

heart can see God. §

But notice here that—2.—This reformation can only be effected by the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The leopard may change his spots or the lion his nature as easily as a man unaided can change his own heart. A man may give up his evil habits, he may cease to do wickedly, from a sense of honor, or to please his friends, or for the sake of his health or his reputation. All this may be done and still no change be made in his disposition.

The inclination may not only remain but the pleasure of these things may remain. Love to God may form no part of this reformation. All that is needed to bring such an one back to his old haunts and habits is a change in those outward influences which keep him straight. A partridge may be caged for months, but if the cage is opened she will return to her freedom in the forest. The tiger may be tamed but the taste of blood, will arouse all his old nature and he will bury his fangs in the flesh of his master. A reformation wrought by mere will power is not to be trusted.

A reformation to be true and genuine must be permanent. It can be permanent only when it is effected by that which is in itself strong and permanent. No true reformation can be permanently effected without the divine power of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's Holy Spirit must become united with, and take up his abode in the very faculties of the soul. Christ by his grace must live in the soul.

3. It is our duty then brethren to hold up Christ as the only Saviour from our lost and immoral condition. The history of the Church proves that when the Lord Jesus Christ has been faithfully preached, that where His word has been studied, His life followed, His name revered and His ordinances loved—there has been a corresponding elevation of all the higher faculties of the human soul. The gospel of the Lord Jesus by its power has reached the business mart and purged it of dishonesty. It has reformed politics and has elevated the opinions and even the manners of men. It has shown a power which nothing else could do in cultivating, reforming, humanizing the worst kind of men. There is nothing like the gospel of Jesus in reforming society and making men happy.

The life of David Brainard is a notable instance of the all-prevailing and reformatory character of the gospel of Jesus. This wonderful man went among one of

the worst tribes of Indians in America, a tribe noted for their stolid indifference to anything that was good, who had indulged in life-long habits of intemperance, licentiousness, ignorance and indolence, who were noted for their revengeful natures, their prejudices and unstable mode of life. Brainard saw and felt that nothing but the gospel would bring these people clothed and in their right minds to the feet of Jesus. His constant endeavour therefore was to enlighten them by the gospel of Jesus.

Wonderful success attended his effort, a remarkable reformation was effected among these wild denizens of the forest. He was not among them long before these wild plunderers became peaceful, truthful, and honest. From being barbarous they became civilized. Instead of howling through their drunken idolatrous feasts, they devoutly sang the praises of God in solemn worship.—They prayed, observed the Lord's day, were honest and peaceful among themselves and sought religious instruction for themselves and their families.

In less than a year a tribe of low debased savages was converted into a peaceful and moral community.

Such is the invariable effect of the gospel when it is embraced, the overthrowing of everything that opposes righteousness and truth, and the building up of that kingdom in the hearts of men that will stand forever. What we need to effect a true reformation is more of Christ and less of self. Oh Brethren let us pray and work that the Lord Jesus may be enthroned in every home and in every heart of this congregation. Christ enthroned in the heart is the means which alone can reform society, purify and regenerate mankind.

There must then be a change in our moral character, a giving up of our old haunts, a renovation of our corrupt hearts before we can be accepted to God's favour and become the heirs of glory. This change as we have seen must be in the heart, not merely in the outward life. If it is in the heart it will show itself in the life. If the fountain is pure then the stream will be pure.

But Brethren the life may be apparently right, and the heart be still in the gall of bitterness and bowd of iniquity. Many are trusting to a good moral life. Manly, noble, generous, in their nature they mistake this for Christianity. The heart has never been changed by the power of the spirit. Christ as their all has never yet been enthroned on the