

The Incorruptible Seed

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The highest possible motive for the love commanded of Christians is their common spiritual parentage. All Christians are born again.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). Being born again, all Christians are in the same spiritual family. Thus brother love without hypocrisy is to be a natural consequence. Just as purifying the soul is by the word (1 Peter 1:22), being born again is by the word. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Peter 1:23).

Some feel that "liveth and abideth" refers to God as eternal; others feel it refers to the word of God. The context seems to favor it referring to the word. The word of God shall never fade away. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mt. 24:35). Peter clinches his argument, as he always does, with the authority of the Scriptures by quoting Isaiah 40:6-8. "For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass (1 Peter 1:24). Man needs to learn of his vanity. Only God can give him eternal life and that is in Christ. To have it we

must obey the everlasting word (Psalm 90:10). All that is human is perishing. That which is the most attractive, the flower, is frail. The flower is the plant's moment of glory, but soon fades. "For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings" (James 1:11).

"The gospel is a plant which is not affected by earthly changes. It is the same in the temperate as in the torrid zone, and as in the frigid. It does not seem to be scorched by heats, or benumbed by cold. Age does not diminish the freshness of its bloom; soil does not affect its nature; climate does not modify its peculiar properties. Among the frost-bound latitudes of North America, and the burning sands of Africa, or the fertile plains of India, we find it still shooting up the same plant of renown, the same vine of the Lord's right-hand planting, the same 'tree of life,' raised up from the beginning of time, 'whose leaves were for the healing of the nations,' and under which all kindreds and tribes and tongues and people shall one day rejoice,

when privileged to take shelter under its all-covering shade, and draw refreshing nourishment from its perennial fruits" (Duff).

God's word, including His great and precious promises, is everlasting and sure. The early Christians were opposed and persecuted, sometimes even by Imperial Rome. All that opposition being flesh perished. Christians continued to preach and the word continued to spread. The contrast is one we must never forget. God's word endures. Build on it for eternity. Build on the flesh and it will last only till death. The gospel preached by the apostles is that everlasting word. "And this is the word of good tidings which was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:25). The faith and hope of Christians rests upon a secure foundation. It is "good tidings." We are begotten when we believe and obey the good news, the gospel. Having been begotten, we should love one another.

Corruptible seed brings forth only that which is corruptible and destined for death. God's word is capable of everlasting life. The sowing of the word of God which results in regeneration is the theme of the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:1-9; 18-23). As the seed is the word of God, let us recognize the importance of being thoroughly scriptural. There are various obstacles which meet the seed and destroy its fruitfulness. Thankfully, there is also good ground which bears fruit. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (Heb. 2:1).