

Others say there is a principle of holiness planted in the soul, which dispenses the sinner to receive the gospel. We read of no principle of holiness being in sinner or sinner, but the gospel of the grace of God.---That is the only principle of holiness acknowledged by God, for "without faith it is impossible to please him." Heb. 11. 6. For "whatever is not of faith is sin." What is sinful, and does not please God, must be prior holiness, ill fitted for qualifying a sinner for the reception of the gospel.

But let me remark, that the persons to whom the gospel is addressed, are described in scripture as totally destitute of holiness, or any good. According to the testimony of the Holy Spirit all are sinners; that is, breakers of the law of God. The language of the law, is, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matth. 22. 37---41. Now, where is the man that has kept this law? No where! Jehovah looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did good and he found none. Rom. 3. 9---10. All had sinned and come short of the glory (i. e. approbation) of God. Rom. 3. 23. Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin v. 9. The human race are not only sinners in practice, but the inherent principle of sin is interwoven in their very nature.---They are conceived and begotten in sin. Psalm. 51. 5.---They have the poison of sin inherent in them from their birth. Psalm. 53. 4, 5.---They are dead in sin---Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3. Their hearts are at enmity with God---Col. 2. 20, 21. Rom. 8. 7. It is impossible for the natural mind of man to obey God. As such they are under the condemning sentence of the law of God. Rom. 3. 19. Gal. 3. 10. Their mouths are shut, and all the world are guilty before God. Rom. 3. 19.

I remark, farther, that as such they are reckoned the children of wrath Eph. 2. 3. And the children of the devil. Thus all have sinned, and all sinners are under the wrath of Jehovah---under the condemnation of the law of God---under the curse of the most high.

Not only in this case, but they are utterly helpless, utterly unable to do any thing to save themselves. All their righteousness is as filthy rags before God. Their best performances, even their prayers, and sacrifices are abomination before God; as are all their thoughts. Pro. 15. 26. 8. 9. and 28. 9. All that a natural man performs, even his religious services, springs from wrong motives---self love is the spring of all, and destroys all its productions. "A corrupt tree cannot yield good fruit." Hence, "by the righteousness of the law shall no flesh be justified before God." Present duties, and these duties springing from sinful motives too, cannot atone for past transgressions. Therefore the persons addressed by the gospel are in a lost ruined condition, without any thing to recommend them to God, save their utter pollution and helplessness. Without the atonement of Jesus Christ they cannot be saved.