

characteristic, and eternal life its portion. How evident, then, is it that they who judge of, or describe it as an improvement in morals and tastes, wholly misapprehend the simple quality and radical nature of the new birth. Man in the old nature was characterized by unbelief; the new man is characterized by exactly the opposite, which it declares as just and compensatory; and thus faith is its peculiar mark, and the proof of its existence. New birth exists wherever faith exists, and *vice versa*. If I be ever so changed or improved and have no faith in God, there can be no conscious new birth for the first utterance of the newly born soul is that of faith. It knows that God is to be trusted, and let its trust be ever so feeble, the response returned to it from God, is *eternal life*—he that believes hath eternal life. And this eternal life is the second characteristic, the inalienable possession of new birth. In all times, as I have remarked, faith in God was the first expression and utterance of the quickened soul, and this single fact clears away much of the confusion and uncertainty with which the subject has been surrounded. Both teachers and souls have been diverted from the plain and true ground by looking for an improvement in feelings and manners, instead of first insisting on the necessity of the existence of faith, from which in true power the other would follow. A remarkable change and improvement may be wrought in me from many other causes; but faith in God in my soul is proof positive that it is newly born; for nothing but His Spirit