

## 181. Regeneration and Conversion Is in No Wise Our Own Merit.

**Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. 2 Cor. 3, 5.**

Regeneration is the implanting of a new, spiritual life in man. Conversion is the turning of the sinner away from sin and to God. This renewing of man in regeneration and conversion is wholly and solely God's work. As little as a tree can graft itself, even so little, yea, and much less, can man regenerate himself. Beginning, middle, and end is all God's operation. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

While both the Word of God and our Confessions clearly teach that man may *resist* the power of God in the work of regeneration and conversion, they nowhere say that he can *assist* God in this work, not even in the least degree; and they plainly declare that to ascribe this work to man in any part or degree is to ascribe to man that which does not belong to him. Nothing less than creative power can make man a new creature. "Us, who were dead in sins, God hath quickened." Who but He can bring life out of death? The Spirit is Life. He is the almighty God. As, together with the Father and the Son, He at the beginning called the world out of nothing and imbued it with *physical* life, so He created *spiritual* life in our dead hearts and caused us to believe in Christ and His salvation.

It is solely and wholly the gracious working of the Holy Ghost that brings man from unbelief to faith. It is the Holy Ghost who by the power of the Gospel begins and completes conversion. Man can do nothing toward changing his evil will; God must effect this change. Man can do nothing toward enlightening his corrupt understanding; God must do that. Man cannot create anything; but God says: "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." Where, then, is our own merit?

### Prayer.

O God the Holy Ghost, I am not able of myself to bring about my conversion. No more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots, can I of my own natural power abstain from sin and turn to good deeds, inasmuch as the imagination of my heart is evil continually from my youth. Even when by grace I resolve to offer the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart, Satan endeavors to prevent me from doing the good that I would. For this reason I bow my knees to Thee, praying for the sake of Thy mercy: Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned. Grant me Thy grace, and I shall be saved. Amen.

By grace I'm saved; grace free and boundless!  
My heart, believ'st thou this or not?  
Why tremblest thou with terror groundless?  
Has Scripture e'er a falsehood taught?  
Then this word also true must be:  
By grace there is a crown for thee.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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