



If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed fundamental, they are doubtless these two, -- the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth: The former relating to that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does *in us*, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of *time*, neither of these is before the other: in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also "born of the Spirit;" but in order of *thinking*, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.

First - Why must we be born again? What is the foundation of this doctrine? The foundation of it lies near as deep as the creation of the world; in the scriptural account whereof we read, "And God," the three-one God, "said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him:" (Gen. 1:26, 27) -- Not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality; a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections; -- nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth;" -- but chiefly in his *moral image*; which, according to the Apostle, is "righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24) in this image of God was mankind made. "God is love:" Accordingly, man at his creation was full of love; which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth; so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity; and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot; otherwise God could not have pronounced him, as well as all the other work of his hands, "very good." (Gen. 1:31) This he could not have been, had he not been pure from sin, and filled with righteousness and true holiness. For there is no medium: If we suppose an intelligent creature not to love God, not to be righteous and holy, we necessarily suppose him not to be good at all; much less to be "very good."

Secondly - Although man was made in the image of God, yet he was not made immutable. This would have been inconsistent with the state of trial in which God was pleased to place him. He was therefore created able to stand, and yet liable to fall. And this God himself apprized him of, and gave him a solemn warning against it. Nevertheless, man did not abide in honour: He fell from his high estate. He "ate of the tree whereof the Lord had commanded him, Thou shalt not eat thereof." By this wilful act of disobedience to his Creator, this flat rebellion against his Sovereign, he openly declared that he would no longer have God to rule over him; That he would be governed by his own will, and not the will of Him that created him; and that he would not seek his happiness in God, but in the world, in the works of his hands. Now, God had told him

before, "In the day that thou eatest" of that fruit, "thou shalt surely die." And the word of the Lord cannot be broken. Accordingly, in that day he did die: He died to God, -- the most dreadful of all deaths. He lost the life of God: He was separated from Him, in union with whom his spiritual life consisted. The body dies when it is separated from the soul; the soul, when it is separated from God. But this separation from God, Adam sustained in the day, the hour, he ate of the forbidden fruit. And of this he gave immediate proof; presently showing by his behaviour, that the love of God was extinguished in his soul, which was now "alienated from the life of God." Instead of this, he was now under the power of servile fear, so that he fled from the presence of the Lord. Yea, so little did he retain even of the knowledge of Him who filleth heaven and earth, that he endeavored to "hide himself from the Lord God among the trees of the garden:" (Gen. 3:8) So had he lost both the knowledge and the love of God, without which the image of God could not subsist. Of this, therefore, he was deprived at the same time, and became unholy as well as unhappy. In the room of this, he had sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of the devil; and into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts that perish.

Thirdly - If it be said, "Nay, but that threatening, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' refers to temporal death, and that alone, to the death of the body only;" the answer is plain: To affirm this is flatly and palpably to make God a liar; to aver that the God of truth positively affirmed a thing contrary to truth. For it is evident, Adam did not *die* in this sense, "in the day that he ate thereof." He lived, in the sense opposite to this death, above nine hundred years after. So that this cannot possibly be understood of the death of the body, without impeaching the veracity of God. It must therefore be understood of spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God.

Fourth - And in Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is, that every one descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin; entirely void of the life of God; void of the image of God, of all that righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Instead of this, every man born into the world now bears the image of the devil in pride and self-will; the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This, then, is the foundation of the new birth, -- the entire corruption of our nature. Hence it is, that, being born in sin, we must be "born again." Hence every one that is born of a woman must be born of the Spirit of God.

THIS IS KEY: Because of the **corruption of human nature a new birth was required of** Romans 8:7-8 (Msg) Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. [8] And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

NONE CAN ENTER HEAVEN WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH: John 3:3 John 3:3 (KJV) Jesus answered and said unto Him Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

THE NEW BIRTH IS PRODUCED THROUGH THESE INSTRUMENTS

The word of God: 1 Peter 1:23 (Msg) Your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal sperm; your new birth comes from God's living Word. Just think: a life conceived by God himself!

The resurrection of Christ. 1 Peter 1:3 (Msg) What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for.

The ministry of the gospel: 1 Cor. 4:15 (Msg) There are a lot of people around who can't wait to tell you what you've done wrong, but there aren't many fathers willing to take the time and effort to help you grow up. It was as Jesus helped me proclaim God's Message to you that I became your father.

The will of God: 1 Peter 1:23 (Msg) Your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal sperm; your new birth comes from God's living Word. Just think: a life conceived by God himself!

Through the mercy of God: Titus 3:5 (KJV) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

THE NEW BIRTH IS ESTABLISHED FOR GOD'S GLORY: Isaiah 43:7 (KJV)

Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

THE NEW BIRTH IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS:

- **A new creation.** 2 Cor. 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephes. 2:10
- **Newness of life.** Romans 6:4
- **A spiritual resurrection.** Romans 6:4-6; Ephes. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:12; Col. 3:1
- **A new heart.** Ezekiel 36:26
- **A new spirit.** Ezekiel 11:19; Romans 7:6
- **Putting on the new man.** Ephes. 4:24
- **The inward man.** Romans 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16
- **Circumcision of the heart.** Deut. 10:6; Romans 2:29; Col. 2:11
- **Partaking of the divine nature.** 2 Peter 1:4

THE NEW BIRTH PRODUCES:

- **Likeness to God.** Ephes. 4:24; Col. 3:10
- **Likeness to Christ.** Romans 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2
- **Knowledge of God.** Jeremiah 24:7; Col. 3:10
- **Hatred of sin.** 1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:18
- **Victory over the world.** 1 John 5:4
- **Delight in God's law.** Romans 7:22

THE EVIDENCE OF THE NEWBIRTH IS SEEN THROUGH:

- **Faith in Christ.** 1 John 5:1
- **Righteousness.** 1 John 2:29
- **Brotherly love.** 1 John 4:7

THE NEWBIRTH PRESERVES YOU FROM SATAN:

1 John 5:18 (Msg) We know that none of the God-begotten make a practice of sin—fatal sin. The God-begotten are also the God-protected. The Evil One can't lay a hand on them.