

Sailing With Paul

Simple Papers for Young Christians

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Chapter 4

Regeneration

GOD not only clears the believer from every charge, forgiving his sins and justifying him from all things, but He makes him a new creature, giving him a new nature and introducing him into a new creation of which the risen CHRIST is the Head. All this and more is involved in the truth of regeneration, a truth of great practical importance, though the word occurs but once in Paul's epistles, and only twice in all the Bible.

The two passages are Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5. It is with the latter that we are now especially concerned, as being part of "Paul's doctrine," which we are seeking to apprehend. But a glance at the former verse will aid us greatly in understanding this other. The Greek word translated *regeneration* does not exactly mean to be generated anew, or re-born, as we might suppose; so it is not really synonymous with new birth. It rather means the bringing in of a new order. In Matthew the Lord uses it as referring to "**the world to come**," i.e., the millennium. Those who had followed Him in His humiliation would share His glory in the coming kingdom - the regeneration, or bringing in of the new order long predicted by the prophets, and for which Israel is still waiting and sighing.

But already a new order has been established, which we generally call Christianity. To share in this we need the washing of the Word, the bath of regeneration. In other words, when a man believes the Gospel and thus receives GOD's present testimony into his soul it washes and cleanses him; he is born anew and thus made morally fit for the new order into which he is brought by the matchless grace of GOD.

Paul never speaks of being born again, though he uses other terms that mean practically the same thing. He looks at man as dead and needing life, so he says to believers, God, "**when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ**" (Ephesians 2:5). We have become sharers of CHRIST's life; hence we are born from above. And now we belong to the new creation of which CHRIST is the Head.

Our link with the old creation is severed through CHRIST's death; for He died as representing us, and faith links us up with Him as risen. We belong to the regeneration, the new race, and no longer are part of the old generation of which fallen Adam is head.

It is a great step forward in the experience of one's own soul when this stupendous truth is apprehended "**for the obedience of faith.**"

Henceforth the Christian will test everything by its relation to CHRIST and the new position which all who are in Him now occupy. The practical effect of this will be very far-reaching. The old legal ground of "Is there any harm in this or that?" and "Is it my duty to do thus and so?" will be left behind. In its stead, the believer will be able to view everything from the standpoint of privilege and loyalty to the Head. In place of speaking of "any harm" or "no harm," the question will be, "Is this consistent with new creation?" Tests will come daily, and can all be met on this ground: "Is it of Adam or CHRIST? Will this enable me better to reflect CHRIST? Will that be suited to the new order to which I have come?" In other words, "Is it of the old generation, or of the regeneration?"

Sometimes there may be perplexity still, but if no doubtful step is taken and GOD's mind is sought through His Word, the HOLY SPIRIT, who is the power of the new order, can be counted on to make all clear. What is needed is a single eye; for, "**if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light**" (Matthew 6:22).

The washing, or bath, of regeneration is that one bathing referred to by our Lord when He said, "**He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit**" (John 13:10). This bath is the application of the Word of GOD: "**Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you**" (John 15:3) and "**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever**" (I Peter 1:23) to heart and conscience when one is born anew. A double cleansing is thus effected. The Word tells of the blood of JESUS CHRIST, GOD's Son, which cleanseth from all, or every, sin. This is judicial. It purges my conscience, and renders me forever clean before GOD. But the same Word judges all my old ways, and judges me personally as morally unfit for GOD.

When I bow to this testimony in repentance, I am morally washed all over. And thus I am, by this double cleansing, introduced into the new order. Hence it is called "**the washing of regeneration.**" It needs never to be repeated. Once in the new creation, I am in CHRIST, and can never again be separated from Him.

But now I need the daily application of the Word to keep me clean, to keep *my ways* in accord with the order to which I belong. "**Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word**" (Psalm 119:9). This is that daily washing of the feet which the Lord illustrates so beautifully in the chapter above referred to. And this blessed

service He is continually carrying on, that we may enjoy, have part with Him in the things so dear to His heart.

See to it, young Christian, that you do not hinder this loving service by neglect of your Bible, by a prayerless spirit, and by unrighteousness in your life. You belong to the regeneration. Make it ever your object to act accordingly, cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart.

~ end of chapter 4 ~
