

waiting God's time.' Glad to catch at any thing rather than immediately comply with them, he uses the means, and prays and reads, and reads and prays, and thinks he is now doing his duty. His conscience is relieved, his distress disappears, and he consoles himself with the thought, that if he is not saved it will not be his fault. Thus are his convictions quenched and his fears allayed, by saying *peace, peace, when there is no peace*. The temporary relief thus afforded is the reason why such preaching and such directions are so welcomed by the unregenerate, and why it is called such hard doctrine to preach immediate submission, a circumstance which sometimes solicits a minister to waive the plain dealing of truth.

In the next place, such a direction is a virtual relinquishment of God's claim on the heart. When the sinner objects to the Gospel injunction to repent, that he '*cannot*,' he is only expressing his repugnance to the duty. It is not true that he cannot, in any other sense than he *will* not. To direct him then to '*use the means*,' in order to get perchance a better heart, is to allow that the objection is valid. Of consequence it follows that God has no right to make such a demand, and the sinner is under no obligation to comply with it. The point in controversy between God and the sinner, viz., his claim on the heart, is conceded to the sinner, and his spiritual guide authorizes him for the present to render something else and something less than his heart, viz., an attendance on the means; authorizes him to continue a little longer in rebellion against God, authorizes him to cherish his heart of enmity until God shall give him a better.

In the next place, such a direction is inconsistent, for it calls on him to do what is as repugnant to the sinner's feelings as repentance itself. It is presumed that no one who gives

such a direction, would advise the sinner to read and pray and hear in an unbelieving and impenitent manner. But to use these means with penitence and faith, implies that he has already done the duty which the direction evades.

And, finally, such a direction is contrary to scriptural instruction and example. The Bible no where admits that the sinner cannot comply with his duty. It no where directs him to use the means of grace in order to get a heart to repent. It fearlessly directs him to repent, taking it for granted that he can if he will, and there it leaves the matter, and there it leaves the sinner to meet the consequences of impenitence.

In accordance with this is every direction given to sinners by the preachers of holy writ. Isaiah says, *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well*. He calls upon the *wicked man to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*. Jeremiah calls upon backsliders in Israel *to circumcise themselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of their hearts*. Ezekiel says, *Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have offended, and make you a new heart and a new spirit*. Joel calls upon sinners in danger to *turn unto the Lord with all their hearts*. John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, saying, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. When the Redeemer began to preach, he said, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The apostles, in their preaching, made the same unqualified demand of repentance. When the three thousand, on the day of Pentecost, said, *Men and brethren, what must we do?* the only direction the apostle gave them was, *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins*. On another occasion, he said to the multitude, *Repent ye*