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I. REGENERATION, REAL, NOT FIGURATIVE.

THERE are doubtless those who think that in a discussion of regeneration nothing new can be said that is true, and nothing true that is new. However this may be, it is certain that opinions differ widely, and that much confusion prevails. It is not our purpose to review the variant and widely diverse opinions which are held on this subject. That were a profitless task. We propose to study the subject anew from the standpoint of the Scriptures, and to compare the conclusion reached with the view generally accepted as orthodox. What is that view?

A very few years ago a report was made to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., by a committee appointed to revise *The Confession*. In that report the following words were found: "The act of regeneration wherein being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit he is enabled to answer God's call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." Had this been approved, new matter would have been added to *The Confession*. This report teaches that the act of regeneration enables the subject to believe on Christ. That this is the commonly accepted view a few citations from Doctors R. L. Dabney and A. A. Hodge may be allowed to show. Dr. Dabney in his *Syllabus and Notes* (Student's Edition, Part II., p. 85) says under the caption "Regeneration properly defined," "we prove that regeneration is not a mere change of human purpose, occurring in view of motive; but a supernatural renovation of the dispositions which determine the moral purpose and of the understanding, in the apprehension of moral and spiritual truth." Says Dr. A. A. Hodge in his *Outlines*: "In the new creation God

VI. THE AIMS AND CONDITIONS OF SEMINARY LIFE.

WISDOM is said to consist in the accomplishment of worthy ends by the use of appropriate means. He is not wise who wastes his energies on ignoble aims, no matter how skilfully he pursues them. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be regarded a wise man who seeks to achieve great ends by the use of unworthy means. There is no disposition on the present occasion to question the wisdom of our fathers in adopting the theological seminary as the means of training a ministry for the church. The purpose is noble and the means appropriate. Our purpose is rather to inquire what are the ends to be kept in view during the process of preparatory training, which, when accomplished, give to the church "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit," and what are the conditions under which the means employed will secure these ends?

What, then, are the more important ends to be kept in view in seminary life? We answer without hesitation that the first is growth in grace. It is universally held now that education consists in developing the man, physically, intellectually and morally. The proposition is based upon the assumption that man is an end unto himself. His true glory is to be what his Creator intended him to be. To regard and treat him merely as an instrument to be employed with reference to some other end is to degrade him. Theological seminaries differ in this respect from secular institutions only in that they aim to develop the new man in Christ Jesus. Professors and students are supposed to be Christian men. And the purpose of the association under these relations is first of all to develop that knowledge, righteousness and true holiness which constitute the new man. It is emphatically true here that man's glory is to be what his Maker intended him to be. It is true man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever; but this end is attained in both its features when man becomes perfect in holiness.

It has long been debated what studies are best adapted to the

purpose of secular education, some contending for literature, ancient and modern; others for the exact sciences, and others, again, for metaphysical inquiries. Happily there can be but one opinion as to the means of developing the renewed man. The direction given in the word of God is, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Jesus prayed for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Two forms of expressions are used in the Scriptures to indicate the suitability of the word of God for this purpose. The figure of the sower and the seed pervades both Testaments. Our Saviour says, "The seed is the word of God." Milton says of all the utterances of men, "books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a phial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them." Our Lord said, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Again, we read in the Scriptures of "that form of doctrine" and "the form of sound words." The written word is the type which leaves the impress upon the new heart. From the seed, when quickened by the Holy Spirit, comes the plant of righteousness. The word of God, constituted of law and gospel, moulds the soul under the power of the Holy Ghost to the divine likeness.

This aspect of seminary life contemplates the professors as pastors of the flock. They are to feed the flock of God which is among them, taking the oversight thereof. And it assumes that piety on the part of the students is the most important of their qualifications for entering upon the work of the ministry. In the second place, seminary life has its professional aspect. Young men in such institutions are to be regarded as candidates for the ministry. They are to be trained to preach the word, and to maintain the order of God's house. Professors are instructors, and the drill has reference to the skilful handling of the Scriptures.

Concerning this feature of our subject, we feel constrained to make three practical observations: First, It is serious business

in which seminaries are engaged. Sometimes we are shocked because a careless or incompetent druggist has caused the death of some sufferer. Again, we are pained by seeing the rightful inheritance of orphan children lost to them for the want of learned and skilful counsel. Where great temporal interests are at stake the importance of professional, as well as general, education is generally recognized. Is it not marvellous that lack of preparation on the part of ministers of the gospel could ever have been tolerated by any people? The case does not admit of argument. To say that our seminaries are training instruments that are to affect the eternal destinies of men is enough. In the next place we remark that seminaries have on hand a vast undertaking. The professor, as he runs over in thought the topics embraced in his single department, heaves a sigh of almost despair. What can be done on such a territory in the period of three years! The student, as he hears some accomplished pulpit orator pour forth in eloquent words, and with ease and accuracy, his accumulated treasures, well-nigh concludes that the achievement is beyond his reach. But let us not forget that there is time enough given to seminary life in which to lay a good foundation. Honest effort ought to send out men, at the end of three years, who have settled and intelligent convictions as to the truth of Christianity; as to the integrity of the word of God and the laws of its interpretation; as to the nature of the church; and as to the plan of salvation. We never had much patience with preachers who changed their church relations after they had entered upon the work of life. There are genuine cases of change of opinion under some circumstances, and with such we sympathize; but in the Presbyterian Church there ought to be no reason or excuse for such occurrences. We have time enough allotted to preparation for laying a good foundation on which to build without fear in after life. The third observation we have to make is, that this foundation cannot be laid in three years, nor in twenty years, without patient labor. There is a temptation to think that this is not the case in some of the departments of instruction. Presbyterians are supposed to grow up in intelligent families and under able preachers. When to this is added the

preparatory education in school and college, our candidates have a right to feel when they enter the seminary that they know something about the Bible. But it is one thing to cherish a traditional faith and quite a different thing to be rooted and grounded in the truth. It is also possible to have an intelligent general apprehension of the truth without being able to teach others also.

Again, Seminary life is a period of meditation and prayer in view of the responsibilities of after life. The Apostle Paul tells us that, when it pleased the Lord to reveal in him his Son, that he might preach him among the heathen, "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem." (Gal. i. 17.) He does not say to what part of Arabia he went. I am unsophisticated enough to think that he went to Horeb, where God met his ancient people. He does not say distinctly how long he remained there; but the intimation is that he continued there the greater part of three years. He does not say for what purpose he went there; but we can hardly go astray as to the purpose. He passed the time in that solitary place, so full of sacred memories, between the call to preach and the entrance upon the work. Any great undertaking should be preceded by a suitable period of calm reflection. How many questions have to be settled in the course of training for the ministry! Shall I labor at home, or abroad; as an evangelist, or as a pastor? Is my heart in the work? Have I laid aside every weight? Have I the scriptural qualifications?

What, now, are the conditions under which the foregoing ends may be secured by the use of the means employed in our seminary training? We think that they may be embraced under two heads, spiritual-mindedness and consecration. Let us consider them in the order stated.

It may be well to dwell for a moment upon the import of the phrase spiritual mindedness. Paul says, in Romans viii. 6: "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The original gives simply "the mind of the

flesh" and "the mind of the spirit." If we take the literal rendering, the question will arise, Does "spirit," in the last clause, refer to the spirit of the man, or to the Holy Spirit that dwells in him? We are forced to confine both phrases to what belongs to man, because the phrase "the mind of the flesh" requires this. In the margin of our English Bibles we have the rendering "the minding of the flesh" and "the minding of the spirit." This is instructive so far as it calls attention to the fact that the phrases denote active states of mind; and it is sustained by the context. The apostle is discussing the fruits of justification by faith. One is, that it secures holy living. The inward state of the believer is such that he delights in the law of the Lord. This he manifests outwardly by his daily walk. But our received translation goes further, and brings out the fact that the phrase "to be spiritually minded" is the result of a joint action of the intellect and the affections. We have in common use the phrase "worldly minded." We use it to express the state of soul devoted to worldly objects and pursuits because it finds its chief pleasure in them. In like manner, "spiritually minded" denotes a state of soul devoted to spiritual objects and pursuits because they are relished.

It is possible to handle spiritual things and yet be dead to their spiritual beauty. As Dr. McCosh has shown, the religious history of the race is to be explained by the sense of dependence and responsibility on the one hand, acting as an attracting principle, while, on the other hand, dislike to the holiness of God repels from fellowship with him. The Apostle Paul finds the origin of heathenism in the fact that men did not like to retain God in their knowledge. It is impossible for the world to become atheistic, because the invisible things of God are understood by the things that are made, and because conscience bears witness in every soul. But this may be so while there is no knowledge that leads men to glorify God as God, or to be thankful. And what may be true on this broad sphere may be true also in a sphere as elevated and contracted as a theological seminary. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. It does not help the carnal mind to put it in a schoo-

of sacred learning. To it every purpose of seminary life is impossible. It is inconsistent with growth in grace; it cannot be fashioned into the temper of a preacher, nor is it capable of either meditation or prayer, such as will favorably influence the life. In the case of such as are spiritually minded, however, seminary life is both useful and pleasant. The capacity to understand the subjects studied is united with a relish for them. It gives the requisite condition for the use of the means employed, and for the attainment of the ends contemplated.

Such is the vital importance of this matter that there should be careful self-examination at the outset of a seminary course. It may be well to suggest some tests by which we can determine whether or not we are spiritually minded. John Owen, in his work on *Spiritual Mindedness*, has gone into this question at large. We will present two of the tests he gives, one for the mind, the other for the affections. He gives spontaneity as the test in the case of our thoughts. A bad man may have thoughts about spiritual things that do not prove that he is spiritually minded, as Agrippa when he heard Paul preach. A good man also may have unworthy thoughts about spiritual things which do not prove that he is not spiritually minded, as David when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. The theological seminary may keep the mind filled with thoughts about holy things, and to all appearances the thoughts may be correct, and yet there may be no relish for them. The decisive question is, What are the subjects that come to us in our solitary moments? When the day's work is done, when recitations are over and books are laid aside, to what topics does the mind turn of its own motion? The test given by Owen for the affections is the supremacy of the love of God. Is there any sin we are unwilling to surrender? Is there any cross we are unwilling to take up? Do we love ease, reputation, family, anything more than we love God? Can we say with Paul, the love of Christ constraineth me?

The other condition now to be presented is consecration. John Foster wrote a book, which he named an *Essay on Decision of Character*. He might as well have called it a "Treatise of Success in Life," for he finds his elements of character by analyz-

ing the lives of successful men. He finds the elements of strong character to be confidence in one's own judgment, vigorous will, and courage. These qualities enable a man to form a decision, to undertake its execution energetically, and to surmount all the difficulties that lie in the way. Foster has looked at the subject from the human side. The Bible always presents the divine side. Believers are strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It may be well to illustrate this. Let us take first the history of Samson. He is enumerated in Hebrews among the heroes of faith. He is by no means a pattern in all respects; but his life is as instructive in its failures as in its successes. There is no evidence that he was a giant, as some seem to think. The Philistines were at a loss to know wherein his great strength lay. The fact is, his strength consisted in his relation to God under the Nazaritic vow. The long hair was the sign of this vow. God gave him strength as he gave Solomon wisdom. As long as Samson was true to his calling and kept his vow, his strength was firm. He could rend a young lion, carry away the gates of Gaza, and slaughter the Philistines heaps upon heaps with the jawbone of an ass. But when his vow was broken he became as other men. His locks were shorn, for God had forsaken him. But when he repented his locks grew again, so that the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Samson was a vacillating character; and so his strength rose and fell with his consecration. The Apostle Paul is an example of steady devotion. If there is any evidence in his history of faltering we have failed to detect it. His ardor never seemed to cool. In all the years of his active ministry he carried the standard of the cross from victory to victory. And when called to wear his chain as the prisoner of the Lord, he illustrated his own strong statement, "in all these things we overcome." And yet his account of his case is, "when I am weak then am I strong"; and his boast was, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Now, let this discussion be closed with the remark that it has been conducted with a desire to promote the efficiency of our seminaries. The time our candidates have to spend in prepara-

tory training is precious. In view of the situation, it has been the aim of the writer to help them to make a wise use of their opportunities. We would not cast a shadow on the heart of any young servant of Christ by the statements we have made. A great calling demands a faithful preparation. This should be distinctly recognized. But with the full recognition of the fact there is no occasion for discouragement. Seminary life should be bright and happy. Why should it not be? If we relish the things that be of God, the seminary is full of them. The Master, who calls us to the feast, says: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

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