

Idling life away like an idiot or a madman

(Joseph Philpot, "[The Soul's Growth in Grace](#)" 1837)

When one is spiritually reborn, he sees
at one and the same moment . . .

God and self,
justice and guilt,
power and helplessness,
a holy law and a broken commandment,
eternity and time,
the purity of the Creator, and
the filthiness of the creature.

And these things he sees, not merely as
declared in the Bible, but as revealed in
himself as personal realities, involving all
his happiness or all his misery in time and
in eternity. Thus it is with him **as though
a new existence** had been communicated,
and as if for the first time he had found
there was a God!

It is as though all his days he had been asleep,
and were now awakened; asleep upon the top of
a mast, with the raging waves beneath; **as if all
his past life were a dream**, and the dream were
now at an end. He has been . . .

hunting butterflies,
blowing soap bubbles,
angling for minnows,
picking daisies,
building houses of cards, and
idling life away like an idiot or a madman.

He had been perhaps wrapped up in a religious
profession, advanced even to the office of a deacon,
or mounted in a pulpit. He had learned to talk about
Christ, and election, and grace, and fill his mouth
with the language of Zion.

But what did he experimentally know of these
things? **Nothing, absolutely nothing!**

Ignorant of his own ignorance (of all kinds of
ignorance the worst), he thought himself rich,

and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing; and knew not that he was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.