

SLB-018
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Regeneration and Spiritual Life

Spiritual Life - Regeneration

- When God is declared to be the Father of all who believe, reference is not made to a moral resemblance which a good life might suggest; it is a reference to legitimate Fatherhood and legitimate sonship grounded on an actual Spiritual Birth by the Holy Spirit.
- The chief shortcoming of Spiritual Life Teaching has been the failure to see the difference between IMPUTATION and IMPARTATION.
- Believer's think that God's righteousness has only been imputed to them, not that it has been imparted to them through the Spiritual Birth process.
- Just as we inherited the Genetic Sinful Nature of Adam from our father, we have inherited the Genetic Righteous Nature of Christ, from our Father.

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- The closest I can come, at this time in my understanding of the Scriptures on this subject, to an explanation of the Spiritual Birth, is that our Human Spirit, either is, or is like, an egg, an ovum; awaiting fertilization.
- Just as the female produces an egg which is “potential life”, but still Dead, every Human has this egg-like Spiritual element residing in him.
- When, at the moment of trust in Christ, God the Holy Spirit fertilizes this “Spiritual Egg”, just as He fertilized Mary’s ovum at the Virgin Conception, the resultant “Birth from above (the Spirit)” is attached, or connected in some way to the Soul, and the result is a “new creation”.

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- Ezek. 36:26-27: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."*

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- Paul reminds the Ephesian believers that it was while they were still dead in their trespasses and sins that they were quickened to life by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth (Eph. 2:1-5).
- James asserts that our new birth experience must be traced back to the will of God (James 1:18).
- Peter exults that the new birth did not come to pass by the agency of anything corruptible, but by that which is incorruptible (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

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- Much, indeed, is directly undertaken by the Holy Spirit to the end that the child of God shall be safe forever.
- Under the present divine arrangement, He is the Executor of very much that the Godhead undertakes; however, as in the case of the Father and the Son, four distinctive achievements are wrought by the Third Person and these demand recognition.” (Chafer Systematic Theology, “III. RESPONSIBILITIES BELONGING TO GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT)

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- **1. The Holy Spirit Regenerates.** The widespread Arminian emphasis upon human merit has tended to obscure one of the primary realities of a true Christian, which reality is secured, not by merit, but by divine grace, in answer to saving belief in Christ.
- That reality is that the believer is regenerated and thus is introduced into a new estate, a new existence, a new relationship which is appropriately defined as a new creation.
- In 2 Corinthians 5:17 it is written: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

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- The Apostle likewise declares that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:10).
- This passage reveals the truth that, as a result of the divine workmanship, the Christian is no less than a divine creation—a form of being which did not exist before.
- That new being is said to partake of the “divine nature,” which implies that it is as enduring as the eternal God.
- Similarly, the same Apostle writes: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision (Religion) avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. 6:15).

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- In the instance of human generation, a being originates who did not exist before and who will go on forever.
- Likewise, in spiritual regeneration a being originates which was not identified as such before and this being will go on forever.
- An earthly parent imparts a nature to his child by human generation, and that nature is immutable.
- Thus, and to a degree which is far more exalted, the Holy Spirit forms a new creation which is immutable.

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- **1. A Knowledge of God.** From the heart with definite consciousness of His reality, the saved one will be able to say, “Abba, Father.”
- Such a recognition of God as Father is wrought in the heart by Christ.
- Of this He said, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” ([Matt. 11:27–28](#)).

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- The rest here promised is that of the soul and is the result of coming to know God as Father.
- It is one thing to know about God, but quite another thing to know God.
- According to this great invitation, it is possible to come to know the Father by the gracious offices and effective working of the Son, and no soul has ever found true rest apart from this intimacy with God.

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- **2. A New Reality in Prayer.** Prayer is communion with God that has been based on confidence born of the knowledge of God.
- It is not natural to speak to one who is unknown and unknowable as is the case with the unsaved trying to pray; but when God is recognized and real to the heart, there is definiteness in every form of prayer and then, as at no other time or under no other conditions, the praying soul finds rest.

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- **3. A New Reality in the Reading of God's Word.** The Word of God is food only to those who have received the nature of God.
- As a newborn child cries for food, so will a normal Christian desire the Word of God.
- That Word is milk to such as are “babes” and “strong meat” to those prepared in heart to receive it.

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- **4. A Recognition of God's Family.** John places this to the front as a very dependable test of whether an individual is a child of God.
- He writes: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).
- The Christian naturally delights in the fellowship of those who are saved.
- His love for them will be manifested in loving sacrifice for them.
- This is not human love, but an outworking of the love of God shed abroad in believing hearts from the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

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- **5. A Divine Compassion for a Lost World.** The objects of the divine love are unchanged respecting their identity even when that love is reproduced in or is passing through the Christian.
- He will love, therefore, what God loves.
- This is indeed an extensive field of contemplation.
- Above all, the love of God for a lost world—that love which spared not His Son in consequence—will be wrought in the child of God as an unceasing burden for those who are unsaved.

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- All of these experiences which have been indicated are naturally the expression of the new divine nature; but, like all Christian experience, it may be hindered and all but unobserved owing to some unspiritual condition that is allowed to exist in the heart of the believer.
- If the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the Reproducer of Christ in the believer is grieved, the power of His presence will not be made manifest.

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- **III. ACQUISITION OF THE NATURE OF GOD**
- The basic fact of having a new divine nature imparted is of such a character that it must be recognized at once as a change that God alone may effect.
- Human effort is utterly foreign to the entire undertaking.
- Where would Nicodemus begin were he to attempt the achievement of his own birth from above?
- That alone which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- Closely allied to the gift of eternal life is the impartation of the divine nature.

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- **IV. INDUCTION INTO THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**
- No earthly relation so unites members of the human race as does the family, and so this human kinship is the best available illustration of the heavenly association together of believers.
- Both the fact of father and son relationship and the fact of brotherhood appear.
- As indicated above, the Fatherhood of God is due to an absolute divine generation: though, as in the case of the birth of Christ, the generating is wrought by the Third Person, still the First Person is universally addressed as the Father of all who believe.

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- The placing of an individual into the family and household of God is no mere adoption, though a believer is adopted in the sense that when born of God as His child he is at once advanced to the position of an adult son with all the privileges and responsibilities attendant on full maturity.
- The human practice of adoption, which merely establishes legal responsibility over an otherwise unrelated child, imparts no parental nature and creates no actual oneness with the new parent.
- In human relationships, a father may by legal action repudiate his son and withdraw all responsibility toward his son, although he cannot prevent the son from resembling him in appearance, in disposition, or other characteristics.

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- In other words, the basic nature which generation imparts cannot be extinguished even in human spheres, just as it cannot be extinguished in divine spheres.
- Once a son of God always a son of God is a truth not only taught in the Scriptures, but sustained by every sonship experience known whether it be here on earth or in heaven.
- The family and household of God is composed of the actual and legitimate offspring of God.
- No such relationship is intimated between Jehovah and the Israelites. The whole nation Israel is likened to a son, but wholly as an expression describing Jehovah's care over them. The description of a nation as a son is far removed from the generating of individuals into eternal, unalterable offspring of God.

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- Membership in the household and family of God implies fitness for the position.
- For a brief time—the period of the Christian’s life on earth after he is saved—the Father does get on with imperfections in His child and administers discipline; but in an eternity of reality which follows, the members of His family will demonstrate how to all infinity the saved ones have been “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12).

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- **V. INHERITANCE OF A SON'S PORTION**
- Based on the actuality of sonship through the generating power of the Holy Spirit is the unavoidable fact of possession of a son's portion.
- The extent of that portion is indicated by the Apostle when he says: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16–17).

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- **VI. GOD'S OWN PURPOSE TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY**
- Most arresting and encouraging is the revealed truth that all that enters into constituting a Christian what he is and what he will be in glory is accomplished by God.
- The Apostle declares: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).
- Life's varying experience may present immediate problems; but the essential factors of salvation, preservation, and eternal glory are His to accomplish and are never made to depend upon human success, achievement, or merit.

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- The Christian learns after he is saved— not before—that he has been “chosen in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world,” that in due time and by the power of God alone he came into a saved relationship to God on the principle of grace, and that by the same divine power he will appear in glory—all in the unchangeable faithfulness of God.
- It is written of believers: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).
- Great significance is to be seen in the description of a believer as one “called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

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- That purpose of God is immediately defined in the context, which reads: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (vss. 29–30).
- To be “conformed to the image of his Son” indicates that divine sonship is to be realized on the part of the one who is saved—a sonship patterned after the very *image* of the Son of God.