

# **THE NEW BIRTH**

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## **Chapter 9 – Growth in Spiritual Understanding**

The physical mind is limited in its abilities – it simply is not equipped to grasp things of deep spiritual nature. We read in TGRABJ/2/200ff, “*You cannot perceive spiritual things with the material mind, neither can a man by reason of those powers of the mind which know only material things, be able to perceive the truths of the spirit. Hence the necessity for man cultivating the soul perceptions, which are greater and more comprehending than all the faculties of the material mind.*”

The Bible concurs and puts it in these words:

**1 Corinthians 2:12-14** – We have not received the spirit of the world but the *Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us*. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in *words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words*. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

### **Importance of Cultivating Soul Perceptions**

We learn further from TGRABJ/2/200ff (paraphrased): The mind is a wonderful instrument for investigating the laws of nature and the relation of cause

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and effect in the physical world. However, the its powers are not helpful when applied to the things of the spirit. Their use in such a way can lead to incorrect conclusions, as well as retarding the soul's development of its faculties.

God has created eternal laws to be applied to conditions of both the material world and the spiritual world. But the laws that apply to the operations of the material world are not fitted to apply to the operations of the spiritual world. Knowledge of the laws pertaining to the natural will not automatically supply knowledge of the laws pertaining to the spiritual. So to spiritually progress, man needs to become acquainted with the relevant spiritual laws.

Material laws may be learned through the five senses of the material mind, but spiritual laws can only be learned by the exercise of the soul faculties. *The soul is to the spiritual things of God what the mind is to the material things of God.* Therefore, it is a mistake to attempt to learn spiritual things through the powers of the material mind. Rather, it is *necessary to exercise the soul perceptions which will come as one's soul develops.* These perceptions are just as real as the five senses of the mind, though most people are not aware of their existence. Once their existence is understood and they begin to be exercised, the development of these faculties or perceptions will progress with success and certainty.

## **From Truth Discovery to Faith**

In TGRABJ/2/337ff, we learn of a process that leads from the revelation of truth to the development of faith. When a discovered or revealed *truth* is recognized as reality based on experience, it is then put into *action*. This leads to *belief of the mind*, which in turn leads to *faith with longings and aspirations at the soul level*. The object of faith becomes real (of substance) which then leads to *knowledge with conviction*, and as a result, one can speak with authority as Jesus did. Such was the process by which Jesus became the possessor and authentic expositor of the great spiritual truths that had never before been known and declared by any person.

These steps leading to knowledge and internalization of truth must be followed gradually and with confidence. The help and influence of the Father are necessary in this, and comes only in response to sincere prayer from the soul. This is the only means to obtain deep spiritual knowledge – it is always by grace. All knowledge of spiritual things coming in any other way cannot be relied on, for there is only one source of such knowledge out of which the real spiritual truths of God emanate. Love is the great principle that enters into all spiritual knowledge. Without love it is impossible to rightly conceive the truths of God and possess them.

In sum, naturally, through the human mind, it is impossible to understand spiritual things or arrive at correct conclusions regarding spiritual matters. Such

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knowledge can only be achieved through soul perceptions or the soul-mind. As one receives more of the Divine Love through the Holy Spirit, the individual becomes aware of their soul faculties, and as he or she begins to exercise them, they become more and more developed. This will result in more and deeper spiritual understanding.