

BORN THRICE.

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God's people are born three times, once into this world, once into a state of grace, and once into glory. They and sinners have the first birth in common. It being the same to all. "That, which is born of the flesh, is flesh." This is a great wonder. Devout men have always ascribed their birth to God, and said with David: "Thou art he, that took me out of my mother's bowels, my praise shall be continually of thee." Warm should be the heart and loud should be the song of her, who is made the joyful mother of a living child.—To how many is birth at the cost of a mother's life. But the pious regard them as matter of wonder and love. Every good man says: "I bless God that ever I was born."

Our second birth brings us into a state of grace. It is one of the richest mercies of the covenant. When it occurs, Satan's kingdom falls like lightning. "That, which is born of the spirit is spirit." It is a work of amazing power. Paul has used all the strong words of the Greek language to teach us that we are renewed by power. He speaks of "the exceeding greatness of his power" and "the working of his mighty power." "The power of God in regeneration is represented as among the greatest displays of his omnipotence ever made, or to be made in the history of the universe. When this fair creation rose fresh in beauty from the hand of God, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; but sweeter songs will celebrate, and louder shouts attend the consummation of redemption by the power of God's Spirit; and brighter glories of God, and illustrations of his power will be manifested to principalities and powers by the church, as will cause the light of his glory in physical creation to go out and be forgotten, as the stars fade and are lost amid the splendors of the sun." Some think it easy to save a soul, to bend a will, to change a heart. But it is God's greatest work. Creation is not so hard. It is the most wonderful species of resurrection. With men it is impossible; with God it is possible. God in saving a soul puts forth a mightier energy than in making many worlds." Upheld in being by God's power and left to the freedom of his own will, man easily destroyed himself; but omnipotence alone can save him. In physics as in morals, destruction is comparatively easy; but restoration is hard. A child may, in an hour, burn down an edifice, which a hundred men cannot build in a year. One stroke of a sword may sunder from the body a limb, which all the surgeons on earth cannot restore to its place and to its functions. One may easily take the life, but fifty millions cannot restore it. The second birth is the work of a mighty power.

It is no less the fruit of matchless kindness. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." This is the way the Bible speaks.—It never speaks any other way. The new birth is the fruit of infinite love.

That love too is exercised in a sovereign way. "Of his own will begat he us." They who are born again, are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Sometimes this birth is called a translation. As Enoch and Elijah were taken out of this world and borne to heaven, so is the soul in its renewal "translated out of darkness" (no darkness is so gross except that "outer darkness") "into the kingdom of God's dear Son." "And what is that kingdom but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?" Then sinful nature is slain, and grace sits upon the throne of the heart, swaying her peaceful but powerful sceptre over the will and affections. This new birth we must all have or perish.—Better to have been born a heathen, a monster, or a beast, yea better never to have been born at all, than not to be born again. The day of one's birth is kept by many, but the day of one's new birth is far more worthy of celebration.

God's people are in due time born into glory. Glory is the end of the Christian race. It is the gracious reward of the believer's toils. It is grace completed, crowned. The words spoken in glory are not like any dialect on earth. The sights seen there it would not be lawful to tell men. The soul is there married to the lamb. There sorrows cease, sickness in her haggard form stalks not forth, sadness and sighing flee away, tears no longer flow, and sin has no dominion. "There is no

darkness there; for the Lord God giveth them light, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The society is pure, peaceful and holy. The employments never produce fatigue. The enjoyments never bring satisfy.

"The better land,
Eye hath not seen it my gentle boy,
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair;
Sorrow and death may not enter there:
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom
For beyond the cloud and beyond the tomb,
It is there."

An ancient artist, being requested to paint Helen, drew a female form with a thick veil where the face should be, thus confessing that he could not paint her beauty. Neither can I paint glory.

REMARKS.

1. The first of these births is natural; the second and third are supernatural.
2. The first is carnal; the others are spiritual.
3. The first inclines to sin. "They go astray so soon as they be born." The others incline to holiness. "He, that is born of God, sinneth not." At their last birth, believers are "presented without spot or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing."
4. They all prove that God is almighty.
5. They all prove that God is love.
6. Their manner of occurrence is not very clear to us. The transition from nothing to something, from death to life, from earth to heaven will perhaps ever be somewhat obscure. "Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child." "Whence came I? memory cannot say." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." "Now we see through a glass darkly."
7. Each of these births has its sorrows.—We come into the world with a cry. We forsake sin and turn to God with great sorrow, weeping as for a first born, or as the people wept at Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, when good King Josiah was slain. We also leave the world with a groan. And yet of the righteous it is always true, "that the day of death is better than the day of one's birth."
8. We cannot be born again without being born; nor can we be born into glory without being born into a state of grace. Yet our second birth is greater than the first, and the third is greater than the second. This shows that although one must precede the other, yet it is not the cause of the other, for the cause must be as great as the effect.
9. The best part of every christian's existence is yet to come. Nature is inferior to grace, and nature and grace are both inferior to glory. Why then do even the pious start at death? "It is strange that a subject of grace should be so reluctant to become the subject of glory." God can and will cure this shrinking, and then we shall

"Burst from the thralldom of encumbering clay,
And spring to liberty, and light, and life."

[New York Observer.]

Civilization versus Romanism.

For many centuries, Romanism has sustained a broad and effectual resistance to civilization. But now its ancient enemy has become too strong for it. And that civilization which has received its quickening from vital Christianity, seems now in a way to become of itself an agent of unlimited power in overturning the strongholds of Romanism. This may in both parts be illustrated in the history and present position of the Spanish race, to say nothing of countless other sources of illustration.

Three hundred years ago, the Spanish race was behind none of its cotemporary nations, in civilization and political advantages. Spain was the seat of the Emperor of Germany.—And it was in a course of expansion by colonies, and of absorption of the wealth of the mines of South America. It was thus endowed with rare advantages, for assuming and holding the head of the civilization of the world. But Romanism, the great enemy to all improvements of humanity, lay as a nightmare upon its civilization. Other nations that felt the impulse of the Reformation, from that time, entered upon a career of advancement in all the arts of life, a career which has brought them to their present position. And Spain is where she is, (under the contempt of the civilized world) for no cause so much, as that she has been the slave of Popery—committing to the flames of the Inquisition every germ of

improvement. The North American Colonies, the offspring of the reformation, commenced more than a century later than the South American; and now these colonies have grown to a nation, which exerts more influence in the world, than all the nations and colonies of Spanish blood. And the main cause of the difference is, that the Gospel exerted a controlling influence over the one, and Popery over the other.

But now the time is coming for civilization to avenge itself on popery, for all the checks which it has put upon it. The nations that have so long "wandered after the beast," and bowed submissively to the cause of their own degradation, are beginning to see at once the difference and its cause. The higher prosperity of those nations that have encouraged liberty of conscience, and welcomed the Gospel, is a fact, which is now entering with great power into the thoughts of men under the dark dominion of anti-christ. And where religious motives cannot come to bear, this view of the secular advantages of religious freedom is exerting great influence. Even Spain is at last getting the idea, that there is a national advantage to be derived from allowing men liberty to think. And the conductors of public Journals there are pleading for such liberty, on the ground that foreigners will not come into Spain and build railroads and make other improvements, unless they can have liberty to bring their own religion with them.

This is but one out of many ways, in which the civilization generated by the Reformation is coming back on Popery with a crushing power, and in which it is destined to avenge itself for all the violence inflicted for three centuries. It was Popery itself that made the issue—that one or the other must be exterminated. And now Civilization has joined the issue; and following the track of vital Christianity, and identified with its destinies, it is going forth in its power to the sure result.—Against the civilization of the nineteenth century, Romanism cannot stand.—*Puritan.*

Providential Showers.

A young lady, the daughter of a tradesman in the city, (London,) fell into ill-health, and in consequence of this, a lodging was taken for her in Wells street, Hackney. Her parents were very much adverse to Methodists and Dissenters; and finding that the people with whom she lodged were Dissenters, cautioned her against their sentiments, fearing that in the weak state of her health, they would render her gloomy. The good people invited her to their family worship, but she steadily refused, saying she belonged to the Church of England. She occasionally, however, overheard the good man in prayer through the wainscot, and could not help thinking he was a good man, though mistaken in forming such precise notions as she conceived him to entertain.

One evening when taking her walk, a shower suddenly came on for which she was not prepared, and she ran for shelter to the porch of the chapel of which the late excellent Mr. Collison was the minister; but like the gentleman referred to last month, she determined not to go beyond it. In hastening, however, to the porch, she became exhausted in consequence of her weakness, and would have sunk, had not the pew-opener who was sitting near the door, caught hold of her, and placed her on a seat which was within the chapel. She felt unwilling to remain when the shower should have ceased, but after the kindness of the pew-opener she did not like to rise in the face of the congregation, and leave the place; and by the time the shower had well ended, she began to feel interested in the sermon, which appeared, so far as she could judge, to have just commenced when she entered. She returned to her lodging with her mind deeply affected. The result, under the divine blessing, was her conversion. Her parents, who were at first greatly distressed at what had occurred, finding that her new religion, instead of rendering her gloomy, promoted her cheerfulness, were induced to accompany her to the place where she had received this spiritual good, and they also became decidedly pious. She very soon became active in the school for Jewish females, supported by the London Missionary Society, afterwards married Mr. Elliot, a Missionary to the East, where she became a widow, and after her return became an inmate in the Retreat for Minister's Widows, at Hackney, where she died about seven years ago.

It is often regretted when a shower comes on just before the commencement of public worship; but even this may subserve the mer-

ciful purposes of Him whose wisdom is inscrutable, by occasioning the attendance of some if it impede the attendance of others.—*London Baptist Magazine.*

Making Secret Prayer Pleasant.

1. Be regular in the observance of it. Arrange your affairs with reference to your daily seasons of retirement; and do it with just as much purpose as with reference to your ordinary meals; and if you are very irregular in the latter, with more.

2. Watch over your life and conversation. If you suffer yourself to be betrayed into any irregularity of conduct, or frivolity of conversation, it will press like lead upon your spirits as you enter your closet. There is meaning in the words of the apostle, "Watching thereunto, with much perseverance."

3. Prepare for it by meditation. The mind which has been engrossed by secular business, needs time to recall itself, that it may gain a proper attitude to commence with Jehovah. You must labour to secure the conception of a present God. You are alone with a grieved, offended, yet compassionate friend. That friend is He before whom the angels veil their faces. There must be a preparation in order to enter suitably into communion with Him.

4. Read, in connection with your devotions, a few pages in such works as Baxter's Saint's Rest, Kempis' Imitation of Christ, and above all, devotional portions of the Bible.

5. Let your heart dictate every word you utter in the form of prayer. In other words, do not go to the closet merely to discharge your conscience in relation to the duty; but go there to unburden your soul of its emotions; and while there do not utter words significant of desires you do not feel. If you have not the emotion which you ought to have, do not mock God by expressions which signify its possession, but meditate and pray for it till it is awakened; and when it comes, utter it.

6. Pray much to Christ. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was tempted—tried—in all points as we are, and presents himself before us in a form to meet our sympathies and invite our most confiding approaches. Why did Stephen, in the hour of his trial, pray, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit?" There is a volume of instruction in that prayer. It points us to One who, having trod the path of temptation, suffering, death, bears towards us the heart of a brother—that can be touched—combined with omnipotence to save.—*Christian Alliance.*

Jews in Europe.

The ways of Providence are to be observed in the influence which the Jews are now exerting in Europe. For a long time they have exerted vast influence on European commerce, and Jews have been the bankers of kings; and now they have become as potent in politics and revolutions. Of the radical republicans that are hatching revolutions in every kingdom, a large portion are Jews; and out of the mouth of a Jew came the word which set Europe in a blaze. As is well known, Cremieux (a Jew) was the means of preventing the proclamation of the young Duke of Orleans in the streets of Paris, immediately on the abdication of his grandfather. He counselled, that this should take place with the consent and through the medium of the Chambers. He then hurried off through byways, and communicated the intelligence that the throne was empty before the Duchess and her son appeared. The impression which, in all probability, would have been produced on the deputies by their sudden appearance among them to receive their allegiance, was destroyed. And when they did arrive, it was the same Jew who pronounced the fatal words—"Too late"—which decided the cause of monarchy in France, and perhaps on the whole continent of Europe. Perhaps it is the design of Providence, to use the Jews as the instruments of retribution on despotic governments, for what Jews have suffered from them.

The Grandeur of Man.

"The birth of an infant," it has been truthfully said, "is a greater event than the production of the sun. The sun is only a lump of senseless matter; it sees not its own light; it feels not its own heat; and with all its grandeur, it will cease to be; but that infant, beginning only to breathe yesterday, is possessed of reason, claims a principle infinitely superior to all matter, and will live through the ages of eternity." Let the immortal mind shed its lustre upon the world.