Jesus answered, 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.

In order to serve God acceptably, we must be “born again.” Our natural dispositions, which are in opposition to the Spirit of God, must be put away. We must be made new men and women in Christ Jesus. Our old, unrenewed lives must give place to a new life—a life full of love, of trust, of willing obedience. Think you that such a change is not necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God? Listen to the words of the Majesty of heaven: “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Unless the change takes place, we cannot serve God aright. Our work will be defective; earthly plans will be brought in; strange fire, dishonoring to God, will be offered. Our lives will be unholy and unhappy, full of unrest and trouble.

The change of heart represented by the new birth can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. It alone can cleanse us from all impurity. If it is allowed to mold and fashion our hearts, we shall be able to discern the character of the kingdom of God, and realize the necessity of the change which must be made before we can obtain entrance to this kingdom. Pride and self-love resist the Spirit of God; every natural inclination of the soul opposes the change from self-importance and pride to the meekness and lowliness of Christ. But if we would travel in the pathway to eternal life, we must not listen to the whispering of self. In humility and contrition we must beseech our heavenly Father, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). As we receive divine light, and cooperate with the heavenly intelligences, we are “born again,” freed from the defilement of sin by the power of Christ.

Christ came to our world because He saw that men had lost the image and nature of God. He saw that they had wandered far from the path of peace and purity, and that, if left to themselves, they would never find their way back. He came with a full and complete salvation, to change our stony hearts to hearts of flesh, to change our sinful natures into His similitude, that, by being partakers of the divine nature, we might be fitted for the heavenly courts.—The Youth’s Instructor, September 9, 1897.

This devotional is taken from Ye Shall Receive Power by Ellen G. White.
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