

*A Proposed Definition of Regeneration*

Although various terms and concepts have been used by the writers whom we have quoted, I would propose the following as a brief working definition: *Regeneration is that ministry of the Holy Spirit by which He imparts spiritual life to one who is spiritually dead.*

Why is regeneration necessary? Because the Scriptures teach that all natural descendants of Adam in the natural state are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins, sinners, bondslaves to sin, at enmity with God, rebels against the Law of God, suppressers of the truth of God, unable to understand the things of God, unable to please God, and those who continually stand under the wrath and condemnation of God. The Bible uniformly portrays fallen man in all dispensations and ages as spiritually dead and morally depraved; and these two aspects of man's spiritual condition establish the necessity of regeneration.

The Bible presents the doctrine of regeneration under several aspects, but mainly four: a new birth, a new life, a new creation, and a new nature. Regeneration is a new birth, a spiritual rebirth, a being born into God's spiritual family, a becoming a child of God, a being begotten anew by the Holy Spirit. Regeneration results in a new life, a resurrection from the dead, a spiritual coming to life. The presence of spiritual life is detected by the presence of life functions, by awareness of spiritual activity and movement and spiritual appetites and drives, and by the experience within oneself of spiritual thoughts, emotions, desires, intentions, and decisions. Regeneration is also a new creation. It is a restoration, initially and progressively, of God's image and likeness in me. It means being restored to God-likeness, becoming more and more conformed to the perfect image of God in Christ. It means knowing God personally, and becoming a holy person, as He is holy. It means becoming a new person, and having a new outlook on creation and life. And regeneration also results in a new nature. In regeneration my nature -- what I am -- is renewed and renovated. The Spirit of God enables me to begin to put to death the expressions of godlessness and unrighteousness in me, and to begin to produce expressions of godliness and holiness in my life, with the result that the prevailing disposition of my character and conduct is that of righteousness.

Now armed with these definitions of regeneration and the various aspects