life in which we all share, there is a spiritual life in which only those share who have been "born again." The natural life is of the earth and is earthly; the spiritual life is from above, and is heavenly. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Human life soon draws to a close, whereas spiritual life is ever on the increase, and the child of God is renewed day by day, and goes on from strength to strength, until he appears in glory before his Heavenly Father a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Thus we have a striking contrast between those who are born of the flesh and those who are born of the Spirit. The children of the flesh, like the flowers of the field, perish in a short space of time, but the children of the Spirit live and abide for ever.

Perhaps no doctrine in the Bible is so offensive to the religious formalist as the New Birth. The expression, however, is Scriptural, so when men mock at us for using it, they mock Him who spake as never man spake, from whom we have learned it. "Marvel not," said our Lord to Nicodemus, "that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Those who scoff at the term "New Birth," when applied to man, do not hesitate, however, to make use of the expression when speaking of the regeneration of their country.

Is the idea of a regenerated individual, we ask, an extravagant one to be sneered at when, in the estimation of our opponents, that of a regenerated nation is a sober one to be treated with respect? Regeneration, according to a distinction of old theology, is something which is not only done *for* a man, but which is also done *upon* him. In this respect it differs from the justification or pardoning of the sinner, which is only something done *for* him, so as to change his *state* in the reckoning of law; whereas regeneration changes the man *himself*—gives him a new *character*, and places him in "the path of the just that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In order to have a clear conception of the nature of the New Birth, it is absolutely necessary for us to remember that, in regeneration, it is the man's mind, and not his body, which undergoes the change. The change, being mental, is effected, not on the faculties of the understanding, but on the passions and affections of the will. Regeneration does not give a man a new brain. If a man's memory be unretentive, his judgment naturally obtuse, and his imagination sluggish, the New Birth will not make his memory retentive, his judgment exceptionally clear and infallible, and his imagination powerful and vivid. Regeneration awakens the conscience, cleanses the heart, ennobles the life, and diverts the powers of the mind from the sinful pursuits of the world to the service of God. This change enables a man to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, tem-

ness about God and His Son Jesus Christ into a state of filial reverence, faith, and obedience; of dependence upon Christ alone for salvation, and of loyalty towards Him as our Lord and King. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"So far as the nature of regeneration is concerned," says Dr. Anderson, "there is no mystery in the subject. It is comprehensible with the clearest distinctness. Viewing it in the most striking aspect as being such a change of mind that the subject of it now loves what it once hated, and hates what it once loved, it is nothing different from what we every day see exemplified by worldly men. And when we find them expressing themselves this morning in terms of admiration respecting certain political characters, for example, whom we found them denouncing bitterly last night,—where is their sense of either reason or justice, when they mock at us as being visionary and fanatic, when we teach that, in the course of the short time, and less, from when the Sabbath congregation assembles till it is dismissed, a man shall be so regenerated that, from being the rude blasphemer he was when he entered, he shall retire a reverent worshipper of God?"

Before passing to the second division of our subject, I would here protest against a mystical conception of theology which has led some persons to entertain the erroneous idea that in the process of the New Birth something mysteriously new is imparted to the heart. This new mystical acquirement is spoken of as a "light within," a "secret voice," an "extraordinary impulse." We, however, prefer to speak of it as the figment of a romantic mind, the outcome of a wild imagination, and often of something worse, even arrant hypocrisy, and unblushing impudence. Such unscriptural teaching must inevitably produce in the minds of those who imbibe its spirit, fanaticism or disheartening perplexity. It is faith, not feeling, that saves the soul. The truly regenerated man feels nothing more than he can clearly comprehend. His experience is that of the man whose blindness was taken away by Christ: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." There is, we frankly confess, a deep and unfathomable mystery in the work of regeneration;—the mystery, however, has to do with the Agency by which the change is produced, not with the nature of the change itself. It is the old love of the old heart, with which it loved things earthly, newly directed by God to the loving of things heavenly. "If ye then be risen with Christ . . . set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

## II. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH.

We wish it to be clearly understood at the outset that by the necessity of the New Birth no absolute obligation either for its bestowment or reception is meant, but only a relative indispensableness in order to qualify sinners for admission into the kingdom of Heaven. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The New Birth is not the *meritorious* cause or condition of our gaining the heavenly inheritance. It is only the condition of qualification for the home above. The intercessory work of Christ, proceeding on the ground of His substitutionary work, is the *procuring cause* of our entrance into the heavenly kingdom, and our individual regeneration is the *qualifying cause*. Thus we see clearly that "though the qualifying cause may not be so *important* as the procuring one, it is every whit as *necessary*." The New Birth, then, is an indispensable necessity if we are to enter Heaven—

1. *Because man's nature is totally depraved.* It is hard for a sinner to take in the extent of his utter ruin. Man's theory is, that there is good in his nature which only requires to be cultivated and developed. Against this theory the face of Jesus is set like a flint. His testimony is that true morality in the sight of God is the outcome of regeneration. It is not the mending and cultivating of the old nature, but the substitution of a new one. Man's understanding of the

Book of God, having been "shapen in iniquity," and conceived in sin. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." The fact that human nature is universally depraved is proved incontrovertibly by all experience, all observation, and by the testimony of "God that cannot lie."

2. *Because man cannot change his nature.* The mistake commonly made is to attempt to live the Divine life without the Divine Spirit. Men content themselves with polishing and improving the natural man, ignoring altogether these words of Christ: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Nothing can be better than the original from whence it comes. The effect will partake of the nature of the cause; the fruit of the nature of the tree; the action of the nature of the agent. "The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, or the leopard his spots," neither can the sinner change his nature. Polishing brass will not convert it into gold. Neither will the chiselling of a rough block of marble into the perfect likeness of the human body put life into the marble statue. Unlike manner you may educate a man to the highest possible point of intellectual polish; pass him through the most exalted circles of what is called "good society," and make him a perfect model of etiquette and refinement; put the phraseology of religion in his lips, and the soundest theology in his head; confirm and baptize him, and place him in a high position in the Church, but unless his heart has been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the voice of God from the excellent glory will say to this model man, "Thou must be born again!" Reformation cannot issue in regeneration. Culture may do a great deal for a man, but it cannot change his nature. No man can bring a clean thing out of an unclean; hence it is impossible to evade the law which Christ Himself has laid down, and which can never be set aside: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Thus it is clear as truth itself, that we must be born again in order to see the kingdom of God.

Moreover, we observe that the New Birth is absolutely necessary—

3. *Because it is both a preparation and qualification for Heaven.* Regeneration is not only indispensable in respect to the character of those who would enter the kingdom of God and participate in the joys of Heaven, but it is also essential in respect to the Divine complacency. The man who stands in the immediate presence of God must be holy, so as to be an object not only presenting nothing offensive to the eye of the Divine holiness, but one whom the Majesty of Heaven contemplates with delight. "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart. . . . For Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with Thee. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight."

The character of a king's courtiers is generally regarded as an index to the character of the monarch himself. The character of the King of Heaven is protected by peculiar sacredness. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever. . . . And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. It is a kingdom of holy love and adoring song; and it is an education of love and praise, by which God makes all His children meet to be partakers of its felicity. By approaching to God through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, we become like God; "are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." Thus by devotion to God on earth, we prepare for, and anticipate the glorious work of Heaven. We join ourselves, beforehand, to the society of angels and blessed spirits above; we enter on the delightful employment of eternity, and begin the song which is heard for ever around the throne of God.

tered in the Lamb's Book of Life, and our entrance into the heavenly Canaan made sure.

### III. THE AUTHOR OF THE NEW BIRTH.

It is through the operation of the Holy Ghost, that this change takes place. He is the sole Agent in the process of the New Birth. "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; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Salvation is "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

"Christians," says Jonathan Edwards, "are called spiritual persons because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the indwelling and holy influence of the Spirit of God in them." "We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit." This is done "by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling." "The work of the Spirit in applying the redemption of Christ," says Hodge, "is represented to be as essential as the redemption itself. It is therefore indispensable that we should know what the Bible teaches concerning the Holy Ghost, both as to His nature and office." In order to prevent misunderstanding regarding the nature of the Holy Spirit's work in the process of the New Birth, we observe—

1. *The operation of the Spirit is consistent with man's free will.* The assistance which we receive from God, in our conversion from sin, and throughout the whole of our Christian life, is entirely rational, and has only a persuasive and moral influence. It does not resemble the inspiration of the prophets of Old Testament times, which was often sudden and violent, and sometimes overpowered the mind, superseded the use of reason, and suspended for a while the exercise of the natural faculties. The prophets were but the instruments of the Spirit, but we work together with God. The grace of God does not take away the powers of the mind, but exalts them. It does not destroy the natural liberty of the mind, it makes us free indeed. If a man loses his free will, he ceases to be a man—he is a machine, and is acted upon. In opposition to this, God is said, in Scripture, to draw us with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man—that is, in such a manner as is most consistent with freedom of choice, and agreeable to the constitution of a reasonable nature. Reason being the noblest faculty of the human frame, it first partakes of the influence of the Divine Spirit. Its views are enlarged to take in the system of Divine truth, and its power is increased to govern the whole man. This Divine aid extends to the heart and affections, places them on proper objects, and gives them their noblest joys. In short, it takes in the whole of the Christian life. It inspires us with good resolutions and purposes of new obedience; carries us on in the way of righteousness; renders the discharge of our duties easy and delightful, and brings us at last to the enjoyment of uninterrupted and everlasting happiness beyond this scene of toil and care.

We thus see, that the influence of the Holy Spirit is, in a way, agreeable to the frame of human nature, gentle and persuasive; not controlling or obstructing the use of reason, but by the use of reason influencing the will, moderating the affections, and regulating the whole conversation. It is no argument against the reality of Divine aid that it is not distinguishable from the operations of our own minds, and that we do not feel it in a sensible and striking manner. How difficult is it in our own character to distinguish what is natural from what is acquired; to distinguish between the natural treasures of the mind, and those foreign stores which she imports from education. The Spirit of God, in regenerating and educating the man, acts in such a manner as is most agreeable to the faculties of the man's mind. It is in this manner, also, that God acts in the material world. Whatever is done in the heavens, or in the earth, or in the

effects, from the lowest up to the throne of God, we call by the name of the course of Nature. But what is the course of Nature? It is the energy of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

2. *The influence of the Spirit is known by its effect upon our lives.* The Holy Spirit is compared by Christ to the wind; we do not see the wind, we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth—its laws are beyond the reach of human ken; but we can trace its effect—we hear the voice thereof—sometimes in the strong gale, which sweeps over land and sea, sometimes in the gentle zephyr, which visits the flower, and cools the heated atmosphere. And so it is with the Holy Spirit—we do not see Him, neither can we understand His methods, for they are imperceptible to sense, and cannot be distinguished in the precise moment of their operation, but they are visible and certain in their effects, and in the fruits which they produce. "God is His own interpreter." A life of obedience and holiness is the proof, and the only proof, that we have passed from death unto life, for it is in their actions and in their affections that the true children of God discover themselves, and give incontrovertible evidence of their New Birth. When the Holy Spirit's power is felt, the weak are made strong, and the faint-hearted are full of might. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

At the naval battle of Salamis, Themistocles, the hero of the Greeks, tarried on shore until nine o'clock in the morning. Every patriot's heart beat with impatience at the delay, and it was hinted at the street corners that Themistocles had sold his country! But the hero knew well that at nine o'clock a land breeze would spring up that would send his boats to sea, and thus change the rowers into warriors ready for the fight. By waiting for the land breeze, Themistocles secured forty fighting men, instead of twenty, for each vessel. That land breeze might well represent the power of the Holy Ghost, energizing the believer and making his efforts double in value. This is the power that God sends to secure victory to His people, and this is the power that brings a soul out of nature's darkness into the marvellous light and liberty of the children of God. Mere oratory and flashy rhetoric will never lead a soul to God. The rhetorician, in decorating the doctrines of grace with artificial flowers of rhetoric, only darkens the counsel of God and obscures the Cross of Christ by the shadow of himself. May the God of all grace help us to "preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, . . . that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." A curate who was a brilliant, talented, and highly-cultured preacher, was transferred to a new parish. He drew large congregations, and the majority of his hearers were much pleased with him. They relished the matter, and greatly appreciated the ornate style of his sermons. There was one element wanting, however—his preaching was not drawn from experience. The believers in his congregation felt the power of his intellect, but longed for the influence and power of a truly regenerated heart in the pulpit. Pretty flowers, brilliant periods, and intellectual treats could not satisfy their souls, which were famishing for the Bread of Life. The proprietor of the principal estate was a young gentleman much given to worldly amusements. One day he came to the church, and listened very attentively to the sermon. It was on the text, "Ye must be born again."

The matter was clearly and logically explained, but the living souls thought it was not that of a man who had experienced the New Birth himself. The young squire left, thinking, "I don't know anyone who has been born again—I should like to do so; I shall invite the curate to dinner and ask him if he has been born again." The curate received the note. He thought, "Well, I suppose I must go and listen to this young fellow's talk about dogs and horses, instead of spending the evening at the literary society. It is a great

Length the curate broke the silence: "By-the-by, you wish to speak to me about something?" The squire replied, "Yes, it is about that sermon of yours." The curate answered, "Why, what was wrong with it?" To which the young gentleman rejoined, "Nothing that I know of. Only—I don't know anyone who has been born again. Now, to put it personally, have you been born again yourself?" The curate felt the home-thrust deeply. His host saw the emotion and went to the window until the preacher should recover himself. In a few minutes he felt a gentle touch on the shoulder, and the curate put the question, "Can we have prayer together?" "Yes, certainly," was the answer; "come into the library." They prayed earnestly together, and both rose from their knees new men in Christ Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit's work. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

3. *The variety of the Holy Spirit's operations.* The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to convince man that sin is not his *misfortune*, but his *guilt*; that sin unforgiven leads to everlasting punishment; to knock from under the deluded formalist every false prop; to persuade the sinner to abandon the idea of saving himself; to turn his eyes away from Sinai to Calvary, and to lead him, through faith, to accept Jesus Christ as his Substitute and Saviour. The means used by the Spirit to accomplish this great work are various, but the object to which He leads the sinner is always the Lamb of God, who "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

A great hindrance to the enjoyment of pardon and peace is the desire of some souls to be *awfully* converted. Some people imagine that in order to be what they term *soundly* converted the sinner must necessarily pass through days and weeks of indescribable agony of soul before he can have the blessed assurance of sin forgiven. Jesus, knowing the thoughts of all men, in order to counteract this error, has set before us the work of the Spirit under the figure of the wind, thereby teaching mankind the variety of the Holy Spirit's operations in the process of the New Birth. Sometimes, by the still small voice of love, He speaks to the awakened conscience, and gently leads a Lydia to Jesus. At other times the thunders of Sinai roll over the sinner's head, the lightnings of Jehovah's vengeance flash around his soul, and the terrors of the Lord shake his whole being; then a Bunyan or a Newton is constrained to flee from the wrath of God to Christ the sinner's only Refuge.

There is often great power where there is little noise and excitement. The silent light of the morning, that quietly steals over the face of Nature, bathing everything in its own glory, is a far mightier agent than the bellowing thunder or the mighty earthquake. The storm and the avalanche may shatter the large masses of ice to pieces, but it is the warm beams of the sun that alone can melt them; and so, under the mild and gentle teachings of the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God, "that cometh not by observation," is set up in the hearts of many weary, heaven-laden souls. As the soldier lies mortally wounded on the battlefield, gazing up at the silent stars through the long night, his mother's earnest prayers and his father's wise counsels are remembered, and as the Spirit leads him to meditate upon Gospel truth learned by him in the Sunday-school, his heart is softened; and there, amid war's deadly alarms, the soldier, through faith in the Captain of our Salvation, enters into the peace and everlasting rest of Heaven.

As the mother takes her last look of her first-born son lying in the sleep of death, and with bursting heart and quivering lips imprints her last kiss on his cold brow, the Spirit of God makes her to realize the changeableness and vanity of life, and gently leads her to Him who is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." Her tears are wiped away, and her sorrow is turned into gladness, as she anticipates the happy reunion with her loved one in the presence of the Father.

As the careless sailor treads the deck of his vessel in the lonely midnight watch, gentle as the breeze that sighs through the shrouds above his head, or causes the soft ripple of the waters beneath his feet, comes the Spirit with holy thoughts of home and pious scenes. His sins become hateful to him, his neglected Bible is sought out and read, and lips that so lately burned with blasphemies begin to pray. Thus many can say with David, "Thy gentleness has made me great."

My friends, our time is gone, but before closing I wish to remind you that the question under consideration is not how were you led to see yourself a lost sinner, nor how intense have been your convictions, nor how long have you been in a state of alarm about your soul's welfare, but—have you been born again? If you want to be miserable *continue* in sin. If you want to be distracted, *look around* in search of deliverance from the power of sin. If you want to be happy, *look up to Christ* in a spirit of childlike faith. Looking at your own vileness will never change your character before God. You might just as well attempt to produce heat by looking at snow; to produce light by looking at darkness; to produce wealth by looking at poverty; to produce health by looking at disease; to produce life by looking at death, as to produce true repentance and reformation of life and character by looking at your sins.

"It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,  
But the blood that atones for the soul."

"Your tears," says McCheyne, "will not blot out sin. They do nothing but weep in hell, but that does not justify them. Your right views of the Gospel will not justify you; you must be covered with a spotless righteousness. . . . Jesus offers you this perfect righteousness; in Him you may stand and hear God say, 'Thou art all fair, My love.'" Abandon all hope of saving yourselves. You might as well attempt to walk to America upon the pathless sea as to enter Heaven on the ground of personal merit. There is absolutely nothing between you and pardon but your own unbelief. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is God's message to every sinner. Jesus is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." Come to the Saviour for pardon, rest and peace. I only ask you to do what I have done myself. Eighteen years ago in this building—

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
'Thy head upon My breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary, and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting-place,  
And He has made me glad."

My friends, what Christ has done for me, and for my old schoolfellow,\* who preached so eloquently this morning, and for many others who have gone forth from this church to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in many lands, He is able and willing to do now for you. Do not put off your salvation till a more convenient season. Delays are dangerous. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." "Resist not the Spirit." Remember

"God's gracious entreaties may end with to-day."

May the love of the Father, the grace of the Son the Saviour, the power of the Holy Ghost the Quickener—one God—create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you, so that you may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To Him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.