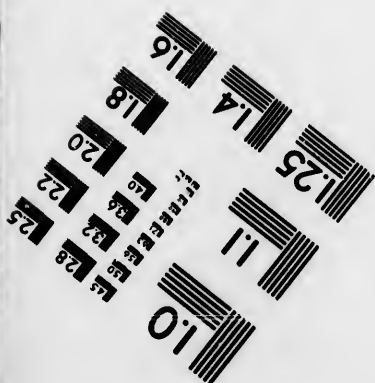
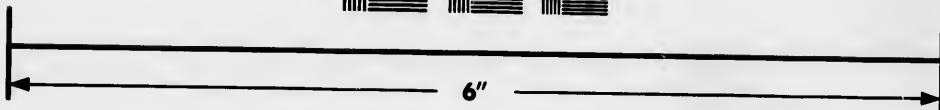
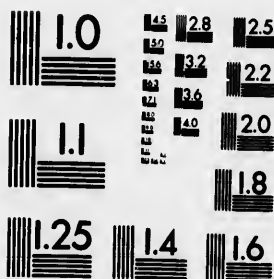


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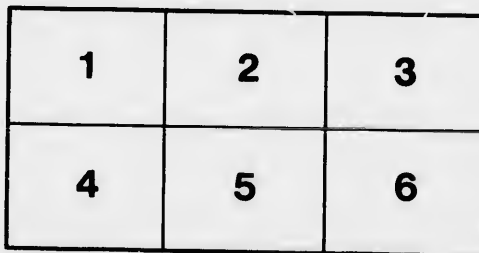
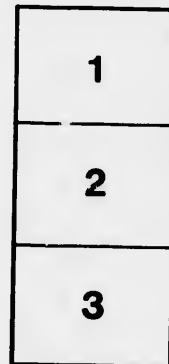
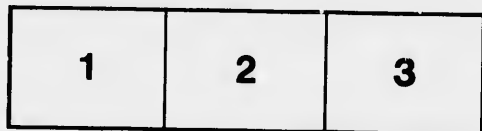
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10

REGENERATION:

OR

EXEGETIC AND EXPOSITION

OF

John 3: 1-8.

BY THE

REV. D. SUTHERLAND,

GABARUS, N. S., CANADA.

CHARLOTTETOWN:

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REGENERATION.

The life of Christ was so holy ; his walk among men so inoffensive ; his conversation so pure and heavenly ; and his miracles, which he wrought so powerful and extraordinary—that the people could not deny his origin, and descent, as from God. There was a general understanding, as to who he was. The devils, even, knew full well, that he was the Son of God—the Son of David also—and hence their great and unexempled enmity, displayed to the utmost against him, in the temptation on the lonely mountain, and by means of wicked men, his whole life through ; which assumed a fearful measure, when he was condemned and crucified, amid horrid blasphemies, on Calvary. Men believed from His miracles, which he performed, that he was the Messiah sent of God ; who yet did not believe unto Salvation, and were therefore not obedient unto Him in sincerity and truth. Nay, many believed in him with a mere outward and ordinary faith, who yet persecuted him,—and, who, like the keepers of the vineyard, would have cast him out and killed him, before the time appointed in the Divine Mind, if they could. But they were restrained ; for, as King he restrains

and conquers his enemies. Agreeably to this, therefore, we are told in the last or preceding chapter: "Now when he was in Jerusalem, at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man:" i. e. he knew them inwardly, and He knew that their believing was from outward constraint, forced upon them by their observing his miracles: and that, therefore, they were not to be trusted.

Now there is an instance of such a faith as this given in the case of Nicodemus; not indeed that we are bound to suppose that there was any maliciousness in his intention—but he was totally wanting in that which would capacitate him for exercising a saving faith in the Saviour, viz, the new birth. It was lamentable to think that a man of his position should be so ignorant of Divine things. He was unregenerate—a mere natural man. It was a good sign however to find him apply to the Saviour for instruction; and it is not known what blessed results may have grown out of this interesting conference, that took place between himself and Jesus. Indeed from the notice made of him in chapters 7: 50 v., and 19: 39 v., we infer that he was led to embrace the Gospel by this interview. Very likely he believed this very night in the Saviour. We have in this conference, firstly, the Person and Official Capacity of Nicodemus pointed out in the Record; secondly, his Self-conducted Introduction to the Saviour;

thirdly, Jesus' Terms of Reception; fourthly, Nicodemus' Rejoinder; and fifthly, Jesus' Great Reply.

I. The Person and Official Capacity of Nicodemus—ver. 1. "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus." The Jews, were, at this time divided into several sects; of these, the sect of the Pharisees was the strictest; and he was one of them. Being, therefore a Pharisee, we may reasonably suppose, that he was imbued with more or less of their Spirit;—he was, probably, reserved, self-righteous, and refinedly proud, and possessed of much suavity, but assumed the face of unquestioned sanctimony; his frame of heart, if expressed, would possibly be well conveyed by the language, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou."

Nicodemus' rank is stated; and he was not a man of ordinary standing, and trust. He was a Ruler of the Jews. The Jews, at this time, had not a King of their own; but they had a Chief Court or Council composed of the greatest and wisest men of the nation; and Nicodemus was a member of this Court or Council. They were seventy in number. Their business was, among other things, to watch over and suppress heresies. Their opinion was considered weighty and authoritative, in matters of religion. When John the Baptist made his appearance, preaching Repentance, and baptising, they sent Priests and Levites, to make enquiries whether he was the Messiah who was to come; and when the Saviour, of whom John bore witness, did actually appear, they sent to him, time after time, to ascertain the nature of his doctrines; but they pressed their

enquiries in such a spirit as prevented their profiting--viz., in a set, contracted, self-willed, self-wise and malicious spirit. Learn then a lesson or two from this: firstly, no office or station that a man can fill in the church, is able to convert him in heart unto God. It is not in an outward connection that the efficacy consists; and a man may feel much elated, with an office or standing in the Church of God on earth, who, after all, may have little reason to boast, being destitute of the grace of God, as was Nicodemus at the time of his visit to Jesus. And in such a case as this the words of the Saviour are verified, "He that is first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Again, we must not set our faith to the standard of men's opinions as in pride; however worthy their judgment may be in most cases. Men may err. The Courts of the purest Church may err, at times, in their judgment; and without doubt they do often err; for men at best are but fallible. The only infallible Standard is the Word of God; it cannot err; and he that walketh by it, walketh securely and wisely—"Unto the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

II. Consider, secondly, Nicodemus' Self-conducted Introduction to the Saviour, ver. 2: "The same came unto Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

It was in Jerusalem this interesting interview took place—in the time of the Passover—the first

after the Saviour's public entering upon his ministry--and this agreeably to the requirements of the law; for the Saviour was subject to it; he was a minister of it, and also the fulfiller of it. Nicodemus must have heard much of the Saviour previously to this; and it is very possible that he was an eye witness to the bold undaunted part which he acted a few days previous to this time, in driving the money-changers and them that sold doves, together with their cumbersome articles of merchandise out of the house of the Lord--scourging them, and saying, "Take these hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Observe; it is good and highly proper to be bold in the cause of God. And there is nothing more unbecoming in Christ's cause than cowardice.

It appears indeed, that there was a special chain of providences going on, and as it were connected, link with link, in Nicodemus' case; not merely in outward circumstances, but in the inward cogitations, and revolvings of his mind. His attention, to say the least was seized; and he was so arrested in his thoughts, that is, of Christ and his wonderful manner of proceedings, that he is forced to make farther discoveries; and consequently, of his own accord, he is moved to give Him a visit for the purpose of personal information. And it is said—"The same came to Jesus by night." He is particularly designated. He is a marked man. The eyes of God are upon him, and his name is recorded; and these circumstances are handed down to the notice and inspection of all time to come. According to D'Aubigne, young Martin

Luther remarked, how condescending, the learned Trebonius, when entering the school at Erfurth, would raise his cap and bow to salute the scholars; and his reason, as expressed to his fellow professors, prompting him to such amazingly humble conduct in those pedantic times, is handed down by Luther, as worthy of record: "There are, says Trebonius, among these boys, men of whom God will, one day, make burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates. Although you do not yet see them with the badges of their dignity, it is right that you should treat them with respect.' Side by side with this, the language of God's word is, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning." "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

God follows up his dealings with Nicodemus, He has not yet that grace needful to embolden him to visit Jesus, for a conference, in the day time, when he and others alike might be edified and added to the Kingdom of God. He therefore comes in the night—with the view of saving himself the sacrifice of his standing with the rulers—for fear, namely, of personal trouble—and of being cast out of the synagogue, according to a law of theirs passed of which notice is given in chapters 12:42 v., to the effect "that if any man should confess him, he should be put out of the synagogue; and even if there is no evidence that this decree was passed so early as this visit of Nicodemus, this is the spirit first and subsequently the law at an early date and throughout, upon which the Supreme Council of the Jews acted

against the Son of God. This was very damaging; yet it was a test upon the sincerity of professors to a certain extent. There is manliness or Christian boldness in religion; and this qualification accompanies faith. "Add to your faith virtue (or fortitude); and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience Godliness; and to Godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. 1:5-9. He that taketh up his cross to follow Christ, must be ready to forsake everything else, even the most darling objects and delightful pleasures—wife, brothers, sisters and kindred; his goods, honours, and worldly estate; and if necessary life itself. But then it is promised him, that he shall receive "an hundred fold in this world; and in the world to come everlasting life." Cowardice is not becoming in religion; and there must be no compromise in our duties to Christ. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more than they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."

Nicodemus accosted the Saviour very respectfully, as far as he knew, but yet, in a great measure, derogatively to the high and honorable character of Jesus—calling him Rabbi simply; that is, Doctor or Master, the title of respect given by the Jews to their great men in the syn-

agogue. But Christ was something more than this; He was the Messiah—the King Anointed—the Messenger and Eternal Son of the Father full of grace and truth. They did not accord to Him His right and proper place. Yet it was confessedly established and understood among them that he was from God. They could not deny his origin. His miracles which he wrought were of such a nature, as put this beyond dispute—“For no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.” This is the best definition ever given of a miracle,—“a work that no man can do except God be with him.”

A miracle is not simply the unknown, the profound. It is the darling aim of the Church of Rome to inspire awe into their devotees by a display of pomp and magnificence. They say and inculcate that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and it is of the devotion of superstition. Carnal prudence dictates to them to keep their people blind—so that they may have the better opportunity of imposing their frauds, and pass off their performances for real miracles. Yet their miracles, so-called, are no miracles, but dogmatical feats of imposture. Truly the sacrilegious mockery of the Priests of Rome performing Mass in the Chapel of the Vatican, as related by Luther, was apropos;—one day as these were performing Mass at the altar, and administering the sacrament—instead of pronouncing the usual words, uttered to transform, as they blasphemously assert, the wafers and wine, into the true humanity and divinity of the Saviour, they unusually, this time, under Luther's

own observation, yet in real and perfect keeping with truth, derisively pronounced over the elements the words:—" *Panis es, et panis manebis; vinum es, et vinum manebis*"—" Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt be; wine thou art, and wine thou wilt be.' A most complete exposure we think! "Such miracles!" is the language characterising the Saviour's miracles as of a distinctive nature. This is important to note. It is not for a moment to be denied, that devils and wicked designing men have power to work counterfeit miracles, calculated to deceive. There were wonderful feats of legerdemain practiced in Egypt by the magicians in the time of Moses; there were false miracles offered for true ones by false prophets in Israel, in various times; and both the old and new Testaments bear testimony to very wonderful examples of this kind; and it cannot be denied that the devil has power to aid and abet his subjects slavishly serving him, and that he does to this day exercise that power, and will till the utmost of his guile is exhausted in his forthputting of his hellish machinations against the Church of God; and till he is bound over prostrate and utterly powerless by the glorious power of Christ Jesus the King of Zion. Satan's work is to blindfold. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Gal. 3: 1v. He uses consummate craft to destroy souls, and it would appear that, to gain his purpose the better, he has organized plans of his own, established and enforced, by the weight and

prestige of preposterous devices, amounting, to all intents and purposes, to miracles of darkness. "And then that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them: that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—Thes. 2: 8-12.

Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of the Egyptian Enchanters at last, and thus the superiority of the power by which he wrought was proved. Their power was limited, and not able to deceive any longer, and, overcome with terror, they are forced to confess unto Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God." Now "a miracle is a work that no man can do except God be with him." It is the sign of God's presence. It is the seal of God's power. It suspends the laws of nature, and God then speaks superior to all such law; or it moves nature by the will of God to testify to his mind. It is a power that silences into submission the power of Satan. The Devils were forced to supplicate the forbearance of Christ. Working miracles the Saviour healed the sick; opened the eyes of the blind; raised the dead to life again; walked upon the sea; stilled the winds and the boisterous ocean, and "cast out Devils by the power of God." His miracles were

full of mercy and divine compassion. Their character was that of love, and goodness, and mercy. Was not his death a miracle of love? Was not his manifestation in the flesh at all, a great mystery and miracle? Is not the regeneration of a soul a wonderful and transcendently great miracle wrought by the Spirit of God and of Christ?

III. Consider, thirdly, Jesus Terms of Reception.

Ver. 3: "Jesus answered and said unto him: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (or from above or anew) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'" This was a very unequivocal reply. Nicodemus, of necessity, was surprised. He was not in the habit of thinking thus. He could not but have read this doctrine in the Scriptures; yet it never gained his attention, nor did he ever give it the slightest consideration. Certainly, in a proper manner he did not, else he would not have manifested such ignorance now. His Pharisaism could not do, however austere and rigid. It is in vain to look to the "mountains and hills for salvation." Man himself cannot make as much as "one hair white or black;" "neither by taking thought can he add as much as one cubit to his stature." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that were accustomed to do evil."

No doubt Nicodemus never expected to have his own state brought to such a question. He would expect the Saviour to give what explanations soever he demanded of his doctrines and profession, that he would accede to all his enquiries in a reciprocally mild and communicative spirit, as he himself

wore. But not exactly so. It must not be so. The Saviour would not do justice to himself, and his Heavenly Father that sent him, thus. He could not act in the spirit of Nicodemus. It belonged not to Jesus to reciprocate carnal sentiments of an unregenerate man. He came for a witness of the truth. He came to set up the Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel—the kingdom which shall never be destroyed—the kingdom which shall break down and destroy all other opposing kingdoms—and he proclaims its terms. It is not of this world. It is from above. "The Kingdom of God is within you," that is, in your midst; and, again, in your hearts and inmost being. Again, "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation," so that it can be seen in its outward pomp and magnificence, but secretly, silently, it may be; soft and gentle as the dew, yet powerful; for, in the language of Daniel, the Prophet of God, "the stone cut out without hands breaketh the monstrous and huge idol of ungodliness, iniquity and sin into pieces."

But, what then is the Kingdom of God? This is a great question. Attend, and you shall hear. It is the Sovereignty of God. In it his goodness and care, and all the glorious attributes of his nature are triumphantly displayed. It is the kingdom of grace here, and the kingdom of glory in heaven hereafter. It is the kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. If any man have not the Father, Son, and Spirit, he is not of this kingdom, but of the kingdom of Satan—the kingdom of darkness, and death, and hell. In order to be of the Kingdom of God you must be born again.

The honest purport or meaning of the Saviour's language, insisting on the necessity of the New Birth, as contained in the original, is: "Except a man be born again, or from above, or from heaven, or from God, or from the beginning, or thoroughly, or completely, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Again, more particularly still, it is: "Except any one be born again, he or she cannot see the Kingdom of God."

The Jews were accustomed to call the religious washing of their Proselytes, Regeneration; but the general mass of the Jewish people never applied the language to Jews, but to Gentiles, for they understood the Jews not to need such a thing as Regeneration, it being considered and believed firmly by them that they themselves were already in covenant with God, and fit subjects of his kingdom, by a constant observance of the outward rights of their holy religion. With the Jews water was used symbolically thus, it would appear, long before the time of its use in Baptism by John, or the disciples of Jesus; and because they were destitute of the Spirit they fell short of the Spiritual meaning which should properly accompany and invest or clothe the ordinance of washing of water, as, indeed, every other part of the Word of God; for although there is no proof in the Word of Inspiration for the Divine institution of the Jewish washing of Preselytes on their admittance into the Church of God, yet it was from the washing in water of the sacrifices and sacred utensils that they derived it in its theological or dogmatic sense. It is not expressly stated any where, but, no doubt, it

would be, of the same form or nature of washing as that for the dead, or ceremonial washing of the person; and it would be neither sprinkling, nor pouring, nor immersion, but lapping the person all over in an ordinary way. The Priests were washed with water; the sacrifices were all, as to their inwards and legs, washed with water; the vessels of the holy service, the altar, penitent sinners, and all other things pertaining to the honor and service of God, were washed either with water or blood, or with both together, by the two ways, viz., of lapping, or the ordinary application of the water by the hand, and by sprinkling, or pouring. Basins were provided for the purpose of washing in the holy service; and it is remarkable that our Lord himself, as if to join the whole circle of obediential rites and symbolical observances, for wise and holy purposes, on the night of his betrayal, rising from the Paschal Supper, "poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."—John 13: 5. To a reflecting mind it will be clear that the flesh of the sacrifices, for the purpose of washing, was not immersed in the basin of the holy service, or into a stream where there might have been no water-basin provided for the service of the Lord, but poured upon by the hand out of the basin, so that while the sacrifice was washed, the remainder of the water, not being attained by contact, remained still pure and holy for holy use, as might yet be required of it.

In John 8: 23, Jesus says unto the Pharisees: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above"—the

words 'beneath' and 'above' being those of contrary meaning in the original—the words 'from above' being one word in Greek, and the same both here and in John 8:3, translated 'again'; the words 'from beneath' evidently pointing to their father the Devil and his region of Perdition and Darkness, namely, Hell, to which the sinner's course tends in the end. "He that committeth sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil."—1 John 3:8. Being born of God is the remedy or antidote provided. The old lines and relationship of Sin and Satan are by this means undermined, and uprooted, and overthrown. The ice breaks up; the fettered earth is released; and the appearance of the upspringing grass is the first assurance of Spring. So faith is the awakened life of the renewed soul, and Repentance is the means of its various lively fruits or effects. In the original, the word for Repentance is *μετάνοια*, (*metanoia*), and means, 'a change of mind, thought, or mode of thinking, of feeling, purpose, or action,' in one word, 'a radical reformation of principle and life.' It would be too little to consider it as a change merely in the Jews' opinion or judgment concerning the claims of the Saviour. The Devils believe and tremble: It is not Sorrow, merely. It does not consist of remorse, or repentance unto death. It is not mere Reformation. It is not a forced obedience to the Law. It is not begotten in bon-

dage. It is "a Saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience."

Dr. Horatius Bonar, says, "Repent and believe the Gospel," does not mean "get repentance by the law, and then believe the Gospel," but "let this good news about the Kingdom which I am preaching, lead you to change your views and receive the Gospel." Repentance being put before faith here, simply implies, that there must be a turning from what is false in order to the reception of what is true. If I would turn my face to the north, I must turn it from the south; yet I should not think of calling the one of these preparatory to the other. If I want to get quit of the darkness I must let in the light; but I should not say that the getting quit of the darkness is a preparation for receiving the light. These must in the nature of things go together." Repentance springs out of Faith; and Faith itself is a gift of God, awakened in the new birth to saving exercise, "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life"—and its perpetual progress and increase fully realized is called "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb." Rev. 22: 1.

That will be in the Kingdom of God in Heaven; in the meantime, God, in His good will hath begotten us; in His mercy hath forgiven us our sins; and in His love He hath taken us up, and embraced us as His own children.

Hence the mercy of God being remedial, John the Baptist preached and baptized with water, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus"—Acts 19: 4.—Jesus preached, commencing with the same doctrine of Repentance saying, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel—which was also the burden of Paul's message and continues still the same grand theme grappling with the hearts and consciences of all men, namely, in one distinctive utterance—"Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Baptism of John was from Heaven—the Baptism instituted by Jesus after His Resurrection, was from Heaven, and is a great stage in advance, being a richer and better Baptism—the Baptism of the Spirit is from Heaven—Holiness, Happiness, Jesus, the white stone and the new name written thereupon, and our eternal estate—all are from there.

It was fully contemplated in the word of God, that the blessed change implied in Regeneration should extend to the Gentiles and Jews alike, according to the good and gracious will of God. The 87th Psalm and the 54th chapter of Isaiah are sufficient proof of this—and He who changed Jacob's name into Israel, and Saul's into Paul, and changed many others—giving them a new name—can do this, giving them a new nature—"The Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid; and the Calf and the young

Lion and the sucking together; and a little child shall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the Lion shall eat straw like the Ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea." Is' 11:6—9.

The great and blessed Reformation or Transformation promised will be brought about by means of the Repentance and Faith and Baptism of the Spirit given from Heaven and entertained by the Church through grace in this world, in order to her adornment as a bride prepared for her husband—who is the Lord of Glory Himself. Water Baptism is not Regeneration or the New Birth. The great Bunyan's mind was correct, in entertaining the belief, that it is not necessary unto Salvation or the want of it an absolute bar in the way of outward communion with the Church of God. And Ritualism having come to an end at the death, or rather, Resurrection of the Saviour, Baptism with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, becomes a duty—but, I conceive, an honest favour, in using the water symbol in this Sacrament, consistently with what is signified thereby in the word of God, will be pleasing to God and ought to satisfy the consciences of all Christians. For there is no bondage exercised now, and there should not be any schism in the House of

God, on account of any carnal or worldly ordinance.

Heavenly Birth, like natural Birth introduces at once into the lines of Infinite and Divine and Heavenly Blessings, Gifts, Relations; Riches, Honours, Friendships, and Inheritance—which we lost by the Fall, and by Faith we now endue or clothe ourselves with, in a glad and welcome mind—and such as are so born are born to holiness here and an everlasting home in Heaven hereafter. And, O! we sigh for that Home.

This Doctrine of the new birth was prominently held forth in the Old Testament Scriptures. The People of God had many promises of it, and of the enlargement of the Church—Is' 66 : 5—24. The rite of Circumcision represented it, and held it continually to their notice—"Circumcise therefore the fore-skin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut' 10 : 16. "For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem : Break up your fallow-ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem ; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." Jer. 4 : 8, 4 : "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed ; and make you a new heart and a new Spirit : for why will ye die, O House of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God : wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Ez. 18 :

30, 32. David prayed for it, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." The Lord has very clearly indicated the means by which this blessed change is brought about: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments and do them: and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My People and I will be your God." Ez. 36: 25, 28. For the Light of the Word and the Instruction of the Holy Spirit, so amply and gloriously held to view, in the 19th and 119th Psalms, men ought, most earnestly, to enquire, search, covet, and pray; to dispense them "The True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; being born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Really, before Nicodemus could understand the Saviour, he must needs be born again, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned"; and, "as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts."

He must have new life communicated. He must have new light imparted. His affections must be renewed and changed. He must be renewed in the Spirit of his mind. As already quoted out of the Old Testament writings, so the same thing is promised and needed in the New Testament times: "This is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel in those days, saith the Lord; I will put My Laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Heb. 8 : 10. And this is applicable to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews—to all—to every child of humanity.

Observe: There is not a possibility of evading this question. There is a "verily, verily" in it—truly, truly—from the lips of Christ; Who was in Heaven; came down from Heaven, and knows full well what difference there is between men's hearts and Heaven; and what manner of change we need to undergo before we can enter Heaven; for Heaven, in its Holiness, and Purity, and Spirituality, cannot lower its standard, meet us half-way, or compromise with us. Outward reformation, however great, will not do. Outward connection with the Church of God, and due obedience outwardly to the rules of Christ's House, will not suffice. All this is enjoined—and necessary—and brings the Kingdom of God near to us. But absolutely, and without equivocation, or gainsaying—we must be born again, in order to see the Kingdom of God. And they that do not belong to the Kingdom of

God on earth, cannot expect to enter the Kingdom of God in Heavenly Glory.

Dr. A. A. Hodge, says: "Infants as well as adults, are rational and moral agents, and by nature totally depraved. The difference is, that the faculties of infants are in the germ, while those of adults are developed. As Regeneration is a change wrought by creative power in the inherent moral condition of the soul, infants may plainly be the subjects of it in precisely the same sense as adults; in both cases the operation is miraculous, and therefore inscrutable. The fact is established by what the Scriptures teach of innate depravity, of infant salvation, of infant circumcision and baptism." The same rule applies to idiots and to all saved by the mercy of God from among the heathen who have not enjoyed the knowledge of the Revealed Word, and of the Crucified Saviour preached to dying men. There is no one saved except through the Regeneration of the Holy Spirit and by the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, the Lord. On this matter there is common agreement among the best divines. Dr. Thomas Smyth, says: "The heathen are guilty, and require pardon and justification in the sight of God; they are unholy and depraved, and to be made meet for Heaven, they must become pure, and possess that holiness, without which no man sees God. Now, there are three ways in which these effects may be secured. There is, then, God's written Law, perfect obedience to which, entitles to perfect happiness. There is Salvation through Christ, acceptance of which, will

secure everlasting life. And, there is a law written in the heart of every man, and means of knowing God put within the reach of every man, the perfect use and fulfilment of which will save from the wrath to come. * * * Not to believe, therefore, that the heathen are thus without hope of Salvation, dying in guilt, and opposed to everlasting misery, is to deny the whole foundation, on which Christianity, as a remedial system, rests—it is, as we have proved, to contradict reason—it is, to oppose the self-offered confessions and feelings of the heathen themselves—it is to annihilate eternal justice—destroy all moral government—make vice and virtue synonymous—dethrone the Sovereign of the universe—and unbarring the gates of Hell, let loose the unjustly incarcerated victims;—it is to be more benevolent than the Angels of Heaven—more benignant than the everlasting Comforter—more tender than the Crucified Redeemer—more merciful than the Merciful God.” The sentence that God’s unerring word has pronounced upon the case is: “For as many as have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law, that is, Revealed Law. Hence the loud call we have to generously impart to the heathen the Light of the Gospel which God in His love hath so bountifully dispensed unto ourselves; for “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”; “and where no vision is the people perish.” And Death and the Final Judgment are fast approaching and closing in upon these poor people and upon all.

" Hark ! what mean those lamentations,
 Rolling sadly through the sky ?
 'Tis the cry of heathen nations,
 Come and help us, or we die !"

" Hear the Heathens' sad complaining,
 Christians ! hear their dying cry,
 And, the Love of Christ constraining,
 Join to help them ere they die."

IV. Consider, fourthly, Nicodemus' Rejoinder, ver: 4.—"Nicodemus saith unto Him: How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Dr. Jacobus says on this point: "It is not likely that this man was so utterly ignorant of Our Lord's meaning, as to suppose, that he was speaking of a literal second birth of nature. The general idea of a new birth was already in use, as Proselytes were spoken of as new born, when they came into the Jewish Church by Baptism. And our Lord here gives the deeper, more important sense in which a new birth was necessary for coming into the Church of the Messiah, that is, for being His true disciples and members. Nicodemus understood the term only as applied to Proselytes entering the Jewish Church. But how it could apply to the Jews, and be made a prerequisite for entering the Messiah's Kingdom, he could not see. Indeed it seemed to him just as absurd as to think of a man when he is old (already born and advanced in age) entering again into his mother's womb, and being born the second time; as, for a Jew, already in the Church, the true and only church, going back to enter the church for the first time. Our Lord, therefore, more fully explains.—Beyond the form,

is the inward reality, which is the great requisite, and without which the form is only an empty sign and shadow." Nicodemus was truly ignorant—deplorably ignorant—on the subject. He might have known better than to reply in terms so utterly foreign to the subject. What might he expect from a natural, second birth, were the thing possible, but a natural man, even literally speaking—as carnal—and fleshly, or sensual—and wicked—and unholy as ever! Flesh produces flesh; and there is as much difference between a natural birth and the spiritual birth, as there is between flesh and spirit. So, in the nature of things, as tried both by revelation and reason, Nicodemus' rejoinder is not appropriate or correct.

V. Consider, fifthly, Jesus' Great Reply, ver. 5-8. Jesus answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit (or, even the Spirit) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."—This is a noble reply. Jesus might have repulsed Nicodemus in his ignorance; but in his Divine forbearance he condescends to teach him to still greater length. He insists upon the truth of what he had previously said; and he now states further, that a man must be born of water and of the Spirit, or he cannot see the kingdom of God.

1st. He shows the unavoidable necessity of Regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God, in order to enter the kingdom of God. It requires the direct and immediate creative power and act of the Holy Ghost to recreate the soul, not in regard to its essence or essential being, but in its subjective state and relation to God and Divine things. The Spirit gives sight to the dark benighted soul; the truth is the light discovered. The Holy Spirit gives feeling or sensibility; the truth presents the object beloved; and upon this gracious view and effectual call of God, the instant language of the soul is: "Draw me, we will run after thee. " My beloved is chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies." Without this man cannot know God. Without it he cannot duly reverence his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, or works, or anything by which he maketh himself known. He cannot know anything aright, or taste aright of any heavenly gift. He cannot see how the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father. He cannot serve God. He cannot repent of his sins. He can do nothing truly pleasing to God in this life, and can never see the world of glory. They that are in the flesh cannot see God. "Born of water and of the Spirit," or "born of water, even the Spirit," as it may equally well be translated, means baptized of water and of the Spirit—giving in the pleonastic style adopted, 'ex crescendo,' the honor of the instrumentality to the word of divine appointment, to which pertains also in its own place the ordinance of Baptism—and

giving the honor of efficacious power to the Holy Spirit, by whom really the soul is effectually regenerated, or born again, or from above, that is, from heaven, or by heavenly grace and power. Christ was baptized; so are we. He died for us: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Christ was baptized by the Spirit: so are we. Christ was sanctified or baptized by the water of the word: so are we. The Spirit and the word and the blood agreed to him in testimony; so do they agree in evidence to us still of eternal life in God's dear Son. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Approaching death, Jesus had in the Spirit, in whom he offered himself up unto God, overwhelming and unutterable soul experience, as he devotedly expresses himself to the Father: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Christ, "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." He gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the eternal life."—Gal. 5:26, and Tit. 3:5, 6. The reception by faith of the blessings of God's grace and mercy in Christ is all that is absolutely necessary to our salvation. This is effectually brought about by the operation of the

Spirit with the word in conjunction. It is faith brings the soul into the appropriate posture for the reception of the great gift of Jesus' blood sprinkling the soul clean and righteous; and this faith is itself the gift of God in its relation, aspect, and operation. It is exercised with thankfulness upon a precious, lovely Saviour. The washing by water in Baptism corresponds to the washing by the Blood of Jesus, the washing of the Spirit, the washing of the word also; and as Jesus came by water and blood distinctly, so do his members, believers. "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. And there are three that bear witness on earth—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."—1 John 5: 6, 8. "The Spirit is truth," is the same as to say the Holy Spirit is the author of and the enforcer or witnesser of the truth; and when it is said that the three mentioned agree in one, the meaning is that they agree unto the one thing, or purpose, or purport. Baptism with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, should be dispensed so as to enforce the sense we have of the grace and spirit and truth of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is a means of grace, and a valid external sign and seal of the covenant of salvation in Christ Jesus. It points out and refers to his Blood and Spirit, and the "showers of blessings" that come upon us from Heaven

through the Atonement; and the Spirit of God enforces the duty most explicitly: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—Acts 22:16. When water Baptism is dispensed, it ought to be dispensed by sprinkling or pouring, for such is the language appropriate thereunto, found in the word of God; and regenerate persons or believers and their children ought to be baptized, and thereby duly admitted into the Church of God on earth as gracious subjects, preparatory to their admittance into the Church or Kingdom of God in heavenly glory. The cardinal doctrine is contained in Peter's salutation: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, into obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."—1 Pet. 1:2. But washing with water, applied in any way, may, in charity, be barely tolerated as Christian Baptism, when administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

2d. He shows how the flesh or the unsanctified nature of man administers delusions on this subject, and this of its natural motions. Truly, "Man walketh in a vain show." "He calleth evil good, and good evil." Hence God's complaint of Israel: "This people do err in their hearts, and they have, not known my laws;" "unto whom I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest." The fleshly and carnal mind raises expectations of salvation by securing an outward attach-

ment to a Christian church; by outward reformation; by emulating the praise of our fellow-beings; by self-created and cherished feelings, and by the outward ordinance of either circumcision or baptism — which last species of deception is very common — and Baptism, one of the Holy Ordinances instituted by Christ in his Church for the edification and comfort of his Church to the end of the world, is perverted by the vanity of men's minds into an operation upon the heart, as it is the case in the Church of Rome.

3d. He shows how reasonable this doctrine of Regeneration by the Spirit is, and that it consists with second judgment. Also, that its demands upon our faith are adequate or equal in importance to those on our unquestionable faith or belief in natural facts which still we cannot explain. It accords with our experience of the very great and unquestionable, but unaccountable, changes that we see produced in the character and conduct of our fellow-men. It has the testimony of the wisest and the holiest. God's Son has published it; the Spirit has spoken it by the Prophets and Apostles. It has the double testimony of His Father and Himself. Who, therefore, can doubt it on any reasonable plea? So we should, at any rate, believe it, as we believe many other unquestionable doctrines of truths in nature which transcend our knowledge. No wonder, although the Saviour charged Nicodemus with unbelief. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" We are forced to believe in the force of the winds by

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the effects produced; also in difference in climates; in the weather, in the heavenly meteors, in the many, nay, even unaccountable, wonders of nature; in our own creation, birth and existence, and in the existence of the world external to us. We believe in them, though we do not understand or perceive the latent and occult processes concerned in them, but merely the effects, or those chiefly. Why not, then, believe in the operation and acts of the Spirit of God? If we believe other things without a full and complete comprehension and understanding of them, why not this? The same word that is used for wind and spirit is also used for the Spirit of God. It means the gentle wind—silent and mysterious. The Spirit that created man at first must recreate him. The Spirit that moves the winds to refresh and regale nature can alone revive the soul. Hence the language of the inspired sweet Psalmist of Israel:—

Thy quickening Spirit thou sendest forth,
And they created be;
And then the earth's decayed face,
Renewed is by thee.

The glory of the mighty Lord
Continue shall forever;
The Lord Jehovah shall rejoice
In all his works together.—Ps. 104 : 30, 31.

Dr. Brown, of Haddington, understands the term throughout this chapter to mean Spirit, or Holy Spirit, and not wind at all, and he renders it: "The Spirit breathes where He will in inspiration, and you know not the reason or manner of His beginning or closing the work, but you observe its effects."

You know His voice, the Revelation, as in the Bible given us. So in the work of Regeneration. He gives no account, but by the effects." It may, however, be proper first, to take the words in their natural sense; then in a spiritual sense; and the latter sense is the appropriate use of them here, inasmuch as that was the connection in which they were employed, as Dr. Brown understands them.

Wind, in common speech, means the air in motion, and, as such, lifting up the chariot of God, and winging swiftly its way with the Divine message—it subserves very important ends—the material universe of God. David says in the Holy Ghost:—

Bless, O my soul, Jehovah!
 Jehovah, my God, Thou hast been very great;
 Honor and majesty Thou hast put on.
 Covering Himself with light as a garment;
 Stretching out the heavens as a curtain;
 Who is laying the beam of His upper chambers in the waters;
 Who is making thick clouds His chariot;
 Who is walking on wings of wind;
 Making His messengers—the winds;
 His ministers—the flaming fire.—Ps. 104: 1-4.

—Young's Trans.

Guileless existent nature is a patient, eloquent witnesser to the Divine Existence, and His Omniscience. Every impression and outline of existent being points this way. Modern Science—especially that of Electricity, in its various branches—has of late made wonderful discoveries, glorifying the perfections of the great Divine Artificer over, and superlatively above, our contemplations of His exquisite and wonderful works, and with their exactness recording His omniscience

And long, long ago, has the Bible announced:
 "The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam
 out of the timber shall answer it."

Possibly a single vibration in the air never ceases; and a theory has been elaborately enunciated to the effect, that, similar to the vibrations in the air, or the waves and counter-waves produced and reproduced on the smooth surface of water, there are likewise produced impressions on an imperceptible fluid or ether filling all created space, which communicates indelibly through the different portions of the wide universe the spectacle, as it may be, of the bleeding slave, or the blazing pile of the martyr, or any other fact or deed committed; so that the intelligent universe forever may, for aught we know, become the witnesses of the misdeeds or good deeds of men, or of the incomparable suffering of the Saviour suspended upon the ignominious and cruel Cross of Calvary; that even the very impressions of the soul, inscribed upon matter through that fine organism, the feeling heart, may tell their tale of weal or woe forever. This may or may not be so. It may be a relief to the fancy to give it some study. We infer one thing, that, as "the most sure word of testimony," viz, the Holy Scriptures assures us "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."—Ecc. 12: 14.

The great volume of God's works would never bring us to God; but the volume of his word will by the blessing of the Spirit. God in Christ is Life, and Light, and Love, Mercy and Truth,

Righteousness and Peace, in glorious harmony and amity. Jesus washed his disciples' feet, and thereby signified expressly how a participating and appropriating faith discriminates, but yet disregards the form or quantity of the earthly element of water used in washing or Baptism. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all." Peace, then! Forbearance! Unity! "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—Eph. 4: 2-6.

I will now close the discussion of this important subject by drawing a few inferences clearly contained therein, and profitable for personal and individual application.

I. We must be united to Christ, and clothed in his righteousness, so as to enjoy fellowship with God and his people; and so to enter into the enjoyment, as subjects, of any gracious experience of the favor of God, there must first be a radical change effected upon us. God loved his own with an everlasting love; yes, but they must enter into that love through the door of Regeneration. This applies to every one. "We are all by nature the children of wrath, even as others." "I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."

II. Think of the foolishness of those who are contented to remain in their present unregenerat

state. "God is angry with the wicked every day." And yet they sport and please themselves amid the pleasures and delights of this world, as if there were no demands of conscience and God, and the world to come, to satisfy. Alas! "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "Didst thou ever see a happier man than I?" asked Cræsus, in the midst of his treasures. Solon replied: "No person ought to be called happy before his death." The ancient Egyptians embalmed in the hope of a speedy resurrection; but a competent number of judges (40 in all) decided whether the departed was deemed worthy of honorable burial or not, according as his soul had passed into happiness and glory, or into misery, from the nature of his life and actions. "O, sleeper! arise, and call upon thy God."

III. The evidence which Regeneration will furnish to the Regenerate. "After I was healed I repented in dust and ashes." "Whereas I was blind, now I see." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God—that is, sin habitually, and with his whole heart."

IV. The great cause of rejoicing the regenerate have. They are the children of God by spiritual birth. They are "partakers of the Divine nature." They are beloved. By faith they are the sons of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in them, and intercedes for them. They can call God their Father, and Heaven their home.

V. Consider our need of the Spirit of God. Regeneration is his effectual work, and saving faith is our first gracious act, by which the salvation of God becomes ours. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Pray for the Spirit. Supplicate the Spirit. Grieve not the Spirit. Cherish the Spirit's pleadings and teachings. Honor the Holy Spirit, and He will honor you. AMEN.

HEAVEN.

BY REV. WILLIAM COSS, KIRKILL, ONTARIO.

Oh, for the bright celestial land,
Where perfect saints in glory stand—
In adoration most profound,
Behold the Lamb, with honors crowned.
Lord, speed me to that happy land,
And grant that soon I there may stand
To spend eternity in praise
Of Thee who art my length of days.

A land of days without a night,
A land of love and pure delight,
A land of uprightness indeed,
Where grows of sin no noxious weed.
O speed me to that happy land—
To join the happy band—
Who worship Thee both day and night,
And sing Thy praise with heart and might.

Immanuel's own peaceful land—
The workmanship of His own hand—
No strife of tongue, no battle's roar,
Is heard upon its radiant shore.
O speed me to that happy land
A speedy passage, Lord, command;
I long to be away with Thee,
I long Thy glory, Lord, to see.

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