

## THE NEW BIRTH AND THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH THAT FOLLOWS IT

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In an hour when the Bride of Christ is being attacked from all sides by an enemy whose evil desire is to lead us astray from even the basic doctrines of the Bible, it behooves us to ever be **“As wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.”** (Matt. 10:16) We are exhorted to **“GROW UP into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.”** (Eph. 4:15) We understand what is meant by Physical Growth, and the Christian should be just as informed concerning Spiritual Growth. Though we understand what physical growth is, in that we can measure it with the bathroom scales, and the tape measure, its actual operation and process is hidden from us. Ecc. 11:5, **“As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.”**

How much more then must Spiritual Growth be hidden from our natural understanding, so that unless we are taught by the Spirit, through the Word, we will fail to understand the supernatural advancement that we are calling “spiritual growth.” The beginning of our PHYSICAL GROWTH is clouded in mystery, and much more is the beginning of our SPIRITUAL GROWTH mysterious. Even so, there are certain truths that our Lord has revealed. We will look at some of these, with His help. First: we are to note that until there has been a natural birth from the mother’s womb, it is impossible for the child to grow to maturity. A 160-pound man cannot be formed in his mother’s womb.

Armed with the knowledge that things in the natural realm are types of things in the spiritual realm, we can conclude that until there has been a Spiritual Birth it is totally impossible for us to reach Spiritual Maturity in Christ. There must be a New Birth in the soul before **“Your LOVE may abound more and more.”** (Phil. 1:19) and before **“Our faith can grow exceedingly.”** (II Thes. 1:3) The New Creature, which is a result of the old soul being replaced with the Soul of God, is from above. This New Creature is nothing less than the God of all Creation having moved into a house of clay. Our natural mind is not acquainted with this God, therefore there must begin a process of growth, or a time of getting acquainted with this other PERSON. (Col. 1:21)

One teaching that is a “must” for the new Christian, is the fact that the changing out of the Soul does not do away with the **“Law of Sin”** that is in our members (our flesh). (Rom. 7:23) Those two principals are in direct opposition to each other, and will be as long as the flesh survives. We are in a never-ending warfare with our flesh. Gal. 5:17, **“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”** This conflict, which often results in our having fail-

ures in the flesh man, is certain to cause confusion in the mind of the Christian. We must have the teaching of scripture to bring us peace of mind, or the enemy will make us to seriously doubt our conversion. Our failures to keep the whole Law, as the heart so desires to do, the ragings of sin that is still in the flesh, and the discovery that evil thoughts still flood our minds, which can still tempt us to sin, all cause us to wonder if Grace and Holiness have really been imparted to our heart. This presents a real problem to an honest person.

It behooves us to remember that when a baby is physically born into this world, it is complete in all its body parts. No new parts will be added at a later time. The child is a complete unit, a human being, having been given all that will ever be needed to grow to maturity, though at birth, it is not developed. And so, at our Spiritual Birth we are complete in Christ, there will not be added one thing that is not included in the New Soul that we received. But, in this we are also not developed and there must begin a growth. It is the unending duty of the Holy Ghost to develop in our Character the Graces that are already in us by the impartation of His Soul.

Though one person may grow faster than another, and the fruits of righteousness be more in evidence, yet if the New Birth really took

place, one is no more "CONVERTED" than the other. Both have within all that will ever be needed to reach spiritual maturity and leave this earth in a Rapture. This is the "SEAL" of Eph. 1:13. It is the thing that has made us "Accepted in The Beloved." (Eph. 1:6) it is what has made us to be "Holy and with out blame before Him in love." (Eph. 1:4) The fact that we must stress is that without this Spiritual Birth there can be no Spiritual progress.

In this Satan's Eden, where spiritual counterfeits are all around us and so many good people are confused about what the New Birth is and WHEN it can happen, we dare not conclude that all people in Message Churches have had the genuine experience. May the Lord Jesus be pleased to give us more light as we write, and may some true Christians, who now seem to be confused about WHEN the New Birth can occur, see the way of the Lord more clearly. There is a teaching in our churches that is coming more and more to the front, and one that this writer feels pressed in the Spirit to address. It is the doctrine that the New Birth cannot occur until the person has accepted, or is in the process of accepting, the End-Time Message. On the surface it sounds good, but it doesn't seem to fit all the scripture.

Before I discuss this teaching, let me say that it is in no way the intention of this writer to "accuse" any of my beloved Brothers who teach this. As for our part, we have no thought of breaking fellowship. Instead we greatly desire to follow the teaching of Paul when he said, "I beseech you brethren that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you...." (I Cor. 1:10) We will therefore, respectfully

set before you our thoughts on the subject, and give scripture and quotes in support of the same.

First let it be said that BEFORE there can be Spiritual Growth, there must be SPIRITUAL LIFE, and that Spiritual Life is a result of the New Birth. Before the New Birth we are "Dead in trespasses and sins, and walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:1-2) John 6:44 declares that, "No man CAN come unto Me except the Father that has sent Me draw him." How does the Father draw us to Himself? Is it not by sending His Spirit to us so that we can THEN receive revelations of truth? Only a REGENERATED PERSON CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY! How then do we say that we must FIRST BELIEVE the Message for today BEFORE we can experience the New Birth? It seems to this writer that in teaching this, we have put "Cart before the horse."

Many scriptures bear out the fact that there must first be Spiritual Life before Spiritual Truth can be imparted. I Tim. 2:3-4, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and (THEN) to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Please notice the sequence of events here. It is Salvation first, then the knowledge of the Truth. John 16:13-15, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...." Notice again, not that we come into the truth and then receive the Spirit (New Birth), but just the opposite. The Spirit comes to indwell and LEAD to the Truth.

II Tim. 3:5-7, "Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away." Verse 7, "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." These people had the ability to see certain things intellectually, but not the spiritual ability to apply the same truths to their daily lives. They denied that there was a power that could enable them to do so. And why could they not come to the knowledge of the truth? It was because the Truth Giver was not in them! But, when He comes, He will lead into all truth.

Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power AFTER that the Holy Ghost has come upon you; And (then) ye shall be witnesses unto me...." We can only be a true witness after the New Birth. Not that we receive the New Birth by BELIEVING, but rather that we believe because we were given the New Birth! I Cor. 2:12, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Verse 14, "But 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."

And so I say again, to teach that a man is born again AFTER he receives the revelations of truth, is contrary to scripture. And also, if we say he is born again AT THE TIME he receives the truth, we are still unscriptural, for the Word declares there must be Life, or a Birth, BEFORE there can be spiritual enlightenment. This takes salvation completely out of the hands of man. God-made Christians are a miracle of

GRACE and GRACE alone. They are the product of Divine Workmanship, a Divine Creation, brought into existence by the Supernatural Power of God and totally independent of any help from the one receiving it.

By the New Birth, we are enabled to communicate with our Creator. The old nature, that was there before this miracle, had no desire to communicate, much less was he able to receive the End-Time Message as his part in being granted Life! It is the God of ALL Grace that brings us from "**Death unto Life**" and the will of man plays no part in it. (Rom. 9:16) There must be something imparted that was not there before, or else we cannot, with the heart, believe this glorious Message. By no efforts of our own, by no university education, or religious instruction about the Message can we obtain any vital knowledge of it. It is utterly beyond our ability until the change comes.

QUOTE: YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN, DEC.31, 1961, JEFF. PAGE 8, "Now, God bless His Word. And I want to take the subject this morning of Jesus' first doctrine. The first doctrine of Jesus was, You Must Be Born Again. ....And we find out that there is so many different meanings that people put to it....so seeing there is so many different interpretations, and yet (It is) a Bible doctrine, there must be, and is, a truth somewhere."

CONT. QUOTE: PAGE 10, "And although the Creed that they recite, (In saying they are born-again) and I don't believe we should criticize it, some of them (The creeds) are pure and holy, some of them are real scriptural, (For example: The correct teaching of the End Time Message) but the scripture is not applied in the right place. And even ap-

plying the scripture I believe the New Birth is something beyond that! Even though how well you might mean it, (Your belief in the Message) I believe that the New Birth is far beyond your good intentions and your thoughts, mind, it's beyond that."

CONT. QUOTE: PAGE 11, "And no matter how much that we try to think that we are right in saying a creed (Or saying I believe the Message), you're still what you were until you're actually born-again of the Spirit of God. It doesn't change you. (What you believe doesn't change you of itself, God must perform the miracle.) Your creed, joining the church, or changing your ideas, (From Baptist to Message) or your good intentions, although as good as it might seem, it's still not right. (Not right in our heart until the miracle of change comes) There's something got to happen, the New Birth is an experience, something that takes place. SO IT IS NOT THAT THAT BRINGS THE NEW BIRTH. (What we say we believe does not bring the New Birth.) Now the different churches, they'd say, well, you accept this or believe that, and it's all right. BUT IT ISN'T!" (End quote)

Dear friends, I believe if we will open our hearts to the scriptures and the Prophet's Message, we will see that believing the End-time Message, of itself, is not what causes the Lord to give us the New Birth. John 3:3, "**Except a man be born-again he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven.**" Neither can he receive the Message of the Hour in such a way as to live by it! He may have a notional knowledge of it but until the Miracle of Grace takes place he cannot have any spiritual understanding of it.

God's favorable regard of us did not originate in anything whatever

that was in us, nor even in what He saw we would later become. God's grace to us, in that He brought us into this Message, was absolutely FREE. It was the exercise of His own good pleasure, and the cause of us having been shown the light was altogether in Himself. It was not at all because He looked down and saw that we had decided to believe the Message. II Tim. 1:9,

**"Who hath saved us and called us with an Holy Calling, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began."** Our believing and understanding the Message was not bestowed upon us because of our graces, or because we believed it first, but rather because of HIS GRACE.

This writer, having been born-again back in Pentecost, was not born the second time when he was led into the Message. How can a man enter into his mother's womb and be born the second time? We are only born ONE TIME physically and Spiritually. It is true that many in Pentecost received only an anointing, and not He, Himself. The soul was not changed. But, it is also just as true that some did receive He, Himself, as they walked in all the light they had at the time. This writer was one of those. How can we tell those who were truly born-again in Pentecost? Very simple, when they were exposed to God's End-Time Message they received it. Not that they needed to be born the second time, for they already had in them all that was needed to receive truth as it was revealed.

Many who were in Pentecost and who were anointed WITH THE SPIRIT reject this Message today.

The reason being that the Spirit was only WITH THEM and not IN THEM. (John 14:17) To suppose that we grew in favor with God by believing the Message, and that this caused Him to favor us with the New Birth, gives man reason to boast and does away with FREE GRACE. It also supposes, unscripturally, that man may obtain Spiritual Knowledge before the New Birth, and that he did so by believing the Message.

But, the scripture says, **“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.”** (I Cor. 2:14)

How then may a person in this hour come into this saving grace? Can he come in through believing the End-Time Message? Most certainly he may! That is if the part of the Message be preached to him that has to do with repentance and then accepting forgiveness by faith in the Blood of the Cross. But, a general belief in the overall Message, and the coming of a Prophet, was never ordained to lift the sin burden from our shoulders. Most certainly the Bride will believe Her Prophet, but not as a **“WAY TO SALVATION.”** He was only another **“MEANS”** to the **WAY**, which way is Jesus Christ.

What shall we say then about the New Birth? This! Whether you came into it before you heard of the Message, or whether you received it by hearing the Message preached, just be certain that a **TRUE CONVERSION** has taken place. Such a Miracle of Grace that takes

place in us when we are forgiven of our sins cannot long go unnoticed in one who is so blessed. The change can easily be recognized by the effects it produces. There will be a genuine crying out for the One who took the sins away, a strong desire to serve Him and do His will.

If you received this Eternal Blessing through three steps, **BEFORE** you knew of this Message, you will be led into it. If you believe the Message intellectually and this Supernatural Change has not yet come, it is still available to you. Rev. 3:20, **“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if ANY MAN hear my Voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”**

To the end of His ministry, Brother Branham taught three stages of Grace that brings us to full Salvation. To those who have said to me, “God doesn’t do it that way anymore,” let me respectfully refer you to the following quote:

QUOTE: THE FUTURE HOME, PAGE 14, 1964 JEFF, “And notice how God makes plain to us His Plan of Redemption. Oh, this just thrilled my soul when I saw it. How He makes plain to us here now, His Plan of Redemption.....How He led us to Himself, to a tabernacle in us by three stages of Grace, just like He’s led the world in three stages, to come through the world. As God will come to the world after it has gone through three different stages of purification, **THAT’S EXACTLY HOW HE COMES TO US, THROUGH THREE STAGES OF**

**GRACE. I’VE TAUGHT THAT AT THE BEGINNING; I’VE NEVER CHANGED SINCE. IT’S GOD’S WORD.”** (End quote)

Why would the enemy of our soul want us to believe that we can now come in by simply believing the Message? It must be because some have an intellectual knowledge of the Message who haven’t been supernaturally changed, and he would have them to be satisfied with said belief. He well knows that without the Inner Nature change, we will miss the Rapture.

Precious Message Believers, the Way has not changed, since the Book of Acts. A man must be pricked in his heart by the Holy Ghost and be convinced of his lost condition. He must be made to throw down his weapons of rebellion against our Christ, and cast aside his idols, and turn loose of his love for the world. He must be made to surrender to the Lordship of Christ, taking His yoke upon him. (Not just believe the Message) He must be **“Delivered the Faith”** to believe in the cleansing power of the Blood to remove all sin, past present and future.

In doing these things, he is to understand that a Power outside himself has accomplished the work. This fulfills the scripture that declares, **“For by GRACE are ye saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God. NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast.”** (Eph. 2:8-9)

Message Believers, we must be Born-Again! Amen!

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