

## The Necessity of Regeneration

[I]f we view mankind as they come into the world, we shall then find them *haters of God – enemies to God – estranged from God* – nay, the very heart is enmity itself against all the divine perfections; and we shall find them acting more freely and most voluntarily in these exercises. There is no state or circumstance that they prefer to the present, unless it be one whereby they may dishonor God more, or carry on their war with heaven with a higher hand. They have no relish for divine things, but hate, and choose to remain enemies to, all that is morally good. Now, that this is actually the case with sinners is very evident from the Scriptures. We are told in the chapter of which the text is a part that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit; which teaches us that there is nothing truly spiritual or holy in the first birth, but that this comes by the second, or by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Christ tells the Jews that they hated Him without a cause. And the inspired apostle says that “the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8).

Therefore,

- Seeing this is the state that mankind are in antecedent to the new birth, it is not fit or reasonable that God should bring them into favor with Himself, or be at peace with them, without regeneration. Nay, He cannot, consistent with His perfection, for this would be for Him to connive at wickedness when He tells us that He can by no means clear the guilty.

- To suppose that sinners can see the kingdom of God or be happy in the divine favor without regeneration or the new birth, is a perfect inconsistency, or contrary to the nature of the thing. The very essence of religion consists in love to God, and a man is no further happy in the favor of God than he loves God. Therefore, to say we enjoy happiness in God, and at the same time hate God, is a plain contradiction.
- It is evident from Scripture that those to whom God gives a title to his spiritual kingdom are regenerated or born again, and those that are not, and remain so, shall be miserable. This is not only asserted in the text by the Son of God, who was co-equal, co-eternal, and co-essential with the Father – whose words stand more permanent than the whole fabric of heaven and earth – and who stands at the gate of the universe, and will not alter the things that have gone out of his mouth; I say, it was not only spoken by this glorious being who cannot lie, by his own lips, with a repeated *verily*, but has been confirmed by those whom he inspired, and who, we are assured, had the mind of Christ. St. Paul gives us the character of a good man, or one entitled to the heavenly world: “If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). And they are said to be renewed in the spirit of their mind (Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2). And to be born of God (John 1:13). And they are spoken of as being lovers of God (Prov. 8:17). And those that are not of this character, or that remain enemies to God, He tells us that He will pour out His fury upon them. Hence we read that the wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the

nations that forget God, and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And St. John the Divine, having a view of the glory of the heavenly world, says that "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whosoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). Thus we see the propriety of our Lord's assertion that, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.