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Begotten Again, or Born Again, Which?

THE new birth is at the second coming of Christ. "Waiting for sonship." Rom. 8:23. Take time to understand the terms.

When I make the statement that the New Birth takes place at the resurrection, I do not mean that conversion takes place then. I do not mean that we cannot have our sins forgiven, (at least conditionally) until the second coming of Christ. I do not mean that the believer is not created in Christ Jesus unto good works until Christ comes.

I do not mean that the believer does not enjoy and possess the love of God which passeth understanding, nor do I mean that he is not filled with the Holy Spirit until he is raised from the dead, at the second coming of Christ. But I do mean that unless we have been converted, and kept converted, and possess a knowledge of our sins forgiven, and enjoy the peace and love of God, and have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us in this life before the second coming of Christ, then we are none of his, and we shall never be born again, or attain to the resurrection from among the dead, or have a part in the holy and blessed first rising again. I mean that the state, or condition of conversion, is not either properly or Scripturally defined by the term "Born again." But it is by the word "Begotten."

MISTAKEN MEANING OF WORDS GIVE RISE TO FALSE
DOCTRINES.

A great many grievous mistakes in doctrine are made on account of this man-made teaching that we are "Born again" at our conversion. 1st, That if we have been "Born again", or truly converted, we can never be lost, or what is generally known as "Once saved, never lost". It is assumed that we have been born sons, and we can never change our relationship. This would be exactly the truth if we were "Born again" when we were converted. But as the Scriptures teach the very opposite to this, such an interpretation must be wrong. When we understand that conversion is best understood as *Conception*, or *Begettal*, then we have harmony throughout all the Scriptures upon the question of the New Birth. As a child may be begotten and not born, so can a sinner be converted but not eternally saved. As it is in the natural and physical, so it is in the spiritual. 2nd, Another false position is this: That when a sinner is converted, he both sees and enters the kingdom. But as that kingdom of which Jesus spoke is not here, either to see or enter, that belief must be untrue. For the "Nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Luke 19: 12. It is allowed that the "Certain Nobleman" represents Jesus Christ. Therefore the kingdom comes when Christ returns, and for his we pray, "Thy kingdom come".

BEGETTAL IS NOT BIRTH.

I believe that all the change of character, condition,

and feelings when a sinner is converted, and what is mistakenly called the "New Birth", must take place before anyone can either see or enter the kingdom of God. But such a change from nature to grace, is not a birth, but a conception only, or a begetting of spiritual life, and unless such a life is begotten, then there can be no spiritual birth as the result, at the second coming of Jesus Christ. If it be that the sinner is "Born again", when is he begotten? Is there no difference between the act of begetting and that of birth? Please read Matt. 1: 18-21. "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived (Margin, Begotten), in her is of the Holy Spirit". Jesus was not born when Joseph thought to put Mary away. That birth is described as follows: "And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." Luke 2: 5-7. Here we have two distinct acts, conception and birth, as it is in the natural and physical; so it is in the spiritual, or there could be no harmonious comparison. The symbols which Jesus made use of, are on all fours, and correct. But by the popular interpretation, either ignores the conception, or allows it to take place at the same time as the supposed birth, when a person is converted. But the Scriptures give a time for the begetting, a time for travail, and another time for birth. "Him that begat." 1 John 5: 1, last part. "Of his own will begat he us." See James 1: 18. In order to be children of

od, it is necessary to be begotten of God. I have been asked if begotten by God, who is the female in the spiritual sense, or simile. I answer, the one who receives conception. Have we not this illustrated very frequently in the Holy Scriptures? Read Isa. 54: 5. "Thy Maker is thine husband." Jer. 3: 14. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you". "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ". 2 Cor. 11: 2. Also Rom. 7: 1-4; and Eph. 5: 22-32. I prefer the reading given in the Emph. Diag. "Having willed it, He begot us by the Word of Truth." James 1: 18. In this same chapter we have another conception, though, it is not by God, but by the enemy of God, and this is the great proof that there is a real personal devil. Verse 15. "Then inordinate desire having conceived produces sin. It is a terrible act to receive conception from Satan, and "bring forth fruit unto death". Rom. 7: 5. "Giveth birth to sin and sin having been perfected, bringeth forth death". In that satanic conception, there is no force employed, "But every man is emptied, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed". V 14. Man does not tempt, or entice himself, then enticed by whom? By Satan. In the spiritual conception it is the same. No compulsion, no force, for the text says, we are to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word". V 21.

THE LAW OF GOD IS THE SEED OF BEGETTAL.

"He begot us with the word of truth". This word

of truth is not the Holy Scriptures, as some affirm; if so, how could the Old Testament saints have been begotten, when the Scriptures were not complete, and again what a long time it would take to comprehend the whole of the Scriptures. We need not speculate what is meant by the Word of Truth, for Jesus gives us the meaning of the truth, "thy word is truth". John 17: 17. The margin of which refers me to Ps. 119: 142, 151. Where I may read, "Thy law is the truth," and "All thy commandments truth". This meaning is also backed up by Peter, "Having been regenerated, (or begotten) not out of corruptible seed, but incorruptible—through the means of the word of a living and abiding God". 1 Pet. 1: 23. J. B. Rotherham. It will be seen that it is the very same agent by which we are converted—"The Law of God". 19: 7. "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul". As it takes every one of the ten words of God to truly and really convert the soul, it takes every one of the ten, to effect a true regeneration. Those early Christians were begotten by seed which was incorruptible, there was no Trinity of Gods, or Sunday Sabbath in that Law of God by which they were converted, or begotten. If our regeneration has not been effected by the perfect law of God, it will only result in an abortion. How very necessary it is to know that the beginning of our spiritual life is really of God, and according to the Scriptures. Have the 1st, the 2nd, and the 4th precepts of the incorruptible seed been sown in our hearts by the Holy Spirit? If not our regeneration will

result in failures. There is nothing like certainty in this important matter; for

"Immortal life's in the question,
And joy through eternity".

The Scriptures teach that there is a period of time between the begetting and the birth, and it is one of travail and pain. "For we know, that all creation is sighing together and travailing in birth throes together until the present". (J. B. R.) "And not only it, but ourselves also, possessing the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for sonship, the redemption of our body". Emph. Diag. Rom. 8: 22, 23. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you". Gal. 4: 19. See Eze. 9: 4; Matt. 5: 4. The period between conception and birth is one of uncertainty, so it is spiritually.

WHEN THE BIRTH TAKES PLACE.

The Scriptures teach that when a believer is raised from the dead, he is born again. "Because those whom he foreknew, he also predetermined to be copies of the likeness of His Son, for him to be a firstborn among many brethren". "The firstborn from the dead". "Jesus Christ the chief-born of the dead, and prince of the kings of the earth". Rom. 8: 29; Col. 1: 18; Rev. 1: 5. Emph. Diag. Those who come out of their graves when the New Jerusalem is in travail are said to be born. Isa. 66: 8. Our mother is said to be the New Jerusalem. "But Jerusalem which is above is

free, which is the mother of us all". Gal. 4:26. Jesus Christ is said to be our father. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . his name shall be called . . . the everlasting Father". Isa. 9:6. "As we have borne the image of the man of earth, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven". 1 Cor. 15: 49. (J. B. R.) We are told when the marriage takes place in Rev. 19: 7-9.

During this present time the church is likened to the bride of Christ, but at the resurrection the figure changes. For we become children of the resurrection. "But they that are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection". Luke 20:35,36. Erroneous translations give rise and help to maintain the false teaching that when a sinner is converted he is "Born again". Please read Judges 8: 30; Gen. 5: 3; John 3: 16. "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son". Those passages prove that it is the Father who begets, and the mother gives birth. Now what sense or propriety is there in the following texts as given in King James' translation of A. D. 1611, commonly called the Authorized Version? "Whosoever is born of God". 1 John 3: 9; 4: 7; 5: 1; 4: 18; also 2: 29. In all these texts the Revisers have given us begotten instead of born. That is in harmony with the symbol used to illustrate it. Instead of "Born of God", those texts now read "Begotten of God".

OBJECTIONS RAISED.

Some have thought that John 1: 13, was directly against the teaching, that the new birth takes place at the resurrection, because it reads, even in the Revised Version, "which were born not of blood". But even here, the revisers have placed the word "begotten" in the margin of that very text. Let the student grasp the context, and he will see harmony, in the use of the word "begotten"; and disparity, as well as impossibility, if the word "Born" is used. "To as many as received him, he gave authority to become the children of God, to those believing into his name, who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". E. D. Here we have the following steps. To those believing, the regental takes place; it is not accomplished by man, of blood, or the will of the flesh, but it is by God that we are begotten. It is "Him that begat". From that time, those who receive Christ by believing into his name, are begotten into spiritual life, and are then given authority, or the right or privilege to become (in future) the children of God. Another text which is raised as an objection is, Rom. 8: 14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God". The Emph. Diag. reads: "As many as are guided by God's Spirit, these are the sons of God". To accept this text as proof that we are born again now in this present life, when we are converted, would destroy the harmony and meaning of many other passages. We must therefore find the explanation from the context. This can be done very easily.

First, In the very next verse, 15th, we have the figure of "Adoption" used instead of the "Birth" symbol. "Ye have received the spirit of adoption". An adopted son is not one born of the parents who adopted him. It is a very different illustration. It is quite in keeping with that figure for those adopted be called sons, and for them to "Cry Abba, Father".

Second, In verse 17, another figure is used. "If children then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." An heir is not in possession of the property, or the inheritance, and may never come into its possession. The duke of Clarence was the eldest son of King Edward, and consequently he was the heir to the throne of Great Britain. But his death has forever prevented his coming into possession, and his brother, now the Prince of Wales, is now the heir to the throne of England. This illustration holds good in the spiritual sense with our argument. Being heirs to eternal life we are not in possession of it, and may never have it although "Begotten" into spiritual life at conversion.

Third, This heirship is also conditional, and the conditions last until death, or while probation continues. One stipulation is here given: "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together". The suffering continues until death, or to the end of probation, then comes possession or the glorification.

Fourth. Another condition to sonship is that of being led or guided by the Spirit. "As many as are guided by God's Spirit, these are sons of God." E. D. V. 14. The guiding or leading of the Spirit is not, for

one day, or a week, or a month, or a year: but it is for life. Therefore the work of leading and guiding will not be finished until life is over, and then at Christ's second coming, sonship. But if we cease to be led, or guided by the Spirit, we then forfeit the right or privilege to become sons of God.

Fifth. We can view this sonship as yet unborn, for Paul tells us in verse 19 that "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." In the natural sense, sons are only manifested when they are born, and as the manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place, neither has their birth spiritually. To this we have the most positive proof in verses 21 and 23. "Because the creature (or the creation) also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." . . . "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for sonship." If we are waiting for sonship, we cannot have it at the present time. If we are waiting for birth, it cannot have taken place already.

Sixth. Paul tells us that even now, God "Calleth those things which be not as though they were." Rom. 4: 17. So that speaking or reckoning of our sonship, as already actual fact, we are thus assured of the certainty of becoming sons of God, if we will be led, or guided by the Spirit and suffer persecution. Then the mere repetition of verse 14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," does not prove that we are already born again, or born

from above, contrary to the six positions stated. But they help us to understand one, at least, of the some things hard to be understood, which Paul wrote.

To fix more deeply in the memory the explanation of Rom. 8: 14 I will here collate the afore mentioned points.

1st, "Are sons of God" by adoption. Rom. 8: 15.

2nd, "Are sons of God" by the symbol of heirship. Verse 17.

3rd, "Are sons of God" conditional upon suffering. Verse 17.

4th, "Are sons of God" if guided all the time by the Holy Spirit. Verse 14.

5th, "Are sons of God" unborn. Verses 19, 23.

6th, "God calleth those things (sons) which be not as though they were." Rom. 4: 17.

The very positive statement, "Ye are sons", made by Paul in Gal. 4: 9, may be raised as an objection to the future birth of the begotten of God by some. But verse 5 tells us that the symbol is, "The adoption of sons", and not by birth. Another very strong assertion is made by John. "Now are we the sons of God." 1 John 3: 2. That text, according to many, sets aside all the other Scriptures, and reasons herein given. I believe that John was inspired by the same Holy Spirit which inbreathed Paul when he wrote his letters. Therefore there can be no conflicting statements between Paul and John; and the Scripture named, thoroughly agrees with all I have written when carefully examined. I will give the whole text in another trans-

lation, which will help the student to see that there is perfect harmony in my argument. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it has not yet been seen what we shall be. We know, however, that if he should appear, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." Emph. Dia.

The first thing to note is, we are called children, instead of sons, it is both unwise and imprudent to call unborn children sons, for they may be daughters. The qualification which is given by John, "It has not yet been seen what we shall be," cannot apply to children that are born, but it can to those unborn. Paul's idea was the same when he wrote, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. . . . I count not myself to have apprehended." If Paul had been raised from the dead, if he had been born again he would have gained sonship and immortality. "If he should appear, we shall be like him." That text clearly proves that we are now, while in this present state, before the coming of Christ, unlike Jesus. But when Jesus was on the earth "it behooveth him to be made like unto his brethren."

WHO ARE ISRAELITES?

The new birth question of John 3: 1-21, as stated by Jesus should forever settle the Jewish claims, and those who advocate them, to any part in the kingdom of God on account of their race, while they refuse to be generated by another Father. "They which are children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." Rom. 9: 8. After foretelling the death of Jesus.

it is further shown that "He shall see his seed." But how could this be when it is asked in prophecy, "Who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth." Isa. 53:8; with Acts 8:33. The children, or seed of Jesus will be a spiritual race or generation. We are begotten not out of corruptible seed, but incorruptible through the means of the word of a living and abiding God, that is by the law of God, the ten words of God. Then by a life in conformity thereto. Having accepted the enabling power to do so, which is obtained by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then we shall be born again at the coming of Christ, and thus made like him. In further explanation to Nicodemus, Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." How long do we retain these fleshly bodies? Answer. "It is sown, (buried) in corruption, dishonor, weakness, a natural body." When does the change, or birth take place? It is raised in incorruption. It is raised in glory. It is raised in power. It is raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. 15: 41-57.

We have first our natural bodies, "afterward that which is spiritual." Note again the comparison of those born of the spirit, with the holy spirit's movements, or mode of quick traveling. "The spirit where he willeth doth breathe, and his voice thou hearest, but thou hast not known whence he cometh, and whither he goeth; thus is every one who is born of the spirit." Dr. Young, John 3: 8. Mar. R. V. The comparison here

nade is not how the spirit operates upon the heart but how the spirit moves hither and thither, and they who are born of the spirit are able to come and go in the same way. That the resurrected saints, or those born again, are like the angels. See Luke 20: 35, 36. During Daniel's prayer Gabriel flew from heaven to earth. Dan. 9: 20-23. This is also illustrated by Elijah, Jesus Christ and the multitude of captives who ascended with him to heaven. Therefore as no man when converted can ascend to heaven, or move as quickly as an angel, it is clear proof that they are not born of the spirit, and that the new birth did not take place when they turned from sin to God. But at the resurrection those in Christ will be born from the dead, and the living mortals shall put on immortality, and together they will be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall they ever be with the Lord. This shows how those who are born of the Spirit are like him, or like the angels.

While the teaching of the new birth at conversion does not. Of all the multitudes that believed on, or in Christ, not one is said to be born again. Why then should we employ unscriptural terms and phrases, when they give rise to erroneous teaching and presumption? "Born of water and spirit". John 3: 5. This explanation of the nature of the birth was given by Jesus to Nicodemus, in answer to his question: "How can a man be born when he is old?" Water is very frequently used as a symbol of the Word of God, or the law of God. See Eph. 5: 26. "Washing of water by the

word." John 15: 3; 17:17; Eze. 36: 25; Isa. 10: 11. The theory put forth by some that immersion, is here referred to by Jesus is neither in harmony with the subject, or the context. No person when baptized immediately becomes like the Holy Spirit or like the angels, as Jesus asserts they do when they are born again. Verse 8. But they do so, by the regenerating power of the law of God and the holy spirit at the resurrection.

It is therefore untrue that the new birth takes place at conversion. If so, it is false, and those who teach it are teaching falsehood, and that must be displeasing to the God of truth. We cannot be born anew unless we are begotten, and we cannot be begotten unless we receive with meekness the implanted word, the ten words of God. How very essential it is then to be holding forth or exhibiting the words of life! Imp. Dia. Phil. 2: 16. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." Rom. 1: 18. R. V.

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