

far, of social order, and infinitely more economical than prisons and standing armies. Strange, unaccountably strange, that even Christian rulers and statesmen should have so much overlooked this in their schemes of government! Necessity has driven them to forge chains for the lawless maniac, but enlightened patriotism has not led them to apply the proper remedy for his disease:—though an infallible guide has made the true method of cure known, it is daily overlooked, and out of the national crime grows the national punishment.

REGENERATION, ITS NATURE, AND CAUSE.

The doctrine of spiritual regeneration pervades the whole of scripture, in which its nature is unfolded, its necessity enforced, and the divine agent, by whose independent and almighty power it is achieved, is distinctly recognized and pointed out. Of the manner, however, in which this necessary and spiritual change is accomplished, we are ignorant. It is an operation hid from the scrutiny of every human eye—"the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit." The effects alone of the change are placed before our view, and by them only, are we enabled to judge, of its reality. Of its magnitude however, and extensive influence, we are enabled to form some idea from the peculiar and comprehensive nature of the metaphor, which our Redeemer employs to denote it. He compares it to a new birth, by which we are unquestionably warranted to affirm, that it is a change extending its influence, not merely to the outward conduct of its subject, but to every affection of his heart, and to every faculty of his mind; in short, that it is a change affecting the whole man and making him a new creature, so that "old things pass away" and "all things become new."

If it involved merely a change of the outward conduct, as some are disposed to affirm, it would certainly seem inapt in our Lord, to use a metaphor so strong in its nature, and so universal in its application, to denote a change which is only partial, and which may be, and which often is, accomplished by selfish and wordly motives. We not unfrequently see men, from a change in their cir-

cumstances, abandoning some of the habits of irregularity and vice, not by any means influenced by moral feeling or a regard to the will and authority of God, but simply, because such habits are at variance with their new situation, injurious to their reputation, or uncongenial to the manners of those with whom they now associate. Their years may furnish enough to restrain them from their more youthful vices, or a regard to their health and comfort, may restrict their indulgence in the immoralities of more advanced life within narrower bounds. Such changes, it may readily be admitted, are good in themselves, but they fall far short of that intimated by the words of our Redeemer. It is not a change so partial, neither does it result from principles so futile, and motives so defective. It extends its influence over the whole of the outward conduct of its subjects, and results from principles of a nobler description; from principles implanted by the spirit, and intimately connected with the glory of God, whose, they acknowledge, they are, and whom they feel they are bound to serve.

But it is more than a change of the outward conduct, however extensive and radical that change may seem to be. The men who have undergone the change referred to, are spoken of as being "renewed in the spirit of their mind," as having "put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness," as having "put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created them," and as being, "created in Christ Jesus, unto good works." Those passages of scripture and others which might be adduced obviously involve more than a reformation of conduct. They indubitably extend our views to the moral and intellectual constitution of man, and lead us to conclude that the change to which the word of God attaches so much importance reaches even to it. And hence it is, that we find in the Bible, the promise and the prayer recorded, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you." "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Even while the heart remains insensible to every truly religious feeling, and while spiritual subjects fail permanently to influence it, the outward conduct may be good and exemplary, in the judgment of the world. A man may be regular in his life, and distinguished by much that is decent and praiseworthy, when estimated by the low and variable standard of this world's morality; many of his relative duties may be regularly performed, and his social circle may be adorned with some of the parental virtues; it