

the face of the Lord is against them that do evil,' 1 Pet. 3:12. . . . It is important to a proper understanding of the Holy Spirit's work in conversion, that we try to keep it disentangled from every thing foreign to it. If we can do this, and then quit hunting for difficulties and mysteries, we will not find many. The truths of God often sparkle as gems upon the surface of His Word, and are unobserved by those who are always digging tunnels, but never examining the virgin soil in its native simplicity."¹

3. Spiritual Begetting

The process which, on the human side, is turning to God or *conversion*, is, on the Divine side, *regeneration* or the begetting and bringing to birth, by the Holy Spirit, of a new spiritual life in the human heart.

Generation has to precede regeneration of course, in the Plan of God. 1 Cor. 15:45-49: "So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." In the very nature of things, one must belong to the Kingdom of Nature *before* one can belong to the Kingdom of Grace; and—I might add here—that one must belong to the Kingdom of Grace *before* one can belong to the Kingdom of Glory. Moreover, as man's place in the Kingdom of Nature is determined by his possession of that increment of power—the principle of natural personal life—which specifies him as man, which was breathed into him at Creation from the Being of God, that is, imparted to him by the Spirit (Gen. 2:7); so his place in the Kingdom of Grace is determined by his possession of the higher increment of power—the Mind of Christ, which is the principle of the new spiritual life—which is proper to the order of sainthood, and which likewise is breathed into him, superposed upon his natural faculties, so to speak, by the Holy Spirit. The King-

1. T. W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 634-636.

dom of Grace—the order of sainthood—is the next higher order of being above the order of natural personal life which man enjoys as a citizen of the Kingdom of Nature.

The principle seems to run throughout all Nature that the properties of the lower order of being are, in each case, lifted up, incorporated in, and subsumed in the higher order of being. Thus the plant subsumed certain physicochemical processes of the inanimate world; the animal, in turn, subsumes in itself both the physicochemical processes and, in a general way, the cellular processes characteristic of the plant; and the natural man, in his turn, subsumes in himself both the physicochemical and cellular processes *plus* the sensitive and locomotive powers of the animal. The spiritual man, moreover, incorporates in himself all these properties of the lower orders and elevates and refines them. Whereas the natural man employs his reason to control his appetites and passions and to direct his will, the spiritual man, in addition, brings his reason under the control of the Mind of Christ as applied by the Spirit, and thus, in Scripture nomenclature, “crucifies” the flesh with its passions and lusts.

[Rom. 6:5-7]: For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection [the allusion here is to Christian baptism] knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. [Gal. 2:20]: I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. [Gal. 6:14] Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. [Gal. 5:24]: And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. [This conquest and refinement of the bodily processes takes place in sanctification. In the final change, the saints, putting on of immortality, this exaltation and refinement of the body will be complete, in perfect conformity to the image of God's glorified Son (Rom. 8:29).] [1 Cor. 15:44, 49]: If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthly [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [Christ]. [Certainly it is quite possible that the elements of our spiritual body are included within those of our present physical body, and await only the dissolution of the latter to be released for the use of the spirit in the celestial world. This final refinement of matter will also be universal, we are told, 2 Pet. 3:13]: But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The process of salvation in its entirety embraces three phases. First, there is the salvation from physical death which we enjoy from day to day through the Creator's provision of air, water, food, and many other material gifts, for our physical sustenance and well-being. Hence, in recognition of the fact that it is God who showers these blessings upon us daily, for the enjoyment of which the only condition is honest toil on our part (Gen. 3:17-19), we are taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). This is the salvation enjoyed by all men in the Kingdom of Nature. Then, in the second place, there is the salvation from the guilt of sin, which is attended by reconciliation with God and all the blessings of spiritual adoption (Ezek. 18:19-20). This is the salvation enjoyed in this present life by the saints of God, as citizens of the Kingdom of Grace, on the conditions of their union with Christ and continued life with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:8, Rom. 5:1, 1 John 5:12, etc.). And finally, there is salvation from the consequences of sin, in the ultimate redemption of the body (Exo. 20:4). This, too, is to be realized by God's saints, in the Kingdom of Glory, on the condition of their progressive sanctification or growth in holiness in this present life (Gal. 5:16-24, Rom. 8:23, Phil. 3:20-21). The natural progress of man from glory to glory—that ordained by the Creator of all things—is from the Kingdom of Nature, through the Kingdom of Grace, into the Kingdom of Glory. (Cf. 2 Cor. 16-17.)

To the Holy Spirit we are indebted for all that is knowable and known of God and His Eternal Purpose. The Spirit Himself is the Source both of our animal and of our intellectual life. Job 32:8—"There is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding." When man fell, the Spirit was grieved and departed from him, but was restored as the Enlightener and Corrector in virtue of the proposed Incarnation and Atonement of Christ, who is the true Light (John 1:9). This Divine afflatus is still continued to fallen man; it is by the Spirit that he has reason, conscience, judgment of Divine things, knowledge of good and evil, ability to apprehend the facts, commands and promises of the Gospel. In a word, it is to the Spirit that man owes his very capability of being saved. Through the Light provided by the same Spirit, convincing of sin, righteousness and judgment, the sinner is turned to God through Christ and finds redemption in His

blood, the remission of his sins. To the Spirit He is indebted for the revelation of the Mind of Christ, the principle of his regeneration and sanctification. And to the Spirit he is indebted for these two processes by which his natural faculties are incorporated into Christ, who is literally—the Logos—formed in him, and developing in him, as his own life with the Holy Spirit becomes, as little by little it is possessed by the Spirit, the very life of the Spirit Himself in Him. As the Word implanted by the Spirit in the womb of the Virgin became the Logos Incarnate, so the same Word formed by the Spirit in the heart of the saint in regeneration, and nurtured in sanctification, becomes Christ incarnate in him. As Christ was the Incarnate of God, so the true Church is the Incarnate of Christ. (Christ, the Mind of Christ, the Logos, Thought-power, and Spirit-power, all become one as the principle of the new spiritual life implanted in regeneration.) The application of all this Divine Power, together with the realization of its effects, is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who lives and works in the saint, leading him, guiding him by His counsel, sanctifying him, sealing him for God's own possession, and finally leading him into eternal glory,—the inheritance for which He has prepared him. The real Israel are true obedient believers in Christ Jesus, and the genuine Jerusalem is the Church of the Firstborn, made free, with all her children, from the bondage of *atan*, sin, death and hell. All that went before were types or shadows of these glorious Gospel excellencies. The entire life process in all its phases, from each lower to each higher level of being, is realized in man by the agency of the Spirit of God.

Now the implanting of this principle of new spiritual life in the human heart—the implanting of the Mind of Christ, the Logos, Spirit-power, in the heart by faith—is known in Scripture as *regeneration*. As man comes into the Kingdom of Nature by generation, so every accountable human being comes into the Kingdom of Grace by *regeneration*. (We are not considering, in this work, the salvation of infants who die in infancy; that was provided for, unconditionally, by Christ's atoning death, Rom. 5:19). In a word, one must be "born again." As Jesus put it explicitly to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). To which Nicodemus,

thinking only of natural birth and apparently unable to conceive of such a thing as spiritual birth, replied. "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (v. 4). Then answered Jesus, elaborating His former affirmation: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5). To this Jesus immediately added, reaffirming a principle which pervades all Nature: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh [*i.e.*, fleshly or natural]; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit [spiritual]" (v. 6). "Each after its own kind" (Gen. 1:11, 21, 24) is a law of the moral, as well as of the biological realm. The "natural man" (1 Cor. 2:14), the man with the "mind of the flesh," can neither apprehend nor appreciate the things of God; such things, in the first place, have to be revealed to him by the Spirit; then, by taking those revealed truths into his mind and incorporating them into his life, he acquires the "mind of the Spirit." One who has never cultivated music appreciation cannot be expected to appreciate a great symphony. To one who has no understanding or appreciation of poetry, a great poem means little or nothing. To one who has no conception of the music and the dream of life, a gorgeous sunset is only a conglomeration of colors. So it is in every phase of life. And it is equally true in Christianity. The man who has lived only the life of the flesh, who has never acquired an understanding of the things of God, of the higher values of life, could not hope to appreciate Heaven even if he were to attain it. To talk to such a man of the Life of the Spirit is to speak, *to him*, in a foreign tongue. (The devil would be the most miserable creature imaginable in Heaven.) There is *no way* by which the "moral" man can become a spiritual man just by tugging at his own bootstraps. "For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5, 6). To enter into the Kingdom of Grace, therefore, one must be born again, born of the Spirit, born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13. Now in view of the fact that the King

Himself explicitly declares that one must be born again to get into His kingdom, how can any man remotely hope to do so without being born again?

What, then, is this process of being born again? What is included in it? Jesus Himself says that it is a birth of *water and the Spirit*. What does He mean by this phrase?

I suggest that we approach the answer to these questions by asking first, What is the state of the unregenerated or "natural" man? The answer is clear, both from Scripture and from experience, namely, that in so far as the things of God are concerned, he is "dead." Men are by nature in a state of darkness or blindness with respect to God and spiritual things. With regard to the things of the world, they may be, and indeed are, wise, learned and skilful, but with regard to spiritual things they are ignorant, blind and darkened (cf. Matt. 4:16, John 1:5, Acts 26:18, Col. 1:13, Eph. 4:18, Rom. 1:21, 1 Pet. 2:9, etc.). This darkness of an unregenerate state is compared by Paul to that which pervaded the primordial Chaos prior to the entrance of Light at Creation, darkness which was dissipated only by the entrance of the Spirit and the Word (Gen. 1:1-5; cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-4). This spiritual darkness is also described as a condition of "death" (Eph. 2:1-3). Those who have not been born again; no matter how alive they may be to things of the intellect, to social, political, philosophical or educational issues, are dead to the things of the Spirit of God. They are dead, therefore, in the sense of being actually separated from the Principle of spiritual and real life,—eternal life. This does not mean, of course, that they are "totally depraved." Indeed, were they totally depraved, they would be utterly incapable of responding to the Gospel message. Only the Devil and his angels are totally depraved; they alone are "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4). Now, in this heart that is dead through *its own* (not Adam's) trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3), dead to the words, commands and promises of the Spirit, the Father begets a new life, a new spiritual life; by effecting a change of mind, affections, will and relationship He actually brings forth a *new creature* in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. :17). How is this done? I suggest the following considerations:

1. The Holy Spirit operates on the natural man, in regeneration, agreeably to the latter's rational nature. There is no indication in Scripture that the Spirit puts any force upon the rational faculties; rather, He acts in and through them suitably to their potencies. Regeneration does not consist in ecstasies, trances, visions or raptures; indeed the recreative act itself is wrought without the consciousness of it on man's part.

2. In regeneration, as in generation, there must first be a *begetting* (conception) before there can be a *birth*. The beginning of life—natural or spiritual—is not in the birth, but in the begetting. The begetting, moreover, must not be confused with the birth,—they are separate and distinct acts.

3. In order to generation, there must be the planting of physical seed; so, in order to regeneration, there must be the planting of spiritual seed. A farmer does not expect to produce a crop without seed; so God does not expect to produce a spiritual crop without spiritual seed. Jesus makes this clear in the Parable of the Sower and the Soils: "the seed [of the Kingdom]," says He, "is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Cf. John 6:63—"The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." 1 Pet. 1:23-25: "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." The Word of God—the message of the Gospel—is incorruptible, never-decaying. Said Jesus: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Because the Word of God is incorruptible seed, it begets incorruptible life; because it is eternal, it begets eternal life; because it is "living," it produces a living faith in the human heart. "The word of God is living, and active," etc. (Heb. 4:12). The *living* Creed of the *living* Church of the *living* God is the *ever-living* Christ; He—the Mystery of Godliness—is the living Creed implanted in the heart of the *living* Word of the Gospel.

4. In order to regeneration, the begetting of new spiritual life, there must also be the proper kind of soil for the reception of the seed. Jesus makes this clear in the Parable of the

Sower, and tells us expressly what the proper kind of soil is: it is, says He, "an honest and good heart." Luke 8:15—"And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience." *Certainly there is no indication here that the Holy Spirit must operate first to make the heart honest and good, before the spiritual seed is sown therein.* On the contrary, Jesus makes it quite evident, in this statement, that in some men there are naturally honest and good hearts (in approximately one-fourth of all who hear the Gospel message: in the Parable, four kinds of soils are described, of which only this one kind can be expected to bear a spiritual crop); and, says He, when the seed of the Kingdom, the Word of God, falls into such a heart—the proper kind of soil, that is—a spiritual harvest is bound to be the result.

[Therefore, the things required of the natural man antecedent to regeneration are the following]: [(1) *He must hear the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Hearing is the ordinary means of ingenerating faith.*] [The psychological process is, in order, hearing, understanding, believing, turning again]: Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, and I should heal them [Acts 28:27]. [(2) *He must give the Word a diligent and honest hearing.* Those persons who apply their rational facilities diligently and sincerely to the hearing and study of the Word will gain indescribable blessings.] [Jas. 1:21]: Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. [Matt. 5:6]: Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. [(3) *He must do more than give intellectual assent to the Word: he must not only receive it into his heart, but he must also assimilate it into his life. He must actually live it himself.*] [Rom. 6:17]: Thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient *from the heart* to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered [that is, unto baptism, which pictorializes the facts of the Gospel]. [Jas. 1:22]: Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. [John 8:31]: If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples. [Col. 3:16]: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

5. Spiritual begetting takes place, therefore, when the Word of God—the message of the Gospel—impregnates, takes root in, the heart of man *by faith*. The honest and good heart responds to this spiritual seed, and conception occurs. *Christ*—the Logos—is literally formed within, and the "new man," the antithesis of the "old man" of sensualism and corruption, is created (Rom. 6:6). Gal. 4:19—"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (evidently

the Apostle was in doubt whether these professing Christians, who were threatening to drift back into Judaism, had really been spiritually begotten). Col. 1:27—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." Gal. 2:20—"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live *in faith*, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." Christ in man is indeed man's *only* hope of glory. Thus Christ is formed in the honest and good heart, by the implanting of spiritual seed, the Word of God; this is Divine begetting.

6. The Source of this begetting, the Author of spiritual life, is God, of course. 1 Pet. 1:3—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," etc. Jas. 1:18—"Of his own will He [the Father of lights] brought us forth [begat us] by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

7. But the Agent of the Godhead in the entire procession of regeneration is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the acting Agent or Representative upon earth of both the Father and the Son, throughout the present Dispensation. The Patriarchal Age was that of the Father; the Jewish Age, that of the Son; the present Age is essentially that of the Holy Spirit, who came on the Day of Pentecost to abide with the Church to the end of time, and to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Hence regeneration, distinctively a work of the present Age, is invariably ascribed in Scripture to the Spirit. *The Father originates, the Son executes, and the Spirit realizes; or, the Father plans, the Son mediates, and the Spirit applies. The Spirit's operations in applying the originating work of the Father and the mediatorial work for the Son are summed up as the works of regeneration, sanctification, and immortalization.*

8. Again, the *means* employed by the Spirit in begetting this new spiritual life in an honest and good heart is the Word of Christ, the Message of the Gospel. Jas. 1:18—"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." Where there is no contact with the Word written or spoken, there is no faith, no conversion, no operation of the Spirit—no spiritual begetting and birth.

9. Finally, this Word, however, is ordinarily heard by men from the lips of a preacher, an evangelist. 1 Cor. 1:21—"it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." Hence, in the sense that a man is begotten by means of the Word as proclaimed by a given evangelist, he is said in Scripture to have been "begotten" by that evangelist. Thus Paul wrote to Philemon, v. 10—"I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus." And to the Corinthians, he said: "In Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). Cf. 1 Tim. 1:2—"unto Timothy, my true child in faith." Tit. 1.4—"to Titus, my true child after a common faith."

To sum up: The minister or evangelist preaches the Gospel, the Word of God as revealed by the Spirit, the Word which is "living and active" and "incorruptible," the Word which is the "seed of the kingdom," the Word which "endureth forever." Through the preaching of the Gospel, this Word falls into an honest and good heart. There is within the Word that which is able to save the soul; hence the creature is exhorted to "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save" his soul (Jas. 1:21). When a man hears the Word, and sincerely receives it into his honest and good heart, faith in Christ as the Son of God and his personal Savior is generated within him, for faith "cometh of hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Thus the "old man" is put off and the "new man" is conceived; and this new spiritual life, begotten in this manner, if properly nourished, will grow into the Life Everlasting,—eternal life. John 5:24—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." ("Hearing" here includes, of course, repentance, obedience and "continuing stedfastly.") 1 John 5:1—"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God." 1 John 5:12—"He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." John 17:3—"And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." When a man really begins to *know Christ by faith*, and to *abide in Him*, then he is spiritually begotten; and this new spiritual life is eternal, because the life of the Spirit is by nature eternal.

How may the world know that a man is begotten of God?
The answer is: Certain effects follow, as day the night, a spiritual begetting:

1. When a man is spiritually begotten, he repents of his sins. He turns from his evil ways; he ceases to do evil and learns to do well; he brings forth fruit meet for repentance. This change is disposition and life-purpose is one of the easily recognizable marks of spiritual begetting. 1 John 5:4, 5—"For whatsoever is begotten of God overcome the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcome the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 3:9—"Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." The man who is truly begotten of God is not going to keep on committing sin *wilfully* and *habitually*. He might temporarily yield to temptation, but it would be against his new disposition to do so; for as one spiritually begotten, He loves God and his disposition is to walk in close fellowship with God through Christ. 1 John 5:18—"We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God *keepeth himself*, and the evil one toucheth him not." When spiritual life is generated in the honest and good heart, the one thus spiritually begotten is conscious of a growing hatred of sin and an overwhelming desire to turn from the practice of sin forever. Repentance is an unfailing sign of spiritual begetting.

2. When one is spiritually begotten, his affections are changed. He loves God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his mind; and he loves his neighbor as himself (Matt. 22:34-40). He loves the things of God, the ordinances of Christ, and the stated assembly of the saints. And he loves his brethren of the household of the Faith. 1 John 4:7—"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." To the one who is spiritually begotten, sin in all its forms—the passions and lusts of the flesh, the pride and vainglory of life—all become repulsive. He realizes that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of this world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). In the one who is spiritually begotten, all these things of the world become supplanted by faith and hope and love.

3. When one is spiritually begotten, he *desires* to do what God wants him to do. As Jesus did, he will walk some seventy miles if necessary to do the Will of the Father by being baptized. When we see a man who has been a sinner, turn and correct his ways, we may be certain that he has been begotten of God. 1 John 3:10—"In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his neighbor." 1 John 2:29—"If ye know that he [Christ] is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him." *The man who is spiritually begotten will strive to bring forth in his life the fruit of the Spirit*, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

4. The man who is spiritually begotten will hasten to confess with his mouth the faith that is in his heart. For he knows that Jesus has said: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33). He knows that Paul has said: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). He knows that John has said: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God" (1 John 4:2-3). 1 John 2:23—"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." When men sincerely confess with the mouth, in the presence of witnesses, their belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, we may know that they have been begotten of God.

5. The man who is spiritually begotten will lose no time in yielding himself in body, soul and spirit, to the authority

of Christ, in the ordinance specifically appointed for that purpose,—the ordinance of Christian baptism. He will certainly start no arguments at the baptismal pool. But this leads us to consideration of the birth which is involved in the process of regeneration.

4. Spiritual Birth

We are now ready to consider the consummating phase of regeneration,—that act in which the one spiritually begotten enters upon a full and distinct personal existence as a new creature in Christ Jesus. In the sense that this "new man" is the product of the new increment of power—the Mind of Christ, the principle of spiritual life—breathed into the natural man in spiritual begetting, by which inbreathing he is raised up to the higher level of being, that of sainthood, he is essentially a Divine *creation*. 2 Cor. 5:17—"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." Eph. 2:10—"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." Eph. 4:20-24: "But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been *created* in righteousness and holiness of truth." Col. 3:9, 10—"seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him."

This consummating phase of regeneration is designated by our Lord a *birth*. Now a birth is not the beginning of a new life; it is, rather, the entering of a life already begun upon a full and distinct personal existence as a new creature. Birth is transitional; by means of it the living creature previously begotten is delivered out of one state into another. This new birth, then, is the consummating phase of the bringing into existence of the new spiritual creature, and because it is the consummating phase of the process, it is frequently *per se* designated *regeneration*.

Now Jesus tells us expressly that this new birth is a birth "of water and the Spirit." We can readily see, moreover, why