

work, so far as understanding is necessary for this purpose. We have no evidence that the intellectual powers of the regenerate are more vigorous than they were before this change—they only receive a new and better direction. The same observation may be made respecting the faculty of the will. The fall has not rendered men incapable of loving and hating, or of choosing and rejecting. Of course, regeneration does not consist in the creation of a new will, or a faculty by which the subjects of this change are able to choose or reject objects which are presented to them. These faculties are indeed necessary to the performance of good works; but the injury done to them constitutes no part of the deficiency by which men in a natural state, are rendered incapable of bringing forth holy fruits. What then, it may be asked, is created anew in regeneration? The disposition or temper of mind, is that which is affected by this new creation. Mankind in their fallen state possess every thing but the disposition, which is necessary to the performance of good works. They have no heart to keep the commandments of God. This disposition, I am now to show, must be created anew for this purpose.

1. We may consider the view which the scriptures give of human depravity, as affording evidence in favour of this doctrine. The depravity of man is entire—the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. Among all the race descended from our apostate parent, “there is none that doeth good, no not one; there is no fear of God before their eyes.” “In me,” says the apostle Paul, “that is, in my flesh,” or natural state, “dwelleth no good thing.” And again; “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” “The carnal mind,” declares the same apostle, “is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”; and to the Ephesians, “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Such is the view which the scriptures give of the character of unrenewed man. He is destitute of holiness—his whole heart is corrupt; how then can he perform good works? Can he be influenced to this by the force of mere moral suasion—by all the motives of praise or blame, of fear or hope, which may be presented to the mind? As well might we hope to raise a dead man to life through the mere influence of nourishment or medicines. Were there the smallest degree of spiritual life or holy feeling in the soul, it might unquestionably be revived and strengthened by spiritual sustenance. But since there is none,

all means must be ineffectual, until something is formed in the soul, upon which they may operate. Exhortations and warnings may be expected to have effect where there is life. But can it be expected that these means, unaided by the creating word of God, can animate the dead? They may indeed awaken the fears of men, and incite them to a certain course of exertion; but after all, without the aid of the Spirit, the fruit of that exertion will be nothing better than works of the flesh. The most pressing and solemn motives cannot excite emotions which were not latent in the heart, or for which no foundation previously existed. A corrupt tree, in whatever soil it may be planted, will bring forth fruit after its kind. A corrupt fountain will send forth bitter waters; “the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity.” The result is, that before unregenerate men can perform good works, they must be created anew. A holy disposition must be implanted in their hearts. This conclusion might be avoided, if it could be truly urged that the depravity is but partial. Whatever of moral purity were already possessed might be improved; but where there is nothing to improve, a new nature must be first created.

2. This is evident also, from the manner in which the work of regeneration is represented in the scriptures. It is denominated “being born again.” As the first birth gives active life and vigour, so being born again, implies the production of a new life, or such a life as stands opposed to spiritual death. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” This change is also represented as a resurrection from the dead. “But 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.” “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.” Again; it is represented by God’s taking away hearts of stone, and giving hearts of flesh. “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 an heart of flesh.” If there could be any reason to doubt after these representations, whether regeneration supposes a new creation, it may be remarked, that it is expressly so denominated, not only in the text, but in other parts of scripture. The apostle speaks of it as common to all those who have correctly learned Christ, that having put off the old man, they have put on the new man, which he observes “is created in righteousness and