

probably be entertained by those whom he endeavored to instruct. He knew that the works of man were that upon which the natural man was naturally inclined to practice to the salvation of the soul. He knew then, to preach the doctrine of salvation by grace, was to preach that which they were disinclined to believe, because it was the opposition. Nor did any man receive this important truth, except this strong ground of prejudice was broken up by the power of God, because it takes the reception of spiritual life, which none but God has to bestow.

The carnal mind has ever been ingenious in the effort to explain away this truth, proposing a compromise by placing such a construction of these opposite views as would merge them into one and the same. But this, as the apostle knew, was the great channel through which Satan operates, to steal away the foundation of the glorious truth upon which the Holy Temple of the Lord did stand, making the carnal mind the vehicle through which to send the damning error. The apostle knew too, that Satan preached this to all men, as he was permitted—both saint and sinner. Then, it was well to disengage the mind of any who might be entangled with it, to any extent, as well as to tell them what the truth was. So, after telling them that salvation was by grace, he told them it was not of works—and continuing with increased ardor, he said: "For we are his workmanship." The whole thing is of God. Our existence is from his almighty hand, and he only has the power of creating either soul, body or spirit. What mind, what faith, what knowledge possessed, whether of ourselves or of God, whether naturally or spiritually, is of him. He made us what we are by grace, by his own power, according to his own pleasure and for his own pleasure, for his own purpose. Here he refers no doubt to their spiritual life. For he speaks of their being created in Christ Jesus. The apostle does not mean that Christ Jesus was created, that himself and those whom he addressed were then and there created in him, as part of, nor partners with Jesus, nor anything of the kind; but created in the new life—having now such a mind as to believe in him, and such heart as to love him as their Redeemer. The doctrine which he was preaching to the Ephesians, and which they believed was that Christ was the way and only way of salvation. That man was naturally prone to sin, &c. They knew they once did not believe this doctrine themselves, and he tells them that this was the work of God, that they did now believe it, coupling in himself with them. For now their minds and hearts were changed altogether, so that they loved the things they once hated and hated this doctrine which they once believed.—He speaks of it as a creation, because it was that. He speaks of their being created in Christ Jesus, because

they were engrafted in him as branches into the true vine, were in him by faith as members of the body of which he was the head, having been actually made the recipients of his life and become joint heirs with him. He tells them furthermore, that they were created in Christ Jesus into good works which God had before ordained that they should walk in them. The advent of Christ Jesus was not of revenge, but one of redemption to his enemies. This, and the glory of the Father, was the glorious promise of his earthly career, as man. The ordination of the church of Christ Jesus was of course as ancient as the covenant of redemption. But the time for the setting up of the same on earth, was not come till now. But having now come, he set it up and gave it its laws and offices according to his own mind, and, if after his own mind, of course, also agreeable to that of his people. For by him their mind was created in conformity with his own. These he directed them to observe, first teaching by the power of example and then directing them to the scriptures, as his will and testament which was written for their reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that they might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. In this it is found that there are gifts differing one from another, to suit the different offices of his house—his kingdom. But that notwithstanding this variety they were of the same spirit, as the eye, the ear and the arm are members of the same body. But all were commanded to observe all things whatsoever were commanded them in this book. So, in doing these, they would do the good works which were before ordained that they should walk in them. To numerate and treat upon them now, would be to make this article too long. So, for the present, I close to resume my pen, as did I this evening when I felt to write.

SAMUEL C. DENTON.

LONG BOTTOM, TEXAS,
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Editorial.

JONAH 3: 9, 10.

"Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?"

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Brother Phippen requests my views on this passage. Does not this scripture teach that God is changeable as a man, that he repents as a man? &c.

The declaration is positive as delivered by Jonah; "yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The opinion of Jonah was that God was gracious and merciful and slow to anger, of great kindness, repenting of evil, and Jonah seemed to think the city would not be destroyed, and he tarried to see the end, and was displeased.

The people of Nineveh believed Jonah and repented and besought the Lord for mercy, and the Lord did not destroy the city. Now from this example and others similar in the Bible it is inferred that the Lord changes as man does.

It is a gracious and precious revelation which the Lord makes of himself that he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and that he turns away from his fierce anger when a sinner repents; and that he is grieved at heart that he made man determined to destroy, and that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner. Such exhibitions of the divine character do endear the penitent and needy sinner to the Lord, and are an incentive to him to pray to the Lord as the words of this text prove. While the Lord is independent of man and infinite in his own fulness of perfection, yet that he is not far from each of us and in mercy regards the entreaties of the humble, and forgives the repenting, is full of encouragement to the sinner who repents. Does the Lord change to reveal this grace and mercy? No, it has always been his character. From the beginning that is revealed as a part of his unchangeable character. When did a sinner who truly repented ever perish? In all instances in the Bible where punishment is threatened when the sinner truly repented was he not forgiven?

The wrath of God is now revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, &c., yet what one that truly repents ever perishes, and while the gospel is preached to every sinner yet what one escapes perdition who does not repent? It is then the established character of God to pardon the repenting. There is no exception to this cause. It is the way of God to do so, and if we could find where God had done otherwise then might we agree that he is changeable.

It might be argued that where a threatening message is sent to man

it is accompanied with the understanding that if he does not repent, then such and such a punishment shall befall him. Whenever the Lord denies himself and does not act according to his character then may it be said that he changes. Who did change in the case of the Ninevites? Did not they change? Did not they repent in dust and ashes, and was not idolatry overthrown? In that sense Nineveh was overthrown. But instead of the change being in the Lord it was found that the Ninevites had changed their conduct, for they believed God and repented at the preaching of Jonah. Then they were the ones that changed and not the Lord, and God, as Jonah expected, exhibits his true gracious unchangeable character in forgiving them. God is not capricious and influenced by the vile agencies that affect men, but acts always according to the holy principles of his nature. So that uniformly when a sinner truly repents and calls on the name of the Lord he finds mercy.

The Lord God reveals himself as unchangeable and says that, because he is God and changes not, the sons of Jacob are not consumed. Men do wrong and repent, or, abhor their wicked course. The Lord proclaims that he will punish offenders which is a holy action, but they repent and God in equal holiness repents, that is he changes his administration, but it is the same Lord, and forgives the offenders who obtain mercy. When the Lord repents he does not condemn his past conduct for he cannot do wrongs, he merely changes his administration. Did he not know before-hand that the Ninevites would repent? Surely he did. Who could truly worship God unless he believed that all things are foreknown unto him? The Lord sees the end from the beginning, declaring those things which be not, and nothing, no conduct of man, disappoints or frustrates him, and requires him to do that which he beforehand did not know he would do. He is never taken by surprise, nor, taken advantage of, but acts always according to the principles of his own holy character. It is man that changes—repents, is sorry of his wicked conduct, and turns away from it while God cannot do any thing contrary to his holy nature, and cannot deny himself, or condemn his own course.

It is a source of the greatest hope in God and an incentive to seek him because he is gracious, and turns from his fierce anger, and has mercy on a repenting sinner. Here is a great encouragement to repentance. It is the goodness of God that leads to this repentance, and whenever this divine goodness leads a sinner to repentance the fierce anger of the Lord is turned away, and he extends mercy; while it is equally true that unless we repent we shall all perish. God cannot deny himself in the sense that he will save any that do not repent of their wickedness, faithful and