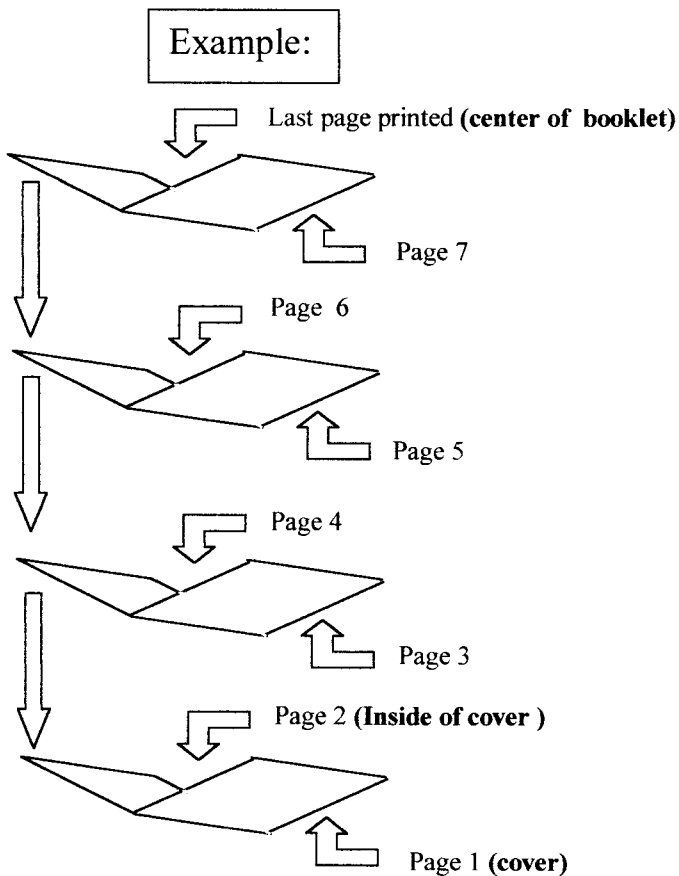


# Instructions for printing ACM booklets from Adobe Acrobat Reader

(For booklets with Printed Text Inside the Cover)



Instructions for printing these documents as booklets.

(Please refer to your printer's manual for **double-sided printing**.)

- Print the first page (**the cover**) Then print page 2 (1<sup>st</sup> page of text) on the back of this sheet.
- Print page 3 on the next sheet, and then page 4 on the back of the same sheet. Do the same with 5 and 6, 7 and 8, etc, until complete.
- The last page printed will be the center of the booklet.
- Fold and staple.

Please note: The actual page numbers printed on the booklet pages, and the page numbers as far as the printer is concerned are two different things. Each single page printed by the printer (one side of a sheet) is actually two pages of the booklet. For example: in a twelve page booklet, page 1 will be front and back of the cover of the booklet, and page 2 for the printer will be page 2 and page 11 together on the same side of the sheet, etc, etc. (example only).

# Born Of God

*John Kershaw*

# BORN OF GOD

Compliments of:

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Were I possessor of the earth,  
 And called the stars my own,  
 Without thy graces and thyself,  
 I were a wretch undone!

What will satisfy a soul born again? We have a satisfaction, and that satisfaction is Christ. If we are born again of the Spirit of God, no provision will satisfy us but the Bread of eternal life, which comes down from heaven. Christ is the provision of the Father's house, and this provision alone will satisfy a heaven-born soul.

If you and I are born again of God we cannot be satisfied with the world and things of the world; and if you and I are born of God we are not, nor can be, satisfied in or of ourselves. I firmly believe from my own experience, that the longer a heaven-born child of God lives here, the more dissatisfied he will be with himself; the more he will sink in his own esteem; loathe and abhor himself, and repent, in his soul-feeling, in the dust before the Lord. On the other hand, if we are born again we shall feel a growing need of a precious Christ, of His glorious Person as the God-man and Mediator. We need Him as our covenant Head, and to feed upon Him as the mystery of godliness, God-man in the flesh, and we adore Him. We see Him fulfil the law of ten commands; we rejoice in His righteousness, and hunger and thirst after it. We also see Him in His blood-shedding; we see the work is finished, and our soul feeds upon a finished and complete salvation; all of grace, from first to last.

O, there is that in Christ that satiates the soul that is born of God. He is all and in all. It is of importance for you and me and every child of God to learn that He is our Saviour and Redeemer. We read in the prophecy by Ezekiel about a newborn babe being cast into the open field. O! How helpless it is! It can do nothing for itself; it must have all done for it. Now, if you are born again of God, you are yourself as helpless as regards saving yourself, and washing yourself from your sins, and clothing yourself in the robe of righteousness, and justifying yourself in a spiritual point of view, as that little child was. If we are born again we are like the babe cast out, helpless and crying, bewailing our condition, knowing that no man can help us. But when the Lord passes by, He spreads His skirt over us, and feeds and nourishes us with the Bread of heaven, and gives us all that we stand in need of. Heaven-born souls can do nothing for themselves. Christ and Christ alone is all and in all. Amen.

## Born of God

PREACHED IN ROCHDALE ROAD CHAPEL, MANCHESTER,  
 ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JUNE 29TH, 1862.

*"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John. 1. 13.)*

The immediate connection in which these words stand is as follows: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, "came unto his own, and his own received him not." By "his own" we are to understand the whole of the Jewish nation, which are nationally His peculiar people; He came unto them, but they received Him not, but conspired against Him, and said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Peter charges the horrid deed upon them; they "killed the Prince of life;" but "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." None ever did, can, or will receive Christ, believe in His name, and enjoy their relationship to a covenant God as His sons, but such as are "born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Paul draws a line of distinction between natural and spiritual Israel: "They are not all Israel which are of Israel, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called;" a remnant according to the election of grace. So that whether Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian,

bond, or free, if they be the sons of God, by eternal adoption, they must in God's time and way be born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God."

In endeavouring to make a few remarks from the words we have now read, to the Lord's honour and our spiritual comfort and consolation and establishment in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, we would notice three things.

1. The *necessity of the new birth*. The necessity appears from the solemn, important, and interesting conversation which took place between Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Nicodemus comes and speaks of the great miracles that the Lord had wrought, which were evident displays of His eternal power and Godhead. Our Lord makes no reply to Nicodemus in reference to the miracles that had been wrought by Him, but directs his attention to a great work, in which there is a greater display of His almighty power than in these miracles to which Nicodemus refers; and at once insists upon the new birth: "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.)

Here the Lord insists on the necessity of being born again, and follows it up: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The kingdom of God is a kingdom prepared by our heavenly Father, in which all His saints shall be landed safe, and appear for ever in His presence. And this kingdom shall be given to none but to those for whom it is prepared; and while the kingdom is prepared for a people, the people that are to be put in possession of it are prepared for the enjoyment of it. Hence we read of "vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory."

This preparation for immortal glory, commences in regeneration, in being born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is impossible in every sense of the word, for an unregenerate person to enter heaven; it would be no heaven to him. He sees no beauty, no glory in, no need of, a precious Christ. The spirits of just men made perfect would be no company for him; he could not enter into their joys; there would be no comfort, no happiness, no bliss, no blessedness, no joy in heaven for him. I can recollect the time when the company and conversation of God's people, when the assembling of His

things are become new.

After this change had taken place in my soul, I once heard my mother talking to some people about me. She said, "I don't know what has taken place with our John; not long since he would never go to chapel; but now he is always with religious people, always going to chapel; there is quite a change in him." O, my friends, the sentence dropped from my mother's lips and sank into my heart, and I believe it will always be there: "He is always most happy when he is going with the old man." O what reason I have to thank God for the desire to go with the people of God, praying to be numbered with them in life and death and to all eternity. I sometimes think when Sunday morning comes, if some power were to compel me back to my old ways, what a hell it would be to my soul.

3. Now we have another evidence, which will lead us into the marrow of the gospel. The regenerate soul has a *spiritual appetite*. We have each a body, and a soul inhabiting that body. Now our bodies are earthly bodies, sensual bodies, for we were originally created out of the dust of the earth. Hence it is that the food the earth produces nourishes and strengthens our earthly bodies. The labouring man following the plough, or whatever labour it may be, perceives his strength fail, and he wants dinner time to come, that he may sit down at the table, and be refreshed in his body. The food he takes strengthens and refreshes him, and he is again able to follow his employment.

Look at one circumstance in the Bible. The prophet Elijah is fleeing from Jezebel; he comes to the wilderness, and sits down under a juniper tree, hungry and faint for want of food, and requested for himself that he might die; but the Lord sent His angel to him, with meat; and the angel said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat for forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God" (1 Kings 19. 7, 8).

A man that is born again of the Spirit of God; can his soul feed and be satisfied with the luxuries the world produces? O no; let him have ever so splendid a table, and ever so much wealth, and heap upon him all the honours, titles, dignities, that a man on earth can bear, and in the heaven-born soul there is a vacuum, an aching void, that neither gold nor silver, nor wealth, nor dignities can fill. Do you want his song?

See these marks confirmed by the apostle's declaration: "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." What are these old things that must pass away, and the new things to come? When a sinner is born again he becomes a new creature; he cannot keep company with old companions any longer; he cannot walk any longer in his own sinful ways. O no; the grace of God has taken possession of his heart, and it never did and never shall fail to produce the effect God says it shall produce; namely, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The Lord hunts His people out, and brings them, with a broken heart and guilty conscience, to weep at His feet, and His words sound in their heart like an alarm: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate."

What a remembrance I had of this very passage last night. After tea I took a walk on Kersal Moor [where the Manchester races then took place], went round the church, and thought of former times when I tried to run away from God. I got up early in the morning and went to the races. I got on the race ground; but O the misery and wretchedness and great terror my soul felt! I could no more abide in the camp of the wicked than I could cease to exist; necessity was upon me, and I looked to find a field where I might be alone, and pour out my soul to God. Heaven-born souls cannot revel and delight in sin. Sin lives in them, but they hate it, and abhor it; for if any man be born again he is a new creature. They are not of the world; God has called them out of the world, and they shall by the grace of God, show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Men regenerate of the Spirit of God have new views of themselves, and new feelings and new desires after Christ and His salvation, as the people of God, as His elect. Before my new birth, the people of God appeared to me poor melancholy fools, men of no pleasure and no enjoyment; and their prayers and talk were a plague and torment to me. But after God had wrought this change in my soul, and I was made alive from the death of sin, and I saw my need of a Saviour, I cried, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you." And O what delight I took in the conversation of these very people I had turned my back upon. Thus there are new connections, new feelings, and new desires; old things have passed away, and all

saints, and the preaching of His gospel, were a burden to me. When I was compelled to attend, and be confined in the chapel, it was a prison to me, and why? Because when we are in a natural state we have no spiritual feeling, no spiritual desire, and see no beauty, no glory, no comeliness in a precious Christ. And, had we died then we had indeed died in our sins, not prepared for heaven, but prepared by our transgressions for destruction.

So, it is those who are born again by the Spirit of God, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit to see and feel the need of Him, to believe in Him, to glory in His Person, triumph in His finished salvation. These are the people who are born again, who love each other as members of the household of faith, who unite under the means of grace, and have a hidden melody in the heart, and can sing, "Hallelujah to God and to the Lamb," and can also join in the chorus, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Before I dismiss this branch of the subject, beloved, a solemn thought presents itself. Death and eternity are before us. Some of us are advanced in years; there can at the most be but a short space between us and the grave for the body, and eternity for the soul. The question arises in much solemnity, Are we, or are we not, born again of God? Are we, or are we not, in a prepared state for death and the kingdom? How frequently, when musing on this important subject, do the following lines drop into my mind:

Prepare me, gracious God,  
To stand before thy face;  
Thy Spirit must the work perform,  
For it is all of grace.

II. The power by which the great change of being born again is effected. The evangelist in our text speaks particularly of this power, and in order that the transaction may shine the brighter and appear the more distinct, he couples three negatives with the positive declaration. Let us first notice the negatives, and then proceed to the positive.

We shall say a little upon the negatives.

I. "Which were born, *not of blood.*" God's grace does not run in the blood from father to son. The abominable and filthy thing, sin, that our God hates, is hereditary; it runs in the blood from father to son. Adam begat sons and daughters in his own

image, as a depraved creature. How explicitly David speaks of it. He says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." How frequently is it seen that gracious, God-fearing parents, parents that are born of God, have profligate sons and daughters. See it in Eli; behold it in David; and in many among ourselves. On the other hand, there are the most profligate parents, whose offspring, born in actual sin and transgression, have been, by the grace of God, regenerate and made new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ. See Abijah in the house of an adulterous king, even Jeroboam. So that the Lord has mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and compassion upon whom He will have compassion. Our religion is therefore not of blood, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit of our God.

2. "Nor of the will of the flesh." What are we to understand by the will of the flesh, in this portion of God's Word? Paul, speaking of this subject, says, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." His desire was that they might be saved. As a Christian and a man of God he had great desires for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who were allied to him by nature. We see this desire shine very prominently on a very memorable occasion. Behold him declaring what God had done for his soul in the presence of King Agrippa and a splendid earthly court, before which he had to appear as a witness for the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of the miraculous manner in which he was converted and called to his apostleship; of the revelation of Christ to his soul; of the preciousness of Jesus; and how he was commanded to proclaim the glorious glad tidings of salvation to perishing sinners. He also reviews the birth, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and His ascension to glory; and he declares these things are the records of heaven, and puts it all to King Agrippa, who believed the prophets, and knew that these things "were not done in a corner." Paul's powerful language has an effect upon the king's mind, so that he exclaims, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Now mark the feeling of Paul's mind. And Paul said, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Now we see the fleshly feeling and desire of the apostle was such that he would, had it been in his power, have regenerated

years old. I have some knowledge of a circumstance relating to this fact. Two men requested a neighbour of theirs, a grey-haired old man, to go and hear their minister. He strongly objected, and said, "Nay, nay. I was christened at church, confirmed at church, married at church, and I will be buried at church, and that is enough for me." They said they did not want to meddle with his church; but merely as neighbours, who had done him many a good turn, wished him to go to their chapel. "Well," said he; "you have done me many a kindness, and as one good turn deserves another, I will go with you." The time came, and they went, praying that God would bless the means to the conversion of the old man. Well; the minister drew the bow at a venture; the Holy Ghost caused the arrow to fasten in the man's soul, as a nail is fastened in a sure place. He went home, sat down, said nothing, looked into the fire, but could not open his mouth. His old wife said, "What is to do with ye?" He said, "I cannot tell; but yon man has said words that dropped into my soul." "O," said she. "I thought how it would be; they will make you as bad as themselves; but we will not leave our church." Another Sabbath came, and he went a second time. The Lord worked more powerfully the second time. He comes home at length, holds up his head, and looks at his wife: "I say, find me the old Bible." Here is a new-born babe in Christ wanting the Word of God. She looks upon the shelf, gets the old Bible, and rubs the dust off it. He reads here and there, page after page; at length he cries, "I say, is this the reet down owd Bible we have always had?" "Yes," she said; "we have never had any other." "Well," said the old man, "if this is the *own* (old) Bible, I have got *new* een (eyes)." O, yes, new eyes and a new heart, and the Lord worked powerfully.

As sure as a poor soul is born again of God there will be a thirst for God; I speak it experimentally. When my father insisted upon my reading a chapter on a Sunday night, and insisted upon my going to the house of God, I say it to my shame, I felt as if I could have cursed him in my heart, and I said, "If ever I become twenty-one years of age I will have my own way." But, bless the Lord, He will not let us have our own way, no: He will bring us to His feet with weeping and supplications. When the Lord laid hold of me what a thirst I had for the Word of God, for a prayer-meeting, and for the conversation of the saints. When we have a new heart, new desires, and new affections, we must walk in new ways.

to Damascus; not with offers and overtures that if he would turn, and repent, and believe, and so on, He would save him. My soul abhors offers and overtures made in this way, because, in its very language it tends to the exaltation of the creature and to the abasing of the mighty power of God. Christ met Saul of Tarsus with new covenant blessings in his own heart; such as, "I will and they shall." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." And the Lord reached his soul with power; His arrow was powerful; Saul was humbled, and lay down at Jesus' feet. Now here we see the power of God. The Lord directs Ananias to go and speak words of peace and comfort to him.

All you that are born of God are praying souls; the soul born of God cannot live without prayer. God's sword is two-edged, cuts both ways. O that it may be so this morning! Have I any this morning that are careless and graceless? Have I any that are content and satisfied with a form of prayer in words, that pray not in their hearts? If so, God is against you. But if you are born of God you are a praying soul; you have inward sighs and groans because of your sin and sinfulness; you have spiritual hungerings and thirstings after Christ, and you cannot live without pouring out your heart and soul unto God. The Holy Spirit pours down into your soul a spirit of supplication and you are enabled to spread your case before Him, and your prayer is the prayer of the publican; and it will be your cry on your dying bed: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" "Lord, save, or I perish!"

2. Let me notice another of the evidences of being born again. The apostle Peter uses the figure of a new-born babe: "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word." The God of nature has implanted in the very constitution of a new-born babe a desire for the breast and milk of its mother. See her take the babe; and with a mother's heart she clasps it in her arms and blesses it. This is an emblem; for so in grace; as sure as a sinner is born again of the Spirit of God, in the very constitution of that regenerated soul there is a spiritual desire, an inward thirst for the sacred Scriptures, for the preaching of the Word of God, for the company and conversation of the saints of God. Hence "we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

A person may be a new-born babe in Christ and yet be eighty

the king and all that were then with him; but he could not reach the case; it required a greater Power.

Let us bring this down to our own feelings. Where is the minister that stands up to preach, that is concerned for the salvation of his hearers, who would not, if he could, carry the Word with power to their souls and convert them to God? Where is the God-fearing man, who has a wife that knows not the Lord, but is concerned for her to know God as her God? And where is the wife that has an unbelieving husband, but is concerned for his salvation? Where are the God-fearing parents who are not concerned for the salvation and welfare of their children? This is commendable so far as we view it subservient to the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush. We can do nothing without the Lord; it must be the power of God alone.

I have known individuals who had godly parents; their parents had been concerned for the spiritual welfare of their children, and their prayers had been bottled in heaven. The parents have died, and in God's own time answers to those very prayers have descended upon the offspring. Some of those offspring have come to me in tears, and said, "O that I had those dear parents now, to tell them what God has done for my soul!" Such cases as these are an encouragement to use the means, leaving the result in the hands of our heavenly Father.

3. "Nor of the will of man." A great deal is said of man and of his free-will, we unhesitatingly grant; but what is that will free to do, while in a state of unregeneracy? The will is one of the faculties of the mind, a depraved faculty; so that men willingly drink in sin, like thirsty oxen drinking in water; they lie down, as thousands do as some of us did, in the sink of sin, and wallow in it and delight in it like a sow wallowing in the mire. Man's free-will in a depraved sinner leads him from God in the broad and downward road; it leads him to eternal destruction, if not prevented by the free and sovereign grace of God.

"O," says one; "has not man a will to choose the good and refuse the bad; to turn to God, and repent, and believe, and be saved?" We answer the question in the Lord's own way, and propose this question as a reply: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No; it is impossible; for, if so, "then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." So then, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but



of God that showeth mercy." Our salvation, our regeneration, is not to be traced to the will of man, but to the sovereign will of God. Mark the notable passage: "Of his own will begat he us."

Now let us look at the *positive* declaration. "*But of God.*" O that we could pronounce this short sentence with the gravity and solemnity that its nature demands. "But of God." All human power must sink and die, "as a dim candle dies at noon," and the great and almighty power of Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, be exalted; for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, above all praise and power, and above every name that can be named; and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and tongue confess, that He is Lord.

Whoever is born again of the Spirit of God is regenerate; and, mark it: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." There is a creation, a new creation. We ask the Christian, who can create but God? Man can perform wonders if you put something into his hand to work upon; but if he has nothing whereon to display his wisdom and demonstrate his handiwork he can do nothing. I was forcibly struck with this while walking through the International Exhibition in London. I beheld many things in the rough state as they were found in or on the earth, and I saw the wisdom and handiwork of man in bringing them forth to perfection, in a way that fills the mind with admiration. But had these men had nothing put into their hands to work upon, they could have displayed no power. So, none can create but God; and the same God, the same power displayed in the creation of the heavens and earth, is displayed in producing this new creation of grace in the soul of a sinner.

Paul, in speaking of this, says, "according to the exceeding greatness of his power." O the exceeding greatness of His power in the works of creation, and in the works of providence! But there is a greater display of Jehovah's power in the regeneration of one soul than in all the works of creation and providence. When the Lord by His almighty power spake the world into existence, there was none to oppose; He spake, and the thing was done. But in the regeneration of a sinner, there is an allied power fighting against the power of God; there is Satan, the god of this world, in the sinner's heart; there are the allurements of the world, all uniting to prevent the Lord from accomplishing the good pleasure of His will. But when the appointed time comes, the stronger man armed enters the sinner's heart; makes him willing in the day of His power;

brings down his lofty looks; abases his proud and hard heart; lays him in the dust and upon the dunghill, at the feet of a dear Redeemer; and He exerts His power, not by creature might nor by creature power, but by the power of God.

A sinner is born again by the power of God Himself. Sinners in a state of nature cannot take to themselves this power; they must be born of God. Lazarus had no power in himself to rise from the dead; neither had his sisters or friends any power to raise him. And we may further say, but with all solemnity, there was no power in the sighs, and groans, and tears of Jesus, as a man, to move Lazarus into life. Where is the power then? In Christ's eternal power and Godhead. Then behold it; He speaks the word: "Lazarus, come forth!" and we see the dead come forth, bound hand and foot in the grave clothes. So, when sinners are converted to God, the word of the Lord regenerates the heart as on the day of Pentecost. If we are born again it must have been the power of God to begin the work; the power of God to maintain it; and the power of God to complete it. If we have not the power of God, the soul is dead, religion is dead, and all is dead.

III. Now let us proceed, in the last place, to notice *the marks and evidences of a sinner's being born again.*

Is it not a subject of vast importance to know whether we are born again? We all know we must die and that after death is the judgment; and if we are not born again, eternal destruction will be our destination. Whatever we may know, whatever we may profess, if we are not changed by divine grace we shall never enter into heaven; for the word of the Lord is explicit here. We must keep to the metaphor. Some people will have it religion begins in joy, and love, and peace. I have not so learned Christ, neither did Paul, nor the thousands at the day of Pentecost, nor the Philippian jailor; but more of this as we enter into the evidences of being born again.

I. Look at it in the familiar style in which it presents itself to us. We must borrow from nature. When a child is born alive, as a token of its birth and the life of the child, *it is heard to cry.* When its cry is heard there is a token, an undeniable evidence, of the birth. Just so in a spiritual point of view. Men, before they are born again, may say prayers, make long prayers like the pharisees, or like Saul of Tarsus; but Saul never did cry, he never did pray spiritually, till Jesus met him on the way