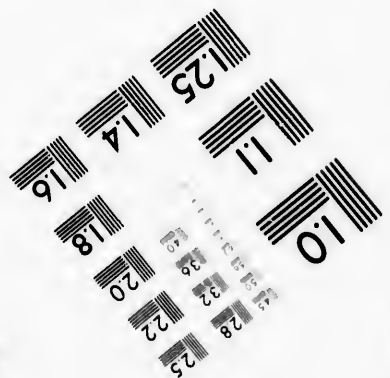
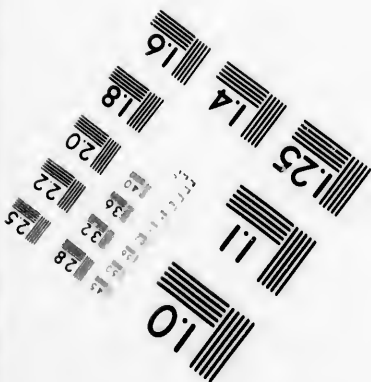
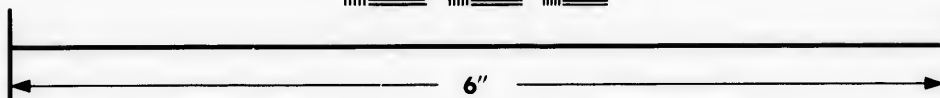
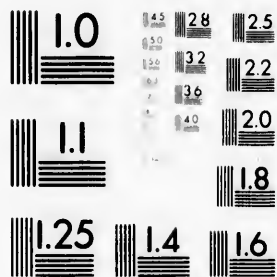


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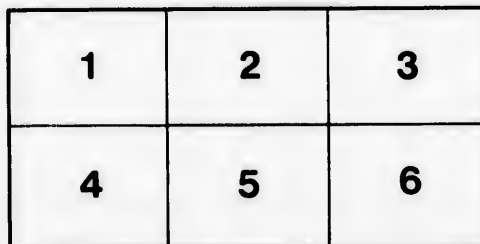
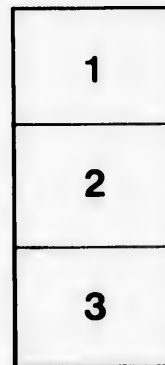
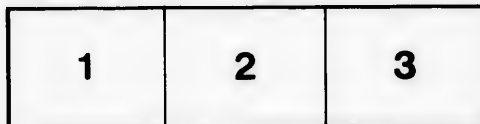
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THE

SCRIPTURAL TEST

OF

Who is, and Who is Not a Christian,

WITH

SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTIONS, &C.,

BY

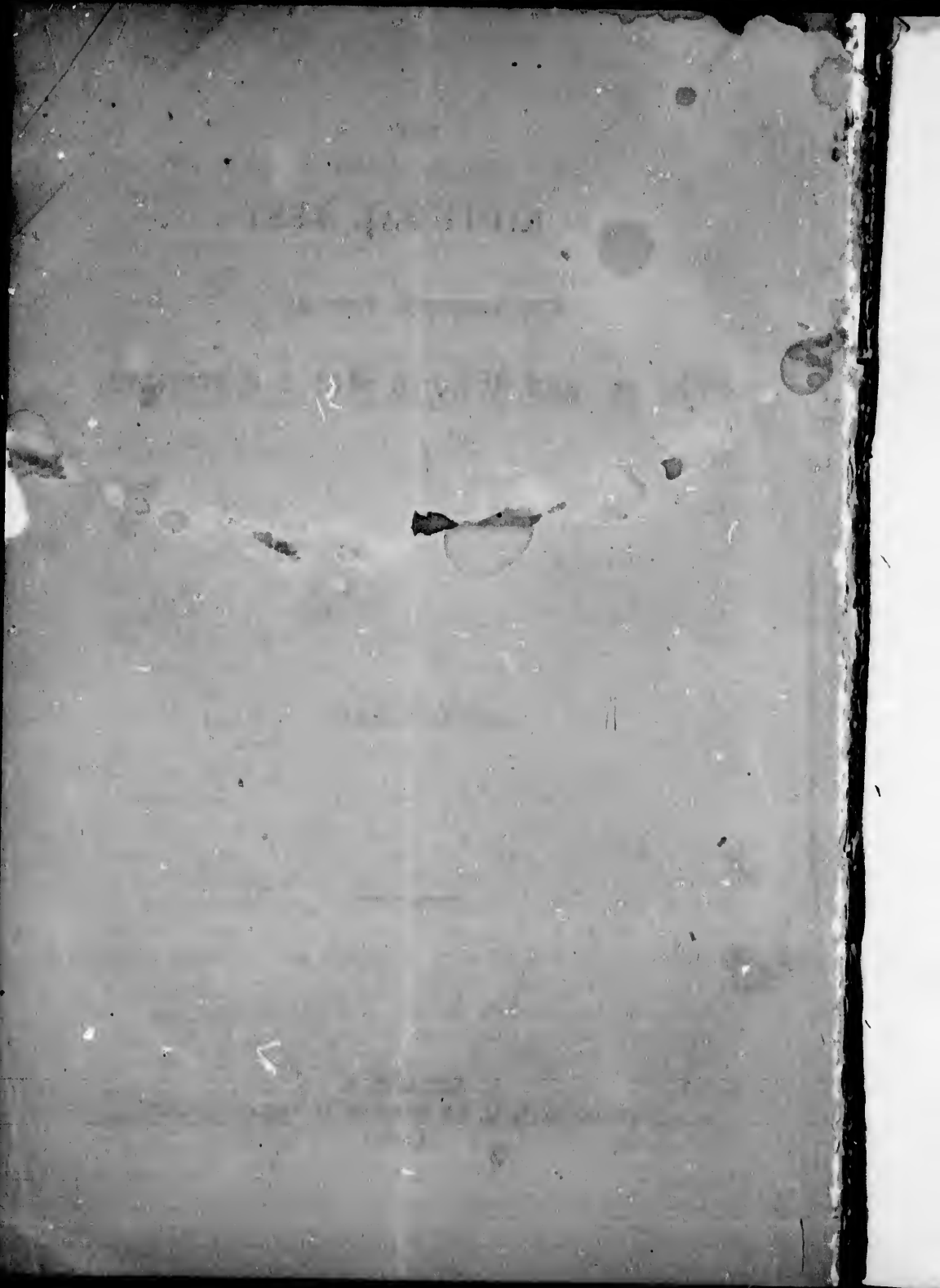
JOHN G. MARSHALL.

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## The Scriptural Test, &c.

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**TEXT.**—"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."—*Romans viii. 9.*

**THESE** are most solemn and alarming words, and expressly appropriate for making a deep and abiding impression on every individual professing Christianity, and attending on its ministrations.—Most especially should they lead every member of a Christian Church to close and prayerful examination of heart and life, to ascertain whether he does indeed possess the presence and influence of that divine spirit, through whose gracious and abiding influence alone, can he be said to belong to Christ, or in other words be a real Christian. During the several ages of Christianity, its profession has, unhappily, taken numerous divisional forms of sects and societies, bearing different names, and varying from each other, more or less, on certain points and particulars. Some of these differences relate to doctrines; some to the organization of Churches and their method of government; some to the modes of celebrating ordinances; others as to ceremonies and observances in conducting public worship; others as to regulations and discipline regarding their members; and on various other points. Now, the Divine Omniscient Being, who has given the words of the text; who knows all things, and the end of all of them from the beginning, knew that all these differences and variations would occur, but He has made no allusion to them, either in the text or context. He has, in effect, declared, as to any and every age, that whatever a person's profession of Christianity may be, as to doctrines, church fellowship, or any of the other particulars just mentioned, if he have not "the spirit of Christ," he does not belong to him, and consequently is not a Christian. Now, the scripture most emphatically declares "that there is no salvation in any

other" than Christ; and that "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."—And further, there is not a word in Scripture, to intimate that any mental or moral sentiments or feelings, or external profession, or conduct, will be of the slightest avail towards obtaining the regeneration and salvation of the soul, independent of the possession and influence of that divine spirit mentioned in the text.

Here it becomes requisite to ascertain and define the true meaning of the words—"the spirit of Christ." In other Scripture passages we find the expression—"the mind of Christ," which to some may appear to be of the same import and meaning. But it is in nature and reference widely different. The expression—"the mind of Christ"—seems to relate to the human mind and character of the blessed Saviour, as originated and proceeding from the union of the *divine* with his *human* nature. But the words of the text—"the spirit of Christ," most certainly mean, the Holy Spirit, the third person in the united, eternal, and glorious Deity. The following are passages of Scripture similar to the text—"the spirit of life in Christ Jesus—(Romans viii. 2). In the same verse as the text the spirit of Christ is called—"the spirit of God." Also, "God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father"—(Gal. iv. 6.) "The supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ"—(Phil. i. 19.) "Searching what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify"—(1 Peter i. 11.) "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear"—(Acts ii. 33.) These last words were a part of the address of the Apostle Peter to the Jews on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost descended in such plenary and rich effusion on the assembled Apostles. The Holy Spirit is most appropriately named, "the spirit of Christ," because His gracious influences, for the quickening and thorough regeneration of human souls, have been purchased by the obedience, sufferings, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ; for the Scriptures declare, "He was made a curse for us;"—"bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" and thereby became "a propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

Some consideration may next be given to the grounds and reasons

which made it requisite for the reconciliation of man to his offended God;—his preservation from everlasting punishment;—and his present and eternal salvation and happiness, that the Lord Jesus Christ should come into the world, and thus suffer and die. Of such reasons, *first* may be mentioned, the perfect and inflexible holiness and justice of the Supreme Being, the glorious Creator and Ruler of the Universe. In the revelation concerning Himself, which He has given us in the inspired Scriptures, and *where only* His true attributes and character can be ascertained and known, we find it declared that “He is glorious in holiness;” (Ex. xv. 11) is “righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works;” (Ps. cxlv. 17) that the myriads who worship in His immediate presence and celebrate and extol His perfect and glorious attributes, incessantly cry “Holy, holy, holy;” (Rev. iv. 8) It is further declared that He is “a just God;” (Is. xlv. 21) that “justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne;” (Ps. lxxxix. 14) that He is “a God of truth;” (Deut. xxxii. 4) that “all His commandments are holy, just, and good;” (Rom. vii. 12) that He “cannot look on sin with allowance;”—“is no respecter of persons;” (Acts x. 34) but “will render to every man according to his deeds.” (Rom. ii. 6). The Heaven of heavens, where is the throne of His glory, and where all holy and happy spirits dwell, is a perfectly holy place. Of the future new Jerusalem, the City of God, in which they will all forever dwell with Him, and the holy and glorious Redeemer, it is declared;—“there shall in nowise enter into it, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life;” (Rev. xxi. 27.) We also see in Scripture, that the angels who rebelled were cast out of heaven, and consigned to everlasting torments—no Redeemer or Saviour being provided for them. We further learn from the same inspired record, that it was for *one* prohibited and disobedient act of our first parents, that they were expelled from paradise; their holy nature in which they had been created, having, by that *one act*, been forfeited and lost; and the corrupt and rebellious nature engendered and established; and their whole posterity also rendered radically infected and polluted. Through the pride of that apostate and corrupt nature, many deny

that consequent and transmitted depravity. But He who made man, and knows thoroughly all the propensities, and desires, inclinations, and feelings, which belong to his fallen moral character, has declared in His infallible word, concerning man, universally, that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil and that continually;" that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" and again, that "both Jews and Gentiles they are all under sin." Now, let it be noted and remembered that these divine declarations are not made, or limited, as to any specified individuals, or bodies, or classes of mankind; but of man, *as a being*; and regarding his nature *universally*. His whole history, while in his unregenerate state, fully accords with those Scriptural testimonies of his depraved nature, as manifested in the base idolatries, murders, cruelties, and various other abominable deeds and numerous vile, and sinful practices, which have so greatly abounded through all ages and generations; and most of them, even in countries whose people possessed the Scriptures of divine revelation, and professed the true religion. With a vast portion of these, so highly favoured,—there has indeed been no real fear or love of God, or obedience to His commands, or desire for the blessings of the great and gracious salvation, He has, through the sacrifice of His son, provided for them, and so freely offered for their acceptance. Seeing, then, so clearly, from inspired Scripture, that the great Creator and God of the universe, is a Being of such infinite holiness, and justice; and that man, in his natural state, is so depraved and sinful, how can they come together in harmony and peace, for as Scripture on the subject enquires, "how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" In one or other, there must be a spiritual and moral change. In the great and holy God there can be none, for as Scripture declares, "He changeth not;"—and "with Him is no variableness or shadow of turning." The change, then, must be in the nature of man; and it must be of *a radical and thorough character*. But further, it cannot be effected by any desires or efforts of man; for Scripture declares, and all experience has shown, that "no man hath quickened his own soul;" or, unaided by divine influence, can even retain the imparted vital

graces ; but the "salvation" they effect, from first to last, "belongeth unto the Lord;" for he hath most emphatically declared, that all who experience that spiritual change, are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." But blessed be that God of grace and mercy, that He has, of his own lovingkindness towards us of the whole human race,—as distinguished from apostate angels,—provided a most sublime and perfect method for our deliverance from all the bitter and deadly consequences of inward depravity and sin, and moral evil ; and for the renewal and sanctification of our nature ; and thereby a restoration to his image and favour ; and if faithful to that grace, and in loving obedience, relying on the merits of the divine Redeemer, the bestowment ultimately, of everlasting happiness, in His eternal and glorious kingdom. We have, in the sacred and infallible word, the gracious intelligence that "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son;" and that Son freely gave himself, to be "a propitiation for our sins," "the just for the unjust;" took upon Him our nature, in a sinless and holy state ; became for us "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" "magnified the law and made it honorable;" "was wounded for our transgressions;" "bore the chastisement of our peace;" "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," for us men and for our salvation. After thus suffering and dying for us, He rose triumphant from the grave, "for our justification;" and "ascended on high, leading captivity captive ; and received gifts for men;" most especially the gift of the Holy Spirit, to regenerate and sanctify our nature, and thus restore us to the image and favour of God. These, and all other inestimable spiritual blessings have been purchased for us by that meritorious obedience, and those agonizing sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The origination and conveyance of all the graces, and qualifications of man's regenerated and renewed spirit, are, as the Scriptures testify, effected through the quickening and sustaining operations of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the glorious Godhead, called in Scripture, as already shown "the Spirit of Christ." Through the divine mercy, the atoning and redeeming work of the Saviour was, from the first, by anticipation, made available for the

hope, comfort, and salvation of all who relied on the first divine promise, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head*; and on the numerous gracious promises, which from time to time, through a long course of ages, were given and recorded by inspired prophets, and "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." On these promises patriarchs, prophets, and all other believing and righteous souls, rested with implicit confidence, and thus experienced pardon and peace. The following, and similar promises, afforded them hope and comfort under all their varied temptations and trials; and they still serve the same supporting and cheering purposes, under the like dispensations, in the case of every genuine christian believer;—"He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds." (Ps. cxlvii. 3) "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." (Ps. l. 15.) "The Lord shall guide thee continually. (Is. lviii. 11.) "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord." (Ps. xxxi. 21.) "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death." (Hos. xiii. 14.) Those holy men under the Mosaic dispensation, were made well aware of the necessity for such spiritual influence and assistance, relying on such promises as the following: "I will pour my spirit upon you." (Is. xlv. 3.) "I will put my spirit within you." (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) And we find some of them crying,—"Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit." (Ps. li. 11, 12.) The Psalms, in numerous portions, describe the operations of the Holy Spirit in the inward religious exercises of the authors of those sublime and deeply affecting compositions.

The influence of the Holy Spirit on the servants of the Lord, under the preceding and legal dispensation, were not,—except in a few instances,—accompanied with the power to work miracles; but were imparted, as they always have been bestowed, and will be to the end of time, as essentially needful to regenerate and sanctify the human spirit, and thus prepare it for the spiritual worship and service of its Divine Creator and Saviour, while here, and to prepare and qualify it for more pure and exalted worship and service in the eternal kingdom of perfect holiness and happiness. The assertion

of our Lord, that "unless a man be born again,"—born of water and of the Spirit, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" were just as applicable, and universally true and binding before his appearance on earth as they are under the present dispensation, and they will continue to be the same, "until the mystery of God upon earth shall be finished."

On the part of our unchangeable and omnipotent God, there is not only perfect willingness, but the most fervent desire,—so to speak,—that all mankind should be saved from sin, and all its present and future ruinous consequences. He has thus sworn by Himself;—"As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." And as of old, He called by His prophet, He has since been doing the same by His Word, and urgently entreating; "turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die;" "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." By these, and many similar promises, He has manifested an intense desire that all should repent and be saved.

The case of those, not favoured with the written revelation of divine mercy, is not here specially taken under view, or intended to be fully treated of. Their salvation is divinely provided for, as we may learn from several passages of Scripture; especially from these which declare that "God is no respecter of persons;" but "will have all men to be saved;" that the Lord Jesus Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all;" and that when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature, the things contained in the law, these, having not the law are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law, written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness; and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing, or else excusing one another."

That most eminent and pious Divine, the Rev. John Wesley, has truly written to the effect, that to all these who live in conformity with those inward lights, or vicegerents of—*conscience and reason*, Christ is as "a principle of redemption and eternal salvation."

Some remarks may here be offered, as to the reasons why such



vast numbers who are favoured with the sacred Scriptures, do not seek to obtain the divine mercy and salvation, so freely and repeatedly offered to them in those inspired records; and even intreatingly urged for their acceptance. The conduct of all such persons evidently discloses the melancholy fact, that they are not willing to comply with the just and gracious terms, on which those inestimable blessings are to be obtained. There are, indeed, as the Scriptures declare, certain conditions involved in those overtures of mercy; or in other words, some *relinquishments* to be made by the sinner, in a just conformity with the requisitions of the Divine Creator and Sovereign, as regards His holy and glorious attributes. The sinner is required to turn from his evil ways, at the same time that, through grace, he accepts of the offers of mercy, and also to be diligent in the use of the divinely appointed means for obtaining the promised deliverance and salvation; for the Saviour commands—"bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The penitent seeker of mercy must also immediately forsake all sinful companions, associations, and fellowships; for the Lord has commanded, "come out from among them, and be ye separate," "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." He must perseveringly comply with the gracious invitations and commands;—"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him;" steadfastly believing the truth and faithfulness of the promise, and patiently expecting its fulfilment, that "every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." He needs deep, heart-felt repentance, and as Scripture declares, "Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins," he must pray to him, and in his name, for that repentance, and implore Him to take away the "stony heart" and according to the promises, grant him the influences of the Holy Spirit, to produce "the heart of flesh," the tender conscience, and contrite spirit, and all those other graces which constitute and manifest true conversion, and ultimately produce entire holiness of heart and life. While God thus works inwardly by His Holy Spirit, the convinced

penitent must, as commanded, give all diligence to secure a sense of pardoning mercy, through the witness of the Spirit, as scripturally promised. Having received this inestimable blessing, he must not indolently or unwatchfully, rest satisfied in its enjoyment, but in the constant and believing use of all the divinely appointed means,—of fervent prayer and supplication, reading and meditating in faith, on the sacred Word, attending public worship, with self-examination, and other means and ordinances, he must earnestly seek that he may be made strong in the faith, and “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” He must at the same time, diligently persevere in obedience to all the revealed will of God, and faithful performance of all relative duties, as scripturally commanded, constantly seeking grace and wisdom, and looking constantly “unto Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith,” for all spiritual blessings. But let him beware of resting satisfied in the use of the outward means, but still persevering in these, he must confidently expect the promised and happy results, first a divine witness of forgiveness, and ultimately the cleansing of his heart and life from all unrighteousness, so as to be thereby fully qualified for every good word and work, and by walking circumspectly in the filial fear and love of God, and comfort of the Holy Ghost, manifest that he does love his God and Saviour, who has declared, “he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”

But why is it that such immense numbers, yea the vast majority in the most evangelically christian countries, blessed with divine and gracious invitations and promises, do not strive to secure that regeneration of heart, and righteousness and holiness of life? It is because they will not comply with the just and merciful terms on which those rich blessings are proposed to them. They are in love with their sins and vanities, and devoted to their practice. Therefore, they will not repent of them and refrain from their commission. They are like those of old, of whom the Lord complained, “I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, but no man regarded,” (Prov. i. 24.) “Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest unto your souls, but they said we will not walk

therein. Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, hearken to the sound of the trumpet, but they said, we will not hearken," (Jer. vi., 16, 17) "We will walk after our own devices." (Jer. xviii. 12). They will not comply with the requisitions of the Saviour "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." They are those of whom he complains, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." They "love idols, and after them will they go;"—idols which they make to themselves, of—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Some in sensuality, in festive and luxurious entertainments, and various other forms, especially in the use of intoxicating liquors, and in the vain and expensive displays in apparel and dwellings, in attendance at public sports and exhibitions, and the numerous other modes of silly amusements or corrupting dissipations, contrary alike to religion and rationality, and now so greatly abounding. They are of this world, and imitate and practice its customs and fashions, and though professing Christianity, and many of them members of churches, they will not take the principles and precepts of Christianity, as revealed in the Scriptures, for the foundation of their faith, and guide of their conduct, but are conformed to the world, and follow the multitude in ways of ungodliness and folly. While having "a name to live," they are dead as to spiritual life, neither knowing nor desiring the self-denying principles, and strict and narrow path of godliness; but are really living without true Christian hope, and "without God in the world." They wish to be, or to be thought to be *religious*, without *spiritual conversion*; and *Christians* without *self-denial*. But such *dissociations* Scriptural religion will not allow, but wherever it exists, those essentials will ever be found combined.

Others there are, who,—inspired by vanity and ambition,—are ardently pursuing and grasping at the phantoms of popular favour and applause, or official honour and distinction. These cannot receive and obey the self-denying and humbling demands of Christian doctrine and practice. They belong to the class of whom the Saviour said,—“How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only.”

There is a numerous class also of *merely nominal and formal professors* in the present day who in the various pursuits and employments of life, are ardently striving to accumulate and lay up worldly treasures, for selfish and earthly purposes. These are, in reality the *votaries of mammon*. They forget, or disregard, the plain warnings and injunctions of Scripture,—“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.” “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” “They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare; and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” “Thou, O, man of God flee these things.”

There is yet another class, chiefly composed of young persons, especially females, who either through their own reflections or by the persuasions of others,—being led to conclude that it is becoming and proper that they should join a Church, and be religious,—go forward at the meetings, during some real or supposed revival of religion; or in some other manner, signify their desires on those points. In the ordinary course,—and mostly too readily, they are regarded as true penitents, and are soon concluded to be truly converted, and by friends or others, are given to understand, or even assured, to that effect. They join a church and partake of its special and most solemn ordinances. But never having been instructed as to the true nature and character of Scriptural Christianity, and its essential requirements; and not having—by the operations of the Divine Spirit—been truly awakened to a sense of their sinful and dangerous state by nature and practice, and exposure to final condemnation and punishment, and consequently not having entered the fold, by the straight gate of true repentance, they are of the class described by the Saviour, as being like the seed which “fell upon a rock,” which by some form of persecution, or other offence; and still retaining some, or all, of their former vanities and follies, and ensnaring associations, they either entirely fall away from their lifeless profession, or continuing in it,—if not really awakened by some divine agency,—remain under the same mere form of godliness, without its power, and become confirmed in self-deception through satanic or worldly delusions, or both,

until death seals their everlasting ruin. One chief cause of the fatal mistake and deception of all in the above class is, that they have never obtained a knowledge of the nature and essential qualities of a real spiritual conversion, as described in Scripture, and of the Divine requirements therein included; more especially of the nature and characteristics of that genuine repentance, which always, and of necessity, precedes and accompanies such spiritual conversion. Yet that repentance as a Scriptural doctrine, is imperatively required and commanded, at the very commencement of conversion, and a religious life. Under the Old Testament legal dispensation, the commands and promises were: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin." "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy."

Similar primary requisitions are made, and commands given, by the Baptist, the introducer of the Christian dispensation; by the Saviour himself; and by the inspired Apostles, throughout the New Testament Scriptures. The following are some of them and of enduring obligation:—"Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" "Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance;" (Matt. iii. 2, 8.) "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." (Mark i. 15.) "But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts xvii. 30.) Through defect of timely instruction, and of knowledge as to this primary doctrine of genuine repentance, multitudes of souls, especially among the young, form the class of unconverted and merely formal professors, already described, and remain until death in the ruinous slumbers of *self-deception*. They attend on the outward ministrations and ordinances, even the Holy Sacrament, but on these solemn occasions equally as at all other times, they retain and exhibit all the vanities and costly or gaudy decorations of apparel and jewellery, and nearly if not quite the same frivolities of conversation, amusements and general conduct, as previously. Poor, simple deceived beings, they are really less blameable than those whose duty it is to afford them the needed

instruction towards genuine repentance and conversion ; and for abstaining from those vanities and other mere worldly and ruinous customs and conformities. They retain these as fully as previous to their supposed conversion, the female portion of them most especially, as to gay and gaudy apparel and ornaments. They will say, as do many others, of the formal professing class, that these decorations are things of indifference, as regards religious principle and practice ; and form no part of the tests as to spiritual conversion, and real piety. The Holy Spirit of wisdom has not so judged, but by His servant Paul, in one of the Epistles to Timothy, has commanded,—“ that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety ; not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array ; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works ;”—and again, in one of the Epistles of Peter, the same spirit has said concerning Christian women,—“ whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.” But so far from these self-denying and appropriate injunctions being obeyed, they are almost utterly disregarded ; inso-much that but rarely, indeed, in any denomination, is a difference to be seen, between professors of religion,—members of churches,—and those who make no such special profession but are votaries of fashion, and of worldly customs and conformities. Looking into any assembly, for divine worship, on Sabbath, or any other day, the exhibitions, as to those varieties of apparel and other decorations, are nearly, if not quite, equal to those displayed in the theatre, the opera house, or at the various public and private festive and gay entertainments of mere worldly and fashionable life. Let all such gay and fashionable professors look also into chapter iii. of the prophet Isaiah, and mark and remember what is there said of similar vanities by the women of Israel. Yet *they* were under a less strict and spiritual dispensation than our own. To the female professor who now retains those vanities, this New Testament Scripture applies ;—“ She is dead while she liveth,”—dead as to the Spiritual Christianity which lives here below, and saves to eternal life above. If she really desires that life, she must lay aside all those ruinous vanities, or else she will find at the end, infinitely worse than vanity her only recompense.

The inconsistencies and numerous defections of these deceived professors, produce among mere worldly persons,—utterly careless as to any desire or profession of piety,—this one, among other evil effects, that they are thereby rendered even more averse to the spirit and observances of true Scriptural religion, and become more fully confirmed in their infidel opinion, that all inward experience of the vital and transforming power of religion is altogether false, and mere deception or hypocrisy. But in so judging they are adding to their own guilt and condemnation. The conduct of those deceived professors cannot possibly form any excuse for their own ungodliness and neglect of seeking true conversion. They have the inspired Scriptures of truth, in their own language, ready for obtainment, if not in their houses; and are free to attend on their numerous evangelical ministrations. Therefore, in the rejection, or wilful neglect of these gracious means and privileges, they are without the least shadow of excuse, for not repenting and turning from evil, and by a life of Scriptural faith and obedience, endeavouring to secure their own salvation. To all these, most emphatically and pointedly apply, the divine warnings, exhortations and commands:—“They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof, therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.” “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation;”—“Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.”

Regarding the deceived classes, previously mentioned, a few additional remarks may be profitably offered. While retaining their several worldly desires, and still earnestly striving for their fulfilment, they wish to be thought religious, and really to be so, according to various standards which each class of such worldlings, and other unconverted persons fix for themselves. But all such standards are incomparably below that of the Scriptures. Indeed they do not look there to find the true and only reliable standard. Thus they deceive themselves, and show the truth of the Scripture which says “the heart is deceitful above all things.” When such persons, by some dishonest, or other immoral conduct, expose the falsity of their religious profession, they are stigmatised as *hypocrites*, but in most of such instances, that is not their charac-

ter, in the strict meaning of the term, but their proper appellation is *self-deceivers*. A hypocrite is one who wilfully and designedly makes a profession of religion, and attends on its ministrations and services, for the purpose of being thereby assisted to secure some object of worldly wealth, or of dignity, public or private trust, or of some other merely secular description. But the self-deceiver really wishes to be religious, but only on his own terms, of still retaining and indulging in his selfish designs and practices. Not prayerfully and earnestly searching the scriptures to obtain a knowledge of the Spiritual and renewing character of christianity, and its indispensable requisites of vital faith, love, and obedience, he yet securely expects salvation, and eternal life, though still remaining in a merely natural, or carnal state. If not divinely awakened to a sense of his danger, and failing to the end of life, to obtain that essential spiritual knowledge, he blindly clings to the same delusive expectation, and notwithstanding all his external profession, and his numerous services, however sincere, he is eternally ruined. Not having received and retained "the spirit of Christ, he is none of His;" and therefore cannot obtain an entrance into His holy and spiritually perfect kingdom.

But turning from the deplorable case of such self-deceivers, mention may next be made, of some of the principal means to be used, by those who have been divinely awakened to a convincing sense of their guilt and danger, and of their absolute and urgent need of the regenerating grace and power of "the spirit of Christ," to make them truly His people,—subjects of His spiritual kingdom, and inheritors of everlasting glory and happiness.

The first, or most important of the exercises of such awakened persons, for obtaining the desired consolation, as indeed for all others, throughout the christian course, is earnest, persevering prayer; for Scripture declares, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." "If ye who are evil, give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him." And let not any such praying and seeking souls faint or be discouraged, if they do not receive an immediate answer of pardon and peace, for the Lord



often tries their sincerity and earnestness, by withholding for a time, according to his wisdom and goodness, the needed blessing. But let such penitent seekers persevere like the patriarch of old, who wrestled long, until nearly fainting, but still crying,—“I will not let thee go unless thou bless me;” and “He blessed him there.” The inestimable witness of the Holy Spirit conveying the assurance of pardoning mercy, will, to all such persevering suppliants, surely come, for he is faithful who has promised, and has for encouragement said;—“Wait on the Lord, be of courage, and he shall strengthen your heart;—“They shall not be ashamed that wait for me;”—“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Let the seeking soul then firmly rely on these and similar divine promises, and plead them at the throne of grace, and confidently rely on their being fulfilled, and he will surely obtain the needed blessing, at the earliest and best time for his greatest spiritual good. To encourage all such seeking souls, the Saviour has said:—“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” and again, “I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life, freely.” This fountain of the water of life is the Holy Spirit, called in our text, and in the other portions of Scripture previously referred to,—“the spirit of Christ.”

Further, and most essential means and exercises for observance by the penitent seeker of salvation, and all through his christian course, are earnest and prayerful searchings into the sacred Scriptures, and meditations thereon; with close and faithful examinations into his own habitual, or prevailing desires, feelings, and pursuits; and the course or habits of his ordinary life; comparing these with the plain declarations and injunctions of Scripture. These exercises are expressly enjoined, as we see in the following passages of the divine word:—“Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul;”—“Search the Scriptures;”—“Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” “Meditate on these things,” and “ponder the path of thy feet.” In the psalms we hear the seeking soul declaring:—“I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search;”—“I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways;”—“I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto

thy testimonies." But the merely formal and careless professor will not give himself the trouble to engage in such strict and earnest exercises, but by his conduct says, in effect,—it is a weariness; and "there is a lion in the way." He merely desires, but has nothing. "The desire of the slothful killeth him." He is like the sluggard, who "will not plough by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing," and becomes sunk into a deep sleep of ignorance as to true vital religion. If not awakened and recovered by divine mercy, he at last goes down to endless perdition and punishment, adding to the myriads of instances, proving how appropriate, in such cases, is the saying, that "hell is paved with good desires."

A further means to be diligently employed by all who are seeking to be spiritually regenerated and saved, is, persevering attendance on the public means of grace, especially the preaching of the divine word, for that word declares and promises:—"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;"—"Let us go up to the House of the Lord, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths;"—"Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

In the diligent use of the beforementioned means of grace, conjoined with a departure from all evil ways and works, and the exercise of faith in the fulfilment of the divine promises, the pardoning and justifying operations of the Holy Spirit, called "the spirit of Christ," may be confidently expected; for he is faithful who has promised,—"I will pour out my spirit upon you;"—"I am he that comforteth you;"—"Because ye are sons, God hath sent the spirit of His son unto your hearts, crying Abba Father." Such renewed and justified soul will then rejoicingly say, like the disburdened and happy spirits of old;—"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time their corn and their wine increased;"—"O Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comforteth me." The numerous promises of delivering and consoling grace, have not been confined to any particular ages of the church, but are the common privilege, and for the encouragement of all, in every age and country, who are seeking, or in any degree enjoying, the blessings they include..

Revelation declares that whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope ;" that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved ;" and that all "may partake of the water of life freely."

The next subject for examination and remark is that of the evidence of the possession of "the spirit of Christ." This evidence is of a two-fold description—internal and external. The first can only be certainly known by the person who possesses it. The truth that the possession of this inestimable blessing may be obtained and enjoyed is plainly set forth in many passages of Scripture.—The following are express on the point:—"The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "Who hath sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." That these words universally apply, throughout all ages and generations, is perfectly evident from the following, among other passages of Scripture:—by the Saviour Himself—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ;"—"This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive ; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Also, the text of this discourse ;—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ;" with many other passages to the same effect, and for all time. The possession and operations of this gracious spirit, as a comforting, strengthening, and encouraging witness, are made manifest to the individual so richly endowed, by his conscious experience of its internal *effects* of love, joy and peace, faith, meekness, patience, and other gracious dispositions and affections, described in Scripture, as proofs of that possession. As one of the effects of the operations of the Divine Spirit in the real Christian, he is content with the lot in this life assigned to him by Divine Providence ; is patient in tribulation and all distressing circumstances, self-denying, mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, cherishing love to God and the Saviour ; to the Word of God, and His ordinances ; to His true people, of every class and denomination, and to all mankind. He is jea-

lous for the glory of God, zealous for the salvation of souls, and for the suppression of all sin and moral evil, yet entirely free from a persecuting spirit. He rejoices in a firm hope of beholding the glory of God, in his Heavenly kingdom, and of inheriting everlasting life and happiness, through the merits of his Saviour, and the mercy of his reconciled God and Father, feeling confident that "He is faithful who has promised." Such are some of the chief *inward fruits* in proof of a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness,—that new birth declared by the Saviour to be indispensibly requisite for an entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. All these fruits are produced by "the Spirit of Christ," whose possession is so positively declared by the text to be essential to constitute an individual one of the Saviour's people; in other words—a Christian.

The external or practical proofs of that spiritual and regenerating change are in accordance with the inward new desires, principles, and dispositions, according to the Scripture illustration and emblem, that "the tree is known by its fruit." The genuine vital Christian discharges all his duties to God and to man, as well as those of a personal nature, conscientiously, and with zeal and diligence. He regularly attends on the public means of grace, and to family and private worship, and daily and prayerfully searches the Scriptures for instruction and encouragement. By all these and other means and exercises he exhibits a faithful adherence to his Lord's cause and assists to produce good effects upon others. His contributions for the promotion and other interests of religion, are with heartfelt gratitude and zeal, liberally rendered. He kindly and faithfully practises honesty, justice, mercy, and beneficence, and all other relative duties. His truly religious character is further exhibited, by the personal graces and duties of humility, meekness and patience in his habitual conduct; by self-denial, diligence in honest and useful employments; temperance in the use of all lawful things, and other personal virtues, in conformity with Scripture precepts. Possessing those inward spiritual graces, and thus shewing "out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom," it is manifest to himself and to others, that he is indeed a partaker of "the spirit of Christ;" not merely a professor of Christianity, but, in reality a Scriptural Christian.

There are some who, although admitting the direct operation of that Divine Spirit on the soul for its regeneration, yet think it to be a work or effect that neither is or can be consciously felt or known, or experimentally enjoyed, by those on whom it is wrought. The several passages of Scripture on the point already cited, and many others which might be mentioned, clearly shew that such a direct and conscious testimony of the Holy Spirit is a perfectly valid doctrine. They not only prove that it may be obtained by true believers, but also show that it is the privilege of all such, in every age, to possess and enjoy it, in a conscious and unmistakable manner, in a greater or less degree, according to the measure of their faith, and zealous and active obedience.

One of the Scriptural passages previously cited, mentions a witness of the Holy Spirit with the spirit of man. Now a witness is one who makes known certain facts or things to another; and surely in every such case, the person to whom such knowledge is so imparted must, at the time, be conscious of its reception. So the penitent will know by that gracious witness of the Divine Spirit, that God hath pardoned him, and that Christ is thus formed in him the "hope of glory." This accords with the Scripture, which says:—"Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

But further, it is in full accordance with reason and of all true philosophy relative to the subject, that He who, at first, formed from Himself, the *human spirit*, can by the direct operation of His *own spirit*, thereon, either *depress* and *afflict* or *strengthen* and *elevate*, *quicken* and *enlighten*, *sustain* and *comfort*, that *human spirit*, and cause it to rejoice in a thoroughly convincing consciousness of the pardoning mercy and favour of Him who called it into being. We are all fully conscious of the natural feelings of *love* and *aversion*, of *envy*, *anger*, *ambition*, and the various other *passions* and *emotions* which arise or dwell within us. Surely, then, on the ground of reason alone, we must be conscious of the presence and influence and direct witness of that gracious Spirit, who is *love itself*, and who, as the Scriptures declare, bestows on the hearts and souls He regenerates His own fruits of "love, joy and peace," making them to "abound" in every confiding and obedient believer.

A brief and general description may now be given, of the chief privileges and blessings divinely conferred on the true obedient Christian, and which so greatly contribute to his own happiness, while passing through this earthly and probationary state. The first and greatest of all, and on which, indeed, all the others depend, is the conscious assurance of the forgiveness of all his past transgressions, through the witness of the Holy Spirit, witnessing to his own spirit that God is reconciled to him, and has adopted him as His son, according to the Scripture testimony on the point; thereby enabling him confidently to say,—“Abba, Father, the Lord is my God;”—“Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away.” “He hath turned my sorrow into gladness;” therefore “I will praise thee, and will trust and not be afraid.” While so trusting and acting in obedience to the divine commands, contained in the Scriptures, he may, and according to the degree of his faith does, actually rely on the Scripture assurances of the divine protection from all real evil; and of a safe guidance through all the pathway of life. These assurances tell him, as to protection,—“His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” “The Lord is thy keeper, and shall preserve from all evil.” For instruction and guidance he is told;—“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths,”—“He will be our guide even unto death.” For preservation from trouble, He has the following, among many other promises:—“Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him,”—“there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” But if in the course of Divine Providence, affliction or trouble of any kind is permitted to fall on the righteous man, for his chastening or any other gracious purpose, he has for his support and consolation, these and other enduring promises;—“The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.” “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, He is their strength in the time of trouble.” “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee.” But further, he has the following with many other divine assurances of deliverance from trouble:—“The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.” “I will turn their mourning

into joy, and will comfort them, and make them to rejoice from their sorrow." The righteous and faithful servant of the Lord, has also these and other divine promises as to his dying hours:—"The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing." "The righteous hath hope in his death." "Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints."

But infinitely beyond, and richer than all temporal blessings and enjoyments, are the eternal glories and happiness, which the Lord, in his faithful word, has so frequently promised to bestow in His heavenly kingdom, on all those who have, until death, faithfully continued to love and to serve him. To these he has promised to change their "vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," and further, has said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;"—"The righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father;"—"The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Now, on the other hand, a few Scripture announcements may be given, as to the guilt and danger of neglecting to seek and obtain "the spirit of Christ," and thereby remaining in an unregenerate state, and consequently under the displeasure of God while here, and hereafter experiencing eternal wrath and punishment for that neglect, and for disobedience to His revealed will and commands. Let all such neglectful and disobedient characters deeply meditate on the following, and many similar passages of the inspired and immutable Word:—"Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;"—"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;"—The word *escape*, in this last passage, evidently means an escape from condemnation and punishment, at the decreed final judgment and retribution, when God "will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained," and will make an everlasting separation between those who have received and retained "the spirit of Christ" and "whose names are in the Lamb's book of life," and those who have not been born of that spirit, and obtained the "wedding garment," but have neglected to ask and receive it. They have thus

“lightly esteemed the Rock of their Salvation ;” have “not obeyed the truth,” but wilfully neglected the “great salvation.” It is observable that it is not charged that they have proudly and presumptuously despised and rejected that salvation, but have merely *neglected* it, and therefore shall not escape. Such persons have no divine promises of protection from danger, or evil of any kind ; nor of support or comfort in seasons of trial or affliction, such as are so abundantly given for the sustainment and consolation of the regenerate and righteous, in all times of tribulation, perplexity, or suffering.

But infinitely more dreadful and agonizing are the declared eternal doom and punishment of those who die without “the spirit of Christ,” and consequently destitute of the “great salvation.” Of all such it is scripturally declared that the wrath of God abideth on them, and they shall die in their sins,” and finally be cast into hell. From these, and numerous other awful announcements of an infinitely just and almighty God, all the unconverted and ungodly may clearly see, that although he has been long-suffering towards them, in order that they may repent and turn from their evil ways, and seek and find his mercy, yet if they remain in their unregenerate and sinful condition, they will, as Scripture declares, be at last consigned to everlasting “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,” “Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Here the solemn question arises, what is the course to be adopted and pursued by the awakened neglecter of the great salvation, in order to avoid that threatened doom and punishment? There is but one way to escape, and it is plainly pointed out and prescribed in the sacred oracles. No merely human devices and performances will avail for securing deliverance and safety, for those oracles declare that “It is the spirit that quickeneth ;” and again, “You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” And of all those who have been regenerated, and made the “sons of God,” it is said, that they “were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” But glory be unto God, that the operations of that gracious and almighty spirit have been purchased for the salvation of all, through the atoning sufferings and death of the Divine Redeemer, and therefore He is most



appropriately called the "spirit of Christ;" and is everywhere operating, according to this promise of the Saviour;—"When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." All this He does, by enlightening the understanding, and operating on the conscience, chiefly through the application of the inspired word, which is called "the sword of the spirit." All who are brought under the hearing of that word, are more or less frequently, and in various degrees, aroused and awakened under those divine operations. They should, therefore, *immediately* and *earnestly* yield deep attention to those divinely warning monitions, and seek by fervent prayer, to have that awakening increased; and diligently and perseveringly follow all the Scriptural directions to penitent seekers of salvation, mentioned in former pages of this discourse, namely:—Constant supplications to the throne of grace,—reading and meditating on the sacred Scriptures;—attending on their public ministrations, and other religious means and ordinances;—and abandoning all sinful ways, associations and companions. They must also engage and persevere in the performance of all divinely commanded duties, doing good in every mode, as occasion offers; while solely relying on the atoning sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon and acceptance, and grace for present and eternal salvation, confidently resting on the numerous divine promises, and believing that for His sake, every requisite support, consolation, and other blessing, will be appropriately and liberally bestowed. Steadfastly and zealously pursuing such a course.—plainly prescribed in Scripture,—they cannot possibly fail to secure all these inestimable gifts and mercies, for the Lord has declared;—"Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts;"—"Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth";—"I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more." Let every seeking soul, then, be encouraged diligently to persevere in striving to secure the "durable riches and righteousness" of the "great salvation," ever remembering that "He is faithful who has promised."

But unhappily there are some, and it may be feared, even many, who say:—"If I am to be saved, the Lord will call me at his own

good and proper time, but I can do nothing at all towards my salvation." All such thoughts and sayings are contrary to Scripture exhortations and commands, and daringly presumptuous. True, you cannot do anything *meritoriously*, to secure that great salvation, but you, and all others can comply with the divine requisitions,—“Ask and it shall be given you;”—“Cease to do evil, learn to do well.” You can read and meditate on the sacred Scriptures, and attend diligently and attentively on their public ministrations, and on other external means for obtaining wisdom and grace. There is the utmost encouragement to adopt such a course, for infallible and unchangeable wisdom has declared,—“Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.”

To all disobedient neglecters of the great salvation the following, with many other similar warnings and exhortations, are expressly applicable:—“Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation;”—“Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;”—“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.” Oh! may all such negligent persons deeply regard these awful words, awake to a view of their imminent danger, and without the least further delay, earnestly strive to avoid the impending wrath and punishment; and by persevering in fervent supplication, obtain “the Spirit of Christ,” and thus secure those gifts and graces which will make for their present and everlasting peace, before they be forever hidden from their eyes.

