

# The Birth of the Spirit by Gilbert Cranmer.

## **“The Birth of the Spirit,” *The Hope of Israel*, Sept 1863, p. 3**

I wish to express a few thoughts through ‘The Hope of Israel,’ with regard to the ‘new birth,’ or the ‘Birth of the Spirit.’ I am aware that upon this subject, there exists a great diversity of opinions, at the present day.

There is no subject taught in the sacred Scriptures, fraught with greater interest than the one before us; for, said Jesus to Nicodemus, ‘Verily, verily I say unto thee, ‘Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ John 3:5.

Some take the position that the ‘new birth’ is water baptism. But the 6<sup>th</sup> verse explains the two births. ‘For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ Hence the first birth, is the birth of the flesh. The birth of the flesh Nicodemus well understood. But the ‘birth of the Spirit,’ was a mystery to him. This subject so involved in mystery, we are about to investigate, in the light of the sacred Scriptures.

First, Christ is said to be the ‘FIRST BORN of every creature.’ Col. 1:15. Now we would ask, was Christ the first one ever baptized in water? Most assuredly not, for Paul tells us that 600,000 ‘were baptized unto Moses, in the sea and in the cloud.’ And again, John had been baptizing six months before Christ came and demanded baptism at his hand.

Again, according to the theology of the day, the new birth is considered to be a change of heart, or conversion. If this idea be correct, there never was a man who was converted, or met with a change of heart, until Christ came in the flesh; for he was the ‘first born of every creature.’ But ‘to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.’ Isa. 8:20. Paul has told us in what sense Christ was the first born of every creature. Col. 1:19, ‘He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born of the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.’ Again, Paul says, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:23, ‘That Christ THE FIRST-FRUITS; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.’ And again, Acts 26:23, ‘That Christ should [suffer, and] that he should be the FIRST that should rise from the dead.’ Again Rev. 1:5, ‘And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the FIRST begotten from the dead.’

Now we will see if the Old Testament will be in harmony with the New, on this subject.

Psalm 89:27, 28, ‘Also I will make him my FIRST BORN, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His SEED also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.’ This scripture agrees perfectly with Paul to Colossians 1:18, that the first born Son of God ‘should in all things have the pre-eminence.’ Yet E.G. White, in one of her ‘visions,’ called ‘The Great Controversy,’ says, on page 43, that Moses had a resurrection 1400 years before Christ. Enough of that fable for the present.

In the above remarks, we have seen how Christ became the firstborn Son of God. Now we will see if the rest of the family are to be born after the same manner.

First, I take the position that Christ is to take the place the first Adam might have occupied, as the 'Everlasting Father of all the redeemed family. Go with me to Isaiah 9:6, 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Now, the question arises, How, and when does he become 'the everlasting Father'? Go with me to Isaiah 22:21, 'And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a FATHER to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.'

From the above scripture we have learned who is to be our 'everlasting Father.' Next, we ask, Who is to be our mother? Go with me to Gal. 4:26, 'But Jerusalem which is above is free, and the MOTHER of us all.'

Now go with me to Rev. 10:7, and we will have our father and mother married. 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.' Rev. 21:9, 10. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.'

Now turn to Isaiah 66:6, 7, 8, and you will see when the whole family is to be born. 'A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.'

We learn from the scripture, just quoted that before the general resurrection of the saints, 'the woman brought forth a man child,' that shall rule all nations with 'a rod of iron.' See Rev. 19:15, And at the general resurrection of the saints, the earth will be made to give up the dead, and all the family be born 'at once;' or as Paul has it, 'shall be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.'

In conclusion, I would say to the scattered flock of God, may that spirit that brought Jesus forth from the grave, dwell richly in all our hearts, that 'our vile bodies' may be quickened like his, at the sound of the last trump.

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