

## (THE MEANING OF REGENERATION)

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p7. Neither regeneration nor justification grounds the other. Both are grounded in Christ. Neither is detachable from him. None of Christ's "benefits" can be detached from the living person of JC. JC bestows *himself* and his benefits with him. (Calvin.)

Justification is restoration to God's *favour*; sanctification, of God's *image*. (Wesley)

Note the three meanings of "born *again*" (John 3): *Anothen* = "one more time", "from above" (i.e., from God), "so as to effect the wholly reconstitutive".

Note: (i) S everywhere insists on regeneration; (ii) in insisting on it left-handedly S reinforces S's und'g that hk is *fallen* (corrupt, deformed, dead); (iii) S everywhere relates regen. to faith; (iv) it is possible in that the new person is one aspect of a new *creation* (see 2 Cor. 5:17); (v) the initiative is with God with respect to what he does in JC and by the HS.

Note the debate over the relation of faith and repentance, and the area of agreement.

Note the three S'l pictures of repentance: unfaithful wife returning to her husband, idol-worshippers returning to the true God, rebel subjects returning to their rightful ruler.

Sin must be forgiven *and forsaken*. Israel was always tempted to embrace both Yahweh and Baal.

p8. In all of this the HS must not be "thingified." Note the analogy with marriage.

p9. We don't develop or evolve into a new creature: it is a miracle *ex nihilo*.

p9. Compare the views of Magisterial Reformers, Radical R'ers and Pietists on regen. The commonality is that salvation is to be enjoyed. To be avoided: any suggestion that there is only one pattern for someone's coming to the new birth.

p10. Forsyth: "...a breach with the natural life, though not a disruption of it. Note: (i) the new life in Christ is *new*, **not** a *natural* process; (ii) the new creature (in Christ) I am is the old creature *renewed*; (iii) regen. supersedes the fall but not nature; (iv) regen. redirects personality but doesn't radically alter it.

## (THE NEW BIRTH AND EXPERIENCE)

The new birth is a *fact* primarily and an *experience* secondarily. Note the language of S: e.g., Gal. 3:2, Acts 2:37, 1 Thess. 1:5-6.

p10. "The whole man must be born again" (Calvin): und'g, will, affections.

p11. The new birth always transcends the experience of the new birth. Our life is *hidden*. Col.3:2

## (BAPTISM BY WATER AND THE SPIRIT)

Be careful about assuming a reference to baptism in every instance of "water" or "washing", etc.

Note the special circumstances of Acts 19 (they weren't believers at all) and Acts 8 (there had to be avoided two "Churches" out of fellowship with each other.)

p12. Discussion re: baptism. Is it essential to salvation? Is it an option? In S it is associated with (i) public profession of faith, (ii) the scandalous baptism of JB (parentage, privilege and piety count for nothing), (iii) our solidarity with JC who made confession of our sin at the Jordan (in anticipation of the cross.)

Baptism recalls the Jordan:

a] it was the threshold of promise

b] Abraham crossed it in freeing Lot

c] Jacob crossed it twice re: Esau

d] it was it was the venue of the "mighty deeds" of Elijah and Elisha

e] Jesus crossed it for the last time at Jericho on the way to Jerusalem

Infant baptism: its meaning in Catholic and Reformed circles.

Believer's baptism: note how the focus of the meaning shifts.

Note that for the Magisterial Reformers the WORD (promise of mercy) is always the substance of the sacrament, and the order is always S, sermon, sac.

#### (CONTINUAL CONVERSION)

Note the following;

- the relation (and relative responsibilities) concerning witness and conversion.
- we are regenerateed once only yet must be converted (repent) daily.
- the identity of the person of Romans 7.
- the need to find sin repulsive if we are going to repudiate it.
- the fact that sin is *present* in believers but doesn't *reign* in them.
- only believers may "put on...put off", but believers must.
- (p16) Bloesch's criticism of later revivalism.
- the need to seek the glory of God, not merely the help of God.

p18. Shepherd thinks BI's argument here may be a bit confused. Why not say (i) ultimately grace alone convicts of sin, (ii) grace is known only in the gospel (the gospel being the content of the law, and the law the form of the gospel), (iii) the mystery surrounding anyone's coming-to-faith and new birth. We want to avoid saying (a) spiritual discernment is a natural possibility (b) the new birth is prior to faith, (c) while the natural person can't see/enter the Kingdom, neither does God coerce us. (Recall the patristic distinction between *gratia operans* and *gratia co-operans*.)

(Shepherd) note the threefold conversion that is always ongoing: to JC, to church, to world.

#### (ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATIONS)

- 1] sacramentalism: it amounts to magic, sidestepping faith and godliness.
- 2] predestinarianism: it entails insuperable difficulties for Christology and Pneumatology; it is often found with lack of mission awareness and antinomianism.
- 3] religious enthusiasm: it makes my zeal or experience the measure of the fact or quality of my regen.
- 4] perfectionism: (a) I am obsessed with perfecting myself (a form of self-sanc'n)  
(b) I maintain that I am sinless now, and therefore sin can't be found in me.

But note too the element of truth in 1-4:

- 1] the sacraments *are* God-ordained and are meant to strengthen faith.
- 2] predestination (election) means that (i) Christ's grip on me will always be stronger than my grip on him, (ii) there will always be more mercy in God than there is sin in me.
- 3] S commends zeal. Lukewarmness is not to be emulated.
- 4] with the exception of the Reformation church, all Christian bodies endorse some form of Christian perfection.

[Assorted matters}

p20. "No one born of God commits sin." (1 J. 3:9) Check the grammar!

p21. "Second blessing". Why not the 22<sup>nd</sup>?

p22. Does S support any distinction between baptism of the Spirit and the new birth?

p.23. (Barth) "We await redemption in its true, strict sense." (i) we *do* wait; (ii) yet we don't undervalue our present reality and experience of the end-time redemption.

p24. (Bushnell) The child in a Christian family is already "regenerate when born." Recall JBap!