

“ ‘Ye Must Be Born Again’ ”

The Present Truth – August 17, 1893

E. J. Waggoner

For some times you have been learning of your brothers and sisters in India. Your heart has ached as you have heard of their sad hopeless condition, and you have doubtless formed plans in your own mind of how you were going to save up pennies to send them Bibles and preachers that would tell them of the living God and His great love. Perhaps you have already begun this good work.

But there is another work which we long to see you begin, which is just as important as helping your brothers and sisters in India. We long to see you seeking help for yourself. Would it not be a sad thing if after you have sent money to save the Indians, you yourself should be lost? You need to be saved from sin as much as they. Jesus says, "Ye must be born again," and "Except a man be born again [margin, from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then it is not enough to have a Bible of your own, and to know about the only true God. Jesus says if you are ever saved, you must be "born again."

"Well," you say, "I do not see how I can become a little baby again."

No, you do not need to, that is not what the Lord means. He does not say that your body must become small again and that you must again come into the world as a little baby. From the above text in John 3:3 we see that He does not say that a man must have

another earthly birth, but what He does say, is that he must have a heavenly birth as well as an earthly birth. He must be born "from above." It is not enough for you to have an earthly father, you must also have a heavenly Father who is real to you and who lives with you every day as truly as your earthly father does. You must become changed inside and begin all over again. You must put away your naughty thoughts and feelings and partake of the sinless and Divine nature of your heavenly Father, as truly as at your first birth you partook of the weak sinful nature of your earthly father.

It is not enough to call God your heavenly Father, you might do that all your life and yet never be born of God at all. You must allow Him to come right into your heart by His Holy Spirit. He can then take away every sin and make your heart all over new so that you will want to do good instead of evil. Then you will feel just like a new creature, indeed you will be a new creature, as truly as though you had become little and been born again, for do you not see? you will feel so differently and act so differently that you will not be like the same person at all. Where you used to disobey your parents you will now obey them, where you used to get angry you will be patient, where you used to say cross words you will say kind words. You will even look different in some ways, for instead of looking solemn and cross and worried, you will look happy and kind and peaceful, for the loveliness and gentleness of Jesus will be shining through your eyes. You will now be the child of God as well as the child of men, for the Lord says that those who receive Jesus are born again (1 John

5:1) and thus become the "sons of God." (John 1:12, 13.)

Now if we only can learn how to receive Jesus into our hearts, we shall know how to be born from above, shall we not?

We read in Eph. 3:17 and 1 Peter 1:23 that we can receive Christ into our hearts and be born again by believing and taking into our hearts the word of God. We can see how this is by reading the sixth chapter of John and John 1:1, for there it says that the Spirit and life of Jesus are in the word.

Then if you will read God's words in your Bible and believe that they are God's words to you, that they are living words filled with the Spirit and life and power of Jesus, and will love them and let them stay in your mind and heart, they will, like a wonderful seed, spring up in your heart and make it all over new and fill it with all the fruits of the gentle Spirit of Jesus,—even with the righteousness of God. In other words, the word of God, if received and loved, will cause you to be born again.

You will not be able to see the life of the word come into your heart anymore than you can see the wind coming into the house, but you will soon be able to see the wonderful change which it has wrought. You will not be able to see how it takes away the bad thoughts and fills you with heavenly thoughts and actions, but God says that it will, and that is enough. All you must do about it is to read and believe and think on His words, and He has promised to cause them to work in you that which is good.

Now do not think that this being born from above is done once and then that is the end of it. Oh, no. It is enough to be born as a baby once, but we must be born from above every day. So you see you shall need to read and believe and think on God's words very often, for it is God's word that is the living seed that causes you to be born from above.

“Growing”

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If you would become a good strong man or woman of God, it is just as necessary for you to grow as it is for you to be born again.

If a little baby never grows after it is born, it never can become a strong man or woman. It will always remain a poor, weak, helpless little babe, or else lose the life it already has.

Now what causes the babe to grow?

"With plenty of good milk," you say.

That's true. Nothing can make it grow like pure milk. If the milk is mixed with other things that are not good, the baby will soon become ill, and will die.

Well, suppose your baby brother has all the good milk he can eat for once, and then you should not give him any more, what would happen?

"He would cry," you say.

Yes, undoubtedly. But should he not be satisfied if he has had all that he needs?

"He has had all that he needs for one time, but that will not last him always."

Why not?

"Because in a little while it is used up by the body, to make it grow, and then it is just as hungry as ever."

Yes and, when the body has used up all its growing material and needs more, it calls for it by making him feel hungry. And even after he has stopped growing and has become a big man, he will still need food, and will get hungry, for the body needs it to keep up repairs.

So you see a person must have food, and must have it every day if he would grow and keep well. And he must not only have food, but he must have good food.

Now the Lord says in 1 Peter 2:2 that after you are born from above, after you have received Jesus in your hearts, you will need heavenly milk to make you grow in the heavenly life, just as much as the little babe needs earthly milk to make it grow strong in the earthly life.

What is the heavenly milk?

The Lord says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere [pure, unadulterated] milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." We see, therefore, that the heavenly milk is the pure, unmixed word of God.

"How can that make me grow more and more like Jesus, and strong to do right?"

By eating it (John 6), by studying it, and thinking upon it, and just drinking it in with your mind, and desiring it more than your necessary food.

You wonder how it can become a part of you, and make you grow better, just by letting your mind think upon it and love it. It does seem wonderful.

But the little baby does not understand how the milk can make its body grow. It just eats and eats and grows, as a little plant,—it knows not how, and we know not how.

Thus the Lord wants you to take His living words into your heart every day, as trustfully and as faithfully as the little baby takes its milk, and His promise is, ye shall grow thereby. Men's words will not do, God's words alone can make you grow.

But above all things, remember that one meal, or even one meal a week, is not enough. You must take time to feed on the milk of God's word every day. Just as surely as you forget for one day to feed on God's word, you will be too weak that day to overcome the temptations of Satan.

By feeding upon the word you feed upon Jesus, and He is the only One who has power to overcome Satan. So if you forget to feed upon the word you forget to have Jesus in your heart, and thus having nothing but your own weakness with which to resist Satan, you surely will be overcome.

Then let us not be content with being born again.
There will be no dwarfs in the kingdom of God. We
must also feed on heavenly milk that we may grow.