

And regeneration also results in a new nature in regeneration my very nature, what I am, is renewed and renovated. The Spirit of God enables me to begin to put to death the expressions of godlessness and unrighteousness in myself; the expressions of idolatry, profanity, superstition, unbelief, hypocrisy, rebellion against lawful authority, hatred, sinful anger, immorality, stealing, lying, and covetousness. At the same time the Holy Spirit enables me to begin to produce the expressions of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in my life, with the result that the prevailing direction of my character and conduct is righteousness! We must ask ourselves: "Has my nature, my very being, been renewed and renovated? Am I characterized, not by works of the flesh, but by the fruit of the Spirit?"

Let us ask ourselves sincerely and gently and lovingly and searchingly: "Have I been born again? Am I spiritually alive? Am I a new creation? And do I have a new nature?"

These four aspects do not refer to four distinct spiritual realities, but one. in slightly differing (and often overlapping) ways, they all speak of regeneration.

"A ruler once came to Jesus by night
To ask Him the way of salvation and light;
The Master made answer in words true and plain,
'Ye must be born again.'

Ye children of men, attend to the word
So solemnly uttered by Jesus, the Lord;
And let not this message to you be in vain,
'Ye must be born again.'

Oh, ye who would enter that glorious rest
And sing with the ransomed the song of the blest,
The life everlasting if ye would obtain,
'Ye must be born again.'

A dear one in heaven thy heart yearns to see
At the beautiful gate may be watching for thee;
Then list to the note of this solemn refrain,
'Ye must be born again.'

Ye must be born again,
Ye must be born again,
I verily, verily say unto you,
'Ye must be born again.' "

(William T. Sleeper)