

est. There was therefore nothing within the range of human possibility he would not gladly have done at the suggestion of our Lord. Had Christ told him his sorrow for his past sins was not deep enough, he would have humbled himself in the profoundest abjections; had Christ commanded his immediate surrender of all his goods to feed the poor, doubtless he would have hastened to obey; but our Lord says none of these things. He gives him, in fact, **NOTHING TO DO**; nothing to please his vanity, or stimulate his self-conceit. He prescribes no fasts, no tears, no human effort; only utters these words—so dark and inexplicable to the mind of Nicodemus—“*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” Now, as long as a man thinks there *is something* by the doing of which he can procure his salvation—no matter what that something may be—he will never despair. If he fail in his effort to-day, he will only try the more to-morrow; but when at last the conviction is forced upon him that he is absolutely **DEPENDENT** on the Holy Spirit, and that he must be **BORN AGAIN**, he sees,