

A man may possess an intellectual knowledge of the Christian faith without actually possessing the gift of faith which is bestowed by the SPIRIT of GOD in a supernatural manner. Wherever you find this supernatural gift of faith it will be preceded by repentance from the same SOURCE. There can be no true faith where there is no true repentance because it pleases GOD to bestow the gift of repentance upon men to prepare their heart to believe in the imputed righteousness of CHRIST as their only hope of eternal salvation.

Man is a self reliant creature by nature. Adam disobeyed the plain commandment of GOD because he thought his way was superior to that of HIS CREATOR. All of his posterity still entertains the same notion. This self reliance must be completely destroyed in order that a man might clearly see that in his flesh dwells no good thing.

Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph, Manasseh being the oldest. When Jacob was upon his death bed he blessed the younger son rather than the eldest as was the normal custom. Joseph thought this was a mistake but Jacob knew that the LORD had set a special blessing upon Ephraim (even though he was not the first-born) and not Manasseh. In this we see a picture of the sovereign purpose of GOD in the election of HIS sons to inherit the blessings HE has intended for them. They were chosen unconditionally, without regard to their relative merit or worth nor anything foreseen in them. HE loved them because HE loved them and has ordained that they should be brought into the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings in JESUS CHRIST.

Though some of the human race have indeed been appointed unto wrath, the elect never have been. They have been ordained unto eternal life and are by the grace of GOD made the heirs of salvation. There is a work of redemption which has been wrought for them by the LORD JESUS CHRIST wherein HE has purchased for them all things pertaining to their eternal salvation. It has pleased HIM to bring them by a way that they knew not and to give them the Kingdom; not only in the ages to come, but in the present time as HE works in them by HIS SPIRIT a work which is fitting to those who are called the sons of GOD.

Thus we see "*Ephraim bemoaning himself*" (i.e.; lamenting his sinful condition) which is an illustration of the work of repentance which is accomplished in those who are the heirs of salvation. There is a "sorrow for sin" which is sometimes prompted by fear of punishment in the natural men of the world. They sometimes are sad for the heartache their sin has caused themselves and those around them. They may even be moved to reform their lives in a moral way to some extent because of this. Yet this "bemoaning" in which Ephraim is involved is not concerned with moral reform or the heartache of others but is centered in a complete awareness of their total unfitness to stand in the presence of GOD. No amount of encouragement by well meaning "helpers" can cause this to subside nor is this a temporary condition which comes and goes. The work of repentance in the sons of GOD is a condition of the quickened mind and heart and is in no way the product of human power but is an abiding work of the SPIRIT in them. The culmination and fruit of this work is that the sons of GOD are brought by it to a place of complete reliance on the imputed righteousness of CHRIST. They can have no confidence in the flesh, even confessing that the only way that they can even now turn to HIM is because HE has turned them.

On mount Sinai, the LORD hid Moses in a cleft of the rock and only allowed him to see HIS back parts as HE went by for no man could look on HIM and live. Even now no man can advance into HIS presence, WHO dwells in an inapproachable light. But it has pleased HIM to reveal HIMSELF unto those whose sins HE has taken away as far as the east is from the west. As Paul has said, "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*" We have nothing whereof to boast except the cross of our LORD. In what do you boast?