

mitant of genuine repentance, results not from any power of man, abstracted from the supernatural agency promised in the Bible. That agency will not be irresistibly exerted beyond a certain point. At that precise point the responsibility of man commences. Reproof and conviction find their way to the mind and conscience of every rational individual; other results depend upon the submission and obedience of the individual himself. The Almighty does for his sinful creatures only those things which they cannot do for themselves. Unassisted by the aids of the divine Spirit, in conjunction with the holy and righteous law, none could ever have come to such a repentance as the gospel requires.

None ever yet repented until they were first brought to see and to feel themselves guilty before God. This sensation is the result of conviction wrought in the mind by the Holy Spirit powerfully applying the violated law to the sinful and corrupt heart. In his epistle to the Romans, (chap. vii. 7.) the Apostle has assured us that he would not have known sin but by the law; from which it is clear, that in order to repentance there must be a knowledge of the law, and an application of it to the conscience. For the purpose of awakening and exciting the guilty fears of transgressors, the law must become quick and powerful, through the Holy Ghost. For, says Paul, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Before his conviction, the Apostle tells us that he had lived in all good conscience before God. He had been intimately acquainted with the divine law from his infancy, but had entirely misapprehended its real nature and import. He had viewed it only as inculcating a course of external morality, while its application to the heart and conscience was entirely misunderstood and overlooked. He rested wholly in the let-

ter, not thinking of any other application which it could have, and was consequently attentive only to those external acts and performances which he afterwards denominated the works of the law. But after the overwhelming display which was vouchsafed to him in a heavenly vision, a flood of light was poured upon his soul, his fears were aroused, his conscience enlightened, and his whole soul was wakened up to a lively and vigorous sensibility. From that period the Apostle's conviction and repentance may be dated.

He immediately abandoned his former system of theology, and espoused that identical cause which he had so much despised, and which he had so ardently labored to exterminate. In his case we see repentance most clearly evinced. He ceases his opposition, because he is convinced that in opposing the religion of Jesus, he found himself fighting against God. He is no longer the ill-natured opposer and deadly persecutor of the saints, but he arranges himself among them, and identifies himself with that religion which had brought so much power and consolation to his soul. Now, being more correctly taught, he was properly prepared to take a correct survey of the divine administration, and to pronounce the law spiritual, and himself carnal, sold under sin.

I am fully convinced, that notwithstanding the commonness of this doctrine, there are many who do not entertain just and correct notions relative to the subject of repentance, who suppose that in order to its genuineness, the soul must be filled with dismal horror and frightful consternation. Mental agony enters not as a component part of true repentance. It is always an accompaniment of the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. Even in repentance there is a joy which the penitent would not exchange for all the pleasures of sin. All that is implied in repentance, is the operation of that cause which