

REGENERATION

(Editorial from The *SECTARIAN*)

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And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28.

The particular point in this testimony that we desire, if the LORD will, to discuss is the Regeneration. In the contests of former years we frequently heard the expression that the sinner was regenerated and born again, and that regeneration, or the term regeneration, was used interchangeably for the spiritual birth, etc. Such notions ignore the fact that if the sinner was regenerated and born again, nothing more is required, he would no longer possess flesh and bones, Luke 24:39; but would become spirit, John 3:6: be clothed with immortality.

The Virginia Corresponding Meeting in 1891, gravely stated that the sinner was quickened into life, then adopted, then born again, and after all this the poor fellow "is groaning waiting to be delivered from his bondage of corruption." We call attention to this in order to illustrate the confusion of thought prevailing upon this important doctrine during these contests. In the first place notice the fact that the division of the Scripture in chapters, verses; and the punctuation were made by the translators; and while we believe that these men, generally speaking, were honest in their intentions, yet we have no evidence that any of them, though professing Christianity, were acquainted with gospel truth, hence mistakes upon these and other important particulars necessarily follow.

In the text under discussion they have placed as follows, "Ye, which have followed me, in the regeneration," This comma (,) is all right as far

as it goes but to our understanding, does not go far enough but should be a period (.) indicating a full stop as we have inserted it at the head of this article; "Ye who have followed me. In the Regeneration when, etc."

The manner in which this phrase is punctuated by the translators somewhat indicates the construction often put upon it, that the Saviour had reference to the disciples following him in the Regeneration, which certainly was not the subject under discussion, nor was it implied in Peter's inquiry or in the Saviour's answer.

Peter evidently at that time knew nothing about the Regeneration, but was concerned more from a natural standpoint about the position the disciples should occupy in the kingdom; they had forsaken all, he said to follow Christ, "what should they have." The Saviour's answer, they which have followed him. This marks the characters described.

Now comes the answer, "In the Regeneration," this had not yet taken place but he tells us that it shall be, "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory;" and then directly answers Peter's inquiry, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This is in direct confirmation of prophetic testimony, "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment," Isaiah 32:1; Christ referring evidently to the gospel dispensation which he had come to establish; the bringing in of "a better hope," Hebrews 7:19; a "lively hope," through the fulfillment by the Redeemer of the law's demands upon his people; and their re-birth in him from those demands into the glorious light and liberty of gospel grace.

The further answer of the dear Redeemer to the inquiry of the apostle fully reveals the character of that inquiry that the following of Jesus on the part of his disciples, some supposed reward was alluded to the reply touched this but went to the depth of the subject "every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren for my names sake."

The term Regeneration occurs but twice in the New Testament, and not once in the Old Testament, hence it is distinctly a New Testament term; it took place in the New Testament dispensation. The term generation, however, is used in the Old as also in the New Testament; for instance in Psalm 22:30: "A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Christ is evidently the seed here spoken of, and this is the same generation alluded to in Matthew 1:1; "the generation of Jesus Christ."

Regeneration, from the Latin root, Generare to engender, to cause to assume form; to produce to beget; and the preface Re, to beget again; the term clearly and accurately expresses the doctrine designed to be set forth. This is evidently its meaning in 1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Who are the us; the subjects of this "begetting again?" They are those addressed in this epistle, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."

We have here presented "the generation of Jesus Christ" as partakers of flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14:) they were first begotten, set apart, or chosen in Christ; for the same act that begat the head, necessarily begat the body also; and it is this same generation who were under the law that Christ came to redeem, "made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law," Galatians 4:4-5; these are they who were "begotten again" (regenerated) in Christ as he came up from under the law, as we have previously quoted, "begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The only other instance in which the term regeneration is used in the Scripture is in Titus 3:5: "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3:5. Here are the same us spoken of and to, in previous testimony, for Paul writes "according to the faith of God's elect." Titus 1:1. This "washing of

regeneration" evidently; refers to the washing "us (the same us) from our sins in his own blood," Revelation 1:5; viewing these children (this generation) as involved in sin in their Adamic relation, brought up from under the law of sin and death, in Christ as it is written "After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise up, (the same us) and we shall live in his sight" Hosea 6:2. "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (the same us) together with Christ." Ephesians 2:5.

Mark you, "quickened together with Christ:" i.e., quickened in him as members of his body, "For as we have many members in one body, so we being many, are one body in Christ and every one members one of another." Romans 12:4-5. "Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the body." Ephesians 5:23.

Considering the fundamental principles underlying this term, "Regeneration," reaching back to its origin, for before Regeneration, there must be a generation to regenerate; and we cannot conceive of the regeneration of a generation totally dissimilar from its own inherent life, on the same principle that we regard it as impossible for the birth of a child from a life in which it had no previous seed existence; and radically different from its own seed substance, in other words, we regard the terms generation and regeneration in the subject under discussion, comprehending the same character of life (eternal); and not a natural generation made over into a spiritual. This does not in any sense question the fact of the redemption of the Adam sinner and the resurrection change, and glorification of the body, in which he dwells (1 Corinthians 15:44, 47-49): but this is not accomplished under the doctrine of the Regeneration.

The term "beget" in a measure differs from either the term generation or birth, yet vitally connected with both. We are told that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image: and called his name Seth," Genesis 5:3: here was a manifestation of the generations of

Adam; but we cannot use the term beget in connection with a life differing from its own character of development; Adam nor none of his posterity could beget a life differing from their own: for the word beget refers "to generate as a father or sire." "The generations of Adam" came from a created (earthly) head; the generation of Christ comes from an uncreated (heavenly) head.

The term Regeneration, therefore, in the sense in which the Scripture testimony that we are discussing uses it, cannot apply to a natural generation. It is written of Christ, "Who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth," Acts 8:33; as he died without issue his could not have been a natural generation: but are sons of God the Father in the sonship of Christ. It is written; "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee," Psalm 2:7; and the many brethren (Romans 8:29), of which Christ is the first-born were begotten in that begetting; chosen in that choice: set up in Christ the head "from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was." Proverbs 8:23.

The generation of Christ as traced in Matthew 1:1-17, through the forty-two consecutive generations of Adam, is evidently referred to by Christ the head of the body in the prophecy: "Bind up the testimony: seal the law among my disciples. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in Zion." Isaiah 8:18.

These are the children; this is the generation Inspiration informs us (Hebrews 2:13-14), that partake of flesh and blood, and were in bondage under the law of sin and death (Galatians 4:3-5); and it is this generation that were "begotten again," brought up from under that bondage; regenerated "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3.

And this Regeneration abolished death in their behalf; and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" 2 Timothy 1:10. He tells us in the text that Regeneration is: "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory."

The throne of his glory is the church where he sits enthroned as king; and the apostles in their respective places in judging the tribes of Israel. This is the woman (church) that John saw: "clothed with the sun (Gospel), the moon (law) under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," (the apostles). Revelation 12:1.

The typical testimony of this doctrine is found first in the tabernacle service in the wilderness in laver (wash-basin) mentioned in Exodus 30:18-20, put between "the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar;" in which the priests were to "wash their hands and feet thereat. "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offerings made by fire unto the LORD." This washing by the priests showing that they were also "compassed with infirmity, and by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins." Hebrews 3, Leviticus 9:7; and in all these offerings there was but the remembrance of sin; but the offering of Christ, a sinless offering, forever cancelled the sins of his people.

The Laver of the tabernacle service was taken over by the sea in the temple worship: 2 Chronicles 4:2-6. This sea like the Laver was made of brass and "stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward." In this sea's under surface round about were covered the similitude of oxen. Here are the Gospel ministry (oxen) resting upon the apostolic ministry (the twelve oxen) looking to the four quarters of earth and time. Mark 16:15.

As the priest before engaging in the tabernacle or temple worship washed in the laver or in the sea, the typical effect of this washing and of the blood flowing from the altar, pointed to the cleansing character of the blood and water (John 19:34), that flowed from the side of Jesus.

“This is the fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath this flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”

The service of the legal dispensation was administered by blood and water, Hebrews 9:19, and Christ came by water and blood, 1 John 5:6. In this last testimony the water is placed first as typifying we presume his (water) baptism unto death, Luke 12:50, and the blood, his crucifixion, but in the crucifixion the blood is named first, John 19:34, as flowing from his side which I understand as pointing especially to his death (blood) and the water the cleansing effect (washing of regeneration) of the shed blood of the Saviour of his people (Matthew 1:21) from their sins. Especially was this typified in the atonement offered once a year under the Aaronical priesthood (Hebrews 9:7), offered with the shedding of blood, and the priest was required to wash himself before and after this offering, Leviticus 16:4, 24, thus offering an atonement for his own sins, and the sins of the people, typifying the cleansing properties of the blood of Christ “who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,” Hebrews 9:14, forever justly and righteously cancelling their sins in this “washing of regeneration,” by his resurrection from the dead.

Truly, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

Well indeed can they be called "The children of the Regeneration," as "begotten again unto a lively [living] hope." The Vulgate translation reads, "hath regenerated us unto a lively hope." The hope that animates the "us" is full of life: a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul; and holds them surely amid all the conflicts, trials, cares, and tribulations that beset them in their pilgrimage here.

Of the things which we have written this is the sum: That the generation of Jesus Christ set up in him as the head of the body (Ephesians 1:22); as the seed, substance of the development of this holy generation (Galatians 3:16; Malachi 2:15; Psalm 129:14-16); thus begotten in him (Isaiah 66:8); developing the generation of Jesus Christ, Matthew 1:1, as partaking of flesh and blood; and thus coming under the law of sin and death in their Adamic development; the head (Christ) follows the body (the church) in this development stands in the place of his people; lays down his (Adamic) life (John 10:15) for that was the life that sinned, and such was the life that the law required, hence Christ died as the Son of man, absolutely not as the Son of God; and having power to thus lay down his life (John 10:18) and take it up again; as born from the dead (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20); (begotten again, 1 Peter 1:3), he forever cancels by paying in full the debt against them, covering their sins (Psalm 32:1; Romans 4:7), as it is written; "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou has covered all their sins." Selah. Psalm 85:2.

Now seated "in the throne of his glory," "as judge of all," (Hebrews 12:23), "he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out," (John 10:3) as before him are gathered all nations, and he separates them "as

a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Matthew 25:32. "I have," he says, in his prophetic prayer "finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John 17:14, 24.

We have now traced the elect through Christ the seed substance (Psalm 139:16; Galatians 3:16); born of God, the Father (John 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:1); partakers of, but not made up out of flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 4:2): brought up from under the law and from under its curse, Matthew 19:28: 1 Peter 1:3.

And, we may well close this testimony with a reference to its crowning glory "The Resurrection of the dead:" yea, "The Resurrection from the dead," for assuredly is Christ "preached that he rose from the dead;" "but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:12, 20, 57.

We must bear in mind, however, that any discussion of the "Resurrection of the dead," Philippians 3:11, must witness that "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body," I Corinthians 15:44; that is, the same body, the identical body deposited in the grave is the body brought up from the grave, but changed in the resurrection from natural to spiritual. "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:18.