

A New Creature

by Thomas Watson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a new creature in Christ, which is a supernatural work of God's Spirit, renewing and transforming the heart into the divine likeness.

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:26, John 3:3, Romans 2:29, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 1:20, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 1:12, Hebrews 11:6, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "New Creation"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the essence of true Christianity being a new creature in Christ, emphasizing the necessity of being grafted into Him by faith to experience a supernatural work of God's Spirit that renews and transforms the heart. He explains that the new creature is a work of divine power, greater than creating the world, and a display of God's free grace, infusing new qualities and restoring God's image lost by the fall. Watson highlights the importance of grieving, detesting, opposing, and mortifying old sins, as well as the need for a visible change in thoughts, affections, and actions to evidence the new creature. He urges the congregation to seek the new creature through the preaching of the Word, earnest prayer, and thankfulness for God's abundant mercy.

Transcript

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"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

In this Scripture consists the essence and soul of religion. I note here two things:

First, that the true definition of a Christian is to be in Christ. "If any man is in Christ." He may be in the visible church--yet not in Christ. It is not to be baptized into Christ's name which makes a true Christian--but to be in Christ, that is, to be grafted into Him by faith. And if to be in Christ makes a Christian--then there are but few Christians. Many are in Christ nominally, not really; they are in Christ by profession, not by spiritual union. Are they in Christ--who do not know Him? Are they in Christ--who persecute those who are in Christ? Surely, such a holy head as Christ, will disclaim such spurious members.

Second, whoever is in Christ, is a new creature. For illustration, I shall show what a new creature is; and what kind of work it is.

What a new creature is. It is a second birth added to the first birth, John 3:3. It may be thus defined: it is a supernatural work of God's Spirit, renewing and transforming the heart into the divine likeness.

The efficient cause of the new creature, is the Holy Spirit; no angel or archangel is able to produce it. Who but God, can alter the hearts of men--and turn stones into flesh? If the new creature was not produced by the Holy Spirit--then the greatest glory in a man's conversion would belong to himself; but this glory God will not give to another. The turning of the will to God--is from God.

The instrumental cause by which the new creature is formed, is the Word of God. James 1:18, "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth." The Word is the seed--out of which springs the flower of the new creature.

The matter of which the new creature consists is the restoring of God's image lost by the fall.

QUESTION. But does God, in the new creature, give a new soul?

ANSWER. No, He does not bestow new faculties--but new qualities. As in the altering of a lute, the strings are not new--but the tune is mended; so, in the new creature, the substance of the soul is not new--but is now tuned by grace. The heart that before was proud--is now humble; the eyes that before were full of lust--are now full of tears. Here are new qualities infused.

What kind of work the new creature is. The new creature is a work of divine power; so much it imports, because it is a creation. The same power which raised Christ from the grave, goes to the production of the new creature, Ephesians 1:20. It is a work of greater power to produce the new creature--than to make a world. It is true, in respect to God, all things are equally possible to Him; but, as to our understanding, it requires a greater power to make a new creature than to make a world, for:

1. When God made the world He met with no opposition--but when God is about to make a new creature He meets with opposition. Satan opposes Him, and the heart opposes Him.
2. It cost God nothing to make the world--but to make the new creature costs Him something. Christ Himself was glad to become man. In making the world, it was but speaking a word; but, in making of the new creature, it cost Christ the shedding of His blood!
3. God made the world in six days--but He is carrying on the new creature in us all our lives long. The new creature is but begun here; it is not perfected or fully drawn in all its orient colors--until it comes to heaven.

The new creature is a work of free grace. There is nothing in us, to cause God to make us anew. By nature we are full of pollution and enmity--yet now God forms the new creature. Behold the banner of love displayed! The new creature may say, "By the grace of God I am what I am!" In the creation, we may see the strength of God's arm; in the new creature, we may see the working of God's heart. That God should consecrate any heart, and anoint it with grace, is an act of pure love! That He should pluck one out of the state of nature, and not another--must be resolved into sovereign grace. Matthew 11:26, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." This will

increase the saint's triumphs in heaven, that the lot of free grace should fall upon them--and not on others.

The new creature is a work of rare excellency. A natural man is a lump of dirt and sin mixed together. God loathes him! But upon the new creature is a spiritual glory, as if we should see a piece of clay, turned into a sparkling diamond! Song of Solomon 3:6, "Who is this that comes out of the wilderness, perfumed with myrrh and incense?" That is the natural man coming out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the Spirit.

The new creature must be glorious, for it partakes of the divine nature, 2 Peter 1:4. A soul beautified with holiness is like the sky, bespangled with glittering stars; it is God's lesser heaven, Isaiah 57:15. In the incarnation, God made Himself in the image of man; in the new creation, man is made in the image of God. By our being creatures, we are the sons of Adam; by being new creatures we are the members of Christ. Reason makes one live the life of man--the new creature makes him live the life of God. A new creature excels the rational nature--and equals the angelic. It is excellent to hear of Christ's being crucified for us--but more excellent to have Christ formed in us!

Concerning the new creature, I shall lay down two positions.

POSITION 1. It is not in the power of a natural man to convert himself, because it is a new creation. As we cannot make ourselves creatures, so we cannot make ourselves new creatures.

QUESTION. But why does God command us to convert ourselves, if we have no power? Ezekiel 18:31, "Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit."

ANSWER 1. We once had power. God gave us a stock of holiness--but we lost it. If a master gives his servant money to employ in his service, and he wastes and embezzles it, may not the master require his money of him? Though we have lost our power to obey--God has not lost His right to command.

ANSWER 2. Though men cannot convert themselves and make themselves new creatures--yet they may do more than they do. They may avoid temptations, they may read the Word. The same feet that carry them to a theater--will carry them to a sermon. They may implore divine grace. But they don't do what they are able to do; they put God to the trial, whether He will give saving grace.

ANSWER 3. God is not lacking to those who seek Him for grace. He is willing to put forth His helping hand. With His command there goes a promise, Ezekiel 18:31, "Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit"; and there is a promise, Ezekiel 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you."

POSITION 2. When God converts a sinner, He does more than use a moral persuasion--for conversion is a new creation. Ephesians 4:24. The Pelagians talk much of free-will. They say, "The will of man is, by nature, asleep; and conversion is nothing but the awakening a sinner out of sleep, which is done by moral persuasion." But man is, by nature, dead in sin, Ephesians 2:1. And God must do more than awaken him. He must enliven him, before he is a new creature.

USE 1. Of terror to such as are not new creatures, such as are still growing upon the stock of old Adam, who continue in their sins and are resolved so to do. These are in the gall of bitterness and are the most miserable creatures that ever God made--except for the devils. These stand in the place where all God's arrows fly; these are the center where all God's curses meet. An unregenerate person is like one in debt--who is in fear of being arrested by death and carried prisoner to hell. Can that traitor be happy--who is fed by his prince in prison--only to be kept alive for execution? God feeds the wicked like prisoners. They are reserved for the day of wrath, 2 Peter 2:9. How should this frighten men out of their natural

condition and make them restless until they are new creatures!

USE 2. Of trial as to whether we are new creatures or not. Our salvation depends upon it. I shall show you the counterfeits of the new creature; or that which seems to be the new creature--but is not.

1. Natural honesty, moral virtue, prudence, justice, liberality, temperance--these are not the new creature. These make a glorious show in the eye of the world--but differ as much from the new creature, as a stick differs from a star. Morality indeed is commendable, and it would be well if there were more of it. This our Savior loves, Mark 10:21, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him." It was a love of compassion, not election. Morality is but nature at its best; it does not amount to grace. There is nothing of Christ in morality. That fruit is sour--which does not grow on the root of Christ. Moral actions are done out of a vain-glorious motive, not any respect to God's glory. The Apostle calls the heathen magistrates unjust, 1 Corinthians 6:1. While they were doing justice in their civil courts--they were unjust in God's court. Their virtues became vices--because faith was lacking; and they did all to raise trophies for their own praise and fame. Morality is but the wild olive tree of nature; it does not amount to grace.

Heat water to the highest degree--and you still cannot make wine out of it; it is water still. Just so, let morality be raised to the highest, it is nature still; it is but old Adam put in a better dress. I may say to a moral man, "yet lack you one thing," Mark 10:21. Moral virtue may exist with the hatred of godliness. A moral man hates true holiness--as much as he does vice! The Stoics were moralists and had sublime notions about virtue--yet were the deadliest enemies Paul had, Acts 17:18. Morality is but a counterfeit jewel--not the new creation. "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3. "You must be born again." John 3:7.

2. Religious education is not the new creature. Education greatly cultivates and refines nature. Education is a good wall to plant the vine of grace against--but it is not grace. King Jehoshaphat was good as long as his uncle Jehoiada lived--but when Jehoiada died, all Jehoshaphat's religion was buried in his uncle's grave! "Jehoshaphat did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him." 2 Kings 12:2. Have we not seen many who have been trained up religiously under their parents, and were very hopeful--yet these fair blossoms of hope have been blown off--and they have lived to be a shame to their parents!

3. A form of godliness is not the new creature. Every bird which has fine feathers, does not have sweet flesh. All who shine with the golden feathers of profession, are not saints. 2 Timothy 3:5, "Having a form of godliness--but denying the power." What is a lifeless form? Formality is the ape of piety! Formalists may perform all the external parts of religion--they may pray, fast and give alms. Whatever duties a believer does in sincerity--the same may a formalist do in hypocrisy. How devout were the Pharisees! How humble was Ahab! What a reformer was Jehu! Yet this was but a formal show of religion! Daedalus, by art, made images to move by themselves, insomuch that people thought they were living. Formalists so counterfeit and play at devotion--that others think they are living saints. They are religious charlatans!

4. Every change of opinion does not amount to the new creature. Man may change from error to truth--yet be no new creature. Here is a change in the head--but not in the heart. One may be orthodox in his judgment, yet not cordially embrace the gospel. He may be no papist--yet no true believer. He who is changed only in opinion, is but almost a Christian, and shall be but almost saved--yet fully damned!

5. Every sudden passion or stirring of the affections, is not the new creature. There may be affections of sorrow. Some, upon reading the history of Christ's passion, may be ready to weep--but it is only a natural

sentimentality and tenderness, which relents at any tragic sight.

Affections of desire may be stirred. John 6:34, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" But these same people basely deserted Christ and no longer followed Him, verse 66. Many desire heaven--but will not come up to the price!

Affections of joy may be stirred. In the parable of the soils, the second sort of hearers are said to receive the word with joy, Matthew 13:20. What was this but to have the affections moved with delight in hearing! Yet, that this did not amount to the new creature is plain, first, because those hearers are said to have no root. Second, because they fell away, verse 21. King Herod heard John the Baptist gladly; he was much affected with John's preaching. Where then was the defect? Why was not Herod a new creature? The reason was, because Herod was not reformed by the Baptist's preaching. His affections were moved--but his sin was not removed! Many have sweet motions of heart, and seem to be much affected with the Word--but their love to sin is stronger than their love to the Word! Therefore, all their good affections prove abortive and come to nothing.

6. One may have trouble for sin--yet not be a new creature. Trouble of spirit may appear while God's judgments lie upon men. When these are removed, their trouble ceases. Psalm 78:34, 36, 37, "When He killed some of them, the rest began to seek Him; they repented and searched for God. But they deceived Him with their mouths, they lied to Him with their tongues, their hearts were insincere toward Him, and they were unfaithful to His covenant." Metal that melts in a furnace, when taken out of the furnace will return to its former hardness. Many in time of sickness seem to be like melted metal. What weeping and wringing of hands! Do not these look like new creatures? But as soon as they recover--they are as bad as ever! Their pangs leave them--and it never comes to a new birth.

7. A man may have some actings of the Spirit--yet not be a new creature. The Apostle supposes a case that one might be made partaker of the Holy Spirit yet fall away, Hebrews 6:4. A man may have some slight transient work of the Spirit--but it does not go to the root. He may have the common gifts of the Spirit--but not the special grace. He may have the Spirit to convince him--but not to convert him. The light he has, is like a winter sun which has little or no influence. It does not make him more holy; he has the motions of the Spirit--but walks after the flesh.

8. Every abstaining from sin, is not the new creature.

First, this abstaining may be from restraining grace--not renewing grace--as God withheld Laban from hurting Jacob, Genesis 31:24. The Lord may restrain men from sin--by the terror of a natural conscience. Conscience stands as the angel with a drawn sword, and says, "Don't commit this evil." Men may be frightened from sin--but not divorced from sin!

Second, men may abstain from sin for awhile--and then return to it again; as Saul left off pursuing David for some time--and then hunted him again. This is like a man that holds his breath under water, and then takes a breath again. Jeremiah 34:15-16, "Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight. But now you have turned around and profaned my name."

Third, men may leave gross sins--and yet live in more spiritual sins. They may leave drunkenness, and live in pride. They may leave immorality, and live in malice. The Pharisee boasted that he was no adulterer--but he could not say that he was not proud or superstitious. Here he left gross sin--and lived in spiritual sins!

Fourth, men may leave sin partially, abstain from some sin--not all. They feed some sin in a corner. Herod left many sins--but one sin he lived in, namely, incest. All this does not amount to the new creature.

I shall show you wherein the essence of the new creature consists.

First, in GENERAL. To the constituting of the new creature, there must be a great change wrought. He who is a new creature is not the same man he was. He is of another spirit. Numbers 14:24, "My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit." When the harlot Lais came to one of her old acquaintances after he was converted, and tempted him to sin, he said, "I am not the same man!" When one becomes a new creature, there is such a visible change, that all may see it. Therefore, it is called a change "from darkness to light," Acts 26:18. Paul, a persecutor, when converted, was so altered that all who saw him were amazed at him, and could scarcely believe that he was the same person, Acts 9:21. It was as if another soul had lived in the same body! Mary Magdalene, an unchaste sinner, when once savingly wrought upon--what a penitent creature she became! Her eyes once were enticements to lust--she now uses them to wash Christ's feet with her tears. The hair which she was so proud of and which was a net to entangle her lovers--she now she now uses it to wipe Christ's feet with.

Thus the new creature makes a visible change. Such as are the same as they were--as vain and proud as ever--there is no new creature to be seen; for then a mighty change would appear. 1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you--but you are washed--but you are sanctified."

But every change does not evidence the new creature. There is a change from one extreme to another, from a prodigal--to an usurer, from a Turk--to a Papist. This is as if one should recover from one disease--and die of another! There is an outward change, which is like the washing of a swine. Ahab was much changed to outward view, when he "tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth," 1 Kings 21:27, insomuch that God stood and wondered at him, "See how Ahab humbles himself!" Yet, for all this, he was but a hypocrite.

QUESTION. What change, then, is that which is requisite in the new creature?

ANSWER. It is an inward change--a change of heart. Though the heart is not newly made--it is newly molded. Jeremiah 4:14, "Oh, Jerusalem, wash your heart!" Ahab's clothes were rent--but not his heart! The outward change will do no good, without the inward change. What will become of those, then--who have not so much as an outward change? Thus you see in general that, in the production of the new creature, there must be a change.

Second, and more PARTICULARLY, the change in the new creature consists in two things, and they are both set down in the text: "old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

The first trial of the new creature is this: "Old things are passed away." Old pride, old ignorance, old malice; the old house must be pulled down, before you can set up a new one.

OBJECTION. But if all old things must pass away--then there are no new creatures. Who can be quite freed from sin? Does not Paul complain of a body of death?

ANSWER. We must know that the change wrought in the new creature, though it is a thorough change--yet it is not a perfect change. Sin will remain. As there is a principle of grace--so there is a principle of corruption. Like wine and water mixed, there is in the regenerate, flesh as well as spirit. Here a question arises.

QUESTION. If sin in the regenerate is not quite done away--then how far must one put off the old man, that he may be a new creature?

ANSWER 1. There must be a GRIEVING for the remains of corruption. Romans 7:24, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" Paul did not cry out of his sufferings, his being beaten with rods, shipwrecked, stoned; but, like the bird of paradise, he bemoaned himself for sin! In the new creature, there must be a daily mourning for the indwelling presence of corruption. A child of God does not wear sin as a gold chain--but as a fetter.

ANSWER 2. In the new creature, there must be a DETESTATION of old things--as one would detest a garment in which is the plague. It is not enough to be angry with sin--but we must hate it. Psalm 119:163, "I hate and abhor lying." Hatred is the highest degree of enmity, and we must hate sin not only for its hurtful effect--but its loathsome nature, as one hates a toad for its poisonous quality.

ANSWER 3. In the new creature, there is an OPPOSITION against all old things. A Christian not only complains of sin--but fights against it, Galatians 5:17.

But may not a natural man oppose sin?

Yes--but there is a great difference between his opposing sin--and the new creature's opposing it.

First, there is a difference in the MANNER of opposition.

The natural man opposes sin only for the shame of it--as it eclipses his reputation; but the new creature opposes sin for the filth of it. It is the spirit of mischief; it is like rust to gold, or as a stain to beauty.

The natural man does not oppose all sin. He does not oppose inward sins. He fights against such sins as are against the light of a natural conscience--but not against heart-sins, such as the first risings of vain thoughts, the stirrings of anger and lust, and the venom and impurity of his nature.

He does not oppose gospel sins: pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, spiritual barrenness. He is not troubled that he can love God no more.

He does not oppose complexion-sins, such sins as the bias of his heart carries him more strongly to--such as lust or avarice. He says of his constitution-sins, as Naaman, 2 Kings 5:18, "In this thing, may the Lord pardon your servant." But the new creature opposes all kinds of sin, as he who hates a serpent hates all kinds of serpents. Psalm 119:104, "I hate every false way."

Second, there is difference between the natural man's opposing sin and the new creature's opposing sin--in regard to the MOTIVES. A natural man opposes sin from carnal motives--to stop the mouth of conscience, and to prevent hell. But the new creature opposes sin upon more noble motives--out of love to God, and fear of dishonoring the gospel.

ANSWER 4. In the new creature, there is a MORTIFYING of old corrupt lusts. Galatians 5:24, "Those who are Christ's, have crucified the flesh." The new creature is said to be dead indeed unto sin, Romans 6:11. He is dead as to the love of sin--that it does not captivate. He is dead as to the power of sin--that it does not command. The new creature is continually crucifying sin. Some limb of the old Adam drops off every day. Though sin does not die perfectly, it dies daily. A gracious soul thinks he can never kill sin enough. He deals with sin as Joab did with Absalom, 2 Samuel 18:14, "He took three darts in his hand and thrust

them through the heart of Absalom." So, with the three darts--faith, prayer, and repentance--a Christian thrusts through the body of sin! He never thinks this Absalom is enough dead!

Try yourself, then, and see if you have this first sign of the new creature, "old things are passed away." There is a grieving for sin, a detesting of it, an opposing of it, and a mortifying of it. This is the passing away of old things, though not in a legal sense--yet in an evangelical sense; and, though it is not to satisfaction--yet it is to acceptance.

The second trial of the new creature is this: "All things are become new." The new creature is new all over. Grace, though it is but in part--yet it is in every part. By nature, every branch of the soul is defiled with sin--as every part of wormwood is bitter. So it is in regeneration: every part of the soul is replenished with grace; therefore, grace is called the new man, Ephesians 4:24. Not a new eye or a new tongue--but a new man; there are new dispositions, new principles, new aims, "all things are become new!"

In the new creature, there is a new UNDERSTANDING, Ephesians 4:23, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The first thing an artist draws in a portrait, is the eye. When God newly draws us and makes us new creatures, the first thing He draws in our souls is a new eye. The new creature is enlightened to see that which he never saw before.

He knows Christ after another manner. An unconverted man, by the light of common grace, may believe Christ to be the Son of God; but the new creature knows Christ after another manner--so as to esteem Him above all, to adore Him, to touch Him by faith, to fetch a healing virtue from Him.

The new creature knows himself better than he did. When the sun shines into a room--it reveals all the dust and cobwebs in it. Just so, when the light of the Spirit shines into the heart--it reveals that corruption which before lay hidden; it shows a man his own vileness and nothingness. Job 40:4, "Behold, I am vile!" A wicked man, blinded with self-love, admires himself--like Narcissus who, seeing his own reflection in the water, fell in love with it. Saving knowledge works self-abasement. "Lord, You are in heaven, and I am in hell," said a martyr. Has this day-star of knowledge shined on our mind?

The new creature is renewed in his CONSCIENCE. The conscience of a natural man is either blind, dumb, or seared; but conscience in the new creature is renewed. Let us examine--does conscience check for sin? The least hair makes the eye weep, and the least sin makes conscience smite. How did David's heart smite him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment! A good conscience is a star to guide, a register to record, a judge to determine, and a witness to accuse or excuse. If conscience does all these office right--then it is a renewed conscience, and speaks peace.

In the new creature, the WILL is renewed. The will, having a new bias of grace put into it, is strongly carried to good. The will of a natural man opposes God. When the wind goes one way and the tide another--then there is a storm. So it is when God's will goes one way and ours another. But when our will goes with God's, as the wind with the tide--then there is a sweet calm of peace in the soul. The sanctified will answers to God's will as the echo to the voice. Psalm 27:8, "When You said, seek you My face, my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord will I seek." And the will, being renewed, carries all the affections along with it.

The new creature has a new LIFE. Grace alters a man's walk. "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." 1 John 2:6. "So that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10. Before he walked proudly--now

he walks humbly. Before he walked loosely--now he walks holily. He makes the Word his rule, and Christ's life his pattern. A ship can be sailing eastward--but, if there comes a gale of wind, it blows it westward. So, before a man sailed hell-ward and, all of a sudden, the Spirit of God comes upon him and blows him heavenward. Here is a new life. It was a speech of Oecolampadius, "I would not speak nor do anything that I thought Jesus Christ would not approve of, if He were here physically present." Where there is circumcision of heart, there is circumspection of life. If we find that all things are become new--then we are new creatures and shall go to the new Jerusalem when we die.

USE 3. Of exhortation. Labor to be new creatures; nothing else will avail us. Galatians 6:15, "Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision--but a new creature." We are for new things. We love new fashions--why not new hearts? But people are full of prejudices against the new creature.

OBJECTION 1. If we are new creatures, there must be so much strictness in religion, so much praying and watching--this discourages us.

ANSWER 1. Is there anything excellent to be obtained, without labor? What pain is taken in searching for a vein of silver or seeking for pearls? Men cannot have the world without labor--would they have eternal salvation without labor?

ANSWER 2. The labor in true religion, bears no proportion with the reward. What are a few tears shed, compared to an eternal weight of glory? The soldier is content to wrestle with difficulties and undergo a bloody fight for a glorious victory. In all labor for heaven, there is profit. It is like a man who digs in a golden mine--and carries away all the gold!

ANSWER 3. Men take more pains to go to hell. What pains does an ambitious man take to climb to the pinnacle of honor? Tullia rode over the dead body of her father, to be made queen. How does the covetous man tire himself, and break his sleep and his peace--to get the world? Thus, some men take more pains in the service of sin--than others do in pursuit of holiness. Men talk of pains in religion--but, when God's Spirit comes into a person--He turns labor into delight. It was Paul's heaven to serve God, Romans 7:22. The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, Proverbs 3:17. It is like walking among beds of spices--which cast forth a sweet perfume.

OBJECTION 2. But if we leave our old company and become new creatures--we shall be exposed to many reproaches.

ANSWER. Who are those who speak evil of religion--but such as are evil? Besides, is it not better that men reproach us for being godly--than that God damn us for being wicked? Matthew 5:11, "Blessed are you when men shall revile you." Stars are never the less glorious though they have ugly names given them like "the bear" and "the dragon." A saint's reproaches are like a soldier's scars, honorable. 1 Peter 4:14, "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon you." While men clip your reputation to make it weigh lighter--they make your crown heavier.

Having answered these objections, I come now to resume the exhortation. I shall give some MOTIVES to labor above all things, to be new creatures.

1. In this true Christianity consists. It is not baptism which makes a Christian; many professors are no better than baptized heathens! The essential part of religion lies in the new creature. Romans 2:29, "Circumcision is that of the heart." Everything has a name from the better part. We call a man a

reasonable creature because of his soul, which is the more noble part; so one is called a Christian because he acts from a principle of the new creature, which the carnal man does not.

2. It is the new creature, which fits us for communion with

God. We cannot converse with God until then. Birds cannot converse with men--unless they have a rational nature put into them. Nor can men converse with God--unless, being made new creatures, they partake of the divine nature. Communion with God is a mystery to most. Everyone who hangs around the court, does not speak with the king. All who meddle with holy duties and, as it were, hang about the court of heaven do not have communion with God. It is only the new creature who enjoys God's presence in ordinances, and sweetly converses with Him as a child with a Father.

The NECESSITY of being new creatures.

1. Until then, we are odious to God. Zechariah 11:8, "My soul loathed them." To God, an unrepentant sinner is worse than a toad. A toad has no poison, but what God has put into it; but a sinner has that which the devil has put into him. Acts 5:3, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie?" A wicked man is possessed with an evil spirit. One man is possessed with the devil of pride, another with the devil of malice. To be possessed with the devil, must make a person odious to God! Thus he remains, until he becomes a new creature.

2. Until we are new creatures, our duties are not accepted with God. They are but wild grapes. God accepts no man--except where He sees His own image. The new creature is called the renewing of God's image, Ephesians 4:24. When they brought Tamarlane a pot of gold, he asked what stamp it had on it; and, when he saw the Roman stamp on it, he refused it. Just so, if God does not see His own stamp and image on the soul--He rejects the most splendid religious services.

Duties of religion are not accepted without the new creature, because there is that lacking, which makes them a sweet savor to God. The holy oil for the tabernacle was to be made of several spices and ingredients, Exodus 30:23. Now, if any of these spices had been left out, it would not have been pleasing to God. The unregenerate man leaves out the chief spice in his duties, and that is faith. Hebrews 11:6, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith lays hold on Christ--and so is accepted.

Such as are not new creatures--but grow upon the stock of old Adam, get no benefit by ordinances. They are to them as medicine in a dead man's mouth--they lose their virtue! Nay, not only do ordinances do them no good--but they hurt them. It would be sad if all a man ate, would turn to poison. The word preached is a savor of death; it is not healing--but hardening to them. Nay, Christ Himself is a rock of offense to them, 1 Peter 2:8. The wicked stumble at a Savior--and suck death from the tree of life!

Without being new creatures, we cannot arrive at heaven. Revelation 21:27, "Nothing impure will ever enter it." Heaven is not like Noah's ark, which received clean and unclean. A sinner is compared to swine, 2 Peter 2:22. Shall a swinish creature tread upon the golden pavement of heaven! Indeed, the frogs came into king Pharaoh's court; but in heaven there is no entertainment for such vermin. It is only the new creature which qualifies us for glory. This consecrates the heart, and only the pure in heart shall see God. The new creature elevates the soul--as the loadstone elevates the iron. A soul renewed by grace, is fit to ascend to the heavenly glory.

The excellency of the new creature consists in two things: The nobility and the immortality.

1. The nobility. The new creature fetches its pedigree from heaven; it is born of God. God counts none else of the royal blood. The new creature ennobles a man's spirit. He aspires after the favor of God, and looks no lower than a heavenly crown. The new creature raises one to honor. He excels the princes of the earth, Psalm 89:27, and is a joint heir with Christ.

2. The immortality. The new creature is begotten of the incorruptible seed of the Word, and never dies. It lasts as long as the soul, as long as heaven. God has laid out great cost for it and, if it perishes, He would lose all his cost. When Xerxes destroyed all the temples in Greece, he caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure. The new creature is God's temple, adorned with all the graces, which He will not allow to be demolished. Riches take wings, king's crowns tumble in the dust. Nay, some of the graces may cease--faith and hope shall be no more. But the new creature abides forever! 1 John 2:27.

The misery of the unregenerate creature. Dying as he is. I may say so of him, as Christ said of Judas, Mark 14:21, "Far better for him if he had never been born!" Better to have been a toad, a serpent, anything--if not a new creature. The old sinner must go into old Tophet, Isaiah 30:33. Damned captives will have nothing to ease their torments--not one drop of honey in all their gall. In the sacrifice of jealousy, there was no oil put into it, Numbers 5. In hell, there is no oil of mercy put to the sufferings of the damned to soothe them.

Therefore, get out of the wild olive tree of nature. Labor to be new creatures--lest you curse yourselves at last! A sinful life, will cause a hopeless and despairing death.

QUESTION. What shall we do to be new creatures?

ANSWER 1. The preaching of the Word is the seed of which the new creature is formed. This is the trumpet which must make the dead in sin come out of their grave!

ANSWER 2. Pray earnestly for the new creature: "Lord, You have made me once--make me again! What shall I do with this old heart? It defiles everything it touches!" Urge God with His promise, Ezekiel 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you." Say, "Lord, I am as these dry bones--breathe a supernatural life of grace into me!" Ezekiel 37:10.

USE 4. Of thankfulness. Let such as are new creatures, stand upon Mount Gerazim, blessing and praising God. Ascribe all, to the riches of God's love; set the crown upon the head of free grace! God has done more for you--than if He had made you kings and queens! Though you have not so much of the world as others, you are happier than the greatest monarchs upon earth! And, I dare say, you would not change place with any of them. The Apostles seldom speak of the new creation--but they always join some thankful praises with it. 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be God, who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope." Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit for the inheritance in light." The new creature is a sign of election--a badge of adoption. What distinguishing love is this--that God should make any of us new creatures--when He has left the greatest part of the world to perish in their sins! Such as are objects of mercy should be trumpets of praise!

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