

THE NEW NATURE
NO. 398

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 30, 1861
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,
by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.
For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:
but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.
And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”*
1 Peter 1:23-25

PETER had earnestly exhorted the scattered saints to love each other “with a pure heart fervently,” and he wisely fetches his argument, not from the law, nor from nature, nor from philosophy, but from that high and divine nature which God has implanted in His people. Love each other with a pure heart fervently, for you have been born again, not with corruptible seed, but with incorruptible.

I might compare Peter to some judicious tutor of the princes of the blood, who labors to beget and foster a kingly spirit in the king’s sons. From their position and descent, he brings argument for a dignified behavior—“Do not act foolishly, it would be unseemly in a king. Speak not so, ribald language would be unbecoming to a prince. Indulge not in these vanities, such would be degrading to the illustrious of the earth.”

So looking upon God’s people as being heirs of glory, princes of the blood royal, descendants of the King of kings, earth’s true and only real aristocracy, Peter says to them, “See that ye love one another, because of your noble birth, being born of incorruptible seed; because of your pedigree, being descended from God, the Creator of all things; and because of your immortal destiny, for you shall never pass away, though the glory of flesh shall fade, and even its very existence shall cease.”

I think it would be well, my brethren, if in a spirit of humility, you and I recognized the free dignity of our regenerated nature and lived up to it. Oh! what is a Christian? If you compare him with a king, he adds priestly sanctity to royal dignity. The king’s royalty often lies only in his crown, but with a Christian it is infused into his very nature.

Compare him with a senator, with a mighty warrior, or a master of wisdom, and he far excels them all. He is of another race than those who are only born of woman. He is as much above his fellows through his new birth, as man is above the beast that perishes. As humanity towers in dignity high above the groveling brute, so does the regenerate man overtop the best of human once-born mortals.

Surely he ought to bear himself and act as one who is not of the multitude—one who has been chosen out of the world, distinguished by sovereign grace, written among “the peculiar people”—and who therefore cannot grovel as others grovel, nor think as others think. Let the dignity of your nature and the brightness of your prospects, O believers in Christ, make your cleave to holiness and hate the very appearance of evil.

In the text there are three points which I think will repay our very serious attention. The apostle evidently speaks of two lives—the one, the life which is natural, born, matured, and perfected only by the flesh. The other, the life which is spiritual—born of the Spirit, in antagonism with the flesh, surviving it, and triumphantly rising to celestial glory.

Now, in speaking of these two lives, the apostle brings out, first of all, *a comparison and a contrast between the two births*—for each life has its own birth. Then he brings out *a contrast between the*

manifest existence of the two lives. And then lastly, *between the glory of the two lives*—for each life has its glory, but the glory of the spiritual life far excels the glory of the natural.

I. First then, the apostle Peter draws A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO BIRTHS WHICH ARE THE DOORWAYS OF THE TWO LIVES.

First, we have said that every life is prefaced by birth. It is so naturally—we are *born*. It is so spiritually—we are *born again*. Except a man be born, he cannot enter into the kingdom of nature. Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Birth is the lowly gateway by which we enter into life and the lofty portal by which we are admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

Now there is a comparison between the two births. in both there is a *solemn mystery*. I have read, I have even heard sermons, in which the minister seemed to me rather to play the part of a physician than of a divine, exposing and explaining the mysteries of our natural birth, across which both God in nature and the good man in delicacy must ever throw a veil.

It is a hallowed thing to be born, as surely as it is a solemnity to die. Birthdays and death days are days of awe. Birth is very frequently used in Scripture as one of the most graphic pictures of solemn mystery. Into this, no man may idly pry, and Science herself, when she has dared to look within the veil, has turned back awestricken, from those “lower parts of the earth” in which David declares us to be “curiously wrought.”

Greater still is the mystery of the *new birth*. That we are born again we know, but how, we cannot tell. How the Spirit of God operates upon the mind, how it is that He renews the faculties, and imparts fresh desires by which those faculties shall be guided, how it is that He enlightens the understanding, subdues the will, purifies the intellect, reverses the desire, lifts up the hope, and puts the fear in its right channel, we cannot tell.

We must leave this among the secret things which belong to God. The Holy Ghost works, but the manner of His operation is not to be comprehended. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell from whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Oh! my hearers, have you *felt* this mystery? Explain it you cannot, nor can I, nor ought we to attempt an explanation—for where God is silent it is perhaps profanity and certainly impertinence for us to speak. The two births then are alike in their solemn mystery.

But then, we know this much of our natural birth, that in birth there is a *life created*. Yonder infant is beginning his being—another creature has lifted up its feeble cry to heaven—another mortal has come to tread this theater of action, to breathe, to live, to die. And so in the new birth, there is an absolute creation—we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus—there is another spirit born to pray, to believe in Christ, to love Him here, and to rejoice in Him hereafter.

As no one doubts but that birth is the manifestation of a creation, so let no one doubt but that regeneration is the manifestation of a creation of God, as divine, as much beyond the power of man, as the creation of the human mind itself.

But we know also that in birth there is not only a life created, but a *life communicated*. Each child has its parent. The very flowers trace themselves back to a parental seed. We spring, not from our own loins, we are not self-created. There is a life communicated. We have links between the son and the father, and back till we come to father Adam.

So in regeneration there is a life, not merely created, but communicated, even the very life of God, who has begotten us again unto a lively hope. As truly as the father lives in the child, so truly does the very life and nature of God live in every twice-born heir of heaven. We are as certainly partakers of the divine nature by the new birth as we were partakers of the human nature by the old birth—so far the comparison holds good.

Equally certain is it, that in the natural and in the spiritual birth there is *life entailed*. There are certain propensities which we inherit, from which this side of the grave we shall not be free. Our temperament grave or gay, our passions slow or hasty, our propensities sensual or aspiring, our faculties

contracted or expansive, are to a great measure an entailed inheritance as much linked to our future portion as are wings to an eagle or a shell to a snail.

No doubt much of our history is born within us and the infant has within himself the germ of his future actions. If I may so speak, there are those qualities that composition and disposition of nature which will naturally, if circumstances assist, work out in full development certain results.

So is it with us when we are born again—a heavenly nature is entailed upon us. We cannot but be holy, the new nature cannot but serve God. It must—it will pant to be nearer to Christ, and more like Him. It has aspirations which time cannot satisfy, desires which earth cannot surfeit, longings which heaven alone can gratify. There is a life entailed upon us in the moment when we pass from death unto life in the solemn mystery of *regeneration*.

In the old birth, and in the new birth also, *a life* is also brought forth which is *complete in all its parts* and only needs to be developed. Yon infant in the cradle shall never have another limb or another eye. Its limb hardens, it grows, it gathers strength. Its brain also enlarges its sphere, but the faculties are there already—they are not implanted afterward.

Verily, so is it in the new-born child of God. Faith, love, hope, and every grace are there the moment he believes in Christ. They grow, 'tis true, but they were all there in the instant of regeneration. The babe in grace who is just now born to God, has every part of the spiritual man—it only needs to grow till he becomes a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Thus far, you perceive, that the two births have a very close resemblance to one another. I pray you, now that I have introduced the subject, do not turn from it till you have thought of the reality of the new birth, as you must of the reality of the first. You were not here if you had not been born—you shall never be in heaven unless you are born again.

You had not been able today to hear, or think, or see if you had not been born. You are not today able to pray or to believe in Christ, unless you are born again. The enjoyments of this world you could never have known, if it had not been for birth. The sacred delight of God you do not know today, and you never shall know unless you are born again.

Do not look upon regeneration as though it were a fancy or a fiction. I do assure you, my hearers, it is as real as is the natural birth. For spiritual is not the same as fanciful, but the spiritual is as real as even nature itself. To be born again is as much a matter of fact to be realized, to be discerned, and to be discovered, as to be born for the first time into this vale of tears.

But now comes *the contrast*—"being born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Herein lies the contrast between the two. That child who has just experienced the first birth, has been made partaker of *corruptible seed*. The depravity of his parent lies sleeping within him. Could he speak, he might say so. David did—"Behold, I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity." He receives the evil virus which was first infused into us by the fall.

Not so, however, is it when we are born again. No sin is then sown within us. This sin of the old flesh remains, but there is no sin in the new-born nature—it cannot sin because it is born of God Himself. It is as impossible for that new nature to sin as for the Deity itself to be defiled. It is a part of the divine nature—a spark struck off from the central orb of light and life, and dead or dark it cannot be—because it would be contrary to its nature to be either the one or the other.

Oh, what a difference! In the first birth—born to sin, in the next—born to holiness. In the first—partakers of corruption, in the next—heirs of incorruption. In the first—depravity, in the second—perfection. What broader contrast could there be? What should make us more thoroughly long for this new birth than the glorious fact that we are by its means consciously lifted up from the ruins of the fall and made perfect in Christ Jesus.

In the birth of the flesh too, what *dread uncertainties* attend it! What shall become of yonder child? It may live to curse the day in which it was born, as did the poor troubled patriarch of old. What sorrow may drive its ploughshares along its yet unwrinkled brow? Ah! child, you shall be grey-headed one day,

but ere that comes you shall have felt a thousand storms beating about your heart and head. Little do you know your destiny, but assuredly you shall be of few days and full of trouble.

Not so in the regeneration—we shall never rue the day in which we are born again, never look back upon that with sorrow, but always with ecstasy and delight, for we are ushered then—not into the hovel of humanity—but into the palace of Deity. We are not then born into a valley of tears, but into an inheritance in the Canaan of God.

That child, too, so fondly the object of its mother's love, may one day vex or break its parent's heart. Are not children doubtful mercies? Bring they not with them sad forebodings of what they yet may be? Alas for the pretty prattlers who have grown up to be convicted criminals!

But blessed be God, they who are sons of God shall never break their Father's heart. Their new nature shall be worthy of Him who gave it existence. They shall live to honor Him, they shall die to be perfectly like Him, and shall rise to glorify Him forever.

We have sometimes said that God has a very naughty family, but surely the naughtiness is in the old Adam nature, and not in JEHOVAH's gracious work. There is no naughtiness in the new creature. In that new creature there is no taint of sin. God's child as descended from His loins, can never sin. The new nature which God has put into it does never wander, does never transgress—it were not the new nature if it did, it were not God's offspring if it did—for that which comes of God is like Him, holy, pure, and undefiled, separate from sin.

In this indeed lies a strange difference. We know not to what that first nature tends—who can tell what bitterness it shall bring forth? But we know whither the new nature tends—for it ripens towards the perfect image of Him who created us in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps without my endeavoring to enlarge further, you could yourselves muse upon this theme. It remains but for me upon this first head to return with earnestness to that point upon which I fear the greatest difficulty lies—the realization of this birth—for we repeat it, we are speaking of a fact and not a dream, a reality and not a metaphor.

Some tell you that the child is regenerated when the drops fall from priestly fingers. My brethren, a more fond and foul delusion was never perpetrated upon earth. Rome itself did never discourse upon a wilder error than this. Dream not of it. O think not that it is so. “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

The Lord Himself addresses this sentence not to an infant but to a full-grown man. Nicodemus—one who was circumcised according to the Jewish law, but who yet, though he had received the seal of that covenant, needed as a man to be born again. We all without exception must know this change. Your life may have been moral, but it will not suffice.

The most moralized human nature can never attain to the divine nature. You may cleanse and purge the fruit of the first birth, but still the inevitable decree demands the second birth for all. If from your youth up you have been so trained that you have scarcely known the vices of the people—so tended, hedged in, and kept from contamination with sin, that you have not known temptation—yet you must be born again.

And this birth, I repeat it, must be as much a fact, must be as true, as real, and as sure as was that first birth in which you were ushered into this world. What do you know of this, my hearer? What do you know of this? It is a thing you cannot perform for yourself. You cannot regenerate yourself any more than you could cause yourself to be born. It is a matter out of the range of human power—it is supernatural, it is divine.

Have you partaken of it? Do not merely look back to some hour in which you felt mysterious feelings. No, but judge by the fruits. Have your fears and hopes changed places? Do you love the things you once hated, and hate the things you once loved? Are old things passed away? Have all things become new?

Christian brethren, I put the query to you, as well as to the rest. It is so easy to be deceived here. We shall find it no trifle to be born again. It is a solemn, it is a momentous matter. Let us not take it for

granted because we have given up drunkenness that we are therefore converted, because we do not swear, because now we attend a place of worship. There is more needed than this.

Do not think you are saved because you have some good feelings, some good thoughts. There is more required than this—you must be *born again*. And oh, Christian parents, train up your children in the fear of God, but do not be content with your training—they must be born again. And Christian husbands, and Christian wives—be not satisfied with merely praying that your partner’s characters may become moral and honest—ask that something may be done for them which they cannot do for themselves.

And you philanthropists, who think that building new cottages, using fresh plans for drainage, teaching the poor economy, will be the means of emparadising the world. I pray you go further than such schemes as these. You must change the heart. It is but little use to alter the outward till you have renewed the inward. It is not the bark of the tree that is wrong as much as the sap. It is not the skin—it is the blood—nay, deeper than the blood—the very essence of the nature must be altered.

The man must be as much made anew as if he never had an existence. Nay, a greater miracle than this—these must be two miracles combined—the old things must pass away and new things must be created by the Holy Ghost. I tremble while I speak upon this theme, lest I, your minister, should know in theory, but not in experience a mystery so sublime as this.

What shall we do but together offer a prayer like this—“O God, if we be not regenerate, let us know the worst of our state, and if we be, let us never cease to plead and pray for others till they too shall be renewed by the Holy Ghost.”

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Its best endeavors go no higher than flesh, and the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit alone is Spirit, and only the Spirit can enter into spiritual things, and inherit the spiritual portion which God has provided for His people.

I have thus passed through the somewhat delicate and extremely difficult task of bringing out the apostle’s meaning—the comparison between the two births—which are the doorsteps of the two lives.

II. I now come to the second point—THE MANIFEST DIFFERENCE OF THE TWO LIVES RESULTING FROM THE TWO BIRTHS.

Brethren, look around you. To what shall we compare this immense assembly? As I look upon the many colors, and the varied faces, even if it were not in the text, I am certain that a meadow thickly besprinkled with flowers would rise up before my imagination. Look at the mass of people gathered together, and does it not remind you of the field in its full summer glory, when the king-cups, daisies, clovers, and grass blooms are sunning themselves in countless varieties of beauty?

Ay, but not only in the poet’s eye is there a resemblance—but in the mind of God—and in the experience of man. “All flesh is grass.” All that is born of the first birth, if we compare it to grass in poetry, may be compared to it also in fact—from the frailty and shortness of its existence. We passed the meadows but a month ago, and they were moved in verdant billows by the breeze like waves of ocean when they are softly stirred with the evening gale. We looked upon the whole scene and it was exceeding fair.

We passed it yesterday, and the mower’s scythe had cut asunder beauty from its roots, and there it lay in heaps ready to be gathered when fully dry. The grass is cut down so soon—but if it stood, it would wither, and handfuls of dust would take the place of the green and colored leaves, for does not the grass wither and the flowers thereof fall away?

Such is mortal life. We are not living, brethren, we are dying. We begin to breathe and we make the number of our breaths less. Our pulse is “beating funeral marches to the tomb.” The sand runs down from the upper bulb of the glass and it is emptying fast. Death is written upon every brow. Man, know that you are mortal, for you are born of woman. Your first birth gave you life and death together. You do only breathe awhile to keep you from the jaws of the grave—when that breath is spent—into the dust of death you fall then and there.

Everything, especially during the last few weeks, has taught us the frailty of human life. The senator who guided the affairs of nations and beheld the rise of a free kingdom, lived not to see it fully organized, but expired with many a weighty secret unspoken. The judge who has sentenced many, receives his own sentence at the last.

From this earth, since last we met together, master-minds have been taken away, and even the monarch on his throne has owned the monarchy of Death. How many of the masses too have fallen and have been carried to their long home! There have been funerals, some of them funerals of honored men who perished doing their Master's will in saving human life, and alas, there have been unhonored burials of others who did the will of Satan, and have inherited the flame.

There have been deaths abundant on the right hand and on the left, and well have Peter's words been proved—"All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away."

Now, brethren, let us look at the other side of the question. The second birth gave us a nature too—will that also die? Is it like grass and its glory like the flower of the field? No, most certainly not. The first nature dies because the seed was corruptible. But the second nature was not created by corruptible seed, but with incorruptible, even the Word of God into which God has infused His own life—so that it quickens us by the Spirit.

That incorruptible Word produces an incorruptible life. The child of God in his new nature never dies. He can never see death. Christ, who is in him, is the immortality and the life. "He that liveth and believeth in Christ shall never die." And yet again—"Though he were dead, yet shall he live."

When we are born again, we receive a nature which is indestructible by accident, which is not to be consumed by fire, drowned by water, weakened by old age, or smitten down by blast of pestilence; a nature invulnerable to poison; a nature which shall not be destroyed by the sword; a nature which can never die till the God who gave it should Himself expire and Deity die out.

Think of this, my brethren, and surely you will find reason to rejoice. But perhaps, you ask me, why it is the new nature can never die? I am sure the text teaches it never can. "But not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even of the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." If that does not teach that the spiritual nature which is given us by the new birth never dies, it does not teach anything at all. And if it does teach that, where goes the Arminian doctrine of falling from grace? Where go your Arminian fears of perishing after all?

But let me show you why it is that this nature never dies. First, *from the fact of its nature*. It is in itself incorruptible. Every like produces its like. Man, dying man, produces dying man. God, eternal God, produces everlasting nature when He begets again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

"As is the earthy, such are they also who are earthy." The earthy dies, we who are earthy die too. "As is the heavenly, such are they also who are heavenly." The heavenly never dies, and if we are born as the heavenly, the heavenly nature dies neither. "The first Adam was made a living soul." We are made living souls too, but that soul at last is separated from the body. "The second Adam is made a quickening spirit," and that spirit is not only alive, but quickening.

Do you not perceive it?—the first was a quickened *soul*—quickened, receiving life for a season. The second is a quickening spirit, giving out life, rather than receiving it. Like that angel whom some poet pictures, who perpetually shot forth sparklers of fire, having within himself an undying flame, the fountain of perpetual floods of light and heat. So is it with the new nature within us. It is not merely a quickened thing which may die, but a quickening thing which cannot die, being made like unto Christ the quickening Spirit.

But then, more than this, the new nature cannot die, because *the Holy Spirit perpetually supplies it with life*. "He giveth more grace"—grace upon grace. You know the apostle puts it thus—"If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by *his life*." Is not the Holy Spirit the divine agent by whom the life of Christ is infused into

us? Now, the life-floods which the Holy Spirit sends into us, co-work with the immortality of the new-born Spirit and so doubly preserve the eternity of our bliss.

But then, again, *we are in vital union with Christ*, and to suppose that the new nature could die out were to imagine that a member of Christ would die, that a finger, a hand, an arm, could rot from the person of Jesus—that He could be maimed and divided. Does not the apostle say, “Is Christ divided?” And was it not written, “Not a bone of him shall be broken”? And how were this true if we were broken from Him or rolled from His body?

My brethren, we receive the divine sap through Christ the stem. That divine sap keeps us alive, but more—the very fact that we are joined to Christ preserves our life, “Because I live ye shall live also.” The new life cannot die, *because God is pledged to keep it alive*. “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” “My Father which gave them to me is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

And yet again—“The water which I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” And yet again—“He that believeth in me shall never hunger and never thirst.” And so might we repeat multitudes of passages where the divine promise engages omnipotence and divine wisdom to preserve the new life.

So then, let us gather these all up in one. As a man born of the flesh, I shall die. As a new man born of the Spirit, I shall never die. You, O flesh, the offspring of flesh—you shall see corruption. You, O spirit, new-created spirit, offspring of the Lord—corruption you shall never see. With our glorious Covenant Head we may exclaim, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.”

I shall die, yet never die. My life shall flee, yet never flee. I shall pass away and yet abide. I shall be carried to the tomb, and yet, soaring upward, the tomb can ne’er contain the quickened Spirit. Oh, children of God, I know not any subject that ought more thoroughly to lift you out of yourselves than this.

Now let the divine nature live in you. Come, put down the animal for a moment, put down the mere mental faculty. Let the living spark blaze up. Come, let the divine element, the new-born nature that God has given to you—let that now speak—and let its voice be praise. Let it look up and let it breathe its own atmosphere, the heaven of God, in which it shall shortly rejoice.

O God, our Father, help us to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, seeing that we have by Your own Self been quickened to an immortal life.

III. I now come to the last and perhaps the most interesting point of all. THE GLORY OF THE TWO NATURES IS CONTRASTED.

Every nature has its glory. Brethren, look at the field again. There is not only the grass, but there is the flower which is the glory of the field. Sometimes many colored hues begem the pastures with beauty. Now, the painted flower is the glory of the verdant field. It comes up later than the grass, and it dies sooner, for the grass is up a long while before the flower blooms, and when the flower is dead, the stalk of the grass still retains vitality.

It is precisely so with us. Our nature has its glory, but that glory does not arrive for years. The babe has not yet the glory of full manhood, and when that glory does come, it dies before our nature dies, for “They that look out of the windows are darkened, the grinders cease because they are few.” The man loses his glory and becomes a tottering imbecile before life becomes extinct.

The flower comes up last and dies first. Our glory comes last and dies first too. O flesh! O flesh! what contempt is passed upon you! Your very existence is frail and feeble, but your glory more frail and feeble still. It grows but late, and then it dies—alas how soon!

Give me your attention for a moment while I tell you briefly. In some, the glory of the flesh is BEAUTY. Their face is fair to look upon, and as the handiwork of the Great Worker, it should be admired. When a person becomes vain of it, beauty becomes shame, but to have well-proportioned features is, doubtless, no mean endowment.

There is a glory in the beauty of the flesh, but how late it is developed, and how soon it fades! How soon do the cheeks become hollow! how frequently does the complexion grow sallow, and the bright eyes are dimmed, and the comely visage is marred!

A part, too, of the glory of the flesh is *physical strength*. To be a strong man, to have the bones well-set and the muscles well braced—to have good muscular vigor is no small thing. Many men take delight in the legs of a man and in the strength of his arm. Well, as God made him, he is a wonderful creature, and 'twere wrong for us not to admire the masterpiece of God.

But how late does muscular strength arrive! There are the days of infancy, and there are the days of youth, when as yet the strong man is but feeble. And then, when he has had his little hey-day of strength, how does the stalwart frame begin to rock and reel! And the rotting teeth and the whitened hair show that death has begun to claim the heriot clay, and will soon take possession of it for himself. “The glory thereof falleth away.”

To others, the glory of the flesh lies rather *in the mind*. They have eloquence. They can so speak as to enchant the ears of the multitude. The bees of eloquence have made their hives between the lips of the orator and honey distils with every word. Yes, but how late is this a coming! How many years before the child speaks articulately and before the young man is able to deliver himself with courage! And then, how soon it goes!—till, mumbling from between his toothless jaws, the poor man would speak the words of wisdom, but the lips of age deny him utterance.

Or let the glory be *wisdom*. There is a man whose glory is his masterly power over others. He can foresee and look further than other men, he can match craft by craft—he is so wise that his fellows put confidence in him. This is the glory of the flesh. How late is it in coming!—from the whining child, what a distance up to the wise man!

And then how soon it is gone! How often, while yet the man himself in his flesh is in vigor, has the mind shewn symptoms of decay! Well, take what you will to be the glory of the flesh, I will still pronounce over it, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” If the flesh be frail, the glory of the flesh is frailer still. If the grass wither, certainly the flower of the grass withereth before it.

But is this true of the new nature? Brethren, is this true of that which was implanted at the second birth? I have just shown you, I think, that the existence of the new nature is eternal, because it was not born of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. I have tried to show that it can never perish and can never die.

But your unbelief suggests, “Perhaps its glory may.” No, its glory never can. And what is the glory of the new-born nature? Why, its glory first of all is *beauty*. But what is its beauty? It is to be like the Lord Jesus. We are, when we shall see Him as He is, to be like Him. And that beauty shall never fade. Eternity itself shall not hollow the cheeks of this seraphic comeliness, nor dim the brilliant eye of this celestial radiance. We shall be like Christ, but the likeness shall never be marred by time, nor consumed by decay.

I said just now that the glory of the flesh consisted sometimes in its strength—so does the glory of the Spirit consist in its vigor—but then it is a force that never shall be expended. The strength of the new-born nature is the Holy Ghost Himself, and while Deity remains omnipotent, our new nature shall go on increasing in vigor till we come first to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus, and next come to be glorified men standing before His throne.

The flower of the new nature you cannot see much of yet—you see through a glass darkly. That flower of glory consists perhaps, too, in eloquence. “Eloquence,” you ask, “how can that be?” I said the glory of the old nature might be eloquence, so with the new—but this is the eloquence—“Abba Father.” This is an eloquence you can use now. It is one which when you cannot speak a word which might move an audience, shall still remain upon your tongue to move the courts of heaven.

You shall be able to say, “Abba Father,” in the very pangs of death, and waking from your beds of dust and silent clay, more eloquent still you shall cry, “Hallelujah!” You shall join the eternal chorus,

swell the divine symphony of cherubim and seraphim and through eternity your glory shall never pass away.

And then, if wisdom be glory, your wisdom—the wisdom which you inherit in the new nature, which is none other than Christ's, who is made of God unto us—wisdom shall never fade, in fact it shall grow, for there you shall know even as you are known. While here you see through a glass darkly, there you shall see face to face. You sip the brook today, you shall bathe in the ocean tomorrow. You see afar off now, you shall lie in the arms of wisdom by and by.

For the glory of the Spirit never dies, but throughout eternity expanding, enlarging, blazing, glorifying itself through God, it shall go on never, never to fail. Brethren, whatever it may be which you are expecting as the glory of your new nature, you have not yet an idea of what it will be. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

But though He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, yet, I fear we have not fully learned them. However, we will say of this glory, whatever it may be, it is incorruptible, undefiled, and it fades not away.

The only question we have to ask, and with that we finish, is—are we born again? Brethren, it is impossible for you to possess the existence of the new life without the new birth and the glory of the new birth you cannot know without the new heart. I say—*are you born again?* Do not stand up and say, "I am a Churchman. I was baptized and confirmed." That you may be and yet not be born again.

Do not say, "I am a Baptist. I have professed my faith and was immersed." That you may be and not be born again. Do not say, "I am of Christian parents." That you may be and yet be an heir of wrath, even as others.

Are you born again? Oh! souls, may God the Holy Ghost reveal Christ to you, and when you come to see Christ with the tearful eyes of a penitential faith—then be it known unto you that you are born again, and that you have passed from death unto life, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." God help you to believe!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.