

## **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.