

[R5685 : page 147]

THE NEW CREATURE'S CONQUEST OF HIS FLESH

"Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." – Colossians 3:9,10.

DEVELOPMENT is necessary to the life of the New Creation. In our text the term "old man" stands for the human will, which once dominated the being. All who become Christians in the Bible sense of the term not only accept Christ and trust in Him as their Savior, but devote their old will, their old nature, to death. Thenceforth that old nature is repudiated, and is no longer to control the life of the individual. But the body of the "old man" – the fleshly tabernacle – is still retained after the old will has been discharged and the new will has come in. The New Creature, with new impulses, a new purpose, uses the mortal body as its servant. The new will is now master.

This new will is the will of God, or in other words, it is a will to do God's will. Our consecration is a consecration [R5686 : page 147] to do the will of God, to be dead to any other will, whether our own natural will or the will of another. This includes the dedication of everything we have or had hoped to have as human beings. It means the laying on the altar our every power, our every ability, our strength, our time, our pocketbook, our influence. Those who make a Covenant of Sacrifice are accepted up to the full number of the Elect. They will, if faithful unto death, receive new bodies in the resurrection.

KNOWLEDGE THE BASIS OF DEVELOPMENT

In our context the Apostle explains how this putting off and putting on is done. This "new man" – this spirit-begotten New Creature – is to develop by acting upon the knowledge that it gains. We had some knowledge before consecration, or we would not

have thought of taking such a step. First, the Lord permitted a measure of knowledge to come to us. Then when we had accepted the terms and presented ourselves for sacrifice, the Savior's merit was imputed to us, and we were received of God and begotten as New Creatures by His Spirit, His power; and the good work has been going on in all those who have met the necessary conditions of development.

We must grow in love. The Apostle tells us that we might have all knowledge and yet be as nothing. Knowledge alone will not suffice. However, knowledge is the basis of faith and obedience. Without knowledge we could accomplish nothing. Knowledge shows us the will of God on the one hand and the selfishness that appertains to the fallen human nature on the other. It shows us the love and generosity that belong to the new nature. It shows us the Lord's character – the character that we are to imitate. We are to be "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us" – created us as New Creatures.

As St. Paul expresses it elsewhere, we are to be transformed – formed over. We have a new *will* from the *beginning*, but it requires some time to transform our *minds*. Our minds being accustomed to reasoning along the lines of the flesh, the old nature, it takes some length of time before they are so entirely renewed as to view things from the Divine standpoint. But only as we thus progress can we form a Christlike character.

RENEWING OF CHURCH AND WORLD DIFFERENT

Not only are we to have our *minds renewed*, but our bodies are to be brought into *subjection* to the *new mind*, our *new will*. Because our bodies are earthly and imperfect through the fall, we can never hope to bring them into *complete* subserviency to the new mind. There will always be more or less of conflict. But we are to deaden, to treat as though they were nothing, these desires and impulses of the depraved flesh. Thus we make progress, being

transformed day by day into the image and likeness of our God and of His dear Son. Those who attain this character-likeness to the Master will in due time be granted the Divine nature.

This change of mind comes only to those who are spirit-begotten; it does not come to the world. The Lord will deal with the world during the incoming Age. Mankind also will need to be renewed; but theirs will not be a renewal such as is granted to the Church. The world will need a new mind, and must learn to overcome all their fallen tendencies, but they will be required to give up only that which is sinful. Their renewal will be along the lines of Restitution, a restoration, to the former condition of the perfect man. They will not have a new mind that is in conflict with human nature, as has the Church. The world will not renounce their human nature; they are to renounce only sin and to bring their human nature, by Divine assistance then granted, up to perfection.

ALL MUST ATTAIN THE LIKENESS OF GOD

In the end, we see, every being who will have everlasting life on any plane will be in the likeness of God – the image of God. Father Adam in his perfection had this **[R5686 : page 148]** image; the holy angels have this image; Jesus had this image of the Father; and the Church must have this image. The world, also, by and by, must have this image of God. All must love and serve righteousness. Wrong must always be repulsive. All who attain life everlasting will see Divine Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power, and will thoroughly conform themselves to that standard in all their thoughts, words and deeds. All who do not attain this image of God by the close of the next Age – the thousand years of Christ's reign – will be cut off from life, without remedy.

The Lord Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:3.) To know God means to have intimate acquaintance with Him, to be like Him in character, to be able to view matters

as He views them. Only those who have the mind of God will be granted eternal life – whether of the Church now or of the world in the next Age.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MIND AND BODY

St. Paul brings to the attention of the Church the fact that all true Christians are New Creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and therefore may be spoken of as separate and distinct from their mortal bodies. (See verses 1 to 4 of same chapter.) This will never be true of the world in general; it is true only of those who are begotten of the Holy Spirit. The Lord does not judge these New Creatures according to the imperfections of their flesh, because these are *covered*. They will prove the measure of their love and loyalty by the way in which they fight against sin and the desires of the flesh, and especially against a rebellious spirit in their own flesh.

Each child of God has an enemy in his own body, and the more so because our bodies through the fall have become more or less surcharged with sin. The New Creature wills to do the Lord's will. Hence from the time that the New Creature has an existence there is a conflict between this New Creature and the old body. The Apostle Paul declared that he browbeat his body, kept his body under the control of the new mind; and he intimates that this is the only way to be a follower of the Lord Jesus. – 1 Corinthians 9:27.

THE FLESH TO BE THOROUGHLY SUBJUGATED

This matter of keeping the body under had a beginning. All our former lives we had been asking our body, What is your will? What is your desire? What will please you? Therefore it is a somewhat difficult matter now to bring the body under the control of the new will and to be able to say, "Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done." Just as a colt needs to be broken, to be brought into subjection, so it is with our flesh. If it is thoroughly broken, it will

remain in subjection. From time to time it will, of course, attempt to assert itself, but it must be conquered; for if it is not thoroughly broken and subjugated, if it is allowed to have more or less of its own way, there will always be danger of a runaway or of some other difficulty, and of final catastrophe.

We are not to take the Apostle too literally when he says that he browbeats his body. His thought is, not that we are literally to handle our body in a rough way, to maltreat it, as some have thought, but that we are to subjugate it, to teach it a thorough lesson. The object of this is that the body may learn to be a good servant of the New Creature. The Spirit of the Lord cannot quicken our mortal body until we have first brought it into subjection. Even if the triumph of the New Creature means the quick death of the body, it must be made submissive; for after we have decided that as human beings our own will is not to be any longer in control, but the Lord's will is to govern, the only thing to do is to set to work to use our body in His service. This will be done more or less thoroughly as we grow as New Creatures. As this battle goes on, if it is faithfully waged, our flesh becomes weaker, and the new mind is renewed day by day. We learn more fully to put our bodies under and bring them into the service of the new will. It should be manifest to all that we are seeking to do the will of the Lord; and that the will of the flesh is dead, and not to be entertained for a moment.

THE TESTING OF THE BELIEVER

The Apostle tells one reason why he kept his body under – lest, having instructed others how they should do, he himself should make a failure and become a castaway. Likewise with every true Christian this is a matter of supreme importance, and should be particularly noted by every one who is a teacher in the Church.

In choosing a Bride for His Son, the Father is making a selection from those who accept the Gospel Message and desire to

draw near to Him. The first test is as to whether or not they will make a full consecration to God. The second test is as to whether, after they have made their consecration, they will conquer the flesh and bring it into subjection. The third test is as to whether they will strive always to keep the flesh in subjection, even unto the end of the way.

The Lord is watching our course continually. His eye is ever upon us to see to what extent we are zealous in crucifying our flesh. Those who are in dead earnest in this matter are the ones whom He is seeking. He seeks a godly seed – those who have the disposition of the Master; and the Master's disposition has ever been in direct antagonism to everything sinful. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows," was spoken by the Father of our Lord Jesus. Moreover, the Master gladly laid down His life in sacrifice to do the Father's will and to save the world. **[R5687 : page 148]**

And so the Father has, during the Gospel Age, been seeking for the Bride of His Son those who preeminently love righteousness, who hate iniquity, and are glad to be living sacrifices, to be used up in God's service. In proportion as we manifest the spirit which actuated our Lord – a love for that which is right, a promptness to fight against all sin in ourselves, and a spirit of loving sacrifice – we shall be copies of God's dear Son. If we fail to have a proper zeal and energy in this respect, we shall be unfit to be granted the reward promised – "the prize of the High Calling" – and shall be rejected, be cast away.

One who had committed the sin unto death would be a castaway in the most absolute sense. Even the Great Company class must prove loyal of heart and mind and must hate sin, though cast away as regards the "prize." The degree of love and zeal we manifest in fighting against the weaknesses of the flesh has much

to do with the attainment of the prize, in determining whether or not we shall be inheritors of the highest nature with our Master – the Divine nature.

We find that in our flesh there is a tendency to revive from its condition of reckoned deadness, and to struggle for supremacy. Hence, as we have said, the new nature must be continually on the alert to maintain its ascendancy, to fight the good fight of faith, that we may gain the "crown of life," may be overcomers in the highest sense – [R5687 : page 149] "more than conquerors." We are in a position of great responsibility.

TWO CLASSES IN THE WORLD

There are at the present time two classes in the world – the fleshly and the spiritual. The fleshly live according to their natural tendencies; the spiritual live by faith, contrary to the flesh. Those who become footstep followers of Jesus are begotten of the Holy Spirit; hence they have been lifted to a higher plane than others of mankind. To them the old things of their past lives have passed away, have been renounced, and all things have become new.

The Apostle declares that if these live after the flesh – according to their natural inclinations and the desires and ambitions of the world – it means that they have descended again to the plane of the *world*; and they will *die*. It is only if we faithfully endure, if we suffer with Christ, that we shall reign with Him. Our sufferings with Christ are not in the upholding of some foolishness – of wearing a certain cut of hair, or a certain style of dress, etc. – but in active opposition to error, in living apart from the spirit of the world, and in energy and faithfulness, according to opportunity, in the spread of the Truth. The Lord's side is to be our side in everything. This brings us into conflict with the world and with the tendencies and proclivities of our own flesh; for we naturally love the things that the world loves.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND OUR DANGER

We are not to blame the world for living according to the flesh; for this course is the natural bent of the fallen nature. But it is different with us, by reason of the fact that we have sacrificed the earthly in order to obtain the spiritual. It would be a disastrous matter with us if we should live after the flesh, should sow to the flesh, instead of to the Spirit. It is not possible for us to live fully up to the Spirit, but it is possible for us to make a strenuous endeavor to do so. We can live *after* the Spirit, though we cannot measure up to the perfect standard. We can do our best; we can make our plans and arrangements in harmony with what God's Holy Spirit would dictate and approve, as God gives us wisdom to discern. This is the only course by which we can reach the eternal life and glory which the Lord has promised to the faithful Church.

We recognize, indeed, that there are two classes which will attain spiritual life; but only one will be granted an abundant entrance into the Kingdom. Those who sow liberally to the Spirit will reap the larger reward. Those who sow sparingly will reap the smaller reward. Those who are striving to live in full harmony with God, and contrary to everything that is in opposition to God, seeking by prayer and the study of the Word to ascertain His will, shall win the promised prize. – Philippians 3:14.

But those who have been spirit-begotten, and who then live according to the flesh, are not to expect any reward – not even Restitution. There can be nothing for them but the Second Death. They have had their chance for life and have abused it. Christ came to give *one* full, individual opportunity to each and all – and *only one*. God gave Adam an opportunity for everlasting life, but he was then inexperienced with sin and its consequences; hence, he is to be granted in his awakening an opportunity equal to that given the remainder of the world. Christ died to redeem *all*, and thus to give

to all mankind, in due time, a full, fair opportunity for life eternal, after experience with the nature and the results of sin.

The Church are having their trial now. This class, which is now receiving its opportunity, is limited. None can come to the full degree of responsibility, except those who have the clear enlightenment and special opportunities now granted to only a comparatively few. These, after having once been begotten of the Holy Spirit, must gain spiritual life, or else fail altogether and go into the Second Death.

In the next Age the world will be brought forth from the tomb – the death state – in an imperfect, blemished condition. The great Mediator will be in charge of the world's interests, having then made satisfaction to Justice on their behalf. It will be His mission to help mankind up to perfection – all who will. But any who continue to live, or to attempt to live, after the sinful cravings of their fallen flesh will eventually be destroyed; for those who prefer sin, after coming to a clear knowledge of the difference between good and evil, and having access to all needed assistance to rise out of their fallen estate, will be cut off as cumberers of the ground and corrupters of the earth. Those who during the incoming Age would attain eternal life on the human plane must seek to live in harmony with God's Law, with righteousness; and thus they will reach full perfection and restitution, under the guidance and assistance of The Messiah.

THE SPECIAL BATTLES OF THE CHURCH

But much more glorious than even this is the prospect before those who are now faithfully running the race for the prize of the High Calling, held out to the Church! There are, however, enemies yet to be vanquished, and victories to be gained, if we would receive the crown. Until the final battle is fought, we must not relax our vigilance for a moment nor lay aside one piece of our armor.

Considering particularly what are some of the battles of the New Creature, we realize that many of them pertain to the weaknesses of the flesh through heredity – sin working in our mortal bodies, seeking to bring us into captivity. After we have become New Creatures, the gross sins of the flesh gradually become distasteful even to those once in bondage to them. When these are conquered, a great victory has been won. But there are subtle sins that lurk in the flesh of all those who have become the Lord's; and these dispositions hide themselves in such a manner that they frequently deceive the new will, which needs to be educated up to a clear appreciation of the principles of righteousness.

It is an advance lesson in the School of Christ that hatred of a brother is murder, that we are not only to hate the *act* of murder, but also the murder *spirit*, and are so fully to cast out this spirit as to have nothing but love and kindly wishes in the heart toward others, even our enemies. Only the more advanced and better drilled pupils in the School of Christ see clearly and distinctly the meaning of the Apostle's words when he denominates anger (fleshly wrath), malice, hatred, strife, envyings, and evil speakings, as the works of the Devil. These must be fought to the finish.

"WE BESEECH YOU, THEREFORE," BELOVED

All the children of God must come to see that "*love* worketh no ill to his neighbor," nor does it *wish* ill. We must see that such evil dispositions originate in the mind, in the heart; and as soon as the true soldier of the cross perceives any of these sins manifesting themselves outwardly or lurking in his heart, he will begin a vigorous campaign against them, and will go to the Throne of Grace for the promised grace to help in time of need. Only thus can the child of God keep his record clear and retain the Lord's favor and blessing.

Let each of us then, dearly beloved, apply earnestly to ourselves these lessons. Let us diligently follow the example [R5687 : page 150] of the beloved Apostle Paul, and "keep under" our bodies, lest we become castaways. Let us keep ever before our minds the thought that we have "put off the old man with his deeds"; and that we have "put on the new man," and are now on trial for life or death eternal; that we are being tested, are being given the opportunity to prove the sincerity and depth of our consecration to the Lord. Surely this will spur us on and energize us to faithfulness. Let us remember that the keeping under of our body appertains to food and drink, to the clothing we wear, to the way we spend our consecrated time, to our every thought, word and deed.

These battlings of the new mind against the flesh are a "good fight" – good in the sense that they are fightings against the intrenched weaknesses and besetments of the fallen nature, against temptations from within and without, that appeal to us as human beings. They are a "fight of faith" because the entire course of the New Creature is one of faith; for "we walk by faith, not by sight." We could never succeed in this fight unaided. Hence we must keep very close to the Lord. We must "*watch* and pray," putting on and keeping securely fastened to us the whole armor of God. The time is short in which to complete this work in ourselves. Then let us be diligent!

