

**ORTHODOX PREACHING (IN
CONTRADISTINCTION SO
CALLED) DEFENDED, AGAINST
MODERN OBJECTIONS AND
MISREPRESENTATIONS**

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Orthodox preaching (in contradistinction so called) defended, Against modern objections and misrepresentations by Anonymous

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AND

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BY A LAYMAN.



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ABOUT three weeks after the publication of my former pamphlet (*Remarks on Evangelical Preaching—exclusively so called*), I was, for the first time, made acquainted with the fact of Mr. Melvill's having renounced, since 1832, the peculiar tenets of the pseudo-Evangelical School; and a passage which was pointed out to me in a volume of his sermons published a few years ago, removes all possible doubt of his having really done so. I have, therefore, much pleasure in now giving to this passage the same publicity which I before gave to the former tenets of the above highly popular preacher.

THE AUTHOR.

ORTHODOX PREACHING.

At a time like the present, when our Church is so zealously assailed by the agents of blasphemy, infidelity, and Popery, on the one side, and of schismatical dissent on the other, it is deeply to be regretted that there should still continue to exist within her bosom the two opposite parties usually styled "ORTHODOX" and "EVANGELICAL," between whom a harmony of opinion seems impossible to be effected. Occasionally, indeed, the peculiar differences of these two parties may appear to be lost sight of, in their united zeal to repel a common enemy; but no sooner has the enemy been driven back, than these differences again start into notice, bringing with them a revival of those feelings which for a time had seemed extinguished.

Of these differences, that relating to baptismal regeneration has excited by far the greatest share of interest, and may undoubtedly be considered as the chief; since, if the two parties can only be brought to an agreement on this subject, it is evident that all other important differences must necessarily disappear. Let both parties but agree on the completeness of the analogy between the case (instanced in 1 Cor. x.) of the Israelites travelling, under Divine guidance, through the wilderness to the earthly Canaan, and that of regularly baptized Christians travelling, under the guidance of God's Spirit, through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan, and we shall then have a settlement of the question relating to the possibility of departing totally and finally from grace. For as the Israelites, by provoking God, subjected themselves not

merely to repeated chastisements, but at length to excision in the wilderness, and thus failed to reach the earthly Canaan; so may Christians, by similar misconduct, fail finally to reach the heavenly Canaan. The view which the "Orthodox" party take of baptismal regeneration perfectly harmonizes with the above analogy: I shall therefore endeavour, in the first place, clearly to explain the view taken by this party; and then proceed to a defence of it against modern objections and misrepresentations.

"The determinate sense of the word 'regeneration' (observes Bishop Van Mildert) depends upon the subject to which it relates. Abstractedly, it denotes an entrance upon any new state of being; a state essentially different from that in which existence had already taken place. Thence it is taken to denote anything new in the mode or condition of being. But what that newly modified state or condition may be, can only be ascertained by reference to the subject and the purpose to which the term is applied. Here the aid of verbal analogy is called for. In the Scriptures, terms of similar import with 'regeneration,' such as 'new birth,' a 'new creature,' 'born again,' and 'created anew,' are frequently used. These are to be compared with each other, and with the several contexts of the passages where they occur, in order to discover the signification ordinarily attached to them by the author. And when we find that they are almost invariably employed to distinguish the state of a person admitted into the Christian covenant, from that of one who is not so admitted, we shall beware of adopting any interpretation irrelevant to that view of the subject. We shall perceive, that the word 'regeneration,' in the Scriptural usage of it, means only our initiation, or entrance, by baptism, into that covenant, which gives us new privileges, new hopes, and a new principle of spiritual life; translating us from our natural state in Adam, to a spiritual state in Christ. The expression, therefore, cannot, without a direct violation of the ver-

bal analogy of Scripture, be applied to any operation that takes place subsequent to that baptismal change with which alone it perfectly corresponds. In like manner, historical analogy may be applied to this particular point, strongly confirming the evidence adduced from verbal analogy. Had the sacred writers used the term 'regeneration,' and the expressions synonymous with it, in a sense not only peculiar to themselves, but dissimilar to any in which they had before been used, still, having expressed themselves so clearly upon the subject to which the terms are applied, there could be little difficulty in determining the acceptation in which these terms ought to be taken. But we have further evidence than this. Our Lord, in discoursing with Nicodemus on the necessity of being 'born again,' reproves this 'master of Israel' for not already 'knowing these things:' that is, for not readily perceiving the force and propriety of a figure of speech which ought to have been familiar to a Jewish teacher. And that this reproof was justly merited, we collect from the best writers on Jewish antiquities; from whom it appears, that terms of similar import were in frequent use among the Jews, to describe those Gentiles who had been converted from heathenism, and admitted into the Jewish Church."

"Because (remarks Bishop Gleig) it was said to the children of Israel, immediately before their departure from Egypt, 'When a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land;' such proselytes were considered as made in reality children of Abraham by some mystical or new birth. Some time, however, before the advent of the Messiah, baptism, as well as circumcision, appears to have been deemed necessary to accomplish that regeneration; and by these two rites it was so completely accomplished, that a heathen, when thus admitted as a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and a slave, when emancipated by

his master, was each considered as a new-born Jewish child, insomuch that his former relations, when a heathen or a slave, were no longer considered as related to him at all. Such firm possession had this strange notion got of their minds, that Maimonides (as quoted by Lightfoot) informs us, that a heathen might lawfully marry his own mother, or his maternal sister, when they had both become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and thereby were literally made new creatures. Lightfoot has given us the whole process of Jewish baptism; and the questions which he says were put to the heathen candidates for that baptism, appear to have, on the whole, been very proper, and analogous to those which were afterwards put by the Christian clergy to the adult candidates for Christian baptism. If all this be duly considered, I think there will be no doubt but that it was from the Hebrew Scriptures, and the common language of the Jewish doctors, that the Apostles and Evangelists, and even Christ Jesus himself, learned to call admission into the Church by baptism, 'regeneration,' or 'a new birth.'

Such, then, is the origin and Scriptural meaning of the term 'regeneration;' and that such is also the meaning attached to it by our Church, is evident from her catechism, which teaches us, that the "inward and spiritual grace" received at baptism, is "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness," whereby, from "being by nature born in sin and children of wrath," we are made "children of grace." Baptism we are thus taught to consider as conveying regeneration, whereby we are admitted to the privileges of the Christian covenant, and have an assurance of the grant of all spiritual aid necessary to enable us to perform its conditions.

"It is (continues Bishop Van Mildert) by entitling him to these benefits, that it makes the partaker 'a new creature,' 'born of God,' and 'an heir of eternal life.' Thenceforth he continues to be in a state of salvation, or salvable state, notwithstanding the errors and defec-

tions to which he is liable. He 'may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and, by the grace of God, may rise again and amend his life.' He may entirely forfeit his hopes and privileges by impenitency or unbelief; or he may recover them by repentance and renewal of faith. His spiritual birth, his regeneration, is the beginning of his Christian life: his growth in grace, and his perseverance to the end, will be the result of a right use of those further supplies from above, which minister to his spiritual support and nourishment, and to which this first admission into the covenant gives him a title and a claim."

"This new birth, this regeneration (remarks Dr. Waterland), can be but once in a Christian's whole life, as baptism can be but once; and as there can be no second baptism, so there can be no second new birth. Regeneration, with respect to the regenerating agent, means the first admission; and with respect to the recipient, it means the first entrance into the spiritual or Christian life; and there cannot be two first entrances or first admissions, any more than two spiritual lives or two baptisms. The analogy which this new spiritual life bears to the natural, demonstrates the same thing." For as natural life once received is no more given, no more begun, but is repaired, renewed, nourished, kept up, preserved; so spiritual life is but once given, and is nourished and preserved by those further supplies of heavenly grace flowing from a worthy participation of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Concerning adult baptism, no difference of opinion exists in our Church; both parties (Orthodox and Evangelical) allowing that baptism conveys no spiritual blessings to adults without repentance and faith. Not so, however, with respect to infant baptism; for here great difference of opinion exists. Now, while some contend that regeneration denotes an instantaneous, perceptible, and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit, which takes place at some period subsequent to