

On the necessity of regeneration, our Lord's words are very plain and emphatic. There is no mistaking their meaning. Over and over again he says, "Ye must be born again." Educated though Nicodemus was, and moral and upright in his life, respected and honoured as a man of position and influence, one of the very best men of his time doubtless, yet he, even he, needed regeneration, before he was fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Born of the flesh, he was flesh, and "flesh and blood," we are assured, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. And born of the flesh man is corrupt. In the nature of things then he must either be born again or remain for ever without the incorruptible kingdom.

The passage also teaches us concerning the NATURE of the new birth. Regeneration is a radical change. It is no mere amendment of the old, it is out and out renewal. New life is produced in the soul. Weak at first, but though weak real; and it grows stronger and stronger with age. Regeneration is an instantaneous change; it occurs at some point or moment of time, but that point or moment may not be known to those who are the subjects of the change.

The agent producing or accomplishing the change is the Spirit of God, and He works when and where and how He will. He is sovereign in His workings. He may work in the heart of an unconscious child, as well as in the heart of an adult. He is not confined to time or place or manner of working. He works mysteriously. He giveth no account of His doings unto any. We cannot understand how the Divine Spirit operates on the human Spirit. And He works silently. No ear can hear His goings and doings, yet He works mightily and effectually.

Nicodemus was utterly ignorant of this doctrine. He knew it not; neither could he understand it when it was announced. He wondered as Christ addressed him, and thought and talked of the natural birth. He was glad to comprehend it and believe it. Still he did receive it and embrace it. He became a follower of Jesus.

The 14th, 15th and 16th verses treat of another subject, equally great and important. They are and have always been regarded as among the richest verses in the Bible. The 16th v. is intended a Bible in itself; it should be committed to memory by every child in the Sabbath school. The reference to the serpent in the wilderness should be turned up. (Numb 21:9). And from the whole passage the Gospel should be affectionately urged on the attention and acceptance of every child.

We learn that in the work of man's salvation, the three persons of the Trinity are engaged. The Father in His love gave His Son, and the Father and the Son send the Spirit. The Father devised the plan of redemption; the Son executes it, and the Holy Spirit applies it.

All the children of Adam's race whether young or old are by nature corrupt, are dead in trespasses and sins, and so all need to be born from above. Are you born again? Are

those under your care? Give attention to this subject, for unless you have an acquaintance with this point, an experimental acquaintance all your teaching is in vain.

There is room in the Church, and need, for all manner of workers. The poorest and least recognised are as much needed as any. Open your watch; your eyes fall on jewels there. But the sparkling jewels cannot say to the modest coil of steel beside them, "We have no need of thee," for that is the mainspring. And the mainspring cannot say to the tiniest cog wheel, "We have no need of thee," for without it the works stand still. It is just so in the Church of Christ. One little worker can mar the whole by failing to fulfil his office. There is a place for each.

SUPREME LOVE.—If this love to God should prevail, there would be—1. No idolatry. 2. No superstition. 3. No profanation. 4. No opposition to truth. 5. No corruption of truth. 6. No perjury. 7. No despising the good. 8. No ingratitude. 9. No pride. 10. No discontent. 11. No suicide. 12. No violent deaths. 13. No duels. 14. No wars. 15. No rivalry. 16. No breach of contracts. 17. No envy. 18. No wrongs. 19. No slander. 20. No intrigues. 21. No deceit. 22. No fraud. 23. No false statements. 24. No oppression. 25. No injury to person, property, or character. 26. No cruelty. 27. No selfishness. 28. No disobedience. 29. No unkindness. 30. No resentments. 31. No haunts of wickedness. 32. No social evils. 33. No complainings in our streets.

Two things characterize every Church that is in the highest condition of spiritual health. The one is that they all worship, the other that they all work. The first appertains more directly to the heart; the second appertains as well to the head, the hands, and the purse. The fullest combination of the two would almost realise the ideal of Church life in its highest form.

WHEN the sun rises there is light. Why I do not know. There might have been light without the sun, and there might have been a sun that gave no light, but God has been pleased to put these two things together—sunrise and light. So, whenever there is prayer there is a blessing. I do not know why. There might have been prayer without a blessing, for there is in the world of wrath; and there might have been a blessing without prayer, for it is often sent to souls who sought it not. But God has been pleased to make this a rule for the government of the moral and spiritual universe, that there shall be prayer first, and then there shall be an answer to prayer.—*Spurgeon.*