

this new birth when he did come, was a greater act of cruelty. Well, sir, I'll be composed. Explain it to me, and tell me all about it."

"You are a sinner, guilty and depraved. You have committed many sins, and are now under a sentence of condemnation. The word of God says, '*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*'—Gal. iii. 10. You have felt through life a propensity to sin, and you have taken delight in sinning. This proceeds from the depraved state of your heart. Your heart is wicked. You have not loved God, nor feared him, nor have you sought, by intense prayer, the manifestation of his pardoning mercy and grace. You have taken more pleasure in sinning, than in repenting; more pleasure in swearing, than in praying; more pleasure in profaning the Sabbath, than in keeping the day holy; more pleasure in drinking hard, than in working out your salvation with fear and trembling; and have felt more disposed to forget God, than to think of him with delight."

"Ah, sir, you have hit off my character to the life in these few words. But what am I to do now—what is to become of my poor soul? Why, this absolution and sacrament of the parson is, after all a regular piece of humbug—a bit of priestly trickery—a mere farce, to end in a terrible tragedy."

"Well, this wicked heart of yours must undergo a change of principle, of propensity, of taste, and then you will have a moral capacity, and an inclination to hate sin, which you once relished, and to fear God and love Jesus Christ, whom you once contemned and despised."

"Did you ever know a man, sir, who got born again?"

"Yes. I trust I have undergone this great change."

"And how, sir, did you do it? Tell me, that I may set about it at once, as I have not long to live. Will it take much time, sir?"

"My dear sir, it is a great and a glorious change; but it is one which you cannot produce yourself."

"Indeed, who can do it for me? Can you, sir? If you can, I hope you will. I will let you do anything to me; because I see if I don't get this job done, I shall never get into heaven. I shall then get out of a state of delusion, and get into a state of despair. One state will be as fatal as t'other; but despair will be the most horrible while it lasts."

"This great change cannot be produced by man. It requires the exercise of the gracious power of God to effect it."

"Then, sir, what must I do? Must I lie here till God is pleased to change my heart, and make me fit for the kingdom of heaven?"

"I will now read to you another part of the word of God, which will tell you what you are to do—'*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements and do them.*'—Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. You see that it is God, that changes the heart, and puts a new spirit into the soul of man. This is His work. He alone can do it. And it is of great importance that you should understand and believe this."

"I see, sir; that's plain enough, and no mistake."

"Now, attend to what follows this statement of his own work—'*Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.*' The heart must be changed—God alone can change it; and yet he requires you to pray to him to do it for you. He thus brings a test to try your submission to his authority, to try your recognition of his power and grace, and also to try your earnestness in prayer."

"I see, sir, this is all plain and easy to be understood; but then how must I pray? and if I pray, will he hear me?"

"Yes, he will hear you. I will now read to you another part of his holy word—'*Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool:*' '*but to this I will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*'—Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. What I have now read from the word of God will teach you in what manner you ought to pray. You may cast these verses into the form of prayer, and with very great ease and propriety. 'O Lord, be pleased to give me a new heart, and put a new spirit into me, that I may be a new man in