

A  
NEW CREATURE;

OR, A

**D**iscourse

ON GALATIANS VI. 15.

AN  
EPISTLE

*To my dear Friends and beloved Hearers at Northowram  
in Yorkshire.*

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MY DEARLY BELOVED,

TWO sorts of doctrine I have always judged necessary, and very seasonable : first, what concerns the person, natures, offices, and undertaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, in all their mediatorial latitude ; secondly, that which relates to a saving internal work of grace upon the hearts of men, which is the spring of all external action. These are as standing dishes requisite in every feast, and to the obtainment of which, my heart hath been much disposed. The former I have largely treated, from 1 Tim. i. 15, “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,”—which contains the sum and substance of our christian faith, the marrow of the gospel, the quintessence of our happiness ; nor doth any minister need to be “ ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth,” Rom. i. 16. And though this may seem to be out of fashion amongst some who would be esteemed rational preachers, and think that treating of Christ is but a conceited canting, though the great apostle of the Gentiles mentions the name of Christ nine several times in his first ten verses in the first chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and in his epistles some hundreds of times ; yea, and glories in it, expressing himself thus, 1 Cor. ii. 2, “ I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” But I wave this subject for the

present. That which hath respect to the inner man, especially the new man, or a saving work in the soul, is the subject before us, which has engaged my attention much; and after my pilgrimage amongst you, above forty-four years, in many difficulties, not without some success of my poor labours, "knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle," 2 Pet. i. 14. I was willing to leave one legacy more behind me, as a standing testimony to surviving posterity, of my long attachment to the concerns of your precious souls, and a means of your spiritual good, when my mouth is closed in the dust. And having lately treated on this subject, some of you desired me to publish it, which I was the more willing to do, for these reasons: 1. Because I am sure the subject is of daily, important, and universal use. 2. I have not seen any complete treatise upon it. 3. Its necessity is great. 4. Some were greatly alarmed on hearing it; and who knows what good the presenting of it to the eye, as well as to the ear, may do? It is true, it is simply and plainly drest, not with ornaments of art or rhetorical flourishes to set it off to the learned, being adapted in intelligible language to ordinary capacities, and possibly it may prove more profitable to country hearers; nor ought it to offend any, that much of this treatise is in scripture dialect, in words which "the Holy Ghost teacheth," 1 Cor. ii. 13; which the spiritual man cannot but approve and love.

And now, my dear neighbours and friends, God knows, and you know, "From the first day that I came to you, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons," Acts xx. 18; my tears, temptations, banishment, imprisonment, confiscations, night travels, and preachings, fastings, watchings, encouragements, and discouragements, and appealing to the searcher of hearts for its truth, I may say, what the same apostle said to his Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. Alas, what are you better for having Christ revealed to you, unless he be revealed in you? Gal. i. 16. Oh! woe will be to you, if you prove Christless, after hearing so much of Christ. Words signify little without something more, and no profession or change will do, but what is genuine, and accompanies salva-

tion. I will say to you, as Dr. Harris to his children in his last will and testament, "Think how you and I shall endure the sight, and the thought of one another at the last day, if you appear in the old Adam! much less shall you stand before Christ, unless you shew the image of Christ in you; and therefore never cease till you be made new creatures, and study well what that is."

Alas! sirs, you may make a shift to pass through this world unsuspected; many moralists, yea, Christians may subscribe their names to your testimonial, and give you the right hand of fellowship in this world, when you must be set at the left in the next: things will not then go on as they do now. Deal faithfully with God and your own souls; see you have the root of the matter, the life of grace. You may herd amongst the sheep now, and be found amongst goats at last. A king will give his subjects liberty to travel into another king's dominions, reserving their loyalty to their own prince. Papists, in Queen Elizabeth's days, being commanded to go to church, or be punished, sent to the Pope for a solution of this case of conscience. His answer was, You may comply; but, "my son, give me thy heart."\* Thus the devil will give you leave to read, pray, hear, and attend on ordinances; but as long as he holds you fast by the heart-strings, you are still his slaves, you are none of God's servants: for the soul is the man. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," Prov. xxiii. 7. As a man's principles are stated, so he receives his denomination, good or bad, a Jew or a heathen, a saint or a brute. If you have a brute's heart in the shape of a man, God will esteem you no better than a brute. It is the saying of a learned man, "Some make an image of the living God hewn out of the stock of a dead tree: but the new creature is not such a lifeless thing as many imagine." It is the spirit of "power, of love, and of a sound mind,"† 2 Tim. i. 7. This text, saith a good divine,‡ doth express the three parts of God's image in the new creature; certainly this vital principle hath a strong and vigorous

\* Fili, da mihi cor.

† Πνεῦμα δυνάμεως, ἀγάπης, καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ.

‡ Baxter's Life of Faith, page 122.



movement God-wards, and against sin. It is a holy spark, rising upwards to God, and forwards straight for heaven. Most professors are mistaken here; though ministers are oft calling on you to look about you, we tell you, there is a deception in the case. Counterfeit coin is common; our warnings now will be thought of another day, these frequent summons will ring in your ears, our sermons will have a repetition in this, or in another world. Conscience will gall you, and you cannot plead ignorance, or say, *non putâram*, I had not thought of such a day. How often do we tell you of the danger of dying in your natural state, and of that sulphureous lake, in which thousands are suffering, who once lived as securely as you now do, and who are in a hopeless, helpless eternity? and how can you tell but this may be the last day, the last warning or overture of grace, the last knock at your door? God may say, Away, begone out of my sight, take him, devil, I will no more be troubled with such a sinner. But if after all this, you be senseless and lie still, you are dead, twice dead.

But let me rather persuade you from the advantage it will be to all sorts of persons, of every age and relation, to look after this change denominated in scripture, a new creation.

Oh! if you are advancing in years, going off the stage of the world, dropping into the grave and eternity, if you have been long here, and not yet spiritually alive, begin at last to turn over a new leaf; seek a new life, that you may have comfort, and not terror in your expiring moments: yet there is hope, God still waits to be gracious, and stands knocking at your door. Rise out of your bed of sloth, put back the bar, admit him with all his graces; make out with this change against your last change.

Young people, that have lately stepped into the world, and gone thus far before you know where you are, it may be, young in years, but old in sin, you are entering into a wicked world, with wicked hearts. Oh! look after this blessed antidote, which may prevent infection; be sure of a pilot that may row you through this boisterous sea safe to the haven. Without

new hearts you will make this bad world worse, and become worse by it; rather seek to amend it.

You that are entering into callings, or on a change of condition, without this, you will be fit for nothing; without this, you will bring a curse into every relation and vocation; but this will make you fit for any thing, and in all you set about, you will be attended with God's blessing.

You, unmarried persons, I recommend it to you, that you be sure to marry in the Lord, then you will be heirs together of the grace of life: and pray and praise God together, you will have the sweet relation perfumed, and will meet in glory.

You, rich persons, are beggars without this; this will make you rich and honourable, the excellent in the earth, God's jewels, the favourites of heaven. And you, poor, that cannot get daily bread, this will make you rich in faith, heirs of a kingdom. O what a treasure is this fear of the Lord!

You, poor Athenians, that are always inquiring after news, new opinions, new inventions, new fashions, here is a fine and blessed piece of novelty for you; this new creature will stand you in stead, not so much to please your itching ears, as to profit your languishing souls.

Well, I have done my poor endeavour, to effect this work upon your hearts. But when we have said and done all we can, we have done nothing at all, except the eternal Jehovah accompany our efforts with the power of his grace. O thou infinite, Almighty God, who "hast made the earth by thy power, hast established the world by thy wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by thy discretion," Jer. x. 12. Look into the hearts of sinners, see what a chaos of confusion is by sin brought into the whole soul; go over thy work again, mend what sin hath marred, put light in the understanding, power into the will, rectitude into the affections, make conscience do its office. O that corruption may be mortified, Satan cast out, a sound principle introduced, the soul renewed and everlastingly saved.

I commend these my poor labours into the hands of God, to use them as he sees good; and to you who have heard these sermons, and to others that shall take the pains to read them, whether the effect answer my pains and aims, or not, having delivered my conscience, with some degree of uprightness. In this labour of love, I am willing to take my leave of the world, and commend you, my brethren, to God, and “to the word of his grace, which is able to” renew your hearts, and “build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified,” Acts xx. 32; which is the daily prayer of,

A poor watchman for your souls,

OLIVER HEYWOOD.

*May 3rd. 1695.*

A

# NEW CREATURE.

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GALATIANS VI. 15.

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing,  
nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

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## CHAP. I.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

SOME interpreters think that this text is not introduced as a proof of the immediately preceding assertion, of the apostle's "glorying in the cross of Christ, and his being crucified to the world," verse 14; but rather that it forms a conclusion of the main doctrine delivered in this epistle, namely, "That a sinner is not justified by the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ," as if he had said,—I urge this first and last with the greatest earnestness and importunity;\* let Jews and Judaizing Christians say what they will or can, this I confidently affirm, that now in the gospel state, as settled by Christ, it is of no great moment whether a man be a Jew or a Gentile. It is true, under the law there was something of privilege in circumcision, as it was a badge of God's covenant with Abraham's seed, and the uncircumcised were strangers to the covenants of pro-

\* Hoc est quod dico et repeto, et extremis verbis contendo.

mise and had no right to church membership: but now in the gospel, God is the God of the believing Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; for there is not one God in the Old Testament, and another in the New, as the Manichees dreamed, but "it is one God, that shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith," Rom. iii. 29, 30; that is, both one way, if only they be sincere believers, for God regards not any for being circumcised, nor rejects any for the want of it, but looks at real sanctification of heart and life.

This is a sound and apposite connection of the words; but Calvin subjoins them to the foregoing verse. The reason why the blessed apostle is crucified to the world, and the world to him, is because in Christ to whom he is united, the chief thing available is a new creature, other things are insignificant: the truth of this the apostle had before demonstrated, because the gospel truth makes void legal figures:\* thus both interpretations come to the same thing.

It is observable, that this phrase is three times used, with different conclusions. 1 Cor. vii. 19, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." Again, Gal. v. 6, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avail-eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love:" and in this passage, "but a new creature." They all combine in this one sense, that in the New Testament dispensation by Christ, no privileges are efficacious to the salvation of the soul without an operative faith accompanied with a principle of grace in the heart, and a holy life agreeable to the rule of God's holy word. Thus there is a due consistency

\* Quia scilicet, veritas evangelii omnes legis figuras absorbeat, et examiniat.



in these necessary qualifications: for in spiritual means, marks, methods of salvation, there is a blessed combination, affinity, and concatenation; not a link of this golden chain can be wanting; the true religion is of one piece, there is no loose joint, but all the parts make up one entire body and complete system of christianity.

But to come to the words, in which we have the negative and positive parts of our religion,—wherein it doth not consist, and wherein it doth. Suppose men had excellent privileges, and choice advantages, these would not of themselves attain the important end, namely, God's glory and man's happiness.

By this word, *in Christ Jesus*, some understand in the christian religion; others, in the church or kingdom of Christ; others, in the gospel dispensation, in the concern of obtaining salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.\* The doctrine of the gospel is called the faith of Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. 22, wherein and whereby the glorious design of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, doth eminently and evidently appear: it is called “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Cor. iv. 6. “And he hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel,” or through the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10.

Circumcision was to the Jews a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11, a badge and criterion, whereby an Israelite was distinguished from other people, as belonging to God's peculiar heritage: it both engaged to duty, and entailed many privileges. See Rom. ix. 4.

By its not *availing any thing*, is signified its ineffectualness to attain these two great objects: first, the justifying of a sinner before God; secondly, the eternal salvation of the soul. Not that I think the new creature

\* In negotio salutis obtinendæ per Christum.

justifies, as I shall shew hereafter, but it is in a justified person, and these external privileges avail not to our justification, nor does the want of them hinder it; but in this case, “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all,” Col. iii. 11. Hence observe,

First, That the richest privileges and most splendid profession avail no man, without being a new creature.

The Jews boasted of their privileges, and by consequence, gospel professors are apt to pride themselves on what they think to be of great worth, but they all signify nothing in the sight of God, if they be not new creatures. Men may please themselves with external shows, professions, or privileges, as to be born of godly parents, to be baptized, living under pure and powerful ordinances, associating with the best people in the purest churches, sitting down at the Lord’s supper, making credible profession, performing religious duties; yea, suffering much for the religion of God: all these together will not avail a person, as it respects his eternal happiness, without being a new creature. Mistake me not, I do not say, but these are good in their places, and great mercies and duties. Here consider,

1. Things that hinder or oppose the new creature, are hurtful in their own nature, and to be laid aside, as sin and the old man, Eph. iv. 22.

2. Things that further not this new creature in our hearts, are comparatively useless, though lawful, as the profits, pleasures, and honours of this world.

3. Things that do further the growth of the new creature by God’s appointment, are not of themselves sufficient to attain their end, without the concurrence of divine grace: as preaching, prayer, and seals—they are but means.

4. Things good in themselves may, by man's abuse, prove rather snares and hindrances, than helps and furtherances in heaven's road : circumcision was once good and God's ordinance, but when some Judaizers affirmed, that "except Christians were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved," Acts xv. 1, 9, 10,—the apostles come to this decision, "that God puts no difference between Jews and Gentiles," and that this "was a yoke that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear : " and so it was not only laid aside as other legal ceremonies, which became not only dead, but deadly ; \* so the apostle affirms, "that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," Gal. v. 2. Nay, the best duties, ordinances, and privileges rested in, short of Christ, will rather ruin, than raise us ; undo us, than enrich us with grace here, or glory hereafter : see Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3.

But this is a great truth, that all the privileges in the world, without this new creature, can never of themselves render a soul acceptable to God, or bring it to eternal happiness in the enjoyment of God,

(1.) Because such a person may be, and is yet under the old covenant, which brings a curse : and being out of Christ, Gal. iii. 10—13, all that he hath, doth, or enjoyeth, is accursed to him ; for every man must either keep the law, and satisfy for the breach of it in his own person,—or another that is able, must do it for him, and that is none but Christ our surety ; and Christ doth it not for any but such as by faith have an interest in him. Now he that is not a new creature hath no interest in Christ, "for if any man be in Christ," that is, related to Christ, entitled to him, "he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. And he that is not

\* Mortuæ sed mortiferæ.

grafted into this true vine, and doth not “partake of the root and fatness of this olive-tree, can bear no fruit, John xv. 1, 5. Rom. xi. 17,—can do nothing to any purpose, nor improve any privilege to his spiritual profit, for he is a dead branch cast forth and withered, and thrown into the fire, John xv. 6. Though he be in Christ by profession, yet because he is not planted in Christ, by possession of him, he is a woful cast-away,—he is grafted in a wrong stock, to be fruitful here, or to shoot up as high as heaven at last. Now, we cannot be accepted but in the Beloved, Eph. i. 6: and without faith in Christ it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6; for “the first man Adam was made a living soul,” and by his fall, himself and his posterity are become dead, condemned sinners, “but the last Adam is made a quickening Spirit,” that is, Christ becomes a principle of life to all his spiritual offspring, and he will own none but such: see 1 Cor. xv. 45—49.

(2.) Because such souls want the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit: and we find that “the offering up of the Gentiles is only acceptable, by being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 16. God will own nothing from men, but what hath the breathings of the Spirit in it; “For God knoweth the mind of the Spirit,” Rom. viii. 26, 27. The least indication thereof in his children, though but a groaning that cannot be uttered, is accepted of God; but the most eloquent rhapsodies, and loudest vociferations of graceless souls, are rejected by the Lord; “For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” Rom. viii. 9, 11, 14: here we read of the Spirit of God dwelling in believers; and “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they,” and indeed none else, “are the sons of God.” God will own none for his, but those



that have this stamp, this seal upon them ; so 2 Cor. i. 22, "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts ;" and this is the "earnest of our inheritance," Eph. i. 13, 14. Now all external ordinances, privileges, and performances, amount not to this : and the Scripture tells us, that "he is not a Jew (that is, a sincere Christian, for it is an Old Testament title given to a New Testament believer,) that is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God," Rom. ii. 28, 29. Here we see the life of our religion ; the tree must first be good, or it can never bring forth good fruit : working results from the being of a thing.\* If men be not good, they can never do good : now it is not any thing external that can make persons good, it must be "the hidden man of the heart" that constitutes a person good, 1 Pet. iii. 4. So reason makes a man, not jewels or outward ornaments : thus grace constitutes a Christian, not outward privileges. As nothing that is "without a man, can defile a man," Mark vii. 15, so nothing without can cleanse him.

Is this so, that the richest privileges, and most splendid profession, avail not any man, except he be a new creature ? Then it follows,

1. That religion consists not in negatives, but positives. It is false arguing to say,—I am not a Jew, nor a Turk, nor heathen, and therefore am a good Christian. Nay, it is not enough to say I am no swearer, drunkard, or whoremonger, and therefore am a saint good enough : this was the fallacy of the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, "God I thank thee, that I am not as other

\* Operari sequitur esse.



men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Alas, this would not do ; God disowned him. Christianity consists in something positive : " Little children," saith the apostle, " let no man deceive you, he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous," 1 John iii. 7. " Christ becomes the author of eternal salvation unto all them," and only them, " that obey him," Heb. v. 9. Alas ! persons may gull and beguile themselves with airy notions and speculations of free grace, Christ's merits, and trusting God, and so build castles in the air, which will drop with them into hell ; for without practical godliness, they will be deceived, and die with a lie in their right hand. Mistake not, I say not that free grace, or Christ's blood, is but a fancy, or that a soul can be saved without them, or he that believeth with a sincere gospel faith shall miss of heaven ; but many catch at these, and espouse a mere chimera, a fancy or airy notion, while they have not a principle of grace in their hearts, or the power of godliness in their lives. I may say with the apostle, " Can faith save thee ? No, no, such a faith without works is dead," James ii. 20, 26. And being lifeless, it is lost, thou must have something that hath existence.

2. That christianity doth not lie in mere externals. If men have no more religion than is visible to others, they have not that which will serve their purpose. True godliness is a hidden, mystical thing ; " Our life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3. It is a pearl in the shell ; it is a hidden spring that moves the visible hand. God's children are " hidden ones," Psalm lxxxiii. 3 ; kings in disguise, " It appears not yet what they shall be," 1 John iii. 2. The best and worst of a real saint is not obvious to men's view : " The king's daughter is all glorious within," Psalm xlv. 13. If

privileges and profession did constitute a saint, we might infallibly tell who should be saved ; but a child of God hath two sides, one God-wards, another men-wards. A merchant's wares are in back shops : the best goods are often out of sight. " In the hidden parts," saith David, " thou shalt make me to know wisdom," Psalm li. 6. Hypocrites are " painted sepulchres, that outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness," Matt. xxiii. 27. You must look at internal principles, not at external professions or privileges.

3. There is such a thing as nominal, without real christianity ; some have " a name to live, but are dead," Rev. iii. 1 ; have high titles, but bad hearts, and vicious lives ; they " profess they know God, but in works they deny him," Tit. i. 16. They have heaven in their mouths, and hell in their minds ; they soar high, but design low ; there may be a real heathen under a Christian name. All church members are not members of Christ ;\* they are not all Israel that are of Israel, Rom. ix. 6. A fine title may be on some boxes that have nothing within to correspond. Judah that was uncircumcised in heart, may be ranked with Egypt, Edom, Moab, Ammon ; Jer. ix. 26. Some may cry out, " The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," The church, the church, they are right church members, that yet do wickedly, and think their privileges will excuse them, as though thereby " they were delivered to do all manner of abominations," Jer. vii. 4. 10. They shall know one day, that an empty name without the thing, is but a great crime, that it will rather aggravate their condemnation than tend to their salvation. Alas ! how many are providential, not principled Christians, that have nothing

\* Ad ecclesiam non pertinent omnes qui sunt intus.

more to plead for their christianity than that they were born in a christian country, and in their infancy were baptized, having since done as other people do, gone to church, and behaved civilly, and passed amongst others for downright honest men. But God judgeth not as man judgeth; when persons stand before the awful tribunal of the righteous Judge, names, and titles, and privileges, will signify nothing; such varnish will melt off before the fire of God's wrath; nothing then will signify but the inner garment of sanctification, and the upper garment of Christ's righteousness for our justification, to cover all defects of the former. This is "fine linen, clean and white; this is the righteousness of saints," Rev. xix. 8.

4. Yet privileges are not to be slighted, nor ordinances to be despised. As you are not to rest in circumcision or baptism, as though this were enough, so you are not to cast off God's institutions, as if they were of no worth, there is a medium betwixt an abuse and total neglect; men may abuse meat and drink, yet must not lay them aside. Ordinances can do us no good without the concurrence of divine grace; "man lives not by bread only, but by God's blessing therewith," Deut. viii. 3; must bread be thrown away on this pretence? surely no, it becomes us to obey God in hearing, praying, reading, meditating and attending on God in his own ways; the seals of the covenant are not insignificant ceremonies; ordinances are channels, through which God conveys his grace to the soul;\* these are "golden pipes through which the olive branches empty the golden oil out of themselves," Zech. iv. 12. Shall the bucket be thrown away because it hath not water in itself, without letting it down into the well,

\* Canales gratiæ.

by the chain of faith? Shall the boat be slighted, because of itself it cannot carry us over the river? rather let us get into it and row, and wait for the gales of the Spirit to waft us over. Privileges are good, the fruits of Christ's purchase, the pledges of God's love; they must be made use of, though not trusted or made our boast; you should be very thankful and fruitful under pure and powerful ordinances; let God have the glory, look you after the advantage of privileges, set them in their own place, not in God's room; let none say, "the table of the Lord is contemptible," Mal. i. 7. Nor on the other hand, let not presuming souls say, "let us fetch the ark of the covenant, that it may save us," 1 Sam. iv. 3. Alas, what can the ark of God avail us, if the God of the ark leave us? Let our dependance be on God in the way of his appointments. Affect not to be above, but go beyond all ordinances; God is present in all, that we may despise none, he withdraws in some, sometimes in all, that we may idolize none; when you enter upon a duty, look up to the blessed Jesus, make it your business to get communion with God therein. If you miss of God in ordinances, you lose your end; yea, you are in danger of losing your souls. If you find God, glory in the Lord, boast not of the duty or ordinances; sit not down in the porch, but make forward to the holy of holies; press to the city of refuge, lay your sacrifices at the door of the tabernacle, put your offering into the high priest's hand; thank God for enlargements, but depend not on them. If you make your services your saviours, you will perish with them; when you have done all, say, "I am still an unprofitable servant," Luke xvii. 10; I have but done my duty, nay, I have not done my duty, my best righteousnesses are not only too scant a covering, but also filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6. My very duties as well



as sins may undo me; I may even find hell torments the upshot of privileges; further advancement by privileges, through a non-improvement of them sinks deeper in hell, as in the case of Chorazin and Capernaum, Matt. xi. 21—24. For privileges to graceless souls do take away the cloak that might cover the foulness of sin, and so do rather aggravate than extenuate it, John xv. 22, 24. I must therefore look for something else than privileges, that is, a new creature.

## CHAP. II.

### THE NATURE OF A NEW CREATURE.

THE main point in the text, and which I have principally in view, is concerning the new creature, *κτίσις καινή*, new creation, it is a mode of speech peculiar and proper to the new testament dispensation; 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," that is, if a man be a true Christian, formed to the gospel pattern and rule, he is, and must be, and cannot but be of a new frame and character. So it was prophesied of old concerning gospel times; "Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare," Isa. xlii. 9; lxxv. 17, "Behold, I create new heavens, and new earth; yea, all things new." So here he frames a work of saving grace in the hearts of all his saints. It signifies a new, noble, heavenly disposition, opposed to the antiquated, corrupt state of nature, derived from the first Adam, called the old man. But it may be asked,

1. Why is this called a creature? I answer,



(1.) Because it is produced only by the almighty power of God, whose peculiar prerogative it is to create.

(2.) Because as a creature, it hath a real existence as this visible frame of the universe hath. If there be a heaven and earth, there is a new creation in the soul of man; it is no fiction, chimera, or imagination of man's brain.

(3.) Creation makes a mighty change, so doth this work of conversion; as creation changeth a thing from a non-existence to a real being, so by this work of grace, "Old things are past away, and all things become new." But of this more hereafter. You may ask,

2. What is meant by new? In reply I may say,

(1.) New, in scripture language, signifies another, distinct and different from what was before; so Exod. i. 8, "There arose a new king over Egypt," that is, another. Thus this new creature is distinct from the former, as Caleb is said to have another spirit, Numb. xiv. 24, that is, a different nature from the rest of the spies; even from what he himself formerly had. Thus it is with the convert.

(2.) New signifies strange, not heard of before, Numb. xvi. 30, "If the Lord make a new thing," if the earth open her mouth; an unheard of wonder, a prodigy never known before. So it was said, "What new doctrine is this? thou bringest strange things to our ears," Acts xvii. 19, 20. Thus the work of regeneration was strange, even to a great doctor among the Jews, John iii. 3, 4.

(3.) New, signifies something secret, hidden, not easily discerned, or not manifest to all, Isa. xlvi. 6, "I have shewed thee new things, from this time, even hidden things." And this work of the new creature is much hid from the eyes of others, and sometimes kept close from a man's own observation, Job xi. 6,

“That he would show thee the secrets of wisdom.” And David saith, “In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom,” Psal. li. 6.

(4.) New, imports something excellent, transcendent, admirable, Isa. xlii. 10, “Sing unto the Lord a new song;” Psal. xxxiii. 3, “Sing unto him a new song,” that is, an excellent song, the very best to which you can attain. Even so this is the chief of God’s works in the world, and renders “the righteous more excellent than his neighbour; and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit,” Prov. xii. 26. xvii. 27.

The text being thus opened, I shall deduce an observation arising from the preceding words of the text; “circumcision avails nothing, nor uncircumcision,” under this new testament dispensation. What is it then that avails? The answer is, the new creature; this indeed is available. So this is set in contradistinction to the forementioned privileges comprehended under the word circumcision. I observe, then,

Secondly, That a new creature only is every way available to the souls of men.

Nothing else can avail any thing to men’s eternal salvation, but a new creature; and this is very available.

Understand this of things of the same kind or nature; for a new creature must not be set in competition with the eternal love of God, or blood of Christ, or sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, for application of Christ’s purchase to us. A new creature is but a creature, and cannot do the work of the infinite God, who hath appropriated salvation work to himself; “There is no Saviour besides me, where is any other that may save them?” Hos. xiii. 4, 10. It is not any thing done by man, or wrought in man, that can save him from divine wrath, or advance him to

heaven: No, the Lord justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies by Christ. All the causes of man's salvation are without him, Eph. i. 4—9. There is the efficient cause, God's choosing us—the material cause, Christ's redeeming us—the formal, the good pleasure of his will—the final, the praise of God's glorious grace. So then, we do not put this new creature in God's room, as any cause at all of our happiness, but a necessary qualification or disposition, to which salvation is annexed, or as the apostle phraseth it, that which accompanieth salvation. Heb. vi. 9, "Things that accompany salvation," *ἔχόμενα*, that have salvation; that is, comprehend it, are contiguous to it, have happiness annexed to it by the indissoluble connexion of grace and glory, in consequence of a covenant promise. But more of this hereafter.

In the prosecution of this subject, I shall speak to these four things in the doctrinal part of it: namely,

I. Shew what this new creature is.

II. Why it is so called.

III. Wherein it is available.

IV. Answer some queries about it, and then make an application.

I. What is this new creature? Here the names given to it and the nature of it may be considered.

1. The names or titles given to this new creature being synonymous expressions and holding forth the same thing for substance, are such as these:

(1.) It is called the forming of Christ in the womb of a man's heart; Gal. iv. 19, "My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you."

(2.) It is called quickening, Ephes. ii. 1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Alas! what dull stocks and masses of sin we

are, till animated with the Spirit of grace, and quickened by a vital principle! And this is done with Christ, ver. 5, by his resurrection.

(3.) It is called parturition, or bringing forth by spiritual pangs of soul-travail; it is a new birth. John iii. 3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Convincing grace brings a lively and lovely offspring into the world, better than the product of nature.

(4.) Such converts are compared to little children, Matt. xviii. 3, "Verily, I say unto you, except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven:" that is, you must needs have the qualities and dispositions both of infants and larger children.

(5.) This work of God on the soul, is called a dying with Christ, and a rising again with him: Rom. vi. 5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." All real Christians are risen with Christ, Col. iii. 1; hence it is called the "first resurrection," Rev. xx. 6, as if they were newly brought out of their graves, when they had been long dead and useless.

(6.) It is called the image of God on the soul, Col. iii. 10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." Eph. iv. 24, "The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This new creature is a blessed resemblance of the Trinity of persons, in the renewing of the mind, will, and affections, conformable to God.

(7.) It is called a divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the

divine nature;" that is, of those divine qualities, whereby the soul resembles God, not only as a picture doth a man in outward lineaments, but as a child doth his father, both in countenance and condition. As the noble qualities of an immortal soul show that there is a God, so the renewed faculties show what that God is.

So much for the names of this new creature, most of which are figurative expressions, denoting the same thing.

2. For the nature of the new creature, take this description of it.

The new creature is a supernatural work of gospel grace wrought in the soul of a sinner, by the word and Spirit of God, changing the whole man from its old state and course, and thereby transforming it into the divine likeness, and conforming the heart and life to the rule of the word, for the glory of God, and the soul's present and everlasting communion with him: this is the new creature.

I confess this description is long, but I cannot leave out any of its parts.

I shall very briefly discuss the branches of this description.

(1.) With respect to the general nature of it, I call it a supernatural work, for it is above the power of nature to produce it, it comes from above; so he that is "born again," John iii. 3, is *ἀνωθεν γενόμενος*, "from above." This perfect gift "comes down from the Father of lights," James i. 17. The "Jerusalem that is above is the mother of us all," Gal. iv. 26. This new creature is no herb that grows in nature's garden; it is a plant of paradise: "Flesh and blood cannot so much as reveal this to the sons of men," Matt. xvi. 17. Therefore it is no wonder if learned doctors, such as



Nicodemus, laugh at such doctrine, as whimsical fancies, and say, "How can these things be?" John iii. 9. Or, like Ezekiel's hearers, who saith, "Ah, Lord God, they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?" Ezek. xx. 49. For "such wisdom is too high for a fool," Prov. xxiv. 7. In "God's light only shall we see light." Experience is the best master in these cases. "We speak wisdom," saith the apostle, "among them that are perfect; but the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 6, 14. This new creature is of a celestial origin, and must have a heavenly interpreter.

(2.) In this description, we have the particular nature of this new creature; I speak of it as originating in gospel grace. It is no branch or fruit of the old covenant of works, for the law maketh nothing perfect: "There was no law which could give life," Gal. iii. 2, 21, 22, but the new testament dispensation, called the promise; this only produceth the new creation.

But you may say, had not old testament saints this new creature? Doth not David say, "create in me a clean heart?" Psal. li. 10.

I answer, Old testament saints had a new testament spirit; for "they without us could not be made perfect," Heb. xi. 40. The same gospel belonged to them and us, and was preached to both, Heb. iv. 2; Abraham saw Christ's day, they all partook of gospel grace, John viii. 56, both in justification and sanctification; as having but a different edition of the same gospel covenant; they were as children in minority under tutors and governors, Gal. iv. 1, 2, 25; but gospel saints are as children at age; their state was that of the bond woman of mount Sinai; ours is of Jerusalem, which is free. However, that gospel promise, made known in the old testament, belongs both to them and us; Ezek.

xxxvi. 26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." This is the uniform, evangelical result under both dispensations; and sincere believers of old had experience of it, though the veil was on the face of Moses, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15; and on the hearts of carnal Jews, as it is on all unbelievers to this day; but gospel grace renews the soul.

(3.) Here is the subject, in which this new creature is formed, and that is the soul or heart of a sinner. Here is the seat and centre of this new creation; it is not merely external in the eye, or foot, or hand, or tongue; but it is an internal work in the soul, the Christian "is renewed in the spirit of his mind," Eph. iv. 23; "Behold," saith David, "thou desirest truth in the inward parts; in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom," Psal li. 6; it is called, "the hidden man of the heart," 1 Pet. iii. 4. Not but that it discovers itself in lip and life; but the root and spring lie under ground, out of the view of men, as the best treasures are locked up, not exposed to the open view of the world. "A Christian's life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3: hence they are called, "God's hidden ones," Psal. lxxxiii. 3: and "the king's daughter is all glorious within," Psal. xlv. 13. These gracious souls are like kings in disguise, and it "doth not yet appear what they shall be," 1 John iii. 2; but when the shell is broken, the pearl will appear; all external changes in men are but as the change of the clothes; this is the change of the man and his manners; for "he is not a Jew that is one outwardly, but inwardly." Right "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii. 28, 29. It is wrought by God, and known to God, who alone searches and sees the heart.

(4.) The instrumental, or organical cause of this new man, is the word of God, Rom. i. 16, this is "the power of God to salvation." James i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." 1 Pet. i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth for ever." The word is the seed, which being sown in the heart, springeth up in obedience, which is the flower and visible product of the new creature. This is properly the gospel word; Moses or the law may bring us to the borders, but Joshua leads us into Canaan; the terrors of the law prepare the way, as John Baptist did, but the word of the gospel is the door of faith, which admits souls, and leads them into the chamber of presence; it is God's method, to form this new man by a powerful gospel ministry; so saith blessed Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 15, "I have begotten you in Jesus Christ through the gospel;" there is the instrument, Paul, *I have begotten you*; the means, *by the gospel*; the author, *Jesus Christ*. "Faith comes by hearing," Rom. x. 17. Prov. viii. 34. Therefore let all continue at the gates of wisdom, expect not this new creation, if you turn your backs on God's institutions.

(5.) The efficient cause is the Holy Ghost, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," Rom. v. 5. O what a gracious impression doth the Spirit leave upon our hearts! what a sweet perfume doth it breathe into them, causing our love to God and men! How doth this new creature occupy all the faculties of the soul through the operation of the Spirit? This is both a seal and an earnest, "who hath also sealed us," Eph. i. 13, 14; "and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," 2 Cor. i. 22. All good is conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, especially this saving good

of conversion; we are "born again of water and of the Spirit," John iii. 3, 8; "sanctified by the Spirit, and are temples of the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. vi. 11, 19. Nothing can search or reach the heart but the Holy Ghost; "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 10, "and deep things of men." An angel is too short-sighted to see into man's heart, too short-handed to reach the conscience, or make a new creation; God alone turns stone into flesh; "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," Gen. ix. 27. It is an act of power to make people willing, Psal. cx. 3, or volunteers. "No man can come to Christ, except the Father which sent him, draw him," John vi. 44. And God exerts the power of his Spirit to attract hearts to himself.

(6.) The proper, immediate effect of this work, is a change into a new frame or course, by which the sinner becomes new, or another than what he was before; this is the genuine necessary attendant;\* yea, intrinsic nature of that which we call the new creature. 2 Cor. v. 17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." The faculties are the same, but new qualities are put in; as in a lute, the strings are the same, but it is set to a new tune; in a river, the water is the same, but it is turned into a new channel, the ball hath got a new impulse; so the convert said to the tempting harlot, I am not I;† or as Paul said of himself, "who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor; but I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13, that is, converting grace hath changed me. Thus the same apostle saith of the Corinthians, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," 1 Cor. vi. 11. O what a mighty change doth grace make! from lying

\* Formalis ratio.

† Ego non sum ego.



to fearing an oath ; from vain speaking, to holy discourse ; from carelessness, to the greatest concernness about soul affairs ; yea, “from darkness to light,” Eph. v. 8 ; “from death to life ; from Satan to God,” Acts xxvi. 18. The man is now got into a new world, as one observes from Ezek. xi. 19, “I will give them one heart ;” which that I may do, I will cast it anew, in order to this, I will melt and soften it, as one that hath many pieces of old silver by him, casts them into the fire, melts them, and molds them into one lump. Thus doth God with the divided heart in renewing it, and framing it for his use.

7. Here is yet further the completeness of this change ; it is not merely some external acts, exercises, or conversation, not only internal cogitations, affections, or workings of the will and conscience ; but the description goes further, even to the state, constitution, and relation of the man ; and therefore I add, *changing the whole man from an old state to a new* ; for every man and woman hath a state before God ; therefore Paul sends Timothy, “to know the state of the Philippians,” Phil. ii. 19. This imports not a transient act, but a settled abiding frame, a continued relation ; sinners “are by nature children of wrath,” Eph. ii. 3 : agents of Satan, heirs of hell. This new mold makes them children of God, members of Christ, heirs of heaven ; yea, it puts them into an habitual tendency towards heaven, and heavenly things, which is a kind of second nature in them ; this moves the holy soul, (acting like itself) as naturally upwards, as a stone moves downward, therefore it is called a divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4 ; the acting follows the being of a thing ; “Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good.” Matt. xii. 33. If a watch be not well made, it will never go well ; they say of the peacock, roast him as much as you will,



yet when cold, his flesh will be raw again, so force a carnal heart to the highest strain of seeming piety, yet it will come to its old complexion, because there is not a new nature; fill a pond full of water, it will abate if there be not a spring to supply it. The new creature is united to Christ, "and receives grace for grace," John i. 16.

(8.) We have here also, the pattern, copy, or example, according to which this new creature is moulded, *it is the soul's being transformed into the divine likeness*. This image of God consists in knowledge in the intellectual faculties, righteousness in the will, holiness in the affections; Col. iii. 10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." Eph. iv. 24, "That you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; or holiness of truth." As the work of grace in the heart is a true copy, or transcript of the divine image, they agree as the face in the glass doth, with the face of the man that looks in it, or as the image in the wax with the sculpture on the seal, from which it is derived. Godliness is godlikeness; the sum and substance of our religion is to imitate him whom we worship;\* not that it is possible to be like God with a perfection of degree, but in sincerity: "Be ye perfect, as your father in heaven is perfect," Matt. v. 48. A child hath the parts of a man, though not the size; for the new creature is in a daily increase, and tendeth to perfection, as a small seed hath virtually the bulk of a grown tree, though little in itself; but the Christian is like God; man only can beget a man like himself, so the Spirit only doth create the Christian like God. Now divines,† take notice of a

\* Summa religionis est imitari quem colis.

† Journal Christian, Part 2. page 173.

double likeness ; a bare similitude, snow and milk are both white alike, yet are not the image one of another. Again, representation given of another, and so the picture which is drawn every line from the face of a man, is properly the image of a man, after whose likeness it is made. Thus by holiness, the Christian becomes the image of Christ ; Rom. viii. 29, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

(9.) Here is the rule of this new creature, which is expressed, by *turning the heart and life to the rule of the word* ; this either refers to the manner of framing the new creature, or the rule by which the new creature acts and moves being once formed. As to the former, the new creature receives the stamp, signature, and impression of the word ; Rom. vi. 17, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you ;" or as it is more properly in the Greek, *εις ὃν παρεδόξατε τύπον διδαχῆς*, into which you were delivered ; that is, the soul is the metal, the word is the mould, into which the sinner is cast, thereby he receives a new stamp, is formed into a new shape, which naturally terminates in a new course of life, according to scripture rule. This immediately after my text, ver. 16, is called the canon, or rule of the new creature ; for it is added, "As many as walk according to this rule, or canon, *τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ*, peace be on them." This is that cynosure or square that architects have in their operations for levelling the stones and timber suitably, that all the parts of the edifice may agree in a just proportion ;\* thus must, thus will the Christian do, his desire and design is to lie square to the word of God, to "have respect to all God's commandments,"

\* Ut singulæ partes justâ symmetriâ cohærent.—*Calv. in loc.*

Psal. cxix. 6; "To walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," Luke i. 6.

Every child of God is taught by God to walk by rule. All callings have their proper rule; the physician studies Galen; the lawyer his Littleton; the philosopher his Aristotle and Plato; yet in all professions men may vary in their methods, in the same calling, because no rule is so perfect, to which another may not add something; but the standing rule of God's word is perfect, Psal. xix. 7; "able to make the man of God perfect," 2 Tim. iii. 17. Nothing must be added to it, or taken from it. The Christian is both drawn and determined by its authority, more than by a whole team of human arguments.

(10.) And lastly, here is the end of this new creature, which is twofold, first, *the glory of God*; and secondly, *the soul's present and everlasting communion with him*. Both these are wrapped up together, and are very consistent; yea, cannot be separated. Now God's glory is promoted by the new creature, in this world, and in the other.

[i.] In this world the new creature only is capable of glorifying God; such a soul is planted in Christ the true vine, and "glorifies God by bringing forth much fruit," John xv. 8. "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," Phil. i. 11. The chief design of the true Christian and the new creature, is to promote the glory of God, actively and passively; this is the first petition in the Lord's prayer; and the first right step the converted soul takes heaven-ward; he is content to be villified, so that God may be glorified; and if God be glorified by others, whatever become of him, he rejoiceth, as Paul, in the preaching

of Christ by others, to preach down his credit, Phil. i. 18.

[ii.] In the next world also, this new creature will form an illustrious monument to the glory of Jehovah, "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. The existence of this new creation will reflect more glory to the author than that of the old one. O what a glorious sight will it be to see so many bright stars in the firmament of glory, borrowing their light from, and reflecting light to the Sun of righteousness!

Besides, the new creature is the only person on earth that is qualified for communion with God; he only can say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. It is this new creation that raiseth this clod of clay above the earth, and engageth the heart to approach to God, while others "worship afar off," Jer. xxx. 21. Exod. xxiv. 1. These holy souls are they that worship in the "temple of God, and at the altar," Rev. xi. 1. Psal. cxlviii. 14. God admits them into his presence, as a people near to him. The Christian is the man who sanctifies God's name in his worship, and is satisfied with the fatness of God's house. Here is the blessed merchant that trades in rich pearls, that goes from port to port, from ordinance to ordinance; not to see places, but to take in his lading of communications, graces, privileges, assurance, and comfort from God.

### CHAP. III.

#### REASONS FOR THE DENOMINATION, NEW CREATURE. A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE OLD CREATION AND THE NEW.

II. It is now my province briefly to assign reasons, why the Holy Ghost gives this saving conversion the title of a “new creature,” or, as the word is, a “new creation.” Now the answer is, because in many things it bears some analogy and resemblance to the first spacious universe of heaven and earth, this magnificent structure. I shall run the parallel between them in these twelve particulars :

1. God is the first and only cause of the creation of the world, not angels nor created intelligences of any rank, who though they be mighty, yet are not Almighty. It is the peculiar prerogative of Elohim, the infinite God, to create. God orders the Jews in Babylon to repeat that famous sentence in the Chaldee language, to confute their idolatry, Jer. x. 11, “Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.” The reason is given in the Hebrew language, ver. 12, “He hath made the earth by his power ; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.” In creation, divines say, God is the only cause simply, but in his other works, he is the cause of this creature being different from that.\* So none but God can create this new man; “Have we not all one Father? hath not one great God created us? We are God’s workmanship, it is the same

\* Deus est causa simpliciter in creatione, at essendi hoc in aliis.—  
*Vide Weems’s Image of God in Man, page 3.*



mighty power that raised Christ from the dead that gives faith to the souls of men, and quickens the dead."

2. God made all things of nothing, that is, of things that had no existence before he made them. "He calleth those things which be not, as though they were."\* Indeed we are told that *nothing* is taken in a threefold sense.

(1.) It is taken privatively, so an idol is nothing; that is, it hath no divinity in it.

(2.) Comparatively, so all the world is nothing before God.†

(3.) Nothing negatively or simply; so there was no fruit upon the fig-tree.‡ In this sense God made the world of nothing; there was no pre-existent matter for him to work upon. Just thus in the new creation, when God comes to operate upon a sinner, he finds no principle of grace or inclination to good in him. "I know," saith blessed Paul, "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. Nay, there is much evil in us; even worse still, there is antipathy to what is good, within our depraved hearts. Thus, as in the first creation, God produceth a habit from the negation; he works a principle of grace where there was no such thing.

3. God made all things by Christ, his infinite and co-eternal Son. "All things were made by him," that is, by the essential word, "and without him was not any thing made that was made," John i. 3. "By him were all things created, visible and invisible." By this Heir of all things he made the worlds, both according to the matter and form thereof, Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2. And thus it is in the new creation, for "we

\* Mal. ii. 10. Eph. ii. 10. i. 20. Rom. iv. 17.

† 1 Cor. viii. 4. Isa. xl. 17.

‡ Mark xi. 13.

are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. After him the new creature is formed; for God in his unveiled majesty is invisible, not obvious clearly either to corporeal eyes or human minds, but Christ is the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3; and manifests the glorious perfections of the infinite God: that "as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we should bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 45, 49, that is Christ; thus in the incarnation, God became man; in regeneration, man becomes like God.

4. God created all things with a word: so saith the apostle, "Through faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God," Heb. xi. 3. God's *fiat*, or let it be, produced the whole fabric of heaven and earth. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them, by the breath of his mouth," Psal. xxxiii. 6. Art needeth many helps; nature needeth few; God needeth none, nor doth use any instrument in the creation, for nothing can intervene between the first cause and the first effect; it is an immediate product of his sovereign will and pleasure. So it is in this new creation; James i, 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." God speaks the word, and the sinner is converted. If it be said, that ministers are instruments in conversion, I answer, but still they are nothing, "neither is he that planteth any thing," 1 Cor. iii. 7. They need God; God needs not them, he can do his work without them; yea, in the first infusion of a principle of saving grace, there is nothing of instrumentality, it is done immediately.

5. God made all things good and perfect at first. Every creature of God is good; and God saw every

thing that he had made, and behold it was very good ;\* nothing was made either unadvisedly or to no purpose.† A thing may be said to be good, as it is correspondent to the idea of the divine wisdom, or as it is fit for that use to which it is designed, and for which it serves. It needs not be enquired, whether God could not have made the world, or its parts, better or more perfect ; for if we consider the world in respect of the whole, it is perfect both as to its degrees and parts. But as to its parts severally, God could have made them better ; as in a camp, there are captains, soldiers, and a general ; in some respect if a soldier were a captain, he would be better, but in respect of the whole army, which consists of superiors and inferiors, he is better as a soldier. So in this new creature, it is perfect in its kind, in subserviency to God's great purposes, though defective in point of degree in this world ; hence God's children are said to be not perfect, as "having not attained," Phil. iii. 12. "yet they are perfect," ver. 15.

6. Though God from eternity purposed to create the world, yet the world was created only in time, not from eternity ; Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. God worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. It is true, all things had a kind of being in God, as in the cause whence all things flow, in the eternal mind or idea according to which all things were framed ; but they had not their real or actual existence, till God in his wisdom thought good to produce them. "In thy book," saith David, Psal. cxxxix. 16, "were all my members written." Thus it is in

\* 1 Tim. iv. 4. Gen. i. 31.

† Quia nec temere nec frustra factum.

this new creation ; God hath a book of life, and such as are in the book of life, will in time be savingly converted, called, sanctified, justified, and glorified. Thus runs the golden chain, Rom. viii. 29, 30. "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believe." All such as "the Father gives to Christ, shall come to him," John vi. 37. "He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," Eph. i. 4. So then this new creation in time, is the result and effect of God's determination before all time. See 2 Thess. ii. 13.

7. The creation of the world was gradual, both as to time, and as to manner. In point of time, God made the world in six days, Gen. i. Not but that God could have despatched all in a moment, but for sundry weighty reasons he took every day a moment to do the work of that day in. Thus God is perfecting this new creation all the time of a Christian's life; and for his manner or method of working, God proceeded from imperfect to perfect: first, God made a confused chaos, then he formed the elements,\* then what ariseth from them. First, he made things without life, then things having life. Man, that was the master-piece of the whole creation, he made the last. Even thus doth grace proceed in the new creation; he first forms a chaos, having some confusion of spirit from a legal work, at the commencement "comes a spirit of bondage," to fear, "then a spirit of adoption,"† first, some glimmering light in the mind, then the day star ariseth in the soul; and the "sun of righteousness comes with healing under his wings."‡ The grace of God grows till the Christian comes unto a perfect man,

\* Orta ex elementis.

† Rom. viii. 15.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 19. Mal. iv. 2.

“unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.\*

8. The first thing that God created was light, Gen. i. 3, 4, “God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” In this he proceeds from total privation to habit; it is hard to describe this light, possibly it was a bright lucid body, like the fiery cloud in the wilderness, giving imperfect light, successively moving over the several parts of the earth, and afterwards condensed, increased, perfected, and gathered together in the sun; the apostle applies this to the workings of of God’s Spirit in converting a sinner, 2 Cor. iv. 6, “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The first thing a limner draws in a picture is the eye; the first lineament of this gracious new man, is saving knowledge. God will not dwell in a dark house, and therefore first he breaks out windows in his habitation; “without knowledge the heart is not good.”† The devil’s kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; Christ’s of light; converting grace delivers us “from the power of darkness, and translates us into the kingdom of God’s dear Son,” which is a state of “marvellous light.”‡

9. God created some things actually, other things potentially, or virtually, Gen. i. 11, 12, “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, the tree yielding fruit.” Some things were made in their first principles, as from bees came honey; from the vine, grapes, and thence wine; oil, from the olive, &c. Thus it is in the new creation, God plants a seed, a habit of spiritual life, which of its own nature inclines

\* Eph. iv. 13. † Prov. xix. 2. ‡ Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 9.



the Christian to acts of holiness. In every habit there is a propensity to act; so "faith worketh by love," Gal. v. 6. Repentance brings forth "fruits meet for such a principle," Matt. iii. 8. Heavenly acts are the genuine fruits of saving grace, yea, inseparable companions.

10. The same hand that created doth uphold the creature; else it would crumble into its primitive nothing; so "God upholds all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3; he doth not as an artificer, who makes a clock, a watch, a ship, or other machine, and leaves it to others to wind it up, or maintain it; but a divine maintenancy is vouchsafed to every creature, which God hath made; creatures are but shadows to the body; or as the reflection of the glass which vanisheth, when the face is turned away; Psal. civ. 29, "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to the dust." In the chain of second causes, God stands at the commencement, and actuates every part thereof by his influence; "I will hear the heavens, said he, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."\* Thus it is with the new creature, assisting grace supplies and actuates received grace in every duty and exercise, "without Christ we can do nothing;" we must lean upon our beloved every step of the way, or we fall; nothing will go forward without a daily supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.†

11. God had glorious ends in the work of creation. "The Lord made all things for himself," Prov. xvi. 4; for his service and glory. This the four and twenty elders acknowledge, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created

\* Hos. ii. 21, 22. † John xv. 5. Cant. viii. 5. Phil. i. 19.

all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created," Rev. iv. 10, 11. All creatures have a tendency towards their origin, and thereby declare that God is their supreme cause and ultimate end; as all rivers come from the sea, and run back into it, Eccl. i. 5—7; every creature leads man to God; "for," Rom. xi. 36, "of him," as the efficient cause, "through him," as the preserving cause, "and to him" as the final cause, "are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen;" yea, further, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work," Psal. xix. 1. Every creature hath a legible character of God's power, wisdom, and goodness engraven upon it, and hath a mouth to preach something of the magnificence of its Creator; the visible creature leads man to its invisible Maker; nay further, by that supply which the creature affords to man, it gives him abundant cause of glorifying God; hence saith the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Much more doth the new creature work directly to the attaining of God's high and glorious purposes, as might be demonstrated,—by its accomplishing God's pleasure, for holiness is according to his will, 1 Thess. iv. 3.—By working the soul God-wards, it places the affections on things above, Col. iii. 1, 2.—As it evidently displays all God's glorious attributes, being the lively picture of the Deity engraven on the soul.—And doth contribute much to the soul's advancing the glory of God; as we shewed before.

12. The whole creation shall be burnt, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." Not that this glorious structure shall be

annihilated, or turned into its original nothing, I cannot think so; but it shall be purified, refined, and freed from the filthy dregs with which sin hath stained it. So I find Amesius say,\* that the elements shall not be quite taken away, but changed, and purified; that the substance shall remain, only the corrupt qualities introduced by sin, shall be purged away;† for,

(1.) In Peter it is said, the heavens and the earth are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment. Now, fire turns combustible matter into its own nature, but doth not quite consume the matter it feeds on, but purifies things; all melting of metals, is not annihilating of them.

(2.) Scripture rather asserts a mutation or changing of these material heavens and earth, than a total abolition; Psal. cii. 25, 26, “Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.” The seventy employ ἐλξetic, thou shalt fold them; and thus the apostle translates this text, Heb. i. 12, “As a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed;” alluding to a garment, or a book, or scroll of parchment, when it is folded up, there are no letters or words visible; thus it passeth away by a notable change.

(3.) The whole creation lies under the curse and sad effects of sin, which by a kind of natural instinct, it longs to be delivered from; see Rom. viii. 20—23, “The whole creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together until now,” &c. Calvin saith, there is no element, or part of the world, but is touched with the sense of the creature’s misery, and longs for the ex-

\* Elementa non erunt sublata, sed mutata et purgata.

† De mundi elementis hoc unum dicam, absumptum iri tantum, ut novam qualitatem induant, manente substantia.—*Calv.* 2 *Pcter* iii. 10.

pected resurrection; and surely God will not frustrate its expectation.\*

(4.) There is something in the following texts that look this way, Psal. xciii. 1, "The world also is established that it cannot be moved;" Eccl. i. 4, "The earth abideth for ever;" Eccl. iii. 14, "Whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever;" Psal. cxix. 90, "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." All these speak the world's continuance.

But you may say, of what use will heavens and earth then be? I answer,

As an everlasting monument of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, and possibly righteous men shall dwell in this new heaven and earth, and contemplate God in his glorious works; 2 Pet. iii. 13. That new world shall be possessed only by saints, no sinners shall be with them.

Now if we apply all this to this new creation whereof we are treating, it will exactly coincide. Grace shall continue, "He that doth the will of God, shall abide for ever."† This principle is an immortal seed; and shall be cleansed from all dregs of sin, and its consequences; and the spirits of just men "shall be made perfect;" yea, their bodies "shall be made like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus;" and though they may pass through the fire, not of Popish purgatory, but of affliction, or of the Spirit's refining, yet they shall lose nothing but dross, and shall come forth as gold.‡

Thus I have run a parallel between the old creation and the new.

\* Hunc locum accipio, Nullum esse elementum, nullamve mundi partem, quæ non veluti præsentis miseriæ agnitione tacta in spem resurrectionis intenta sit.

† 1 John ii. 17. ‡ Heb. xii. 23. Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. iii. 13.

But this new creation is better, and more difficult than the old.

1. It is better, though the first was perfect in its kind, yet this is more excellent workmanship, being of a more pure, refined, spiritual nature, and repairs what was decayed in the old. It is also brought about with more transcendent love and good will, and hath a reference to the everlasting interests of precious souls in the other world. But of this more anon.

2. This is a creation in some respects more difficult than the former was. It may seem a paradox, that the framing of this new creation in the heart of a sinner, is a greater work, and of more difficulty, than that of making this great universe, heaven and earth; mistake not, this difficulty is not in respect of God's omnipotency, to whom all things are possible and easy; but with respect to the thing itself, and our consideration of it, this appears to our apprehension in these four respects:—

(1.) When God made the world, he met with no opposition; he spake the word, and none uttered any contradiction; but in this new creation, the world, the devil, internal depravity, and sometimes custom in sin oppose this work; the “carnal mind is enmity itself against God,” and fights against him, Rom. viii. 7.

(2.) When God made the world, it cost him but the speaking of a word, as has been said; but in order to this new creation, it cost him dear, even the giving of his own Son to become man, to live a life of sorrow, to endure the painful, ignominious, accursed death of the cross, that sinners might be reconciled to God, and become like God.

(3.) When God made the world, he needed not, nor used any instruments, in order to the effecting of that work; but in this of the new creation, he sends



ministers labouring, travelling, and long waiting on sinners, to persuade them ; he chooses men like themselves, endows them with gifts, gives them compassionate hearts, to weep over others, and beseech them with earnest entreaties to repent ; yet that will not do, except the Spirit strive and prevail.

(4.) When God made the world, all was complete in six days ; “Heaven and earth were finished,” Gen. ii. 1, “and all the host of them ;” there needed not a second hand ; but he is carrying on this work of the new creation many years, the whole life of the Christian ; if he live a hundred years, it will be still defective in point of degree, and never complete, till the soul be landed in heaven.

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## CHAP. IV.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW CREATURE TO THE SOULS OF MEN.

III. It was further proposed to demonstrate, wherein this new creature is of the first importance to the souls of men.

And here, lest I be mistaken, I must premise two caveats by way of exception : the first refers to the kind ; the second, to the end of this availableness.

1. As to the kind, we must beware how we put the new creature in the room of Christ. It is not so available as our blessed Lord Jesus is, who is the only “foundation, on which the church is built,” and “able to save to the uttermost :” no creature must be set up

in competition with him, for "there is no salvation in any other."\* And herein I am afraid the quakers are guilty of a gross heresy, who call us from a Christ without us, to a Christ within us; yea, it hath been a dispute in the plantation, called Pennsylvania, whether we must believe only in a Christ within us, or a Christ both within and without us, and it was carried mostly in the former sense. But let no man be drawn from placing his entire confidence in Christ, as both God and man in one person, who suffered death on the cross to make atonement for sinners, and now "sits on the right hand of God to make intercession for us."—If by a Christ within, they mean that called light within, either free will or natural conscience, or a power to help ourselves without special grace, it is an exploded error; and it is to be feared, the Jesuits deliver their popish doctrine out of these men's mouths in refined language.—If by Christ within, be meant Christ's person in the believer, it is blasphemy.—If intended to signify, "Christ within us, the hope of glory," Col. i. 27, or "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 17, it is as the sun is in the house, when the beams or rays thereof shine into it. So Christ dwells in souls by his Spirit, Rom. viii. 9, and its graces; and this is what is called the new creature, which however is but a creature, and a weak one, full of imperfections: it is a vein of gold enveloped in earth and dross, not to be trusted to. The bride may highly prize her husband's picture, if like him, and drawn by his hand; but it is ridiculous to dote on that, and slight her husband; and when she wants money or clothes, to go not to her husband for them, but to his picture. Surely, our Lord will not take it well, if men honour his image to the dishonour of his

\* 1 Cor. iii. 11. Heb. vii. 25. Acts iv. 12.

person : the original is one thing, the copy is another. Christ, the object of our faith, and the fruit of his Spirit are different : grace in the heart is not so available as Christ in heaven. Let every thing have its due place.

2. That which refers to the end, is this negative, that the new creature is not ordained to have a direct tendency to the justification of a sinner : God did not appoint it for this purpose. The instrument appointed is faith in Christ, Rom. iii. 20—22, in his blood, merits, and satisfaction to divine justice, apprehended by faith alone. And this excludes not only man's merits, but any gracious habits wrought in man, or good works done by him ; nay, it also excludes faith itself, as the work of man, any otherwise than as laying hold on Christ's righteousness. This I affirm, that neither the new creature, nor the best inherent righteousness can justify a sinner before God's tribunal. For a "man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." And lest any should say, it was by the works only of the ceremonial law, it is apparent the apostle includes the moral law ; for the Gentiles were never bound to the ceremonial law, yet he proves both "Jews and Gentiles to be both under sin," and both alike justified by Christ in the way of believing ; but "where there is no law, there is no transgression." Besides, that law which shews sin, is the moral law ; "For by the law is the knowledge of sin."\* And it is that law which drives us out of self to Christ, and therefore it can never justify us : God hath nailed up that door, so that none since the fall can enter into happiness by law-righteousness. This way to heaven is like the north west passage to the Indies, whoever attempts it,

\* Gal. ii. 16. Rom. iii. 9. ii. 26, 27. iv. 15. iii. 20.

is sure to be frozen up before he gets half way thither. But it may be objected,

If a legal righteousness, produced by our own strength, will not justify a sinner, yet this new creature, or the habit, or exercise of evangelical righteousness will surely justify ?

The apostle himself answers, no ; and he instanceth in two famous saints in the Old Testament,—the one is Abraham, the other David, Rom. iv. 1, 6. Faithful, holy Abraham, though no idolater, but circumcised, offering his son, must not glory in any habit or acts of grace. And David, though a man after God's own heart, yet saith, “ Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified : ” “ If the Lord mark iniquity, who can stand ? ” Holy Paul dares not stand in his own righteousness at God's bar, but “ in the righteousness, which is of God by faith.”\* Indeed this imparted or inherent holiness, was communicated to the soul for other ends than to justify a sinner before God, from the guilt of any one sin ; and yet this new creature is very important to the souls of men in these twelve cases :

1. This new creation rectifies the soul's faculties, which were marred by Adam's fall. The former structure, though once a famous edifice, was, in consequence of transgression, not only tottering, but a ruinous house, and lies in rubbish ; this new creation re-edifies it in a more stately, sumptuous manner : yea, it is richly adorned thereby : “ They shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.” Thereby the Christian “ is more excellent than his neighbour,” “ of an excellent spirit,” more excellent than himself was : \* he is thus become like the angels,

\* Psalm cxliii. 2. cxxx. 3. Phil. iii. 7—9.

† Prov. i. 9. xii. 26. xvii. 27.

yea, like God himself: and though he be short of Adam in the degree of grace, yet upon better ground, in point of duration: and now "great grace" is upon all true believers, Acts iv. 33. Man, by his fall, "became like the beasts that perish," Psalm xlix. 12: but this new creature makes him better than other men. All men are on a level as to God, till this new creation sets a divine stamp on some. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth," Prov. x. 20. God only hath sovereignty and authority to rate his creatures: this is the estimate he forms.

2. This new creature is the fruit and evidence of everlasting love; this is the legible print of God's purpose from eternity. "He hath chosen us,—that we should be holy," Eph. i. 4: this is the proper result of free, undeserved grace. Gal. i. 15, God "calls by his grace:" this is the glorious display of his banner of love over the souls of men. In the old creation there was the strength of God's arm; in this there is the working of God's bowels. God found all mankind alike involved in sin and misery, but "grace makes some to differ from others," 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7. As a curious landholder seeing a forest spreading over his ground, marks some trees, designing to make of them some rare pieces of workmanship; thus God carves his own image on a common log, and sets it apart for himself: this is an act of discriminating love, and when the sinner sees it, he must cry out, "Who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" "By the grace of God I am what I am:" this, this is a "shedding abroad of his love in my heart:!"\* I read love in every line and letter of this new impression; and doth not this avail a person much?

\* 2 Sam. vii. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Rom. v. 5.



3. This new creation consecrates the soul to be a residence for God, and renders the person acceptable to him. God dwells in the humble and holy heart : there only he takes up his lodging, when he hath perfumed the heart with myrrh and frankincense : having built this mansion-house, it “ becomes a habitation of God through the Spirit, a temple of the Holy Ghost.”\* God hath two thrones—one in heaven, and the other in a holy heart : the soul and body is a “ sacrifice holy and acceptable to God,” Rom. xii. 1. Happy soul, that is thus owned by the great God : no matter should men reject you, if God receive you ; if men desert you, yet if God abide with you, you are happy : God casts out the devil’s furniture, and saith, “ This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it,” Psalm cxxxii. 14, 15. No bad house will be kept there where God dwells, for he makes all welcome ; this is important.

4. The first instant of this new creation, commences a communion with God ; this is a consequence of the former, and the peculiar privilege of a saint : “ Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son.” This communion with God, is a mystery to most men : every one that hangs about the court, doth not speak with the king : many meddle with duties, but meet not with God. “ It is good for me to draw nigh to God.” How oft doth the Christian cry out, “ Oh when shall I come and appear before God ?”† This new creature puts a bias in the soul God-wards, it naturally carries the believer upwards, to engage “ his heart in approaching to God ;” and the “ Lord meets him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.” Birds cannot converse with men, there is not a suitableness

\* Isa. lvii. 15. Cant. iii. 6. Ephes. ii. 22. 1 Cor. vi. 17, 19.

† 1 John i. 3. Psalm lxxiii. 28. xlii. 2.

of nature ; a “ hypocrite cannot, dare not come before God :” \* but a saint can draw near with boldness through Christ ; for he is like God, and communion is founded in similitude. †

5. This new creature evidenceth a soul’s interest in Christ, and union to him ; yea, puts the poor believer in a capacity of deriving influence from him, as the child in the womb draws nourishment from the mother. It is this new creature that evidenceth our interest in Christ ; “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” This was one end of our Lord’s giving himself for us, to “ purchase to himself a peculiar people.” Christ’s cross was both an altar and a laver, to expiate and to purify, to sanctify and justify ; you shall obtain continual supplies of grace from Christ, and of his fulness receive grace for grace. ‡ The new creature hath a constant spring to feed it, and to recruit it in its decays ; God still saith, “ My grace shall be sufficient for thee ;” so he becomes indefectible, the new creature needs not to fear famishing, having such breasts of consolation to suck, and such a storehouse ; so saith the apostle, “ The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you ;” || surely then this new creature avails much.

6. The new creature is the inlet or avenue to true joy, peace, and satisfaction ; though in its first infancy, there be a casting down, yet it is in order to a lifting up. Light is sown for the righteous ; it may for a season lie in the furrows of gospel sorrow ; “ They

\* Jer. xxx. 21. Isa. lxiv. 5. Job. xiii. 16.

† Communio fundatur in similitudine.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 17. Tit. ii. 14. John i. 16.

|| 2 Cor. xii. 9. Isaiah lxvi. 11. 1 Pet. v. 10.

that sow in tears, shall reap in joy," just like the pangs of a child-bearing woman, that end in comfort. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;\* all joy comes in at this door; that is but a spurious, yea diabolical peace, which is not a companion of the new creature; "when a strong man armed keepeth the palace, his goods are in peace;" the palace is the heart, the goods are the soul's faculties; the strong man is the devil; the soul hath never a quiet hour in God's way, till Satan be dispossessed, and a rightful Lord introduced, that is, our Lord Jesus. It is true, there are oft furrows in the face of the new creature, but they are for sin, and for want of the sense of its in-being; but in God's time, "he will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" sorrowful sufferings will at last "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness."† And is this worth nothing?

7. This new creature hath all things profitable entailed upon it. "Godliness is profitable to all things;" yea, "godliness with contentment, is great gain." All the good things of heaven and earth, are made sure by covenant title to this new creature; "All things are yours," saith God; every thing turns to advantage; the Christian is the true chymist, to extract gold out of every thing; "All things work together for good to him;"‡ though not singly, yet jointly, combined with other ingredients; he gains for the improvement of this new man by outward losses. Every mercy, ordinance, providence, and affliction becomes a talent by which he is a gainer, Matt. xxv. 27. If he fight with Satan, he gets ground at last. In petty skirmishes and some battles the Carthaginians obtained victories, but the

\* Psalm xcvi. 11. cxxvi. 5, 6. John xvi. 21. Rom. xiv. 17.

† Luke xi. 21, 22. 1 Pet. i. 8. Heb. xii. 11.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 8. vi. 6. 1 Cor. iii. 21. Rom. viii. 28.

Romans came off conquerors in the end. So the pious Christian may receive some foils, but "at last he shall be more than a conqueror," yea, "a triumpher" through the Captain of his salvation, Rom. viii. 37.

8. The new creature renders the person that hath it, safe, in a safe condition. He "that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." The holy angels are a royal guard to these "new-born babes of salvation." Many are the dangers to which the new creature is exposed; but one angel is as a whole camp, to encompass and deliver God-fearing souls.\* The God of angels is also nigh them, and saves them; he will secure them from seduction, and the evil of temptation. It is not possible that the elect should be finally and irrecoverably seduced; for grace establisheth the heart, and they "that are of us, shall no doubt continue with us:" they shall be kept "by mighty power, through faith to salvation."† And we know that these souls that are born of God, are so kept, "that the wicked one toucheth them not." God will "keep them, that they shall not be tempted above what they are able." God will furnish his child with armour of proof against Satan's assaults; his breastplate may be shot at, but never shot through; the "Christian's bow abides in strength," and he stands as a rock in the midst of waves.‡ He can neither be stormed nor undermined, if the saints have but a little strength, yet it shall be lasting, yea, everlasting.

9. The new creature makes Christians that possess it useful and profitable to all about them. It is natural for this new creature to propagate religion: as

\* Psalm xci. 1. Heb. i. 14. Psalm xxxiv. 7, 18.

† Matt. xxiv. 24. Heb. xiii. 9. 1 John ii. 19. 1 Pet. i. 5.

‡ 1 John v. 18. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rev. iii. 8—10.

sin, so grace is assimilating: how solicitous was the church for her "little sister that had no breasts, when she should be spoken for?" How did the blessed apostle Paul pant after the conversion of his countrymen, the Jews? The believer labours to do good to all about him, both good and bad. He would fain pluck sinners out of the fire of hell, and engage them for heaven;\* and he spurs on his brethren in heaven's road, by counsels, admonitions, prayers, example, and all holy exercises in christian communion. Such become the pillars of the place and nation where they live: ten righteous persons might have saved Sodom; and Lot's presence there bound the angels' hands till he was gone. The Christian will never know while he lives what use he has been of in the world. Every pious soul is a fruitful tree, that "brings forth fruit in due season, yea, in old age."†

10. This new creature prepares souls for gospel-privileges; it is only the new creature that is a vessel proper to receive the new wine of the gospel, Matt. ix. 16, 17. In the gospel all things are new, Rev. xxi. 5. There is a new name, Rev. iii. 12; new church, Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 2; new way, Heb. x. 20; new covenant, Heb. viii. 8; a new commandment, John xiii. 34; new sacraments, Matt. xxvi. 26. xxviii. 19; a new relation, 1 Pet. ii. 9; a new condition, 2 Pet. iii. 13; and a new song, Rev. xiv. 3: yea, new heavens and a new earth. And surely it is very fit that Christians should have new hearts, which God promiseth in the new covenant, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." New qualifications prepare persons for new dispensations; therefore God joins the new heavens, and "new

\* Cant. viii. 8. Rom. ix. 1—3. x. 1. Jude, 22.

† Gen. xviii. 32. Psalm i. 3. xcii. 14.



earth with the new seed," Isa. lxvi. 22, else there would be a great inconsistency.

11. The new creature prepares persons for death and heaven; "To these to live is Christ, and to die gain; living and dying, these are the Lord's;" it is this that renders persons "meet for the heavenly inheritance."\* None can see God, but those that are pure in heart; these, and only these, are "wrought for this self-same thing." Heaven is not like Noah's ark, that had clean and unclean creatures brought into it; "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."† Frogs came into Pharoah's court; but no unclean thing can enter heaven. A sensual palate could not taste the sweetness of that wine which is in our Father's kingdom, for it is new wine, and renewed souls only are capable of taking pleasure in it. Happy is the man that hath got Christ in the arms of his faith, and in his heart by this new nature, he may lift up his head, and say with Simeon, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."‡ And is not this important to souls?

12. This new creature is heaven begun; it is a considerable part of heaven; holiness is happiness; it is the seed and embryo of the heavenly state. Grace and glory form a blessed connexion, Psal. lxxxiv. 11; they differ only in degree, not in kind; grace is glory begun, glory is grace consummated; grace is the bud, glory is the flower. This new creature is the key of paradise, the inlet into glory; yea, it is salvation already, 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who hath saved and called us." This blessed work of the new creature is a "quicken-

\* Phil. i. 21. Rom. xiv. 8. Col. i. 12.

† Matt. v. 8. 2 Cor. v. 5. Heb. xii. 14.

‡ Rev. xxi. 9. Matt. xxvi. 29. Luke ii. 29 30.

ing of us together with Christ, and raiseth us up together, and makes us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" and thus we are saved in our representative, Eph. ii. 5—7. This divine principle is heaven begun, not only as a pledge, but part of it. The scriptures often tell us, that God's children have eternal life, John xvii. 2. And this is, *in pretio*, in price, for it is a purchased possession, Eph. i. 14.—*In promisso*, in promise, for God hath promised eternal life to all that obey him.—*In semine*, in the seed, the water within the believer, is a well springing up to eternal life, John iv. 14.—*In pignore*, in pledge, this is called sometimes the "seal of the Holy Spirit;" sometimes the earnest, which is part of the thing to be enjoyed; sometimes the witness of the Spirit, who never bears his testimony to a lie; "He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; for the Holy Spirit beareth witness with our spirits."\* And in these respects the new creature is important in such a manner, as no external gospel privileges, or worldly enjoyments are to the children of men.

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## CHAP. V.

### SOME INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE PREMISES.

IV. FOR the practical improvement of this important truth, I shall keep close to the method which the Holy Ghost prescribes for the discussion of all truths; 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *cor-*

\* Heb. v. 9. Eph. i. 13, 14. 1 John v. 10. Rom. viii. 16.

*rection, for instruction in righteousness.* These are the uses I shall make of this subject :

First, For doctrine, or information of the judgment, that our minds may be acquainted with points proper to be known.

Now there may be an inquiry into seven things relative to the new creature, which I shall reduce to question and answer.

1. *Qu.* Is the framing of this new creature in the soul miraculous? The reason of this question is, because we have compared it to, and even shewed its precedency above the first creation, which was a miracle, therefore it should seem that this also must be so.

*Answ.* (1.) Some things are miracles, yet not a creation; as Stephen seeing Jesus at God's right hand, Acts vii. 55; or barren Sarah's conceiving, Gen. xxi. 2; or the sun's going back, or standing still, Isa. xxxviii. 8: for then nature only proceeds beyond its ordinary course.

(2.) Some things are both a miracle and a creation, as the virgin Mary's conceiving, and bearing a Son, yet remaining a virgin, Luke i. 35. The production of manna was both a miracle and a creation, Exod. xvi. 15.

(3.) Some things only seem miraculous to ignorant people, as an eclipse of the sun, but mathematicians know the cause.

(4.) Some things are a creation, yet not a miracle, as the conversion of a soul, the subject is a rational soul, and so capable of a principle of grace, and had once God's image; but it was lost, and is recovered by a spiritual creation, of that which man had lost by his fall and folly.

2. *Qu.* Is there any inclination in man towards this new creation? Or, is there any spark of good

left in man upon his fall, that being improved by his natural faculties and diligence, may grow up to a new creature? For it may seem there is in man a natural conscience, prompting him to good, excusing him in doing it, drawing him from evil, and accusing him on committing it. See Rom. ii. 14, 15.

*Answ.* (1.) Those common notices or anticipations of good, are not in the will, but in the mind; not in the affections, but conscience.\* It was not engraven on their will to choose it, but the power of some truths flashed in their eyes, that they could not but know them, and have some general liking for them; so that they could not but know that adultery and stealing are bad, and the contrary, good.

(2.) But whether these were left in man's heart after the fall, as relics of God's image, or introduced by God's providence afterwards for the good of mankind, and to maintain peace and intercourse in societies, is much disputed; Mr. Capel, on Temptation, thinks the latter. However,

(3.) All our Protestant writers affirm, with the scriptures, that man's nature is universally depraved, against the Socinians, who hold that the nature of man is not corrupted; but say, whatsoever spot or vice is in man, proceeds from frequent acts of sin, and custom in sinning, without the internal corruption of his nature. But the scriptures tell us of man's total degeneracy. "In me," saith Paul, that is, "in my flesh, dwells no good thing." Our "mind and conscience is defiled." "There is none righteous, no, not one," of all the race of mankind.† And therefore they need "a sanctification throughout, in soul, spirit, and body."‡

\* κοινὰ ἔννοιαι, or πρόληψεις. Nec vero cordis nomen pro sede affectuum, sed tantum pro intellectu capitur.—*Calv. in loc.*

† Tit. i. 15. Rom. iii. 9, 10. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 23.

(4.) There is an utter inability in man to renew himself; for we are “all without strength, cannot think a good thought;” yea, are dead in trespasses and sins;\* and merely passive in the first infusion of spiritual life; a subject capable of divine operations; but “in the power of darkness, led captive by Satan at his pleasure.” The “carnal mind is enmity to God; and “God works both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure.”†

3. *Qu.* Why then do God and man call upon us to turn ourselves, yea, to make for ourselves “a new heart and a new spirit,” Ezek. xviii. 31, if this be not in our power? Doth he not mock us, when he calls us to do that which he knows it is impossible for us to do?

*Ans.* No; for, (1.) It was once in our power to do good by his donation, and if we have lost it by our own folly, and cannot do what he requires, we must hereby know, that God hath not lost his authority to command, because we have lost our ability to obey: he will let us know his sovereignty. But

(2.) God knows man is a proud creature, and thinks he can do what he cannot. And now God commands, to convince him of his insufficiency, that he may look up to him for help. Yet,

(3.) Though man has lost the rectitude of his faculties, he hath not lost his faculties; he hath a rational soul, if he have not spiritual grace. Though carnal persons be morally dead, yet they are naturally alive. Men have a self-reflecting conscience, which they may, and must use; “It is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly,” Prov. xx. 27.

\* Rom. v. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 1.

† Subjectum Dei actionem suscipiens. Col. i. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Rom. viii. 7.



(4.) It was the saying of Augustine, twelve hundred years ago, "He that made thee without thyself, will not save thee without thyself." If thou be not an efficient in thy own conversion, thou mayest and must be an instrument in thy salvation: thou art bound to work out thy own salvation, Phil. ii. 12.

4. *Qu.* What is a man better for his endeavours, unless God give him the grace of this new creature? All that he can do, will be to no purpose, nothing can be pleasing to God, or available to himself in his natural state. "For without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6.

*Answ.* (1.) Though carnal men cannot do what God requires in a due manner, yet God hath some respect to such as for the matter do something of their duty. God took notice of Ahab's humiliation, and "promised not to bring the evil in his days," 1 Kings xxi. 27, 29. Jehoahaz was none of the best kings, "Yet, when he besought the Lord, he hearkened to him," 2 Kings xiii. 4. And upon Rehoboam's humiliation, the Lord considerably remitted his punishment, 2 Chron. xii. 6, 7. And is not a relaxation or removal of outward punishment of some worth with you? Yea, though the young gentleman's obedience was but poor stuff, and he in his natural state, yet Jesus beholding him, loved him; see Mark x. 20, 21. Is this nothing?

(2.) However, such as frame not their hearts and doings to turn to God, and through sloth or wilfulness, neglect God's appointed means of becoming new creatures, do evidently declare themselves to be causes of their own damnation;—render themselves daily worse and worse, and grow more unable to repent, 2 Tim. iii. 13;—provoke God to give them up to their own hearts' lusts, Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12;—make themselves manifold more the children of wrath, Matt. xxiii. 15;

—and are more inexcusable, and sink themselves deeper in hell. And is this any way desirable?

(3.) But though such poor souls cannot with all their endeavours make themselves new creatures, yet we may say of such, as our Lord said of the scribe, Mark xii. 33, 34, when “he saw that he answered discreetly, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” You are in a hopeful way to heaven, while you are endeavouring in the use of God’s appointed means.

(4.) And who can tell what these labours will produce? It is true, thou canst not deserve grace to challenge it as debt for the work done; nor can I say that grace is due to thee by any promise; for all the “promises of God are made in Christ,” 2 Cor. i. 20. But I have something yet to say for thy encouragement: for, in the first place, thou hast to deal with a God of infinite goodness, who hath “sworn he delights not in the death of a sinner,” Exod. xxxiv. 6. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And who knows what he may do for thee?—then God hath yet spared thy life, and is sending terms of reconciliation to thee a vile sinner, 2 Cor. v. 20; he stands knocking at thy door, while thou knockest at his. A general pardon is proclaimed, Mark xvi. 15; thou hast no cause to despair.—Didst thou ever meet with any that came sad, and disappointed from his door? Did he ever say to any, “Seek ye me in vain?” nay, doth he not say, “Those that come unto me, I will in no wise cast off?”—And doth he not say, “Those that seek me early, shall find me? Doth not the gospel promise what the law commands? God doth graciously undertake to do what he requires us to do; he bids you “make you a new heart;” and the same God saith, “I will put a new spirit within them.”\* O put him to it, and try

\* Isa. xlv. 19. John vi. 37. Prov. viii. 17. Ezek. xi. 19.

him what he will do. The means I shall suggest hereafter.

5. *Qu.* Is not the new creature produced in the ordinance of baptism, which is called the washing or laver of regeneration? Tit. iii. 5; then we need no more.

*Ans.* (1.) Baptism, as circumcision of old, is “a seal of the righteousness of faith:” and supports faith either in the parent, or in the child, or party baptized, for the “promise is to you and to your children.” The apostles baptized believers. Now the effect is not before the cause: if they were regenerated before, baptism could not be the cause of regeneration.

(2.) Yet some have been baptized upon the profession of their faith, that never were regenerated, as “Simon Magus, who was still in the gall of bitterness.”\* So it was but a sign, no proper cause, which would have had its certain effect.

(3.) If baptism were the cause of regeneration, then no unbaptized children could be regenerate, and so could not be saved, if dying in infancy; but David, by virtue of the covenant, believed his child’s salvation, 2 Sam. xii. 23, though not circumcised.

(4.) It is a groundless popish doctrine, to think that sacraments confer grace,† merely because used, or that they stamp an indelible character on the party baptized; it is but an external act, and cannot reach the heart or conscience, any more than old testament rites could do, Heb. x. 1—4. Nor is it in the power of the holiest minister on earth, or angel in heaven, it is God’s prerogative, and he is a free agent, 1 Pet. i. 23, to work or suspend his grace according to his pleasure.

But you may say, doth not baptism now save?

My reply is, yes; when there is the answer of a good

Rom. iv. 11. Acts ii. 39. Acts viii. 13, 23.

† Ex opere operato.

conscience, and then it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Rom. x. 9. The gospel preaching is "the power of God to salvation;" yet all are not saved by it; "faith comes by hearing," Rom. x. 17. Yet all that hear, do not believe; "for who hath believed our report?" Ordinances are but channels, not springs of grace; the blessing upon them depends entirely on sovereign grace. How many thousands have gone to hell with baptismal water on their faces! Ishmael, Esau, and all the house of Israel, in Jeremiah's days, were uncircumcised in heart, chap. ix. 26. Rest not satisfied with this, but see you "be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," Matt. iii. 11.

6. *Qu.* Wherein doth this new creature excel shining morality, or the splendid, common graces of hypocrites?

*Answ.* (1.) In the root or principle, produced by a saving change from nature to grace: carnal men, though they have never so fair a flower, yet want the "root of the matter," Job xix. 28. This unsoundness of heart is the hair in the moralist's pen that blurs all his fair writing; as it was said of a person, of such and such virtues, yet he is a leper, (as was said of Naaman the Syrian,) still graceless, unprincipled.

(2.) In its universality: "Zacharias and Elizabeth walked in all the commandments of the Lord," Luke i. 6. But of the moralist and the hypocrite it may be said, "The legs of the lame are not equal:" they are addicted to halting and halving: they are always partial, seem excellent in one grace, but defective in another; yea, totally want what is essentially necessary to constitute a saint. The moralist is defective in compliance with the first table of the law, the hypocrite with the second; but the new creature lies square to all commands and duties, at all times, Psalm cvi. 3.

(3.) The new creature acts for a right end,—God's glory and communion with him; but the moralist or



hypocrite always, and in every action, secretly casts his eye upon himself, his own profit, pleasure, or honour, as Jehu and the Pharisees.

(4.) The new creature always regards Jesus Christ, both for assistance and acceptance; the moralist and hypocrite stand upon their own legs, and think their penny, current money with God; but the gracious soul denies himself in all; his “works are wrought in God:” “He is accepted in the Beloved:” “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” \*

7. *Qu.* Wherein lies the difference betwixt this new creature, which consists in sanctification, and the state of justification? The reason of this query is, because Papists and some others confound them.

*Ans.* (1.) The new creature in sanctification, is an inherent production within us. “A new spirit will I put within you:” and “the kingdom of God is within you.” And though at first it be immediately caused by the Spirit, yet the Christian is an agent in promoting his sanctification; he may and must cleanse himself. † But now justification is in consequence of a work done without us, by the Lord Christ, by his satisfaction of divine justice on the cross, and by his intercession at God’s right hand, we have “redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” The red lines of Christ’s blood, blot out the black lines of our sins from God’s debt-book: he “washeth us from our sins in his own blood:” “He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.” ‡ No other person or thing is interposed; not faith itself, as a work, hath any causality in

\* John iii. 21. Eph. i. 6. Isa. xlv. 25.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Luke xvii. 21. 2 Cor vii. 1. 1 John iii. 3.

‡ Ephes. i. 7. 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5. Rom. iv. 25.



this work; it is only God's free act of grace for Christ's sake, to forgive sins.

(2.) The new creature in sanctification, is not produced in the same measure or degree in all the saints of God; some that are sincere, come far short of others; there are "some babes, others strong men." It is said of some kings of Israel, "there was none like them:" "Hananiah feared God above many:" there was none like Job in the earth. So there were different products of the seed, yet all in good ground.\* Some Christians abound in faith, love, humility, patience, knowledge, mortification,—others are defective. But justification is alike to all, "and upon all that believe, for there is no difference." The meanest, weakest believer hath as large a portion as the strongest. The apostle John saith, "I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." They are as much justified as fathers and young men: Mary Magdalene and the penitent thief were as much justified as Peter: the reason is, because they are all "partakers of like precious faith."† The least measure whereof attains its end of receiving Christ, as well as the greater; for it is Christ received by faith, that justifies: a weak hand may receive a gift as well as a stronger, though not so steadily; but it is the gift that enricheth, not the strength of the hand.

(3.) The new creature comes on by degrees, it is not complete at the first instant; it is first an embryo, Christ formed in the heart, and then "increaseth with the increase of God, till it come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The apostle thanks God for the Thessalonians, that

\* Heb. v. 13, 14. Neh. vii. 2. Job i. 8. Matt. xiii. 23.

† Rom. iii. 22. 1 John ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 1.

their "faith did grow exceedingly, and charity."\* It is like the sun that "shineth more and more to the perfect day;" a good man grows stronger and stronger. But now justification is complete at first, every whit as much at first, when ingrafted into Christ, as afterwards; all that "believe, are justified from all things; no charge can be brought against them."† God "forgiveth all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting;" he thoroughly "washeth away his children's blood;" there is not a spot to be seen on them, no indictment can be drawn up against them."‡ But you may ask,

Why then are Christ's disciples bound to pray daily for pardon? Matt. vi. 12.

I answer, Because we are daily committing new sins, in "many things we offend all;" we miss it in every thing; oh, how "many are our secret faults;"||—and because God would have us daily lie under the sense of our former guilt, the desert of sin, and the worth of pardoning grace. David was assured of pardon by Nathan; yet afterwards prays for it. The prodigal son confessed his fault, after his father had fallen on his neck.§ Pardoning grace may be clouded in the sense and assurance of it, and in this respect the righteousness "of God is revealed from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17; from a less to a stronger faith.—And besides, we may distinguish betwixt a justified state, and applications of pardon to the soul, "there is forgiveness with God," which must be daily sued out by faith and prayer, Psal. cxxx. 4.

\* Col. ii. 19. Eph. iv. 13. 2 Thess. i. 3.

† Prov. iv. 18. Job xvii. 9. Acts xiii. 39. Rom. viii. 1.

‡ Col. ii. 13. Ezek. xvi. 9. Rom. viii. 33.

|| James iii. 2. Psal. xix. 12.

§ 2 Sam. xii. 13. Psal. li. 2. Luke xv. 20, 21.

(4.) Another difference between this new creature and justification, is that the grace of the new creation is never perfect in this life; the holiest saints have some spots and defects: who can say, "I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" "There is not a just man on earth, that doth good, and sinneth not." John Baptist needs a new baptism; all the disciples need their first washing; a Paul complains of a body of death;\* it is in heaven only that the "spirits of just men are made perfect." But justification is perfect; there is no spot in the justified; "Fair as the moon," as to sanctification; "clear as the sun," in respect of justification; white as snow. God deals with them, as if they had never offended, "casting their sins behind his back, into the depths of the sea, he remembers them no more."† But it may be objected,

Doth not God punish his people for sin?

I reply, What in this objection are called punishments, are not properly acts of vindictive justice, but fatherly chastisements, coming from God, not as a judge to punish a malefactor, but as an indulgent father to correct his wandering and wayward child. It is true, afflictions are materially a curse, but they are formally a blessing. With reference to this pardoning grace, it is worth noting what Dr. Ames observes,‡ that there is fourfold pardon:—In God's decree and purpose, Gal. iii. 8.—In Christ's undertaking, our sins being laid on him, Isa. liii. 6.—Virtually on the Christian's first relation to God, Rom. viii. 1.—Expressly applied on the believer's repentance, exercising faith, and having a sense of pardon, Rom. v. 1; and I may add there is a day for publicly proclaiming this pardon before the

\* Prov. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. Matt. iii. 14. John xiii. 8. Rom. vii. 24.

† Heb. xii. 23. Cant. vi. 10. Psal. li. 7. Isa. xxxviii. 17. Mic. vii. 19. Jer. xxxi. 34.

‡ Amesii Medul. page 139.

whole world, Acts iii. 19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

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## CHAP. VI.

A REVIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MANY IN CONNECTION WITH THE THINGS WHICH HAVE BEEN STATED SHOWN TO MAKE REPROOF SEASONABLE.

IF a new creation be available, and important, and even of such absolute necessity to the souls of men, then what shall we say of *non-pretenders* to it, and of *mere pretenders* to it?

1. There are some in the world, that plainly say in words or deeds, that they are as they have been, and so will continue; they trouble not themselves about these new things, but say, I am *semper idem*, still the same: I thank God, I am no turn-coat, nor will I meddle with them that are given to change, I love the old way.

To this I answer, Take that text with you, Jer. vi. 16, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." Mark it, not simply the old way, except it be good; for there are many old ways that are not good: Cain's way is old enough, so is Balaam's and Korah's, yet there is a woe unto them that walk in those ways, Jude, 11. The woman of Samaria boasted, that their father Jacob gave them the well, and that her ancestors



did worship in that mountain, John iv. 12, 20, 24: but our Lord teacheth her other doctrines. It was no good plea of the Jews, that they did as their fathers had done, "in burning incense to the queen of heaven," though they pleaded great success; then, say they, "We had of plenty of victuals, and saw no evil," Jer. xlv. 17, 18, which may be compared with God's answer to them, ver. 21, 22. But let me say to you,

(1.) That this plea is an aggravation of the fault. If it be not a good way, every step you take in it, is a new error, and brings new guilt: "the way of the wicked seduceth him."\* Have you examined, whether this be God's way or not? If you be wrong, the further you go, the further you are from God.

(2.) This continuance in old customs without inquiry will harden your hearts, and make you more incapable, yea, more unwilling to return. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots, then may ye also learn to do good, that are accustomed to do evil," Jer. xiii. 23. Custom in sin takes away conscience of sin; the more men travel, the more brawny are their feet.

(3.) But what think you, Adam went wrong, and do you delight to follow him? or rather should not the old man be crucified? Rom. vi. 6. You have no reason for being proud of the old man, "which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, but rather put on this new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 24. See a parallel betwixt the first Adam and second, 1 Cor. xv. 45—49; and then make your choice.

(4.) You will never walk in heaven's road, without a change; deceive not yourselves, you must be turned

\* *Vetustas erroris seductio errantis.*



from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, 1 Pet. i. 18. You will never walk in this new and living way, without a new heart; you cannot serve God, but "it must be in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter," Rom. vii. 6. You are undone, if you die as you are born; you need not change your religion, for you profess the true religion, only you must see that you be true to that religion by a change of heart and life; "Except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3; better never have been born, than not be new-born: but more of this anon. Tremble to think of appearing before God naked, or in your old rotten garments. The Gibeonites might cheat Israel with their old bottles, clouts, and shoes, Josh. ix. 4; but you cannot cozen God so; an old frame is not fit for a new state; or old hearts for new heavens; "if you live after the flesh, you shall die," that is, perish for ever, Rom. viii. 13; but if you through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live," that is, be saved.

There are many more that are far from being new creatures, that have a black brand of impiety printed on their foreheads, and disclaim any pretence to this new creation.

[i.] Such as have imbibed atheistical principles, and say with their tongues or in their hearts, "there is no God," Psal. xiv. 1; at least deists, that deny God's providence, and divine revelation.

[ii.] Profane scoffers at true christian piety and the power of godliness, 2 Pet. iii. 3; ridiculing puritans, and loading strictness in religion, with names of obloquy, scorn, and derision.

[iii.] Those who are profoundly ignorant of gospel mysteries, 1 Cor. xv. 34, and the essentials of religion,

the knowledge whereof is of the highest importance and necessity, and yet do scorn to learn.

[iv.] Voluptuous epicures, drunkards, adulterers, and such as wallow in all sensuality and immorality, without control or remorse, and glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19.

[v.] Proud, contentious, revengeful, hateful, hating all about them, Tit. iii. 3; that evidently manifest the fruits, or works of the flesh, Gal. v. 19, 20, in bitter revilings, suits at law, and variance about trifles.

[vi.] Covetous, griping earth-worms, that make gain their godliness, gold their god, Col. iii. 5; these are idolaters, that are hard-hearted to the poor, but please themselves with worldly enjoyments, Luke xii. 19.

[vii.] Swearers, profane takers of the name of God in vain, foolish talkers, jesters, liars, Eph. v. 4, 5, who think that their tongues are their own, and that they may say what they list.

[viii.] Neglecters of God's worship, public, private, and secret, who never call on God except with horrid imprecations, yea, who even think it is in vain to serve God, Mal. iii. 14, and hate such as do.

Such flagitious offenders there are in the world, yea, in England, that make a scoff at the name of the Spirit and grace of Christ, and will own no regeneration, but what they imagine they receive in baptism, which yet they grossly contradict, as if they would scorn, and run counter to bible-religion and morality itself; these profligates I remit to the righteous judgment of the great God, because I have little hopes they will read such a plain Treatise as this, or hear any powerful preacher; and so are out of the road of ordinary means of grace, or hopes of good.

2. But those I have at present to deal with, are pre-

tenders, and but mere pretenders to this new creation, who have something like it, which will not prove the new creature, but a dead carcase, a lifeless image of it; many of our constant, diligent attenders on all ordinances, are apt to say, "I thank God, I hope I am a new creature." To which I answer, it is well if it prove so; but the apostle saith, "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth," 2 Cor. x. 18. And Solomon saith, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," Prov. xiv. 12. But persons had need to beware taking counters for gold, pebbles for pearls: there is much counterfeit ware passeth for current coin now a-days. May not an angel be put up for a sign when the devil is within? Are not many professors like the Pharisees, painted sepulchres, "that appear fair, but within are full of rottenness, and dead men's bones," Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. Like a golden saddle stuffed with straw; or apothecaries' boxes, with specious titles, but empty of useful drugs; so it is said, a specious title, but nothing within of what is promised.\* Alas, how many professors have we known acting the part of kings on the stage, who were beggars in rags, when divested of their gilded robes of a splendid profession? How many have the complexion, but not the constitution of saints? one calls them deaf nuts, another, apples of Sodom, a third, cockles and darnel, that make a fairer show than good wheat, but must be cast out. There were some of old, that desired to "make a fair show in the flesh," Gal. vi. 12; but are like vapouring tradesmen, that make a great show to gain credit, but if searched into, possibly not worth a groat, when their debts are paid; such there always have been, and it is well if the world be mended.

\* Aliud in titulo, aliud in pyxide.

I shall briefly propound and answer the pleas, that many make for their pretence.

1 *Plea*. I have heard that the new creature consists in knowledge, and I thank God that he hath given me a large share of that.

*Answ.* We know that we all have knowledge; what kind of knowledge is yours? devils have more knowledge than you, yet are not, nor ever will be new creatures; a toad it is said, hath a pearl in its head, but poison in its body; thousands go knowingly to hell, and the more knowledge without grace, the more torment.\*

2 *Plea*. But I believe the revelation of God, and give credit to the gospel, I am no heretic, I can say the creed, and am orthodox.

*Answ.* That is well so far; but read Rom. ii. 17—25. What canst thou say of thyself more than this professing Jew, that “rested in the law, made his boast of God, and approved of things more excellent,” who yet was condemned as a perfidious, self-contradicting, God-dishonouring wretch; but thou believest, so doth “the devil believe, and tremble,” James ii. 19. Thou mayest have an orthodox head, and heterodox feet.

3 *Plea*. I am come of religious parents, who improved and pleaded the covenant for me, and trained me up in the fear of God.

*Answ.* John the Baptist anticipates this plea, Matt. iii. 9, “Think not to say in your hearts, We have Abraham to our father,” Matt. viii. 12, “The children of the kingdom may be sent to outer darkness.” Alas, parental privileges, without parent’s principles, signify nothing. Let our Lord Christ, who will be judge, answer this vain plea, John viii. 33—44. This may

\* 1 Cor. viii. 1. Tit. i. 16. Luke xii. 47.



aggravate your sin, but never save your souls without personal piety.

4 *Plea.* I have made a credible profession of my faith, am baptized, and have been admitted to the Lord's supper, to unite with God's people.

*Ans.* So did Simon Magus believe, he professed his faith, and was baptized, Acts viii. 13, 20—23. He deceived the purest church on earth, for he proved a base hypocrite; so did Judas, so did he that wanted the wedding garment, Matt. xxii. 12. And how easy it is to spread a mist before the eyes of fallible men, daily experience testifies. See an instance of some that partook of extraordinary privileges and ordinances, but yet rejected, 1 Cor. x. 5.

5 *Plea.* I am not only admitted, but continue along with them, and keep up intercourse with them in public and private exercises of religion.

*Ans.* So did the foolish virgins accompany the wise, till the last hour, with shining lamps, and when the bridegroom came, they all trimmed their lamps, but at last it was found that they had no oil in their vessels, and so were shut out, see Matt. xxv. 1—12. And do you not read of some that pertinaciously maintain their plea to the very last, even when the door is shut? they begin to say, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence," Luke xiii. 25—27.

6 *Plea.* But I have had great convictions of conscience for the evil of sin, and strong apprehensions of the justice of God; these surely were signs of a change.

*Ans.* Cain had these legal terrors, yet was an obstinate transgressor; so had Saul, so Judas; yea, Felix trembled upon Paul's preaching, Acts xxiv. 25. And all these were but as *præjudicium judicii*, prelibations of horrible vengeance in the other world. Some sinners have a "fearful looking for of judgment,



and fiery indignation," Heb. x. 27. Oh! look to your coming out of your horrors of conscience; see you close with Christ.

7 *Plea.* Yes, I have had strong persuasions in my breast to close with Christ, and do take him by faith to be my Saviour.

*Ans.* An almost persuasion is one thing, and a thorough resolution is another, Acts xxvi. 27, 28. Some barter for, but buy not this pearl of price; some are content with a Christ to pardon and save them, but like him not as a king to rule them, and subdue their lusts. Look to it, there are more sorts of faith than saving; the apostle supposeth a man to have all faith, 1 Cor. xiii. 2; yet not that which worketh by love; feigned faith is one thing, unfeigned is another, 1 Tim. i. 5.

8 *Plea.* But I confess all my sins, from the bottom of my heart, repent of them, and am heartily sorry I have done amiss.

*Ans.* So have many hypocrites and reprobates; so did Pharaoh, "I have sinned this time, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."\* Twice did Saul confess his folly; yea, lift up his voice and wept, and ingenuously said, "I have sinned." So did Ahab humble himself. And you find Judas repenting himself; yea, restoring, and saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." Oh see that yours be not a worldly sorrow!†

9 *Plea.* But I make strong resolutions of better and new obedience, and do actually reform: is not this evidence of a new creature?

*Ans.* No, the new creature always produceth reformation, but reformation may be without the new creature. "Herod feared John the Baptist, and when

\* Exod. ix. 27. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. xxvi. 21.

† 1 Kings xxi. 27. Matt. xxvii. 3, 4. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." Partial reformation is no sound evidence of regeneration: the unclean spirit of scandalous sinning may go out of the devil's slave for a season. Men may escape gross pollutions, yet be entangled in the devil's fetters. \*

10 *Plea*. I do not only reform, but also conform to the will of God in keeping all his commands; this surely discovers grace.

*Answ.* Yes, if done from a right principle, according to rule, for a right end, with faith in Jesus Christ: but deceive not yourselves, outward compliance doth not always prove the existence of a new creature; the young gentleman, Matt. xix. 20, said concerning the commandments, "All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?" Alas, poor man, he lacked the main thing: Paul, before conversion, saith of himself, "touching the righteousness of the law, blameless, Phil. iii. 6.

11 *Plea*. Besides, I do not only reform and conform, but perform many important duties; I read, pray, fast, and am serious in God's worship.

*Answ.* It is well so far; all do not so: but remember those hypocrites, "That sought God daily, and delighted to know his ways"—"yea, the Pharisees made long prayers;" they even "fasted, and that twice a week."† They were famous for religious exercises, yet gross hypocrites.

12 *Plea*. Those were only for things external in religion, but I am for internal also, that God may have my heart.

*Answ.* Very well; but it is one thing to be sound in doctrines, another to be sincere in what is practical

\* Mark vi. 20. Matt. xii. 43—45. 2 Pet. ii. 20—23.

† Isa. lviii. 2. Matt. xxiii. 14. Luke xviii. 11, 12.

and experimental: it is one thing to say it, another thing to feel it, and do it. The scribe, Mark xii. 32, 33, subscribed to the truth of the great doctrine of "loving the Lord with all the heart, understanding, soul, and strength, and repeats it," yet was not of, but only, "not far from the kingdom of God," ver. 34. Yea, you may take delight in approaching to God, yet be deficient, Isa. lviii. 2.

13 *Plea*. But I am upright in what I do; I know nothing of myself but integrity: conscience doth not accuse me of being a hypocrite.

*Ans.* It may be so, conscience may be asleep, and saith nothing, or nothing to the purpose, being blinded with ignorance, or besotted with self-conceit and want of self-examination. But know, there may be a moral integrity in particular acts, when there is not a gospel-integrity in point of state, as in heathen Abimelech. See God's attestation to it, Gen. xx. 5, 6.

14 *Plea*. I have a love to God, and Jesus Christ, and follow him out of a dear and tender regard for him.

*Ans.* It is well if so; but is it not self-love that engageth you to follow him? as those, John vi. 26, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Augustine complained 1200 years ago, Jesus is scarcely loved for Jesus' sake.\* He pays well for his entertainment in the world's coin. Let Christ and carnal interest part, and then you will see which is the master you will follow; then a discovery will be made.

15 *Plea*. Well, but I have suffered much for Christ, his cause, and a good conscience, a trial hath been made of my integrity.

*Ans.* You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, Heb. xii. 4. Yea, the apostle seems

\* Vix diligitur Jesus propter Jesum.

to suppose a man may give his body to be burnt, and yet not have charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. And it may be as possible, some may suffer in a vicious humour for a good cause, as others pertinaciously in a bad cause; the thorny-ground hearers passed the brunt of persecution, but were not right, Matt. xiii. 20, 22. And the apostle Paul supposes the Galatians to "have suffered many things in vain," Gal. iii. 4. Many things make up a Christian sufferer. Men may bear the cross, and not follow Christ.

16 *Plea*. But I give liberally to the poor of my substance, and am much in the exercise of charity to persons in necessity.

*Answ*. The apostle supposeth still, that a man may bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and yet not have charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. You will say, this is a strange paradox; what is charity, but a free distribution? but the apostle distinguisheth betwixt a hand-charity, and a heart-charity; the poor widow with half a farthing, and a free heart, gave more than all the other rich men's large distributions; some give for ostentation, others of necessity, yea, out of covetousness; you give nothing, unless you give yourselves first to God.\*

17 *Plea*. I am forward for reformation in my place, appearing against profaneness, and sabbath breaking, and am of a public spirit.

*Answ*. It is well done, but see you mistake not. How oft did the Jews find fault with our Lord for healing on the sabbath day, and his disciples, for plucking ears of corn? Take care that blind zeal transport you not; but suppose it be against sin, see whether self bear not sway, as it did in Jehu, who was partial in his reformation; or at least that it be not temporary

\* Matt. vi. 1, 2. Mark xii. 41—44. 2 Cor. ix. 5, 7. 2 Cor. viii. 5.



zeal, like that of Joash, who was very zealous for re-form whilst his good uncle Jehoiada lived.\*

18 *Plea.* I thank God, I have good gifts in conversation and in prayer, and can edify others, who are disposed to commend me.

*Answ.* Gifts are one thing, grace another; all gifted men are not gracious men; who more eminent than Judas the traitor, yet an apostle? and some will say at the last day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" Matt. vii. 22, 23; to whom he will say, "I never knew you, depart from me." The devil hath finer gifts than any of you all; yet he is a damned fiend in hell. Gifts come upon another errand than grace, 1 Cor. xii. 7. Gifts are given to profit others, grace for a man's own soul.

19 *Plea.* I am verily persuaded I am sound at heart, my conscience flies not in my face, yea, I have great peace, joy, and comfort within.

*Answ.* God knows whether your peace be of the right stamp or not; I have told you there is a peace of the devil's making, and that may arise from conscience's sleep security. I now tell you of a joy arising from the common workings of the Spirit, the "stony ground hearers anon with joy received the word," Matt. xiii. 20; "but had no root," Luke viii. 13. It is not to tell what joy and triumph some may have upon a mistake; some "taste of the good word, yea, of the heavenly gift;" yet fall away totally and finally. Look to yourselves, thousands deceive themselves in this weighty affair.†

20 *Plea.* You are seeking to drive us to despair, but that you shall never do, I will hope well still, say what you choose.

\* Matt. xii. 1, 2. 2 Kings x. 28, 29. 2 Chron. xxiv. 2—18.

† Gal. vi. 3. James i. 22. Heb. vi. 4—6.



*Ans.* There is a double despair, (1.) Good and necessary ; a despair of ever being saved in the state of nature wherein we are born, and this God brings the sinner to, in order to the implantation of sound hope, and sincere faith in the soul. (2.) There is an evil, sinful despair of obtaining mercy at God's hands through Christ : God forbid we should drive sinners to this despair : no, no, it is the former at which we aim. Such as Paul felt, Rom. vii. 9, " I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died;" that is, I saw myself in a lost state, having no hopes of salvation, while I continued in a state of nature : we are sure that till souls see themselves condemned, they will never look after a pardon; it is this to which we would drive men.—There is also a twofold hope : (1.) A bad, a false, vain hope, which is built upon men's fancy and imagination. This will be " swept away like a spider's web, will be as the giving up of the ghost ; what hath the hypocrite gained by his hope, when God taketh away his soul?"\* It is the best office we can do the sinner, to break the heart of this groundless hope, that we may bring in a better hope: hence, (2.) There is a good " hope through grace;" a hope " that will not make ashamed;" a hope that rests upon the promises of grace in the gospel ; it is this that will do men good at the last : but men must be sure to observe and comply with the terms of the promise, else it is groundless presumption. A prince hath as much reason to be offended with him that keeps not close to his commission, as with another that acts without a commission. The Israelites of old, saith one, durst make God and his promise a leaning-stock for their fowl elbows to rest on. " They call themselves the holy city, and stay themselves upon the

\* Job viii. 14. xi. 20. xxvii. 8.

God of Israel." \* See Micah iii. 11. Nothing more common, yet nothing more dangerous, for such are more bold than welcome: for though a prince may be so condescending as to let a poor, sick, or wounded man, especially in his service, fainting and unable to go alone, upon his humble request, make use of his arm rather than perish in the street, yet he would reject a reeling drunkard, if he desired to lean on him. Thus a poor, bleeding, humble penitent is entertained, when a presumptuous rebel is discarded with infinite abhorrence: we must encourage the former, and convince the latter, that their hope may be extinguished, and another hope, ("a lively hope," that teacheth persons to cleanse themselves) be planted in the soul: for "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." †

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## CHAP. VII.

### CORRECTION OF MISTAKES ON THIS SUBJECT ATTEMPTED, AND THEIR DANGER DESCRIBED.

MY third use is *πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν*, for correction, or castigation of what is amiss, in order to a restitution of the souls of sinners to their pristine rectitude, for that is the notion of the Greek term; since it signifies not only correction of manners, but rectifying of inward faculties, as critics observe. I must confess, the work is arduous, and it is impossible for a finite creature to effect this new creation: the best ministers are

\* 2 Thess. ii. 17. Rom. v. 5. Isa. xlviii. 2.

† 1 Pet. i. 3. 1 John iii. 3. Prov. xiv. 32.

but instruments ; and what can the axe do without the hand to move it, or the sword without the hand to wield it ? “ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed ? ” 1 Cor. iii. 5. “ I am,” said worthy Mr. Baxter, “ but a pen for God to write with.” Well, then, shall we do nothing, because we cannot do all ? He that set us a work, is able to second our work with his benediction : the world hath been formed anew by this blessed word of truth.

I shall therefore make one experiment more, to see what the great God will do for a new creation upon the souls of men ; humbly imploring the blessing of heaven upon my poor endeavours. In prosecuting my intention, I shall employ some persuasive arguments to prevail with poor sinners, to look after it in due time ; and then answer what objections they can make against it, and so come to the last thing mentioned by the apostle,—instruction in righteousness.

For motives and arguments, I shall not repeat any thing drawn from the advantages thereof detailed in the doctrinal part, as—rectifying the soul’s faculties—evidencing divine love—consecrating the soul to God—fitting it for communion with him—entitling to Christ—producing true joy—entailing all things profitable—putting persons into a safe state—rendering them useful—fitting them for gospel privileges—preparing them for death and heaven—being even heaven begun. All these might be improved as strong arguments to persuade sinners to press after a change.

But I shall at present bring some arguments from the danger sinners are in, till they become new creatures.

1. If you are not new creatures, you are not true Christians ; “ For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” 2 Cor. v. 17, that is, whoever is worthy

the name of Christian, or fit to bear so high a character, he must necessarily be a new creature, or else he arrogates to himself a high title, not belonging to him. And alas, what will a bare name signify? arrogating such a high title, is a piece of high presumption; nay, it is no less than blasphemy, "when men call themselves Jews, or Christians and are not," Rev. ii. 9; even as it is treason against the rightful sovereign, for any subject to entitle himself king. What horrid presumption are graceless sinners guilty of? for whatever you may account yourselves, God accounts you no better than heathens; uncircumcised Judah is ranked with Egypt, Edom, Ammon, and Moab in scripture, Jer. ix. 26; "Are ye not as children of Ethiopians to me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord," Amos ix. 7; profane Saul is called a Cushite, Psal. vii; and graceless Jews, though of the true religion, are accounted as strangers. God esteems wicked princes, rulers of Sodom, and speaks of his people by profession, as people of Gomorrah, Isa. i. 10. And what if God account you that boast of the christian name, as no better than Jews, Mahometanis, or heathens? you are like to fare no better than they.

2. You will fare worse than they. God will judge you according to the helps and advantages you have had; it will be worse with you than Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, Matt. xi. 20—24; yea, the men of Nineveh, "and queen of the south, shall rise up in judgment" against graceless professors of true religion, Matt. xii. 41, 42. O how dreadful a rebuke will this occasion! They may say, if we had heard so much of Christ, and gospel grace, we would have been more compliant, we knew not what state we were in, or what would be the awful consequence thereof, as you heard from day to day; we never pretended such high



things, nor were engaged by baptism to be God's servants, subjects, or soldiers, as you were. Now we know that the soldier that hath taken bounty money, and is false, or fights none, or is a renegado, hath the heaviest doom, Matt. xxiv. 51; the hypocrites are free denizens of hell, it is their proper place. You had better been born in India, than in England, or in Turkey, than within the pale of the church, and not be new creatures; yea, better have been no creatures, or the vilest creatures, than not be new creatures, as our Lord said of Judas, "It had been better if he had never been born," Mark xiv. 21, so say I, if not new born; if you lived and died as brutes, there is an end of you, you would feel neither weal nor woe; but it will be otherwise with you; alas, alas for you that ever you had existence! Lord, have mercy on you.

3. If you be not new creatures, you are slaves to the devil, and bear his image; "you are led captive by him at his pleasure," you are his willing slaves. It is converting grace only that brings out of the power of Satan; his fetters are invisible, for he holds his black hand over the sinner's eye, and "worketh so effectually in his heart,"\* that the poor slave will not believe his slavery, but thinks he is a freeman, "though he be holden with the cords of his sins," Prov. v. 22, and dragged apace hell-wards. O worse than Egyptian bondage, or Turkish slavery! who would abide it? Yea, without this new creation, you have the devil's image upon you, you are the very picture of that infernal fiend; so that if it be asked, whose image and superscription is this? it must be answered, Satan's. Our Lord tells the Jews, "You are of your father the devil," John viii. 44. Your envy is the devil's eye, your hypocrisy the devil's cloven foot, your lying the

\* 2 Tim. ii. 26. Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2.



devil's tongue, your carnal policy the devil's head, your pride and self-conceit the devil's lofty countenance, and all these will end in the devil's despair. Oh tremble, to bear such a resemblance to God's enemy. It is related, that when they brought Tamerlane a pot of gold, he asked what stamp was upon it; when he understood it had the Roman stamp, he utterly refused it: even so will God reject you, if the devil's stamp be on you, you will be no current money with God, though you have golden gifts.

4. If you be not new creatures, God and you are at variance, there is an enmity and antipathy betwixt the holy God and your carnal hearts; and this is the height of a creature's sin and misery. It is very observable that in the middle of the black roll of heathen's sins, Rom. i. 29—31, that noxious root, "hatred of God," being in the midst, diffuseth its malignant influence backwards and forwards, to actuate all those sins; not that the creature can directly intend to be an enemy to God, but that a graceless person is virtually, and consequentially an enemy to God, the chief good; as he is an enemy to holiness, justice, and truth, which are divine perfections; so God accounts them that are enemies to his sovereignty. "The carnal mind is enmity itself against God;" and sin turns God to be an enemy.\* And there is no person that God hates and despises so much, as this hypocritical pretender, Psal. lxxiii. 20, "O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image;" either it is spoken of wicked men's prosperity, which God slights, as but an imaginary thing, or else the image of temporary profession, with their fantastical faith, piety, and devotion, of which now the false-hearted hypocrite makes a parade, as a man in a dream, conceits himself a great prince; but a day is coming, when

\* Luke xix. 27. Rom. viii. 7. Zech. xi. 8. Isa. lxiii. 10.

this great idol shall be broken, and the worshippers of it hissed down to hell with the greatest shame and disdain ; for it is said of the ape, because he hath the face, but not the soul of a man, he is the most ridiculous and odious of all creatures : thus a hypocritical Judas is more abhorred of the Lord, than a bloody Pilate, for it is a high crime for an ignoble person to counterfeit himself to be a king's son, and a false friend is more detested than an open enemy. Such are those that pretend friendship to God, and are his real enemies.

5. If you be not new creatures, you are not capable of getting good by any ordinances and providences : nothing will do you good, for you want a principle and capacity to improve any thing : you are spiritually dead, "dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. It is this new creation alone that puts life into you : preaching to you, is but as singing to a deaf man, speaking to a stone : that which is nourishing food to a living man, corrupts, and turns to putrefaction in a dead man's mouth. Though the sinner breathes, yet he lives not ; naturally alive, spiritually dead : this is the worst kind of death ; for "he is alienated from the life of God." As his works are but dead works, so his soul is but a dead, putrid carcass.\* It is true, a poor, carnal, dead sinner, that is naturally alive, may hear a sound in the ministry of the word, but he receives not the sense, nor conceives aright the significancy of what he hears. It is worth your observing, that it is said of Saul's companions : Acts ix. 7, "They heard a voice ;" yet it is said, Acts xxii. 9, "They heard not the voice of him that spake to me." Are not these inconsistent ? No, they heard indeed a sound, but nothing distinctly, or they might hear a voice, but not Christ's, as Saul did ; even so in an ordinance, men

\* Eph. iv. 18. Heb. ix. 14.

may hear distinctly the voice of a man, but not the voice of God, so as to "fall down and confess, that God is there of a truth." This is that which makes such a difference of hearers in the same auditory. Some "hear what the Spirit saith;" others profit not from day to day, because the "word is not mixed with faith."\* The chymist can do nothing without fire: the sinner will neither do, nor receive good by any thing without the Spirit, and this blessed new creation.

6. Without the new creature, you will not be secured from the worst of sins; for as you want a principle of obedience, so you have no reason to expect assistance from heaven: it is only "God's fear in your hearts, that keeps you from departing from him." Indeed the scripture saith, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him." But alas, you want this seed; there is in you the spring of all abominations, there wants nothing but a tap to give it vent. Satan will be ready enough to "fill your hearts to lie to the Holy Ghost;" to betray Jesus, to run into all excess of riot; if the unclean spirit find his house empty of saving grace, though it be swept † from some gross sins by morality, and garnished with gifts and common graces, he will take to himself seven other spirits more wicked, and take faster possession; as those that escaped some gross pollutions, yet "are again entangled, their latter end is worse than their beginning." These may, and likely will wallow in worse mire than ever before. Besides, God may in justice, give you up to your own hearts' lusts, or to "strong delusions, to believe a lie."‡ If God leave you, who knows whither you may

\* 1 Cor. xiv. 25. Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, &c. Heb. iv. 2.

† Jer. xxxii. 40. 1 John iii. 9. Acts v. 3. Matt. xii. 43—45.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 20—22. Psal. lxxxii. 12. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

be hurried? you will fall downwards into sin, and grow worse and worse, till you be diabolized; as demure as you seem to be, you may commence persecutors, blasphemers, or atheists, and reach that height of impiety that now you shrug and tremble at; yea, you may commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. You say now, God forbid, is thy servant a dog? So said Hazael; but how canst thou be secured? Thou hast no hold of God by faith, and God hath no hold of thee in a covenant relation, for thou wantest the graces of the covenant. Look to thyself, for God will not look to thee, till thou be his; and thou canst not look so to thyself, but thou mayest prove a profane Esau, a scoffing Ishmael, a betraying Judas: who knows where thou wilt stop, whither thou wilt run?

7. If you be not new creatures, you will meet with a woful disappointment. Oh remember the case of the foolish virgins, that too late found they had no oil in their lamps, or grace in their hearts; when the door was shut, and they were shut out, and cried, "Lord, open to us." Oh what an overwhelming word was that, "I know you not." It will not be loud cries, or heart-rending lamentations, that will pierce the ears of a righteous God. Oh think how dreadful it will be to go off the stage "with a lie in your right hand." To walk all your days by "sparks of your own kindling, and lie down in sorrow."\* It would vex any man to be cheated with pebbles for pearls, flint for diamond. Men say, when they are deceived, they would rather have given three times as much, than to be thus overreached: but thus it is with you, the devil imposeth on you, and lest you should see your mistake, he holds his black hand before your eyes, the god of this world

\* Matt. xxv. 8—12. Isa. xlv. 20. 1. 11.



blindeth you, and carries you to hell in a golden dream, in a fool's paradise. It is a dreadful case, if your eyes be never opened till the flames of hell flash in your scorched faces. If there be no discovery till there be no remedy, as some diseases are past cure when they are known, a graceless life brings despair and death. O consider, poor sinner, what relief wilt thou have in thy dying groans? When this king of terrors, this grim sergeant lays his cold hand of arrest upon thee; oh what horror will seize upon thee! When thy fine spun hope must be as the spider's web, swept away with God's besom, or give up the ghost; when thou breathest thy last, what a dreadful case will thy soul be in? Alas! what wilt thou be profited shouldst thou gain the world, when God taketh away thy soul?\*. Thou hadst better die a dog, a toad, a serpent, or the vilest creature, than a man, if thou be not a new creature; for the upshot of their misery is but an inlet to thine; it is a sad case for a poor sinner to leave the world, and not know whither he is going; he must not stay, and he dares not die. If his eyes be opened, and he sees hell flames flashing in his eyes, oh, with what a shriek must his poor confounded soul descend into that infernal lake of fire and brimstone! this will be a day of desperate sorrow; Isa. viii. 22, when men shall "look to the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness." Who can conceive duly of the astonishing horrors of a despairing soul!

8. Who can tell how quickly this anguish may seize upon you? you now live at ease, and fear not, because you feel no danger like Laish of old, and Rome at this day. But when you say, "Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon you, as travail upon

\* Job xviii. 14. viii. 14. xi. 20. Matt. xvi. 26. Job xxvii. 8, 9.



a woman with child, and you shall not escape." It is a dreadful evil to be surprised. The poor, graceless sinner is not sure to be another night out of hell : such a voice may come to thee, as to that senseless, secure wretch, that reckoned upon years, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee." Poor sinner, thou art in continual danger, God is angry with thee every day,\* and stands with his sword whet, and bow bent, and his arrows stringed, and directed to thy heart ; yea, it will come as a shower, suddenly, violently, inevitably ; upon the wicked "he shall rain fire and brimstone, yea, snares, and a horrible tempest," Psal. xi. 6. God, thine enemy, stands over thee as an enemy with a sword of vengeance in his hand, ready to cut thee in pieces ; and though thou sleepest, yet "thy judgment of a long time sleeps not, nor does thy damnation slumber," 2 Pet. ii. 3. Oh, who would continue one hour in such a case, when thy life hangs in doubt, nay, thy immortal soul is hanging over hell by the small brittle thread of thy natural life. Surely if thou wert condemned and to be executed to-morrow, thou wouldst be much concerned to prevent or prepare for death. Oh sinner, bethink thyself, the Judge standeth before the door, James v. 9. Heaven or hell may attend the next step thou takest, the next breath thou breathest : for any thing thou knowest, the commission may be gone out, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground," Luke xiii. 7, 9. At least, it may be the last year, week, day, or hour of indulgence ; madman that thou art, to stand in the place where all God's arrows fly : thou art the centre where all the curses of law and gospel meet. The Roman emperor wondered that a knight slept so securely, who was in great debt, and sent for his pillow. Surely thy pillow is very soft, or

\* 1 Thess. v. 3. Luke xii. 19, 20. Psal. vii. 11, 12.

thy heart very hard, that can sleep under such debts to justice, and not fear an arrest to carry thee to the prison of hell. The plague is running on thee, and a "Lord have mercy on thee," is upon thy door, and will not this alarm thee to look about thee?

9. The possibility of this new creation will aggravate thy misery. Hadst thou lived in Turkey or India, and never heard of the first creation, or the fall, or means of recovery, or a possibility of being made new by the second Adam, thy case had been excusable, at least more tolerable; so saith our Saviour, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin," John xv. 22. The old sinner must go into old Tophet, Isa. xxx. 33. And the lost man will have nothing to ease his torments, not a drop of honey in his bitter gall; there was to be no oil nor frankincense in the offering of jealousy, Numb. v. 15. Why so? because it was a memorial bringing iniquity to remembrance. Just so this dreadful memorial in hell will bring home the sinner's slighting of grace, hardening of his heart against the reproofs of the word, suggestions of the Spirit, checks of conscience, counsels of ministers, and all these shall be as scorpions to sting him, as oil to the flame, to make it burn hotter. Oh woe is me, will he say, ministers warned me, and told me of my danger, but I heeded them not; I did not believe that things would ever come to this pass. Oh that I had regarded the things that belong to my peace, but now it is too late, my day is over, my sun is set, the door is shut, the gulf is fixed, and my soul shut up in everlasting darkness. If you remain impenitent, these will be your despairing groans another day. Oh take warning while it is called to-day; for there will be nothing to mitigate, but much to aggravate your miseries, and

thus those two scriptures are reconciled, Rev. xiv. 10, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation:" that is, without the least ingredient of comfort, no sugar in that bitter cup of wormwood. But it is said, Psal. lxxv. 8, "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red, it is full of mixture:" that is, of dreadful ingredients, to aggravate the sorrows of the lost. Yea, these wicked souls shall drink the dregs thereof, and wring them out; that is, their hearts shall meditate terror, and their consciences shall force out the tormenting circumstances of their past lives, and that worm shall never die, but be gnawing at their heart-strings for evermore.

Lastly, You must undoubtedly be shut out of heaven, if you live and die without this new creation. I told you, that this new creature prepares for heaven, I will now assign some reasons, why it is impossible any soul destitute of it, should go to heaven; it is indeed as possible for a devil to be saved as a poor, finally unregenerate sinner. Because,

(1.) A soul without this new creation, hath no interest in Christ; "for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. This is clear, and it is as clear that there is "no salvation in any other than in Christ," Acts iv. 12. You must mount to heaven alone; if you think to ascend any other way than upon the ladder of Jacob, as Constantine told Acesius long ago, it is a vain attempt, and mere folly not to say madness to divide asunder, what God hath joined so inviolably together; holiness and happiness, a new nature and a new state; if you rend them, God will rend you.

(2.) It is impossible you should walk in the way to heaven, without being new creatures, for the end can

never be attained without the use of the means. Reason tells us, that he that would arrive at London, must go by land or water, in ships, or on horseback, by a coach, or on foot, or by some means or other ; or he can never come thither. So it is here, God hath prescribed means and methods for attaining eternal happiness, and bids us enter in at the strait gate, Matt. vii. 13, 14, "Yea, strive to enter in at the strait gate ;" and adds, "That many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. How shall they then enter, that neither strive, nor seek, nor make any essay to enter ? and how can they seek or strive, that have no strength ; nay, that have no life, as is the case with an 'unregenerate sinner, who is dead in trespasses and sins ? and till the grace of God infuse new life into him, with this new creature, he can neither stir hand nor foot in a spiritual sense, heaven-wards.

(3.) Nay, he that is not a new creature, hath no heart, mind, or will to be saved ; and God saves no man against his will, but his grace makes men truly willing ; and this change of the will is a considerable part of the new creation, and it is a sovereign act of free grace, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." None follow the Captain of our salvation to heaven, but volunteers, and there is great need of a vigorous will, for heaven must be taken by storm, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." No man will be obedient, except he be willing ; there must be the imprimis of a willing mind, before there be an active hand, a worshipping knee, or a walking foot ;\* they whose spirits do not make them willing, will not remove from sin, or move one step heaven-wards ; and hence it is, that our blessed Saviour chargeth men's rejection of him

\* Psal. cx. 3. Matt. xi. 12. 2 Cor. viii. 12.



upon their wills, "You will not come to me that you may have life, and why will ye die, O house of Israel?" This is the true reason of sinners' undoing, they will not choose salvation, and so virtually and as a consequence, they destroy themselves. If a man will not eat, he cannot live; if a man drink poison, he will die; and he that will not use means of salvation, cannot be saved; "how shall we escape, if we neglect" much more wilfully reject "so great salvation?"\* And how should it be otherwise, if men be not converted, and become new creatures?

(4.) What should the old creature do in heaven? heaven would be no heaven to him; the heavenly Jerusalem is another kind of thing than most take it to be. What wild, grovelling conceptions have sensual men of heaven? as though it were Mahomet's paradise, or the heathen's elysian fields, wherein men may gratify their senses, or wallow in pleasures. Alas, a man may say to these ignorant souls, as our Lord to Zebedee's children, "You know not what you ask;" you would go to heaven; yes, you would fain be saved, but do you know what heaven is? I will tell you briefly, heaven consists in a freedom from all sin, a perfection of grace, enjoyment of God, employment in divine praises, love, delight in God, meditation on him, together with the ecstacy and transport of all the soul's faculties in immediate communion with him. And what awkward conception hath a carnal, worldly man of these blessed privileges? they would be no advantage to him at all, but rather a torment to him who hates God, who runs from him, and cannot abide to come near him in any duty, who likes not the society of God's saints, delights in sinful practices, and dallies with Satan's temptations. Can men imagine they shall take cards and

\* John v. 40. Ezek. xviii. 31. Hos. xiii. 9. Heb. ii. 3.



dice, cups and harlots with them to heaven? Nay, can men take fair houses, full bags, or worldly business into another world? Can they make great purchases, gather great rents, or break jests with their companions in a future state? Alas, a poor carnal heart is soon weary of duties, much more would he be in heaven; a sermon is too long, prayer is tedious, "when will the sabbath be gone?" Can those who hold such language be fit to enjoy God in an eternal sabbath of rest? nay, the poor guilty sinner cares not for coming near to God, the sight of God is terrible to him, as it was to fallen Adam; indeed without converting grace, introducing this new creature and divine nature, the soul would be altogether strange to God, or any converse with a holy and glorious God; even the sanctified themselves, by reason of the remainders of corruption in them, have often much ado to bring their hearts to converse with God, especially when they lie under a sense of guilt, even a Peter then cries out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" much more will a graceless soul not dare to come near to God; "A hypocrite shall not come before him;" he will not, and God will not suffer him. But a gracious heart can truly say, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God."\* Communion with God is his heaven upon earth; therefore this God will be his salvation, himself is his best heaven; but a carnal heart knows not what this means, and is therefore incapable of heaven.

\* Luke v. 8. Job xiii. 16. Psalm lxxiii. 28.

## CHAP. VIII.

### SOME OBJECTIONS OF SINNERS ANSWERED, IN REFERENCE TO THEIR BECOMING NEW CREATURES.

IT is much if a carnal mind, with the devil's help, have not something to say against the thing itself, or attempts after it, by way of excuse.

1. *Objection*, Who can in this world be so qualified for heaven, the best come infinitely short. I have heard it said, that as the soul passeth out of the body, it is then perfected and qualified for its enjoyment of God; no man can expect it before; and though I cannot so delight in God, and his service now, yet I hope God will perfect my soul in the instant of its separation from the body. I answer,

(1.) There is a habitual and an actual adaptedness for heaven, as I have at large explained in a treatise on Col. i. 12, called "Meetness for Heaven,"\* and every child of God, after the first impartation of grace to him, and change of his state and relation God-wards, is put into a capacity for communion with God, in this and in the other world, but increase in grace, and exercise of grace do daily capacitate him for further communion with God. No man can expect he will be a perfect man, till he be a man: perfection of degrees follows that of parts. You must first be in Christ, or else you will not arrive "at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 12, 13.

(2.) That man feeds himself with a vain, groundless hope of being saved, and perfected at death, who is careless and graceless in life, for he hath no promise to nourish such persuasion. Did God ever say, "Live

\* Included in this Volume.—*Ed.*

as thou listest, and at the instant of death I will infuse spiritual life into thy soul, trust me for that at thy expiring breath, I will give thee that then, which will qualify thee for heaven, and make thee then in love with me, though thou never caredst for me all thy life long." Where do you find such a promise? and who but a mad man will put all to a desperate venture at the last gasp? You have more reason to fear he will not, than to hope he will give you grace; nay, you have a dreadful threatening, that "because he called and you refused, you shall call and cry, and he will not answer," Prov. i. 24—28. And you have a terrible instance of the fruitless cries of the foolish virgins, Matt. xxv. 10. And who are you that the great God should be at your beck? He can and will hear the least whimper of a child, but regards not the howling of a dog: he may and will say, "Go to the gods, the lusts you have served, I know you not, I own you not for mine." This is not a time for getting, but using grace; yea, death is a time for perfecting the work of grace. Woe be to that wretched man that hangs his eternal state on the uncertain working of the principle of life, in the moment of death.

2 *Obj.* But if I be not yet a new creature, I may be; there is time enough before me, I am young, and yet in my full strength, of a healthy constitution, and may live long: let old persons that are going off the stage, look after this new creation, I have other things to mind.

*Answ.* (1.) Alas, man, art thou certain thou shalt live till the next year, the next month, week, day, or hour? Have not many as young as thou art, gone to the grave before thee, and what assurance hast thou of thy life another moment? For "what is our life but a fleeting vapour?" it is a bubble, a blast, a shadow, a

dream, smoke ; yea, every man in his “ best estate is altogether vanity,”\* as flourishing grass in the morning, cut down before evening. If you fall not by some force of outward casualty, you carry your bane lurking in your bosoms. Have you a lease of your lives, as Hezekiah had ? You have little reason to boast yourselves of to-morrow, “ for you little know what a pregnant day may bring forth,” Prov. xxvii. 1. It may land thy soul in eternity ! therefore despatch this main work at present.

(2.) The longer thou deferrest, the more difficulty wilt thou find ; thy heart will be daily more “ hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Custom in sin will make conscience more brawny. A sickness may easily be cured at first, but when it gets into the nerves, and bones, or strikes to the heart, it becomes incurable ; so it is with soul maladies. O what mischief may a thief do, if suffered to lodge one night in your house ! Besides, the life or death of the soul may hang upon this point of time ; it is often limited to a day, “ Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.”† Who can tell but God may say after this day, “ My Spirit shall strive no more with them ?” Gen. vi. 3. You may provoke God to withdraw ; O, how many instances have we of thousands that have lost their day, and have been undone for ever.

3 *Obj.* If I become a new creature, there will be so much strictness and austerity in praying, reading, watching, and holy walking, that it will never be borne, it will make me melancholy and rob me of the joy and comfort of my life.

*Ans.* (1.) Though the possessor of the new creature lose sensual delights, which are madness, rather

\* James iv. 14. Job vii. 7. Psal. xxxix. 5. xc. 5, 6.

† Heb. iii. 13. Jer. xiii. 23. Heb. iv. 7. 2 Cor. vi. 2.



than true joy, Eccl. ii. 2: yet he may retain the lawful comforts of life. It is true, that he must lay aside lascivious jests, wanton songs, unlawful gaming, excessive drinking, blasphemous stage plays, and other things of a similiar description; but there is no real content in these, to a generous spirit, but they bring guilt and wrath; while the gracious soul may take as much, or more real pleasure in relations and worldly enjoyments, paying due attention to circumstances of time, measure, and freedom from scandal, as another man; nay, now he experiences the blessing of God in his enjoyments, as he hath a right to them in Christ, as they are freed from the curse, sweetened with God's love, helping him in God's service on his way towards heaven; and the new creature puts wisdom into the Christian, to set every thing in its place and order, so that he enjoys himself with more pleasure in a mean condition, than many wicked men in their abundance.

(2.) A man hath never true solid joy and peace till he be a new creature; this, and this only forms the basis of strong consolation. Serious godliness is no such melancholy life, as the carnal world imagine. Suppose the Christian do labour, toil, and take pains in God's service; love oils the wheels of his soul, and he takes as much pleasure therein, as Jacob did for Rachel. God spices every step of his way, "Wisdom's ways are pleasantness." "The severest commands of God are not grievous," but delightful, "the Spirit helps his infirmities,"\* enlarges his heart, he mounts up with wings as eagles; he is sure his profits will answer his pains; he that digs in a golden mine, is paid for every stroke he strikes; nay, there is a recompense at present, "in keeping thy commandments, there is great reward," Psal. xix. 11. You hear of the saint's sor-

\* Prov. iii. 17. I John v. 3. Rom. viii. 26.



row for sin, grief for God's withdrawments, distress from Satan's assaults, but you see not his joy, "a stranger intermeddles not with it," Prov. xiv. 10; he hath comforts that none know, or can deprive him of; yea, he hath more comfort in his tears for sin, than a wicked man hath in gratifying his senses, and committing sin; in the midst of the carnal man's joy his heart is sad; in the midst of the Christian's sorrow for sin, his heart is oft full of joy; do but try a religious course, and you would not exchange it for the wicked's rant.

4 *Obj.* But if I leave my old companions, they will laugh me to scorn, I shall be accounted a fool, a dotard, an enthusiast, or a fanatic, all that is bad; and this I cannot brook, and indeed I know not how to discard and disoblige my old intimate comrades.

*Ans.* (1.) If owning God and saving your precious souls be a disobliging of them, they are better lost than found. Our friends are dear, but God is dearer; religion binds you to forsake your own people, and your father's house, Psal. xlv. 10: to hate father and mother, in comparison of, or standing in competition with Christ, Luke xiv. 26. And it is the best match you can make; you will not repent it, if to enjoy the society of genuine Christians you forego those syren songs of bewitching companions, which lead down to hell; if you forsake such incarnate devils, for the ministry of blessed angels; yea, if you renounce the devil for communion with a holy God, you will have little reason to be afraid or ashamed of such an exchange.

(2.) As for their hatred, scorn or reproach, read Isa. li. 7, 8, "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings;" the tongue of such wicked villains is no slander; better be reviled than praised by some. Our Lord saith, "Woe be to you, when all

men speak well of you." When the Papists called Luther an apostate, he accounted himself a blessed apostate from the synagogue of Satan, to the church of God. And what if an Ishmael mock Isaac, or a Shimei rail at David, are they worse for lying tongues bespattering them? Bright stars may be called by ugly names, as bear, dragon, but they are bright still; so may you be. A heathen Seneca could say, and glory in it, they speak of evil of me, but they are evil men.\* And is it not better to be reproached by bad men for being good, than to be condemned by God for being wicked? Doth not Christ "bid you rejoice and be exceeding glad?" Matt. v. 12. Surely you may wear these as trophies and badges of honour; so did Paul glory in Christ's cross, as an old soldier in his scars received in the wars for his prince; the Christians of old rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ;" they looked on that reproach as their greatest honour and ornament. You deserve not the name of Christian, if you will not bear a foul word from the foul mouths of men, for him who despised the shame for your sakes. If men clip your credit, to make it good weight with God, and rub your crown with dust, to make it brighter, you will be no loser; if you be "reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."†

5 *Obj.* I see no such beauty or excellency in these puritans and precisians, who pretend to be new creatures; they are no better than their neighbours; all are sinners, and so are they; nay, I have seen them slip into scandalous sins, they are proud, and envious, and covetous; they are but a pack of hypocrites.

\* Mala de me loquuntur, sed mali.

† Gal. vi. 17. Acts v. 41. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

*Ans.* (1.) Take heed of speaking evil of the persons and things that you know not: worldly people are not competent judges of God's children. These "are hidden ones," kings in disguise, "it doth not yet appear what they are or shall be." The king's daughter is all glorious within." "The life of saints is hid with Christ in God."\* You know not what they do alone, much less do you know their consciences. Beware of rash judgment; you know neither their best nor their worst, there is a veil upon the face of their souls. There is a hidden man of the heart, which is invisible to the eyes of spectators; and if these gracious souls should open their experience to you, you would judge it a paradox, or a riddle, or mere enthusiasm. Wisdom is too high for a fool: the learned Nicodemus had odd and awkward conceptions of the new birth, John iii. 4. "The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit," 1 Cor. ii. 14. If you had new eyes, you would be fitter to judge of things that differ. Suspend your censures, call them not hypocrites, whom God will own for children: a blind man is not fit to judge of colours.

(2.) It is true, all are sinners, yet there is a vast difference of sinners. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin," *ἀμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ*, doth not work sin, he makes not sinning his trade; his business is to walk in the ways of God, and "if he be overtaken with a fault," he discovers it, mourns for it, riseth out of his falls by repentance, he hates sin more, becomes more watchful and jealous of himself, prays, and desires strength from Christ, "to crucify the flesh." "Sin hath not dominion over him;"† but he makes progress in mortification: and ordinarily this child of

\* Psal. lxxxiii. 3. 1 John iii. 2. Psal. xlv. 13. Col. iii. 3.

† 1 John iii. 9. Gal. vi. 1. v. 24. Rom. vi. 14.

God doth not fall into any gross and scandalous sin, or if at any time God doth suffer him to fall foully, yet it costs him dear; it may be broken bones, as it did David; and God can heal his backslidings, and make him more humble after. However there is a vast difference betwixt a sheep stepping into the mire, and a swine wallowing in the mire. Some are, and some are not "the spots of God's children," Deut. xxxii. 5. You have more need to judge yourselves, than censure others for being hypocrites. Hear what the Reverend Mr. Hildersham saith in this case:\*

"Let none say of professors, these gadders after sermons, these holy brethren, that stand so much upon sincerity, can abide nothing that savours of Popery; these precise fools must be singular, forsooth; they dare not swear—they are no better than hypocrites." And he adds, "though these things be found in some hypocrites, yet they are no signs to know a hypocrite by, nor are they hypocrites that do thus; thou that scornest a man for this, bewrayest the profaneness of thy own heart, and openest thy mouth against heaven," Psal. lxxiii. 9.

6 *Obj.* You told us this work is a creation. Can a man create himself? You said sinners are dead; surely it is not in the power of a dead man to make himself alive? You said this is the work of omnipotency, God must do all. Alas, what can man do of himself?

*Ans.* (1.) You are not naturally dead; though spiritually dead, yet you are alive; God hath given you rational souls, faculties capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying himself. You are not senseless stocks or stones, nor mere brutes; there is in you a remote aptitude, if not a present promptness, to receive grace: you have the noble faculty of a self-reflecting con-

\* Hild. on Psal. li. page 699.



science, that is “the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly,” Prov. xx. 27. It can discover moral good and evil, yea, “it can excuse or accuse in what you do,” right or wrong, Rom. ii. 14, 15. You might be much better if you minded this light within you, the light of natural conscience. How can you expect more, till you improve what you have? Nature can do little towards grace, yet moral principles cherished and improved, may be some fence against vicious inclinations, and prevent a custom in sinful practices; however, it is dangerous to imprison the common notices of a Deity, Rom. i. 18, or moral duty: this is the road to obliterate them, this shuts the door against grace, and opens the sluices of vice. Nourish what is good in thee: who can tell what it may come to at last?

(2.) God commands the use of means; and though he hath not bound himself, yet he hath bound every man to the utmost of his power to be tending towards God. Divines say, That though no exercise of common grace can merit special grace, yet God is not wanting in his further grace, to those that have made a due improvement of common grace, and done what in them lay towards their own salvation. Your business is ‘to “work out your own salvation,” Phil. ii. 12; for it is “God that worketh in you the will and the deed.”

It is an old saying of St. Augustine, “He that made thee without thyself, will not save thee without thyself.” God loves to second man’s endeavours; he is never wanting to the diligent. The precept commands, the gospel promise will assist.\* God hath not lost his right to command, though we have no might to obey; his authority must sway with us, though we have not ability to do his requirement:† he bids us to be

\* Lex jubet, gratia juvat. † Præcipit Deus quod ipse præstat.\*



up and doing, and he will take us by the hand and help us. Try, man, in so necessary a work as thy soul's eternal happiness; thou hast lost much labour in other cases, thou mayest not lose it in this: there is a *may be* in it, and that is warrant enough for such a venture. Be laborious, and thou mayest possess grace.

7 *Obj.* But I may as well sit still, as rise up to fall; I shall never hold out, I see so many temptations of a subtle devil, oppositions of a furious world, and strong corruptions of a treacherous heart, that I do foresee I shall not be able to stand; I had better not begin at all, than begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, and so sink my apostate soul deeper.

*Answ.* (1.) Art thou in good earnest, when thou makest this objection? or dost thou compliment God, and make it an excuse and evasion? If the latter, and this be but to save thee the labour of being serious in religion, thy case is lamentable; thou hast yet but slight thoughts of God, thy soul, or of heaven, that makest such frivolous excuses, to incur a certain damnation! But if thou be in good earnest, it will put thee upon the search of thy heart, whether thou be sincere, that thou mayest not build upon a sandy foundation; and if indeed thou art jealous of thyself, and afraid of apostacy, this very fear is the best security against falling away: "I will," saith God, "put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me; blessed is he that feareth always." This godly fear will make you avoid sin and all its occasions, improve talents, time, and means of grace, and put you upon all methods to grow in grace and gain assurance. A caution is necessary to the best.\* But be sure yours is a godly jealousy, arising from a sense of the evil of sin, and your own

\* Jer. xxxii. 40. Prov. xxviii. 14. Heb. iii. 12, 13. iv. 1.

weakness, and not a mere conception of your hypocritical hearts.

(2.) If once this new creature be truly formed in thy heart, it will be permanent and abiding; not but that it is a creature, and so loseable of itself, but by virtue of God's covenant and promise, it is "an incorruptible seed, a well of living waters, springing up to everlasting life." If once this work be savingly wrought, though it be but a spark, an embryo of grace, the God of heaven will look after his own creature, you shall "be kept by the power of God through faith to salvation." None shall pluck you out of the Father's hands.\* Nothing can separate; the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. Fear not, you have the Father's care, the Son's prayer, the Holy Ghost abiding in you for ever.† Hypocrites will be apostates; a rotten core will spread to the skin. It is very rare to see a hypocrite undiscovered till death; though the foolish virgins held out long, yet it appeared at last they had no oil in their vessels. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us," 1 John ii. 19. Take thou care of thy sincerity, and God will take care of thy perseverance: God will not renounce his own image: Christ will not forsake his members. If thy state and standing were in thy own hands, thou wouldst as surely lose thy integrity, as Adam his innocency; but "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5.

There is one thing I fear more than all the rest, and that is a lazy, slothful, indifferent spirit, that will not take any pains in God's work, nor in the concerns of the soul, but think grace must drop into their gaping

\* 1 Pet. i. 23. John iv. 14. 1 Pet. i. 5. John x. 28, 29.

† Matt. xvi. 18. Rom. viii. 39. Phil. i. 6. 1 John ii. 1. ii. 27.

mouths ; this sloth hath killed thousands of sinners. Oh, it will cost a man trouble, care, and pains, and this he cannot brook. And do men think to grow rich without labouring, careful endeavours, and travelling to markets ? And can they think to go to heaven, or get grace without taking pains ? It is true, it is not merely pains that will do it, but sloth will lose it ; and without pains-taking, nothing that is excellent will be obtained ; for the more choice things are, the more hardly are they attained. \* I am sure Christians of old “laboured hard, that they might be accepted of God,” 2 Cor. v. 9. And the apostle tells the Hebrews, that “God doth not forget their work and labour of love :” and urges them “to shew the same diligence, and not be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises,” Heb. vi. 10—12.

Let the slothful person ask himself these questions:—Whether the pains of hell be not more intolerable, than the pains God requires to be taken to escape it?—Or, whether heaven will not requite all his pains to obtain it?—Or, whether he take not more pains to scrape together a necessary supply of wants, or some thick clay usually called wealth?—Or, whether thousands take not more pains to get to hell, than God requireth of him to travel to heaven ? And let the unhappy sluggard know, that by the time he hath been an hour in the intolerable torments of a future state, he would be glad to be turned into the world again, though upon the hardest terms of obedience, mortification, and doing all things within the range of human capacity. But alas, men in the present state are made up so much of sense, and understand so little of invisible realities, that they choose rather to perish eternally, than to endeavour

\* *Difficilia quæ pulchra.*

to live holily : therefore “ men’s destruction is of themselves,” Hos. xiii. 9 : they “ will not come to Christ, that they may have life,” John v. 40. It is God’s ordination, that men’s own estimate, choice, and endeavours shall be the necessary preparatives to fruition : † and hence it is, that the slothful servant, was a wicked servant, and fared and sped according to his sloth, Matt. xxv. 26.

## CHAP. IX.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRIAL OF OUR SPIRITS, WHETHER WE BE INDEED NEW CREATURES.

THE fourth and last thing proposed, is what the apostle calls *παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ*, that is, instruction in righteousness ; and this I shall rank under these four divisions : I shall,

I. State the nature, parts, and properties of the new creation, for our assistance in the examination of our state.

II. Direct what those should do to obtain it, who feel or fear they are yet deficient.

III. Show how such should act, live, and conduct themselves, as do find upon Scripture grounds, and good experience, that this change is savingly wrought within them.

IV. Answer some queries or cases of conscience, for the satisfaction of such as are doubtful of their sincerity, or would be further informed on some points about this new creature. All these I must briefly despatch.

\* *Nemo nolens bonus aut beatus est.*



I. It is of very great concernment for every rational soul to know and be sure on some certain grounds, whether he be a new creature.

I might here refer the reader to the description I gave at first of this new creation.—It was called a supernatural grace, as to its general nature—for its particular property or nature, it was styled a gospel grace—as to its subject, it is in the soul of a sinner—the instrumental cause of it, is the word of God—the efficient cause, is the Holy Ghost—the proper immediate effect, is a great spiritual change—the completeness of this change, has a reference to state, constitution and relation—the pattern is the divine image or likeness—the rule of it, is the word of God—the end, is the glory of God, and the soul's happiness in its communion with him.

You see then this new creature is very comprehensive, it includes the whole encyclopædia, as I may say, or compass of experimental and practical religion.

It is a relation, not one quality, nor yet one single habit, neither one star, nor yet a constellation of graces, but a relation or rectitude, and orderly correspondence of the faculties proceeding from the impartation of all those habits and qualities to a person, (as a learned man observes,)\* wherein the appetite is subject to the will, the will to reason, the rectified reason to God, and the conversation corresponding to this inward principle, not completely or perfectly in point of degree, as it was in Adam's soul, in the state of innocency, but by integrity of the parts, so far as the soul is sanctified in this life, till it become perfect in heaven. It is, say divines, πνευματικὴ ἄλυσις, a spiritual chain, wherein all virtues and graces are linked, concreated with Adam, and imparted to the Christian in

\* Dr. Arrow's Tract. Sacra. page 138.



this new creation, whereby he hath a power to act as a Christian in this lower world, in all christian exercises, to which God in his word calls him.

This examination of the new creature, I shall reduce to the following particulars :

*Preparatives to it, parts of it, properties thereof, and its effects and fruits.*

Had I time and room, these might be largely insisted upon ; but I shall restrict myself to a short review of them.

First, For the preparatives or antecedents that lead to the new creation ; not that a creature can prepare himself for it, but the same God who creates, doth something on the soul preliminary, as the chaos and darkness preceded the beautiful fabric of the world : so God produces,

1. A sense of sin, wrath and the undone state of the soul, this is a new state of feeling ; for formerly the sinner neither felt nor feared evil, but thought his state as good as any one's ; nor doubted his own salvation ; now a spirit of bondage to fear hath seized on him ; "he is shut up as a sheep for the slaughter." "The law is a severe schoolmaster, and worketh wrath."\* Now the sinner cries, "Woe is me, I am undone, I never thought I had been in this miserable state ; I see I am a condemned malefactor at the dreadful bar of a sin-avenging judge ; my mouth is stopped, I have not a word to say for myself, why sentence should not be executed upon me ; woe is me, I shall perish for ever."

2. A discovery of his helpless state. He cannot help or deliver himself, the whole world cannot ; it is not within the power of men or angels to bring any relief to his forlorn, perishing soul. I am, saith the poor sinner, helpless, fatherless, Hos. xiv. 3, succour-

\* Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iii. 22—24. Rom. iv. 15.

less; I am "without strength, in me dwells no good thing." I could provoke God, but I cannot please him; heaven is shut against me, and I have no key to open it, hell gapes for me, and I know not how to escape it; I hang over flames, I lie in chains, and all the world cannot break them, "silver and gold will not redeem me." "Great men are vanity, good men have no oil to spare." If I sat upon a prince's throne, I could not purchase or command a pardon, "The redemption of the soul is precious, it ceaseth for ever."\* My case grows worse and worse.

3. A serious inquiry after a remedy. When the poor sinner is thus puzzled and non-plust, and knows not which way to turn himself, then he begins to ask new questions, not as he was wont, "Who will shew us any good" of worldly advantage? Psal. iv. 6, no, but his tune is altered, now he cries, "Men and brethren what shall I do?" Acts ii. 37. xvi. 30; O sirs, "What shall I do to be saved?" O you ministers, christian friends, did you ever know any case like mine? Is it possible that ever I should find mercy? Is not the day of grace past? I fear I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, woe is me, what course shall I take? I see nothing but bare walls at home; is there relief to be found for a poor pining soul? tell me, O tell me, what door I must knock at, and how I must knock, that I may speed?

4. Sad thoughts of heart upon discovery of the remedy. Oh, saith the poor sinner, you tell me God is a "merciful God, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin," Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; but I spy one red letter in his name, *that will by no means clear the guilty*. Now I am guilty, and I have read that the arms of justice and mercy are of equal length, both infinite;

\* Rom. v. 6, 7. 1 Pet. i. 18. Matt. xxv. 9. Psal. xlix. 7.

how must justice be satisfied? I am sure not by me, in my own person. Well, the gospel tells the sinner, that the wards of the lock are fitted; this chancery will relieve the condemned sinner; Christ in our room hath suffered and satisfied justice for us; yea, saith the penitent, but how shall I have interest therein? It is answered, by faith. Alas, saith he, I am but where I was, I can no more believe, than I can keep the whole law; O this unbelieving heart kills me, binds me over to wrath; still I would believe, but I cannot, my faith is but unbelief; I thought believing was the easiest thing in the world, now the Spirit hath convinced me, I neither do, nor can believe without divine influence.\* I would give all the world, that I could believe.

5. The removal of obstructions. A stubborn will is by grace made "willing in the day of God's power." Now prejudices are removed, though Nathaniel say, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" yet if he come and see, he will believe; this was the woman of Samaria's case.\* Alas, saith the soul, I have been foolish, and ready to find fault with God's way of justifying and saving poor sinners, and said of the gospel dispensation, how can these things be? but I am at last satisfied, that a revelation from God is not only authentic, but most rational; still I have within me strange imaginations, and "high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God." Well, God comes with his spiritual weapons, and pulls down these strong holds, dismounts the sinner's carnal confidence, and levels these high mountains of opposition, leading captivity captive, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And now the sinner is content, that God should take his own method in

\* Isa. lv. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Mark ix. 24. John xvi. 9. Eph. i. 19.

† Psal. cx. 3. John i. 46—49. iv. 9, 19.

justifying and saving him, by the merits of Christ, without the least respect to any worthiness in himself; and there is much ado to bring the proud heart to this, to forego his own righteousness.

6. Restlessness of spirit in its present state. The sinner is now heavy laden, Matt. xi. 28, and must have rest somewhere, but can enjoy no rest in a sinful state; "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isa. lvii. 21. This is not a state to be rested in, saith the trembling soul, I am got off my former ground, I see my old unregenerate state hopeless and deplorable, yet I fear I am not centred and anchored on Christ. Woe is me, I am fluctuating on the waves betwixt hope and despair, I fear the issue; sometimes I think I see the day break, but clouds and darkness overwhelm me again: however, I am not content with these poor husks of the world in my Christless state in a far country, "I will arise and go to my father," Luke xv. 18. In this quagmire, I find no bottom for the sole of my foot, I must make to firm ground; none but Christ, none but Christ, let me have him, though with "fightings from without, and fears within." I am shifting from post to pillar, let me be dissettled till my soul fix on Christ, "then shall not my heart be troubled, if believing in God, I believe also in Christ," John xiv. 1. Let me never be at rest, till all ways are blocked up but this; if I sit still, I die, 2 Kings vii. 4; if I go to the world, I pine; I will venture upon God's promises, upon Christ's purchase; if I must die, I will die thus; but never did any die at this door.

7. At last the troubled spirit utters its perplexed thoughts in complaints and prayers. God saith, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself," Jer. xxxi. 18. So methinks I see the disquieted soul creep into a corner to unburden his spirit in this manner:



Lord, here I am, as wicked a malefactor as ever stood at thy bar, and as miserable a beggar as ever lay at thy door; I was condemned as soon as born, and have too, too wofully increased the stock of original sin, by thousands of actual transgressions; I am twice dead, in danger of being “plucked up by the roots,” Jude, 12, and cast into the fire of hell; many means hast thou used, but nothing does me good, yet now “thou hast brought me into the wilderness; O speak to my heart.” Every sin deserves damnation; Oh, how many hells then do I deserve? Thou art righteous, if thou condemn me; my mouth is stopped, I am found guilty before God, I am self-condemned, thou wilt need no other witness or jury to find me guilty; but Christ suffered and satisfied justice for poor sinners, and why not for me, the chief of sinners? I find not one word in scripture against it, but a proclamation of a general pardon to all; Christ with all his benefits is offered to me in the ministry of the word, upon the condition of faith and repentance. It is true, I can neither repent nor believe, but they are both included in the absolute grant of the gospel covenant, which gives what it requires. Lord, give me a gospel repentance unto life, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; I hang on thee, blessed Jesus, who wast exalted on purpose “to give repentance and forgiveness of sins,” with every grace and every blessing.\*

Secondly, The parts of this new creature lie in the renovation of the several faculties of the soul, which consists of—the mind and understanding—the conscience—the will—the affections, which are the acts and tendencies of the will.

1. The new creature consists much in the illumination of the mind, which is called “a renewing in the

\* Hos. ii. 14. Rom. iii. 19. 1 Tim. i. 15. Acts v. 31.



spirit of the mind," Eph. iv. 23. Interpreters have been much perplexed to know what is meant by the spirit of the mind. Calvin saith, "The meaning is, we are renewed not only in our inferior appetites, and sensual desires, but in that part of the soul which is esteemed the most noble and excellent."\* For the mind is accounted a queen, and almost adored by philosophers. Now the mind is renewed, when there are,

(1.) New conceptions of things, such as it never had before, for a new light is set up in the soul, to see things after another manner, "the eyes of the understanding are now enlightened," Eph. i. 18. Now a person sees more wickedness in his depraved heart, than ever he did, which makes him cry out like Job, "Behold I am vile." "Lord, thou art heaven, I am hell," said Mr. Hooper. Now the soul sees more poison and malignity in sin, than it ever did before; he sees it "exceedingly sinful," as striking at the majesty, and clouding the glory of the holy God,—as crucifying Christ,—as grieving the Holy Spirit. The new creature forms other conceptions of Christ, as "the rose of Sharon, the chief of ten thousand." He looks on God's commands as "not at all grievous,"† but pleasant, comfortable, and profitable. He looks on the saints as the "most excellent in the earth." He hath got eyesalve to judge of things as they are; "the spiritual man judgeth all things."‡

(2.) The new nature brings a new memory; the Christian forgets injuries, and remembers truths; his

\* Ego simpliciter accipio, acsi dixisset, Renovemini non tantum quod ad inferiores appetitus aut concupiscentias quæ palam sunt vitiosæ, sed etiam quod ad partem illam animæ quæ nobilissima et præstantissima habetur.—*Calv. in loc.*

† Job xl. 4. Rom. vii. 9—17. Cant. v. 10. 1 John v. 3.

‡ Psalm xvi. 3. Rev. iii. 18. 1 Cor. ii. 15.

memory is sanctified and strengthened, he lays up things in his heart, as the pot of manna was laid up in the ark: he “can abundantly utter the memory of God’s great goodness.” The new creature is as a phylactery to prompt and put him in mind of God’s law. If he hath not a great memory, yet he hath a good memory: God brings sins to remembrance committed many years ago, and the soul is humbled for them, as if but newly committed: and though sometimes the best of God’s children are subject to slippery memories, and do need monitors, yet they have minds clarified, and apt to be tenacious of the things of God: “I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.” A hint will bring God and good things into their thoughts again; but wicked men are described by the character of “forgetting God.”\* Do you make it your business to remember God upon your beds, and in all places? Psalm lxiii. 6.

(3.) The new creation introduces a new counsellor. Formerly the person who has experienced this change, consulted with carnal interest, even in things of religion; if the practice of religion did cross his low and selfish designs, he laid it down; but as soon as this principle acts within him, he saith as Paul did, “immediately, I conferred not with flesh and blood;” God’s glory, and the good of his own soul and the souls of others lay uppermost. Now the Christian goes to the sanctuary in arduous cases, and makes the Scriptures (those divine oracles) “his chief counsellors” in his actions, natural, civil, and spiritual;† and dare venture upon nothing but that for which he hath a warrant from God: not, What saith this friend, or the other relation? but what saith God in the case, directly, or

\* Psalm cxlv. 7. Numb. xv. 39. 2 Pet. iii. 1. Psalm l. 22.

† Gal. i. 16. Psalm lxxiii. 17. cxix. 24.

by good consequence? See the difference between good Jehoshaphat and Ahab: the former said, "Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day;" the other made nothing of it. "They soon forgot his works," saith the Psalmist; "they waited not for his counsel:" and "God gives them up to walk in their own counsels." \*

(4.) The new creature hath new admiration; the carnal heart wonders at trifling novelties. David prays, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." There indeed he discovers wonders of power, wisdom, holiness, faithfulness, and a display of all God's attributes, but especially of free grace and love in the work of redemption: he sees no reason to admire any thing, but "things the angels desire to look into," and in admiration of which they are in continual ecstasy. O the love of God in sending Christ,—of Christ in becoming man, in taking any of the sons of men to be the children of God. † Ὡ βασις, "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." There only, there is something to be admired: all the glories of the world are but mere contemptible pageantry; the believer can trample them under his feet with a better disdain, than Diogenes trampled on Plato's finery, for he is in a sort "crucified to the world;" and can pass by things seen with a holy scorn, when compared with things unseen, which are eternal. ‡

2. The new creation also affects the conscience, which though it be not a distinct faculty, but of a complex nature, yet it is of great use in the soul of man: and it is necessary that "the heart be sprinkled

\* 1 Kings xxii. 5—8. Psalm cvi. 13. lxxxi. 12.

† Psalm cxix. 18. 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 John iii. 1.

‡ Rom. xi. 33. Gal. vi. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

from an evil conscience," which is done by the blood Christ, Heb. x. 22 ; and that " the conscience be purged from dead works to serve the living God," and this is effected by the eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. Now there are four offices of conscience, which the new creature doth in a good measure regulate.

(1.) As it is a guide, a discoverer of duty, a bright star in a dark night, a hand in the margin, to shew us what is worth our observing, a schoolmaster to teach us, a monitor to shew our mistakes ; and it must be regulated by the word of God, for conscience is corrupted, and is apt to be deceived, and to deceive us : it is but an under officer, and must itself be subject to God's law. Hence the Christian seeks to regulate its dictates by the word of truth, and grace brings it to the rule,—What saith my supreme Lord and Master ? I must follow thee no further than God's law allows. Now the new creature brings conscience to the word, and saith, Thus far thou must go, and no further : the end of " the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned," 1 Tim. i. 5. These are always companions ; this is a good conscience.

(2.) Conscience is a book, wherein are noted and written down all a man's actions and expressions, even his thoughts and imaginations : it is also a correct and faithful register, to produce them as a faithful witness for, or against a man another day. " The books were opened : " one of these is the book of conscience. Conscience is as a thousand witnesses ; if good, the Holy Ghost unites with it, " my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost ; " and this " is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience."\* If a person have done any thing amiss, conscience brings it to his re-

\* Rev. xx. 12. Rom. ix. 1. 2 Cor. i. 12.



membrance, as the sin of Joseph's brethren made them say, "We are verily guilty." "Now a faithful witness will not lie." A rectified conscience will give in a true testimony to promote repentance, which is therefore called a "bethinking ourselves," or in the Hebrew, "a bringing back upon our hearts." Conscience hath a tenacious memory, and will speak truly in its excusings or accusings; \* which is proper to conscience, as conscience, but grace regulates it, and adds some force to it.

(3.) Conscience is a judge to pass sentence upon a man, as the verdict is brought in. It is true, it is but a petty judge under the supreme Judge, yet the great God confirms its judicial sentence: 1 John iii. 20, "If our hearts," that is, our consciences, "condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." Every man may and must hold private sessions within, preparatory to the great assizes; if he be but passive, and is loath to hearken to the sentence, he is condemned; and this is but a sad prognostic of his being condemned at God's tribunal, which he seeks to escape, as Felix did, but cannot: but if he concur in this sentence, and condemn himself actively and voluntarily, "he shall not be judged or condemned," 1 Cor. xi. 31. Now grace in the heart makes a man do this. I am the man, saith he, I confess both the fact and fault. Art thou so? saith conscience; I must needs then pass sentence upon thee, according to God's righteous law. Well, I yield, saith the soul, I am convicted in this court, and cannot escape the judgment of God: I must fly to the city of refuge.

(4.) Conscience is an avenger, a self-tormentor: a guilty person is one that punishes or afflicts himself; some do this sinfully, by "worldly sorrow which caus-

\* Gen. xliii. 21. 1 Kings viii. 47. Rom. ii. 14, 15.

eth death." The Christian must do it penitentially, either for his own sins, or other men's: so Lot "vexed his righteous soul with the sin of Sodom;" the word is *ἔβασάνιζεν*, he beat and bastinadoed his righteous soul. The godly man must take the whip of conscience with the hand of grace, and scourge himself for his sins: or God will take it with his hand, and chastise him with it, as he did David, whose "heart smote him for numbering the people." The worm of conscience gnawing at the heart, is an acute pain, and will be one of the torments of the wicked in hell.\* But the pious man prevents that, when he approves of God's sentence by self-excruciating trouble for sin here: it is a profitable employment of conscience, with its severe lashes to promote godly sorrow.

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## CHAP. X.

### A CONTINUED EXAMINATION OF THE NEW CREATURE, AS TO THE WILL AND AFFECTIONS.

3. ANOTHER subject, wherein the new creature resides, is the will, and this is the hinge of the soul, the master wheel, all which having received a new and different impulse, moves quite another way than what it had done; now the change of the will is the main work of converting grace.

There are four departments of the will, wherein the new creature shews itself.

(1.) In its designs, aims, and intentions. The world and self-interest were the main drift of the will in a

\* 2 Cor. vii. 10. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. Mark ix. 44.

natural state ; all seek their own, Phil. ii. 21, the gratifying of the flesh, sensual appetite, and worldly gain ; the universal inquiry is, "Who will shew us any good?" Psal. iv. 6. O for a good bargain, a cheap purchase ! another is for strong drink, or dainties of the table, plays or pleasures ; another for the smiles of a court, and titles of honour. But the new creature discards and scorns all these, while his aim is the glorifying of God, and enjoyment of him, let "Christ be magnified, and my soul saved," and I can despise or slight all other things, God hath bound them together, and the soul cannot part them. God is the Christian's chief end, in his natural, civil, and spiritual acts ; the new man aims at the glory of God. O that my soul may obtain fellowship with God.\* I will trample on sinful, worldly selfishness, and spurn this filthy dunghill, when set in competition with God's glory, and the salvation of my own soul ; all other things will neither please nor profit this high-bred creature formed within me.

(2.) In the elective power of the will. The new creature chooseth the most proper means to attain the high ends he has in view ; as he chooseth God for his portion, so in the first place he chooseth Christ "as the only way, truth and life," John xiv. 6. i. 51 ; by whom, as the ladder of Jacob, he may ascend to God ; for there is no coming to the Father, but by the Son. The will therefore consents to have Christ upon his own terms, and chooseth him above the world ; may I have Christ, I will "cast all else as dross at my heels ;" away with them, away with them, I would refuse crowns and sceptres in comparison of, or in competition with Christ ; the believer comes off freely in his choice of Christ, he is not forced to him as his last shift, to escape perdition, but by a sweet tendency and

\* Phil. i. 20. 1 Cor. x. 31. 1 John i. 3. Psal. lxxiii. 25.

propensity of the will, he is touched and attracted with the loadstone of divine grace, "To me to live is Christ," as well as to die with him is gain. The new creature also chooseth the precepts, the promises, and the patterns of the word;\* the way of faith and holiness he likewise chooses to walk in, in order to the attaining of happiness; and he never repents this blessed choice.

(3.) There is a cleaving act of the will, a peremptory, resolved adhering to God and his ways: the will is fixed and determined for God, whatever shall be said to the contrary; he is not off and on like "a double minded man, unstable in all his ways," ἀμφίβιος, hanging in suspense, "halting betwixt two opinions;" but cleaves to the Lord with purpose of heart, as "Ruth was stedfastly minded to go with Naomi."† All men on earth, and all the devils in hell shall not alter this resolution; "I will go and return to my father; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;" let others do as they list, as they dare answer, "I and my house will serve the Lord;"‡ I must not be guided by example or carnal reason, but by the word of God, and having made my choice by the grace of God, I will not change as long as I breathe, no sufferings shall daunt me, no allurements shall entice me from my God.

(4.) There is a resigning act of the will, by which it gives up itself to the will of God. The new creation melts and moulds the will of man into the will of God; as our Lord said, "Not my will, but thine be done," Luke xxii. 42; and those gracious souls, Acts xxi. 14, said, "The will of the Lord be done:" hence Luther durst pray, let my will be done;|| but came off thus,

\* John i. 12. Phil. iii. 7—9. i. 21. Psal. cxix. 30, 111.

† James i. 8. 1 Kings xviii. 21. Acts xi. 23. Ruth i. 16—18.

‡ Luke xv. 18. Psalm xvii. 3. Josh. xxiv. 15.

|| Fiat voluntas mea.



mine, Lord, because my will shall be thine, there shall be but one will between us; this hath been the language of all the holy men in scripture, Eli, David, Paul. Let the Lord do as seems good to him;\* this harmony of wills is a glorious fruit of the new creation; and a pleasing and certain character of the new creature; this brings serenity to the soul in all states, when wind and tide gently go both one way, there is no storm; so when the Christian acquiesceth in God's will, there is great peace in the soul.

4. The new creature is formed in the affections: these are the movements of the will, the *primum mobile*, or main wheel that carries the affections along with it; the affections are characterized either as disliking, or liking; as discovering the aversion or approbation of the soul, and both of them are reduced to sweet order and harmony, according to scripture rule.

(1.) The disliking or disapproving affections: the stream is quite turned into another channel, the soul loathes what it before loved, and bears an implacable hatred, yea, antipathy, not only to sin, but to all appearances of it, 1 Thess. v. 22, and avenues that lead to it, or proceed from it, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh," Jude, 23, as one detests a coat with the plague in it, as a man's heart riseth against some kind of meats, or a toad for its poisonous quality, or a serpent for its sting, or rather for its loathsome nature. David saith, "I hate, and abhor lying," Psal. cxix. 163; he cannot use words enough to express his antipathy to hypocrisy. And true hatred is *πρὸς τὰ γένη*, against all kinds of what we hate, "I hate every false way," ver. 104, saith the holy man. The new creature makes the Christian not only angry at sin, as against his interest, or as a man may be with his

\* 1 Sam. iii. 18. 2 Sam. xv. 26.

wife or child, in a fit of passion, who entertains good thoughts of them again, when the passion is over; but there is an implacable enmity commenced in the heart against all sin, yea, there is even a hatred of wicked men's persons on account of their sin, which otherwise the soul would love, as he would not hate the devil but for sin. O, how weary am I of this body of death, I know not how to bear it, it is like a loathsome dead carcass, which at once both burdens me with its weight, and poisons me with its stench. It is this, and this alone that makes me send forth daily groans, and lamentations. O that I could put a bill of divorce into the hands of my dearest lust, never to have any connection with it again; I will never be reconciled to sin more; I will cut off my right hand sin, and force the knife of the law into the very heart of my sensuality and worldly-mindedness; I will study their utter extirpation; I am "ashamed and blush to lift up my face to God," because of my spots of guilt and pollution; never did any thing so affect my heart, as my sin against God, "I will declare mine iniquity, and be very sorry for my sin;"\* for the future, I will "stand in awe that I may not sin," I will fear sin more than hell; "I cannot bear them that are evil;" though I have patience to bear any affliction, "I behold transgressors, and am grieved," and shed many tears for the dishonour they bring to my God.† O that sin were banished out of the world, or my soul withdrawn from this wicked world.

(2.) As for the liking or kind affections, the renewed soul can truly say, with David, "I have set my affections to the house of my God;" as to inferior objects, "my soul is as a weaned child." New light creates new

\* Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22. Rom. vii. 24. Ezra ix. 6. Ps. xxxviii. 18.

† Psal. iv. 4. Rev. ii. 2. Psal. cxix. 136, 158.

love, new desires new delights. Truth in the understanding, darting upon the affections, and made to converge by the glass of meditation, inflames the soul: did not "our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the scriptures?" said the disciples travelling to Emmaus.\* The sun in the firmament sheds his influence into the bowels of the earth, and light and heat come together into the soul; knowledge affects the heart; the more the Christian knows God, the more he loves him. The soul risen with Christ, cannot but "set its affections on things above;" for "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." Oh saith the Christian, how good is God, I love the Lord above every person and thing, "with all my heart, soul, mind, and might;† with my soul have I desired him in the night:" even "as the hart panteth after the water brooks. When shall I come and appear before God?" God, even God alone "is my exceeding joy." I will take pleasure in nothing but God; this, this is both my duty and privilege: I hope I can "call the sabbath a delight:‡" and he promiseth I shall delight myself in the Lord. My comfort and content is, in communion with God, and it is an anticipation of heavenly joys. I love the word of God, "his testimonies are the rejoicing of my heart, and I have rejoiced in the ways thereof, more than in all riches; and delight myself in the Lord's statutes," Psal. cxix. 14. O how the good soul is elevated, and transported in the galleries of love! its pleasures are infinitely beyond the pleasures of sense.

O then, Christian, feel how the pulse of thy soul beats usually: is thy heart working God-wards in

\* 1 Chron. xxix. 3. Psal. cxxxi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 32.

† Col. iii. 2. Matt. vi. 21. Psal. xviii. 1. Matt. xxii. 37.

‡ Isa. xxvi. 9. Psal. xlii. 1. xliii. 4. Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

duties of his worship, or in daily converse? which way tends the bent of the soul? Art thou sincerely troubled, that thou canst “not delight thyself in the Lord,” as thou oughtest? Wouldst thou give all the world that thou hadst but a heart to love God more? Canst thou say as Peter did, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?” A flame may be painted, but a painted flame cannot be felt. I find the workings of love kindled in my bosom, if I know any thing of my heart. I have also searched the characters of true love in the scriptures, and I find my heart corresponding thereto, harmonizing therewith; I am further told, that this love is the proper character of the new creature, connatural with, and engraven on the new nature, for “he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”\*

Thirdly, I proceed to consider the properties of this new creation; and they are these seven:

1. It is universal. It is not in a part of the soul, but runs through the whole man, “soul, body, and spirit.” It is extensive and comprehensive, takes in all internal powers and external members, all acts in all faculties, at all times, and in all employments. As in the law, the whole sacrifice was to be offered to God; so it is not acceptable to God if any part be withheld from him. This new creation “is as leaven that runs through the whole lump,”† and puts a gracious tincture into all the faculties. This is not a limb or member, but a whole new man; yea, the Christian is a perfect man, having all the parts of a saint, though defective in point of degree. Our heavenly Father has no blind, lame, deranged, or maimed children; there are no idiots in his family. A Chris-

\* Psal. xxxvii. 4. John xxi. 15—17. 1 John iv. 16.

† 1 Thess. v. 23. Exod. xxix. 18. Rom. xii. 1. Matt. xiii. 33.



tian indeed hath all graces radically; but the hypocrite is mainly defective in something of an essential nature, requisite to constitute a saint; he is a cake half baked, dough on one side; the legs of the lame are not equal.

2. It is vital and self-moving; "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is true, it is hid from outward observation, as the spring that moves the visible hand, for "our life is hid with Christ in God:" but a vital principle it is. This gracious habit is to the soul as the soul is to the body; it is a spark of divine life kindled by the holy Spirit; a seed of God,\* quickened within the womb of the earth by the influence of heaven, putting forth gracious acts and precious fruits, through excitations of assisting grace, after a nipping winter of temptations or cold autumn of spiritual decays; his Spirit makes us willing. Oh, saith the Christian, I am restless, as a bird out of the nest, or a fish out of its proper element of water, unsatisfied till I return to my God. But the hypocrite resembles a puppet dressed like a saint, moved by art, or a machine put in motion by something external, which the workman affixes to it; such is the hypocrite: as one saith, there is a vast difference betwixt wool on the sheep's back, which clipped, will grow again; and the wool of the sheep's skin on the wolf's back, which grows no more. The living saint still works upwards, the graceless soul is dead, and puts forth no vital acts.

3. It is sensible and susceptible of impressions; it is not a dead, inanimate log, but of a tender, quick sensation, and can easily discern what profits or prejudices it, what helps or hurts it; it groans under what it feels as making against its being or well-being:

\* Gal. ii. 20. Col. iii. 3. 1 John iii. 9.

nothing doth it so much injury as sin, or what hath a tendency to it : any act of omission or commission lies heavy upon it, pierces and wounds it, and makes it bleed ; hence it is called a heart of flesh, which is a soft and sensible thing. Defects of grace, inroads of temptation, intermissions of duty, or worldliness, are more laid to heart by the new creature, than gross out-breakings of sin in the hypocrite. Whatsoever it perceives to be annoyance or disturbance, is a grievous affliction. Oh, saith the soul, I found at such a time God's withdrawing the assistance of his Spirit ; being puzzled, I bungled in a duty, and could make nothing of it : woe is me, what had I done to banish my God ? I find a weight on me, "and a sin that easily besets me." Did I not quench, grieve, or resist the Spirit ? Was I not sluggish, heartless, or formal ? Lord, forgive me that sin, and quicken me with thy grace. The hypocrite hath none of these experiences, soul-exercises, or agonies, but runs on in a heartless formality, and customary performance, knowing nothing of God's access, or his recess, coming or going.

4. It is distinguished by its growth, it is never stationary ; the pious man is compared to the sun, "that shineth still brighter to the perfect day ;" and to "calves of the stall," that are still growing : as "new-born babes, believers desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby ;"\* it is their duty, yea, their privilege to "grow stronger and stronger, to perfect holiness in the fear of God ;" for the new creature helps, spurs on the child of God to improve his talents, to use God's appointed means for increase, and to derive communications from Jesus Christ, that "he may increase with the increase of God." This new creature has a new appetite, which in this imperfect state,

\* Prov. iv. 18. Mal. iv. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.

makes him desire and long after more ; and he never saith he hath enough in this lower world. It is said of the crocodile, as long as he lives he grows ; so it is with the believer. O, saith the soul, I am short, still defective ; the greatest part of what I have attained, is the least part of what I want ; O that I could be more like God ! “ be changed into his image from glory to glory.”\* I can never be enough like God ; this is the clearest evidence of the truth of grace ; a dead picture will not grow as a living child, a dead stake grows not as a living plant. Lord, make me more humble, holy, heavenly, self-denying, watchful, fruitful.

5. Consciousness of dependance characterizes the new creature, the soul becomes sensible of its own weakness, it feels not its own feet, it cannot stand alone, therefore leans on its beloved, every step through this wilderness state, Cant. viii. 5. Woe be to me, saith the Christian, if I be alone, I have long found by too dear bought experience, that I am like a staff, and can stand no longer than I am upheld by an Almighty hand ; if God bid me come upon the fluid waves, and reach out his hand, I will venture, as Peter did, my feet will not fail, if faith fail not ; Lord, “ hold up my goings in thy path, that my footsteps slip not ;” alas, “ without thee I can do nothing ;” but by thee I can “ run through a troop,” and by my God, “ I can leap over a wall ;” I am able “ to do all things through Christ that strengthens me.”† I find by experience, that the least difficulty overmatcheth me without divine assistance, and the “ greatest mountains become a plain before Zerubbabel,” my Lord of hosts, who out of weakness can make strong ; if he say, “ My grace is sufficient for thee,” 2 Cor. xii. 9, I will encounter a

\* Job xvii. 9. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Col. ii. 19. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

† Psal. xvii. 5. John xv. 5. Psal. xviii. 29. Phil. iv. 13.

Goliah, and in the name of the Lord do wonders ; my only strength is thy all-sufficient grace ; “ by the grace of God I am what I am,” 1 Cor. xv. 10.

6. The new creature is watchful ; the soul never sleeps. Grace in the soul is still waking : “ I sleep, but my heart wakes,” Cant. v. 2. The wise virgins as well as the foolish may nod, Matt. xxv. 5, 6 ; but they are quickly awaked with the Bridegroom’s coming. Grace may lie in the unexercised, passive habit, or as a spark of fire in the ashes, but it will revive : there needs not the impartation of a new life, but the stirring up of the vital principle. It may seem a paradox that the Christian is distinguished from his heart : a suspension of the actings of spiritual liveliness and vivacity there may be, whereby the senses are at present bound up by indisposition to duty, yet a principle of grace, inclining to action there may be also : thus there are two different natures in the child of God, like two distinct persons ; so Paul saith, Rom. vii. 20, “ If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Such a distinction he often makes. These different natures have opposite actings ; in the worst state of a Christian’s spiritual dulness, he is very apprehensive things are not right with him ; there are some convictions, challenges, purposes, protestations of the inward man against this indolent frame, it displeases him, and he hath some faint and languid strugglings to raise himself. The new creature gives not full consent, though it can act little vigorously, but there is a “ lusting against each other,” Gal. v. 17. Peter’s faith did not act, yet did not totally fail, when he denied his Master ; for Christ’s prayer was heard for him, Luke xxii. 32. There is some tendency in the heart God-wards, in the saint’s lowest ebbs : he is not satisfied in his sleepiness.



7. The new creation will abide, it will remain and overcome all opposition, and continue as long as the soul continues, as was said before. It is an immortal seed; "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever," 1 John ii. 17: "This anointing abideth in believers," and causeth them to abide in him, verse 27: this principle will be as "a well of water springing up to everlasting life:" this "fear of the Lord endureth for ever:" his "righteousness endureth for ever." Morality withers and decays, but sincerity will run parallel with the life of God, and line of eternity. If thou art an apostate, thou wast never such a new creature as I have described: "If you continue in my word," said Jesus, "then are you my disciples indeed."\* Look you to your sincerity, and God will look to your perseverance; nay, that principle will be attended with a holy jealousy, which is the awe-band of the soul, and a special preservation against apostacy: Jer. xxxii. 40, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." This fear will teach them to incline God-wards, and abhor what tends to departing from God. Scripture makes this a clear evidence of a state of grace, and interest in Christ: and the contrary, evidence of a soul going off.† Try yourselves by this character: do you persevere?

*Objection.* How can I evidence myself to be a new creature? I am not yet at the end of my journey, who knows what I may do, or be? I have a backsliding heart, I may fall away before I die.

*Ans.* It is true, thou canst not presage what may come; but thou mayest form an opinion of time to come from what thou hast met with in times past;

\* John iv. 14. Psalm xix. 9. cxii. 3. John viii. 31.

† Col. i. 21—23. Heb. iii. 6—14. 1 John ii. 19.

thou hast had experience of the operations of grace, the witnessings of God's Spirit, healing of backslidings, conquest of some strong lusts, victory over the world, and the vanquishing of Satan's assaults, so that thou canst set up thy "Ebenezer, and say, Hitherto hath the Lord helped," 1 Sam. vii. 12. And dost thou not find it upon record, Phil. i. 6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ?" It is true, you are not absolute conquerors till the last enemy be destroyed, which is death; but Scripture style reckons sincere combatants to be conquerors: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them," 1 John iv. 4. v. 4. And "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" yea, we "are more than conquerors, through him that loved us," Rom. viii. 37. And it is often said, "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life," Rev. ii. 7. Mark it, it is not said, to him that hath overcome, but *τῷ νικῶντι*, to him that is overcoming; dost thou keep thy ground, fight still, though sometimes thou art foiled? dost thou not even gain ground by thy falls, mourn for sin, and grow more watchful? As long as thou art in the field against sin, sin is not on the throne in thy heart; "and if sin have not dominion over you, you are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. This victory may have acceptance with God, though not satisfactory to thyself.

## CHAP. XI.

### A NEW CREATION EVIDENCED BY ITS EFFECTS, CONSEQUENCES, AND OPERATIONS.

FOURTHLY, The last way of discovering the truth of the new creation in the soul, is by its proper fruits and effects, as “the tree is known by its fruits,” and the quality of the spring by the streams which issue from it. I can but name these :

1. The new creation produceth a new tongue, new speech, new expressions. The person that was wont to speak the language of Ashdod, now speaks the language of Canaan : his tongue was wont to swear, lie, curse, and rail at religion, or was engaged in vain jangling, idle tales, and impertinent stories, or at best but about weather, trading, and news : now he changeth his note ; “The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.” Why so ? “the law of God is in his heart ; out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.” What say you, sirs ? do you speak as becometh saints, not filthiness, foolish talking, or jesting ? Is your “speech always with grace, seasoned with salt ?” \* not “corrupt communication, but that which is good to the use of edifying ? Do you exhort, and “provoke one another to love and good works ?” Do you speak reverently of God, his word, and works ? Do you “with one mind and one mouth glorify God ?” † edify saints, and convince gainsayers ? Ribaldry, obscenity, and railing are far from a pious man’s mouth : rather you hear giving of thanks, asking and answering serious questions with his tongue, which is his glory.

\* Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31. Matt. xii. 34. Eph. v. 3, 4. Col. iv. 6.

† Eph. iv. 29, 31. Heb. x. 24, 25. Rom. xv. 6.

2. New works : not only new expressions, but new actions. The new creation engageth men to a new course of life, to “ cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light, to walk honestly as in the day.” What a change doth it make in men’s employments ; their backs are now where their faces were, and their faces where their backs were. This grace of God “ teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly ;” yea, “ to be zealous of good works.” They were wont to work hard for the world ; now they “ work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.”\* They used to follow sports and stage-plays ; now they find other employments, reading, praying, meditating, examining their consciences, and mortifying their passions : they find something else to do now, than to spend their time in idleness, and inventing pastimes, to pass away life : they have many graces to exercise, duties to perform, personal and relative ; they have no time to be idle, but must fill up their days with profitable employment, to God’s glory and their own good account. O how busy are the children of God, “ striving to enter in at the strait gate,”—“ taking the kingdom of heaven by violence,”—and giving diligence “ to make their calling and election sure ;”† and that their Master may not find them idle, but that they may be found of him in peace.

3. A new rule suitable for the new creature. Alas, in time past, the poor sinner “ walked according to the course of this world.” The old traditions and customs of men were wont to be his canon ; he followed the multitude in conformity to the world ; but now the rule of the new creature is the star he steers his course

\* Rom. xiii. 12—14. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 14. Phil. ii. 12.

† Luke xiii. 24. Matt. xi. 12. 2 Pet. i. 10.



by.\* Bring me a warrant from the word in a plain text, or a direct unstrained consequence to ground my obedience upon, or you say nothing. God's will is my rule of obedience, that only binds conscience; and the new creature lies square to every command. The authority of God sways it, because there is something in the soul that suits and is adapted to every precept: if he cannot keep any, yet he "hath respect to all God's commandments." He is, as it were, pliant to every thing God makes his duty; but a hypocrite is like a round globe, which toucheth only in some corner, he omits all, except what his interest or fancy calls him to at that juncture: if he "should even keep all, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." A true Christian is of a catholic spirit, a universalist, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, who "walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." These were indeed righteous; if there be circumcision of heart, there will be circumspection in life. See then you walk circumspectly, ἀκριβῶς,† according to command, and to the height of every command, balk none, abate nothing of what God makes duty.

4. A new end, or design. Alas, self is the end and great idol of a carnal heart, till grace rectify and regulate it; all "seek their own," Phil. ii. 21. Matt. vi. 2, self-ease, pleasure, self-profit, self-honour, or applause. The water will rise no higher than the spring: new grace changeth the bias of the soul, as a ship sailing westward, when there comes a strong gale of wind, and carries it directly to the east. Self-seeking is so natural, that till grace alter the constitution of the soul, the sinner will never be beaten off; self-denial is the

\* Eph. ii. 2. 1 Pet. i. 18. Rom. xii. 2. Gal. vi. 16.

† Psal. cxix. 6. James ii. 10. Luke i. 6. Eph. v. 15.

first and last lesson our Lord teacheth his disciples, Matt. xvi. 24; this is the first step and highest round in Jacob's ladder; hath thy soul so far learned it, as to make God's glory, and communion with him, the chief aim of thy duties, studies, endeavours? canst thou, soul, throw thyself in the dust, that God may be on the throne? disappear, that God may only be seen, as John Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease," John iii. 30; if any good be done, "it is not I, but the grace of God with me," 1 Cor. xv. 10; let him alone have the glory; let the crown be set no where but on Christ's head, it becomes him best; I will cast down my crown before the throne, and say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power." As all the lines tend to the centre, so shall all my actions tend only to thy glory; "Let God in all things be glorified," though I be vilified. This rent will I daily pay as a tribute to the crown of heaven; I am resolved to glorify God in my body and soul, which are his;\* better lose my life, than lose the end of my life, God's glory.

5. New worship is always a companion of the new creature. It is true, the carnal man might hear and read the word, pray, receive the sacrament, and perform the external acts of religion before, but formally, heartlessly, hypocritically, God knows; "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," 2 Tim. iii. 5. But as soon as the grace of God hath formed the new creature in the heart, then it is said, as of Paul, "Behold he prayeth," Acts ix. 11; why, did not Paul pray before? Yes, doubtless, he was a Pharisee, and Pharisees made long prayers, it is likely he had a great gift of prayer; aye, but now Paul had the grace of prayer, behold he prays, now he prays with a witness; his prayer hath all the requisites

\* Cant. iii. 11. Rev. iv. 10, 11. 1 Pet. iv. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 20.

essential to prayer. Oh now, if you could lay your ear to the closet of this new born saint; what sighs and groans would you hear! Rom. viii. 26. What throbs and tears; what self-loathing confessions; what heart-rending complaints; what heaven-piercing expostulations, would you witness! What believing, pleading of promises; what improvement of Christ's mediatorship! this is not formal or heartless canting. As soon as ever this new creature was formed, the soul was turned from idols, "to serve the living and true God;" that is, "in spirit and in truth." If the words be the same, the workings of heart are as different as a living man's tone from dead organ pipes; the one hath breath, the other not. The gracious soul engageth his heart to approach unto God: yea, he also saith, "let us lift up our hearts with our hands;"\* that is, let us pray and use our utmost endeavour to obtain what we pray for.† The hypocrite's tongue may be employed; but the new creature sets the heart a breathing, the hands on working, the feet on walking. Oh how he is concerned in the performance of duty!

6. A new war is commenced by the new creature. As soon as this new creature becomes visible, Satan musters all the powers of darkness against it; and now begins this holy war, which never ceases while the soul is in the body: and oh, how many a sharp skirmish hath the Christian with Satan and his armed bands! The carnal heart holds correspondence with the enemy, and the devil lets the sinner alone, and all his goods or soul's faculties are in peace; he sleeps quietly in the devil's tents, little dreaming whither he is going: or rather he is carried in a golden dream into Satan's territories; or as Solomon's young gal-

\* 1 Thess. i. 9. John iv. 24. Jer. xxx. 21. Lamen. iii. 41.

† Oremus et laboremus.

lant with the harlot, "As an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks." But the converted soul sees his danger, and struggles hard to extricate himself, and when he is at liberty, the devil pursues him with rage sometimes, other whiles with subtlety he seeks to overreach him ; he is aware of both and is not ignorant of his devices.\* One while he fights with spiritual weapons, and so resists the devil, and he flees : another while the soul retires to his strong hold, by faith and prayer, and is secured. Thus the gracious soul is "warring a good warfare, fighting the fight of faith," which is a good fight ; he gets disentangled from the affairs of this life, and lays aside every weight, that he may militate more strenuously and more successfully : nor doth the good soul so fight as one that beats the air,† laying about him at adventures ; but he spies his enemies, takes a view of them in scripture light, lets fly at the faces of foreign and intestine adversaries, with spiritual, scriptural weapons, and never sounds a parley or makes a truce, but disputes every inch of his passage to heaven : thus this new creature is a christian champion.

7. The new creature finds out new company. Alas, his old companions grow tiresome with the convert, he cannot take delight in his former comrades, who would jest and be merry, and seek to drive him out of his melancholy humours (as they consider them) with pleasant stories, this is but as singing songs to a heavy heart ; he is now sick of such vain company, and bids them begone, they are of no use to him. It is very observable, three times, upon such occasions, doth David require all wicked men to depart from him, Psal. vi. 8, "Depart from me, all ye workers of

\* Luke xi. 21. Prov. vii. 22. 2 Cor. ii. 11.

† 1 Tim. i. 18, vi. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 26.



iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping;" as if he had said, I have got better company and comfort than you are. Psal. cxix. 115, "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God;" as if he had said, I have taken up other resolutions, and must have other companions than you: the last is Psal. cxxxix. 19, "Surely thou shalt slay the wicked, O God; depart therefore from me, ye bloody men;" as if he had said, I am loth to fare as you fare, and will not be found in your company. This is christian policy as well as piety: it is impossible the new creature should take delight in his old companions; "for what communion hath light with darkness? what concord hath Christ with Belial?" There are in the world, persons more suitable to his temper, even saints, not in heaven, but that are on the earth, "men excellent in whom is all his delight." These, these are his companions,\* the delight of his soul, he loves them dearly, because they are so like his father in heaven; these are they, he hopes to live with in the other world, and he must associate with them in this, he loves to discourse with them, join in prayer with them, no such content he hath on earth as in the communion of saints.

8. The new creature needs and requires new cordials, new food and physic; the world and all that it can afford, which were wont to be so pleasant, are all but dry meat, have no more "savour than the white of an egg;" the soul hath now a more delicate taste, than to be satisfied with such husks and trash; he sues for the tender mercies of God, Psal. cxix. 77, "Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live," as if he had said, I know not how to live a natural life, and I cannot live a spiritual life without these tender mercies;

\* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 17. Psalm xvi. 3. cxix. 63.

the Lord knoweth. my delicate appetite, “and crowns me with loving-kindness and tender mercies,” Psal. ciii. 4. Luther called the whole Turkish empire but a crumb cast to dogs, and often protested to God, that he would not be put off with these low things, even when he had a silver mine offered him; even a heathen Seneca could say, I am greater, and born to higher things, than terrene objects;\* and will not a Christian much more say so? The Christian hath meat to eat that men know not of; spiritual manna, angel’s food, is the Christian’s diet, “the fatness of God’s house; yea, marrow and fatness:” God’s word, which is as “honey and honey comb;” better “than necessary food; yea, Jesus Christ himself, “the bread of life.”† The new creature finds full contentment in Christ, through a promise. It is worth observing, that spiritual delights are suited to all the spiritual senses, music in the ear, wine to the taste; yea, “his love is better than wine, as ointment poured forth to the smell;” yea, as spike-nard and myrrh;‡ his embraces to the touch and feeling, “his left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me;” as for the sight, “my beloved is white and ruddy,” Cant. v. 10—16, “he is altogether lovely,” and of proportion. You see the new creature hath its senses as well as the body, and spiritual good things gratify them, who by reason “of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil,” Heb. v. 14.

9. The new creature hath a new home: our being upon earth in these houses of clay, is our short home; our being under the earth, in the grave, is our long home; hell is the sinner’s last and everlasting home;

\* Major sum et ad majora natus.

† John iv. 32. Psal. xxxvi. 8. lxiii. 5. xix. 10. John vi. 55.

‡ Cant. v. 16. i. 2, 3. ii. 6, 8, 9.

heaven is the saint's best eternal home: "Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord—but we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."\* A poor graceless wretch is well where he is, like that impious cardinal that would not change his part in Paris for his part in paradise: such as "these are men of the world, whose portion is in this life; these are written in the earth," possibly as recorded and renowned among the great ones of it. But there is a generation of the sons of men, that are not of this world, "whose names are written in heaven; and are travelling towards the new Jerusalem, thence they came, and thither they are bound; "Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all;"† it is thither the new creature tendeth, there it would gladly be: it is troubled at whatsoever stops it in its motion homewards; Rom. viii. 23, "Not only they," that is, the other creatures, "but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body;" O blessed jubilee! when shall the dawning of that glorious day appear? "how long must I dwell in Meshech, or in the tents of Kedar?" how long shall I abide on this side Jordan? O that once at last I might inhabit that goodly mount and Lebanon! Why is his chariot so long in coming? why stay the wheels of his chariot? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, break down the walls of this earthly tabernacle, and "clothe me with that house from heaven." How long shall I be tost on this tumultuous sea? when shall I reach the haven? I long to be with Christ,‡ among "the spirits

\* Job iv. 19. Eccl. xii. 5, 7. Rom. vi. 23. 2 Cor. v. 6, 8.

† Psal. xvii. 14. Jer. xvii. 13. Luke x. 20. Gal. iv. 26.

‡ Psal. cxx. 5. 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. Phil. i. 23.

of just men made perfect ;” here I am a stranger and pilgrim, and am seeking another country, thither I am hasting ; there I would be, that this disguise may be plucked off, that “ when he shall appear, I may be like him, and see him as he is :” my best life is yet hid, but when “ Christ who is my life, shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory ;” \* for this I hope and wait, and pray and long.

10. The new creature obtains new apprehensions of himself in all this ; he was darkness, but “ now he is light in the Lord,” Eph. v. 8. The poor old creature thinks well of himself, and his doings ; he imagines he can pray, and perform duty, and when he hath by the strength of his gifts come off finely, then he applauds himself, as Bernard said of himself, † well done, now God is indebted to thee, and owes thee a kindness ; so said the hypocritical Jews, Isa. lviii. 3 ; and the Pharisees, Luke xviii. 11. But this new creation will teach its possessor another lesson, “ when he has done all,” alas, “ he is an unprofitable servant.” My “ righteousnesses are but as filthy rags :” still I am an unclean thing : I deserve nothing but wrath, if I “ justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me.” My spiritual duties need spiritualizing ; my repentance needs repenting of ; my exercise of grace needs a gracious pardon ; my Lord Jesus must take away the iniquity of my holy things, perfume my poor services, and offer my “ prayers with his much incense, upon the golden altar, before the throne.” ‡ I dare not stand before God in my best suit of inherent righteousness. If “ thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity ; O Lord, who can stand ?” “ In thy sight shall no

\* Heb. xii. 23. xi. 13—16. 1 John iii. 1, 2. Col. iii. 3, 4.

† Bene fecisti, Bernarde. ‡ Luke xvii. 10. Isa. lxiv. 6. Job ix. 20. Exod. xxviii. 38. Rev. viii. 3.



man living be justified." If I look at the new creature, there are many defects therein: if I reflect on the purest actings of grace, alas, they are imperfect. I must "be found in Christ," or I am lost for ever; "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." O my Lord, when I am standing before the angel of the Lord, "Satan stands at my right hand to resist me;" and justly he may, "for I am clothed with filthy garments." Oh speak the word, that "mine iniquity may pass away from me," and "clothe me with change of raiment."\* My change of principles will not do without an upper garment to cover all my defects and faults, in which I must stand as righteous before God at the great day. The sum of all this is contained in that excellent text, with which I conclude this head. Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

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## CHAP. XII.

### DIRECTIONS RELATIVE TO THE USE OF MEANS.

I AM sensible I have insisted too long upon the first division in reference to instruction, concerning the evidences of this change in our souls, from its preparatives, parts, properties and effects, I shall be the briefer on the rest.

II. The next is to give some instructions to those

\* Psal. cxxx. 3. cxliii. 2. Phil. iii. 9. Zech. iii. 1—4.

that feel or fear they are not yet new creatures, how they are to conduct themselves, and what course they are to take that they may become new creatures.

I am much anticipated in this by the worthy labours of those excellent men, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Joseph Allein, and many others in their directions about conversion, which are coincident with my design; to which I refer the reader.

Yet this must not be understood, as though it were in any man's power to change his own heart, any more than he can create himself, or put life into a dead carcass, but it becomes men—not to hinder or obstruct the strivings of the Spirit that may work this grace—and to improve their natural faculties to the utmost, in order to the attainment of this end. I shall but briefly lay before you what a natural man can do, by the help of common providence, and what he must do, as he will answer for the contrary another day, to that God that hath given him a command, and rational faculties capable of compliance.

1. Own and improve natural principles, such are *κοινὰ ἔννοιαι*, innate notions, common to man, as a being endowed with reason; namely, that there is a God, that this God must needs be an excellent Being, the ultimate end of all things, the chief good, that all things depend upon him, and must bow to him; that this God must be worshipped, that his will is the rule of man's obedience; that there is moral good and evil, and that there will be a retribution in this or in another world. Natural conscience even of heathens discovers something of these grand principles; for saith the blessed apostle, Rom. ii. 14, 15, "Though the Gentiles have not the written law before their eyes," yet they have a transcript thereof in their hearts, which declares to them some good and evil, and con-

science accordingly excuseth them if they do well, and "accuseth them if they do evil," Rom. i. 18—24. The imprisoning of these truths in unrighteousness, produced a judicial hardening, and giving them up to uncleanness, and rendered them without excuse: and can we think that men now disclaiming and obliterating these notices of religion will fare better? Surely not. So on the contrary, the way to obtain more, is to improve what we have. I say not, that God is bound to give special grace to such as improve what is common, but an instance can hardly be produced to the contrary; and this is God's method in vouchsafing his grace, to engage men to cherish and excite moral principles by diligent endeavours, which he usually seconds with his blessing; yea, this course doth naturally tend to weaken vicious inclinations. Set yourselves about this work, and you little know what it may come to at last. O that unconverted sinners had but the integrity of king Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6, to act according to the light which they have, and the restraining grace afforded them, which the Lord calls integrity, which is however only of a moral nature, yet good, so far as it goes, and a means of more.

2. Be jealous, lest you be mistaken in this point, lest you misapprehend the nature of the new creature, or lest your own hearts deceive you, for they are "deceitful and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. And Satan may attempt to substitute some production of his own in the room of this new creation. Counterfeit grace may look like saving grace: reformation looks like regeneration. How often is a Bristol stone taken for a pearl? Painted grapes once cheated living birds. You must first get a scriptural definition of this new creature; "To the law and to the testimony,"

Isa. viii. 20. Judge yourselves by that word which must judge you at the last day, Rom. ii. 16. Be afraid of self-deceit; "blessed is he that feareth always." You live in the midst of deceptions, a deceitful heart, allurements of pleasure, an ensnaring world, and a tempting devil, all set against you, and we are apt to believe that to be true, we would have to be so: but put the case to thyself; What if I be mistaken? I read of some that "think themselves something, when they are nothing." Others put a false estimate upon themselves, "deceiving their own selves." What if this be my case? What if I be in a delusive dream, imagining I am bound for heaven, when I am descending into the pit? What if I be found without the oil of grace in the vessel of my heart; a foolish virgin amongst the wise? \* What if I prove the only guest at the gospel feast, without a wedding garment, and be struck speechless? Oh what an overwhelming disappointment will it be! Hath none proved such? Why may not I? Some have gone off the stage with "a lie in their right hand," and have lain down in sorrow, notwithstanding the sparks of their own kindling. O what need have I to fear, lest "a promise being left of entering into rest, I should finally come short of it!" †

3. Deal faithfully with your own souls, in self-examination. Flatter not yourselves, examine not only your actions, but the internal state of your souls, how your principles are formed; you may do it, for God hath given you a self-reflecting faculty, "The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, that searcheth the inward parts of the belly." You must do it, you are commanded "to commune with your own heart, to

\* Gal. vi. 3. James i. 22. Matt. xxv. 1—10.

† Matt. xxii. 12, 13. Isa. xlv. 20. 1. 11. Heb. iv. 1.



examine yourselves," prove your work, God's servants have made diligent search :\* and will you continue strangers to your own hearts ? will you be such unkind neighbours, as never to ask your hearts how they do ? or will you be put off with a frivolous or dilatory answer ? O, sirs, come to a point, drive yourselves to this dilemma, I am either a new creature or not, a child of God, or of the devil ; I am bound either for heaven or hell ; I had not need to remain in suspense about this weighty case ; I will now put this doubt out of doubt ; I cannot rest satisfied with uncertainties in so important a concern ; God forbid I should weigh it light, or be mistaken ; I must not take preparatives for parts of the new creature ; the porch for the house ; I will try and try again, and prove my evidences by scripture rule, and appeal to God for the sincerity of my heart ; "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, and try my reins and my heart," Psal. xxvi. 2. I must be a new man, or no man in Christ ; I will not be put off with morality or uncertainty ; irresolvedness breeds disquietude ; I am determined to come to some conclusion.

4. Attend diligently on the most powerful ministry. Not such a dull, formal, heartless preaching, as will rock you asleep in security, or "sew pillows to your arm-holes ;" preaching pleasing things, promising life in a sinful state, and crying, peace, peace, when God proclaims war against you ; thousands are undone by flatteries. Oh frequent a rousing, convincing ministry, which is the "power of God to salvation." The word is the proper medium of communicating divine grace ; by which Christ is formed in the heart,† the glass in which you may behold a true representation of your-

\* Prov. xx. 27. Psal. iv. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Gal. vi. 4. Psal. lxxvii. 6.

† Ezek. xiii. 17—22. Rom. i. 16. Gal. iv. 19.

selves; by which you may be “changed into his image,”—“beholding the glory of the Lord” therein. “I have begotten you,” saith Paul, “through the gospel.” This is God’s workhouse, where he shapes and forms this new creature; of how many an ordinance may it be said this and that man was born there.\* O therefore, be constantly waiting at the posts of wisdom, hear the most warm, lively preachers, prepare for hearing, set yourselves as in the presence of God. Say thus with thyself, I am going to hear the word of the living God, “which is the ministration of the Spirit,” apt and able to give life to dead souls. It is not so much the word of men, but of God. O that it may work effectually in my soul! It is not man, but God, who is now treating with me; “God himself is now beseeching me,” and the minister “praying me in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled to God.†” I perceive it rests with me, God hath declared himself reconciled, if my depraved heart were at last prevailed with to be reconciled to him. O that this may be the day when, and this the sermon whereby, thou wilt mould and form my soul for thyself: now, Lord, let thy words be spirit and life to me: O for renewing grace!

5. Let convictions by the word have their due effect. Strike while the iron is hot, let not impressions die or wear off, postponement lost both Felix and Agrippa their souls, stifled convictions leave the heart harder, heated water, cooled again, is sooner frozen: who knows how long the Spirit may strive? When God is working, work then, put not off warnings; when God convinceth thee of the evil of a sin, presently discard it; when of a duty, without delay commence the

\* James i. 25. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 Cor. iv. 15. Psal. lxxxvii. 5.

† 2 Cor. iii. 8. 1 Thess. ii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 20.

practice of it; when a wound is made, take heed lest the air get in and it begin to fester, and at last grow incurable: our "Lord is standing at the door, and knocking." He will not always wait thy leisure; the Spirit will not always strive with thee. You must sail when the wind blows. There are (*candida tempora*) proper seasons for every thing. It is a dangerous thing for "a man not to know his time."\* If you miss the opportunity, it may never return; the market lasts not all the year. If the tide have brought you thus far, go with it, it may never return to fetch you off: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," not to-morrow. O quench not the Spirit. Think thus, I have stood out many a day of grace, lost many a golden season, it is infinite mercy that God is still calling; if I lose this, I may never have more; yea, I may be in hell before another sermon, even before morning. O that I could "know the day of my visitation!"† O that now at last, my soul were effectually changed!

6. Get thy heart affected with thy sin and misery, by nature and practice; look on thyself as dead in trespasses and sins, and thus incapable of quickening thyself. Let your language be, alas, my praying, reading, hearing, reforming, will never attain the end; I am sunk far below the possibility of human or angelic help; means must be used, but means must not be rested in, they cannot effect the purpose; nay, alas, "I am without strength," and can do nothing; "in me, that is, in my flesh dwells no good thing;" I am a miserable leper, full of "wounds, bruises, putrefying sores;" woe is me, I am defiled in Adam, and actually

\* Acts xxiv. 25—27. Rev. iii. 20. Gen. vi. 3. Eccles. ix. 12.

† 2 Cor. vi. 2. 1 Thess. v. 19. Luke xix. 9.

polluted; averse to all good, and prone to all evil; "I am in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity."\* Satan is leading me hell-wards, I must be changed or perish; for aught I know I stand tottering on the brink of eternal misery; I hang by the slender thread of my natural life over everlasting burnings; my case is worse than the brutes, that are not capable of moral evil. I am already condemned, and liable to the execution of the righteous sentence, "having a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;" another step may set me past hope, for any thing that I know, "this night may devils require my soul,"† and hurry it into the infernal lake. O what will become of me! whither am I going? Lord, awake my sleepy conscience, to see my danger, that I may haste out of the Sodom of fire and brimstone to the mountain; God forbid, I should stay another day in my unregenerate state.

7. Learn to know and exercise faith on Jesus Christ: the life of holiness as well as righteousness is in him; "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There is no spiritual life, but what is derived from Christ, who saith, "Because I live, you shall live also." Sinners are dead; the nearer they come to Christ, the more hope of life; as the nearer to the sun, the more light; we only come to have the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Nothing doth so transform a sinner, as looking on God through Christ; the woman that did but touch the hem of Christ's garment, derived virtue from him; none are branches of this vine, but they have life and fruitfulness:‡ all that

\* Rom. v. 6. vii. 18. Isa. i. 6. Acts viii. 23.

† Eccles. iii. 21. Heb. x. 27. Luke xii. 20.

‡ Gal. ii. 20. John xiv. 19. 2 Cor. iv. 6. John xv. 5.



are "grafted in the olive, partake of the root and fatness of that olive tree." Labour after faith and love; faith unites the soul to Christ, for "he dwells in our hearts by faith." Love assimilates the soul to God, and the more we are like God, the more of meetness we have for heaven. Faith is the spiritual ligament which binds the soul to Christ. Love is a voluntary mover of the soul to Christ; faith is the receiver, love the worker; "faith worketh by love;"\* and both are absolutely necessary to the new creature. Christ is the image of God, and the new creature is the image of Christ, and so of God. Love sees all good in the enjoyment of God, and in conformity to him as the means to attain that end. Faith unites the soul to God mystically, love morally; there can be no new creation without both these; therefore to believe in God, and to love God, are the only means to be like God, and therein consists the new creature; therefore study these.

8. Rest not till you be divorced from sin and sinners. You may and "must amend your ways," Jer. vii. 3; if you cannot mend your hearts, "Cease to do evil, learn to do well; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return to the Lord;" be no more slaves to your sensual appetites, which are as cords to hold you in the devil's service, and drag you down hell-wards. This day, bid an everlasting farewell to sin, say to every idol, "Get thee hence; what have I any more to do with idols."† If you cannot cut up sin by the roots, yet be sure to lop off its branches; it is true, this is not enough, but this is something, and who knows what may be its tendency, and termination? "Departing from iniquity," is one

\* Rom. xi. 17. Eph. iii. 17. Gal. v. 6.

† Isa. i. 16. lv. 7. Prov. v. 22. Isa. xxx. 22. Hos. xiv. 8.

part of the new creature; you cannot find "mercy, except you forsake as well as confess sin;" spare but one sin, and God will not spare thee; "turn from all sins, and you shall live." If you fall out with sin, there are some hopes; and then away with sinners, "forsake the foolish and live;\*" but "a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. There is no hopes of that man who delights in vain company; how many have been laughed out of their serious purposes, or allured from hopeful beginnings by loose associates; if ever God begin this new work in you, this will be the first evidence of it; and it is even a singular help to it, to change your companions, and to run from the tents of the wicked into the society of the godly; I recommend this in a special manner to all persons, young and old, and desire you to read and study, Prov. i. 10—18. ii. 12, 20. iv. 14, 18. 2 Cor. vi. 17. Be sure you join with christian society, open your cases to them; beg their counsel and prayers; company is assimilating, sin is infectious, holiness imitable. Let communion of saints be in your practice as well as in your creed. New society, is a sign and means of new hearts; I despair of your being new creatures in old company.

9. Enter into a solemn covenant with the Lord, by taking God as your chief good, and by making a deed of gift of yourselves entirely to the Lord. I shall not much need to enlarge upon this, having treated on it fully elsewhere, only as it is subservient to this design. Enter into an oath, "and swear the Lord liveth," Jer. iv. 2; Deut. xxvi. 17, "and avouch him to be yours." Do this understandingly, solemnly, resolutely, deliberately; set some time apart, place God before thine eyes, make him witness of the singleness of thy heart, that thou

\* 2 Tim. ii. 19. Prov. xxviii. 13. Ezek. xviii. 21. Prov. ix. 6.

takest God the Father, to love him, trust in him, depend on him, and resign all to him : God the Son, as prophet, priest, king, to be led by him, justified, and ruled by his laws : God the Holy Ghost, to be enlightened, to be sanctified, and comforted by him ; and when thou hast thus taken God for thy God, and devoted thyself to him, soul and body, thou mayest expect and hope that the Lord will dwell in thee, as in his temple, his house, cleanse thee from impurity, adorn thee with graces, and qualify thee for his service, that the persons of the sacred Trinity will take up their lodging and residence in thy soul, that you may henceforth be an "habitation of God through the Spirit." Such is the new creation ; and the way to attain it, is "to give up yourselves to the Lord ;" to be ordered according to his pleasure, for his glory, that he may be "glorified both in soul and body which are his."\* If thou voluntarily subscribest to the equity of his articles, taking him with all the sufferings attending the ways of religion, and yieldest up thy whole interests to his disposal, hating the sins that he forbids, practising the duties that he commands, walking in all the ways of his appointment, in his worship and ordinances ; this, this is a coming up to the terms of the covenant of grace, and then thou shalt have the graces and privileges of that covenant, which comprehends this new creation.

10. Down on thy knees, and beg this renewal of thy nature at the hands of God ; say as David did, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," Psal. li. 10. Say, Lord, I am quite ruined in the old Adam, and I cannot help myself, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" not one ; but thou hast promised in the gospel, to

\* Eph. ii. 20—22. 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

“make all things new,” and in the new covenant thou promisest “a new heart,” Ezek. xxxvi. 26. This is the great mercy, O Lord, I want, and wait for, and I ask thee nothing but what I have under thine own hand in the promise; O that I were partaker of it! yea, thou hast promised “to give thy holy Spirit to them that ask it,” Luke xi. 13. Now thy Spirit can sanctify hearts, as lightning cleanseth the air, as fire refines metals. Lord, seal my soul with the Holy Spirit of promise; put on me thine own stamp, as the seal leaves its impress on the wax. Lord, I shall never be acceptable to thee, profitable to men, or comfortable to myself, except I be renewed and become a new creature, I cannot without this live to any purpose, and I cannot die with any comfort.

*Obj.* But God heareth not sinners, their prayers are abomination.

*Answ.* If you be resolved to go on in a course of sinning, or pray to gratify a sensual appetite, as a thief for a prize, you and your prayers are abominable; but if you be repenting, returning sinners, and pray for grace and pardon, God will pity you, and who knows but he may meet you in mercy, as he did the returning prodigal? Luke xv. 20; “Repent then, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee,” Acts viii. 22. Thou art undone, if thou give over praying; many have sped well at his door, and so mayest thou; still ask, seek, and knock.



## CHAP. XIII.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE WHO ARE INDEED NEW CREATURES.

A THIRD class of directions may be given to sincere Christians (who find, on good evidence, that this change is wrought in them,) how they should live, walk, and conduct themselves in the world, both towards God and man.

1. Use God's appointed means for ascertaining the reality of this new creation. It is one thing to be, another thing to know that we are, new creatures. Alas, some sincere souls walk at uncertainties. A letter may be written, saith one, though it be not sealed : so grace may be written in the soul, though the Spirit hath not set to his seal ; partly to keep the soul humble, partly to punish some sin. But I must not handle the common place of assurance, the possibility, the hindrances, helps, advantages, nature or kinds of assurance, but drop a word by the way. Are the figures of grace engraven upon the dial of your hearts ? pray and wait for the Sun of Righteousness to shine on it, that you may better see what time of day it is in your hearts ; yet, if you grope in the dark, you may feel some characters engraven : " give diligence to make first your calling, then your election sure." Your happiness consists in being, and your comfort in knowing, that you are new creatures ; " and we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end." One text calls for " a full assurance of faith in drawing nigh to God." Another speaks of " assurance of understanding ;" even full assurance, yea, " riches of

full assurance." \* Then indeed thy heart will be comforted to purpose. O labour after much grace, much comfort, for "the joy of the Lord is your strength," Neh. viii. 10, and will cheer up your hearts in every condition and affliction. O brethren, content not yourselves to live at uncertainties, or under doubts, but use all means to attain to the highest pitch of assurance that is attainable in this world.

2. Thank God for the rich mercy displayed in the renovation of your souls. Will you bless God for the good creatures that nourish your bodies? and will you not adore him for this new, and more excellent provision for your inward man? Say as the blessed apostle, 1 Pet. i. 3, "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Next to Christ's blessed undertakings for you, it is the greatest mercy God has vouchsafed to you, to form Christ in your souls. Alas, what were you better than the rest of the corrupt mass of mankind, that lay in the impurities of sin? What merit was there in you, that you should be raised up to sit with princes, even with the princes of his people, to be made like angels? Surely you that are such patterns of mercy, must be trumpets of God's praise; you that were loathsome carcasses, incarnate devils, to be made by this new creation "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; what is this for, but that you should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light?" 1 Pet. ii. 9. O admire free grace, and say with David, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?" 2 Sam. vii. 18. How

\* 2 Pet. i. 10. Heb. vi. 11. x. 22. Col. ii. 2.

many millions of pretending Christians know nothing of this great work, experimentally? this is as life from the dead, infinitely better than natural life, and all the comforts thereof.

3. Beware of declension or apostasy. The new creature is but a creature, it may fail, yea, it will fail, if not supported by an Almighty hand, and if God be provoked, he may justly withdraw, and leave us to ourselves; then we fall as a staff unsupported by the hand. It is true, the covenant secures real saints from falling finally, but imperfect grace leaves them exposed to fall foully, as David, Peter. Be jealous of thyself, "Blessed is he that feareth always." Be not secure, security exposeth to Satan's temptations. Sleep levels all, the wise man is no wiser than a fool to devise his own safety, or the strong man better than the weak to defend himself. The best of saints in spiritual slumber, becomes as Samson, only like another man; "watch that you enter not into temptation." It is worth watching to keep the house from robbing; sleeping one night, may keep thee waking many nights in sorrow, as it did David. The unwatchful Christian oft looseth God's presence, as Christ withdrew from the sleepy spouse. A drowsy soul is not capable of improving Christ or grace: put the sweetest wine into a sleepy man's hand, it will be spilt. And if at any time you begin to nod, rouse up yourselves, gird on your armour, rally your routed forces; "remember whence you are fallen, repent, and do your first works."\* Awake out of your lethargy, lest it end in apostasy: when thou hast fallen, shew that a change has taken place in thee by a rebound upwards, in renewed purposes against sin; recover thy spiritual strength, activity, and familiarity with God; be rest-

\* Prov. xxviii. 14. Matt. xxvi. 41. Cant. v. 2, 6. Rev. ii. 5.

less till matters be set right again; like a bird from its nest, a stone from its centre, or as undigested meat on a sick stomach, having no ease till sin be rejected by a vomit of repentance, and renewed acts of faith. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward," 2 John, 8.

4. Seek earnestly the growth of the new creature. Be not content with the habit; if you say you have enough, you have no grace; your business is to "perfect holiness in the fear of God;" to grow in grace, that "you may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Dead things grow not; children grow, and are fed by what first nourished them, as "new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."\* Be often using the means of nourishment, and you will grow up to further maturity. There is, saith one, much scurf on the face of this new-born babe of grace, which by degrees will wear off as it grows up, and so it becomes distinguishable. Growth helps to see its truth: blow up this spark into a flame, and it will be visible. A hypocrite grows not any more than the hands, arms, legs of a pictured child on the wall, let it be there ever so long. Oh, strive to grow every day better, "to go from strength to strength," Psal. lxxxiv. 7, reaching after perfection in grace; to "run the race set before you;" to get daily more power against corruption. He is a careful and skilful physician that removes the disease, and corroborates or strengthens the body; you must do both. The old man and new creature, are like weights in balances, as the one ascends, the other descends; as the earth and sea, where the one looseth, the other gaineth. Oh, be still on the gaining hand,

\* 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.



improve all mercies, afflictions, ordinances, and providences, for nourishing this new creature in your souls; when you are grown most, you will still be defective, something “will still be lacking in your faith,” love, or humility, 1 Thess. iii. 10. You know but in part, you are not yet ripe.

5. Live up to this change, live at the rate of persons so principled, “walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory, worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called;”—“only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel.” *Only* is here a most comprehensive word: you must act above the style of carnal men, soberly, righteously, and godly.\* If you be singled out to be new creatures, “what singular thing do you?” Matt. v. 47. What do you more than others? Remember, sirs, you are new creatures; an old heart would have served well enough to have done the devil’s drudgery withal; you are new born to higher employment, now you “must serve not in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of spirit,” Rom. vii. 6. When the temple was built with such assiduous care, and costly materials, surely it was for holy use; sincere Christians are God’s “workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works,” Eph. ii. 10. Now it becomes you to act as you are; yours would be aggravated sin, if you sin, who have such a glorious work of the Spirit on your hearts, as none in the world have besides you: you are consecrated persons, and by your sin you profane God’s temple. Others’ sins are theft, yours sacrilege, because you rob God of what was devoted to him. When God breathed such a noble soul into man’s body, he designed him for higher acts than those of mere sense, as brutes. So, Christian, thou art of a higher ex-

\* 1 Thess. ii. 12. Eph. iv. 1. Phil. i. 27. Tit. ii. 12.

traction, than to walk as men, as carnal men, 1 Cor. iii. 3; no, friend, as thou "hast received Christ, so thou must walk in him," Col. ii. 6. O take heed of sin, it is contrary to the divine nature which God hath planted in thee; now we know the more unnatural any act is, the more horrid; as for a woman to kill her own child, or a man to be cruel to his own flesh. Oh beware of killing the babe of grace in thy soul, by sin; but live up to thy principles and privileges.

6. Attend upon God in all his institutions, and in all aim at closer communion with him, in all duties and ordinances, as in hearing the word, prayer, seals of the covenant, christian conference, and communion of saints; this is the air in which the Christian breathes, the most wholesome for this new creature; "Lord," saith the Psalmist, "I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwells;" and he often cries out for the living God; "O when," saith he, "shall I come and appear before God?" Nothing lay nearer David's heart, than God's presence in his ordinances.\* It is or should be so with the new creature; but O wait for the Spirit's wafting over thy soul to Jesus; rest not in ordinances, they are but the boat or bridge to carry thy soul over to God; the ordinance is lost, and thy labour is in vain, if thou do not enjoy God in ordinances. O labour to see Christ "walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks;" be sure you "hold him in the galleries." Ordinances are "the golden pipes that empty the golden oil out of themselves;" be sure that "of his fulness you receive, and grace for grace."† The Holy Ghost sits in ordinances as a minister of state in his office, ready to distribute to every one's case as there is need: thou art at the

\* Psalm xxvi. 8. xlii. 1. lxiii. 1, 2. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

† Rev. ii. 1. Cant. vii. 5. Zech. iv. 12. John i. 16.

right door, wait his leisure, and it shall not be in vain.

7. Endeavour to propagate religion, do what thou canst to make others new creatures, thy relations, neighbours, and all thou art acquainted with; this is the duty, yea, the character of the new creature by prayer, advice, example, and procuring, the help of ministers, or christian friends; it is true, no man can communicate grace to another, it is not in our own power to effect it, but we must endeavour after it. O how Paul was concerned for his countrymen, the wilful unbelieving Jews, Rom. x. 1: his prayers, tears, and wishes, speak him to be their cordial friend, who were his bitter enemies. God commanded Abraham that all his house should be circumcised, to have him go as far as he could to draw them into affinity with God. True grace makes men love relations better than ever, and causeth natural affection to run in a spiritual channel, for the good of their souls. Be concerned to make a jointure of the promises, to thy wife, an entail of the covenant to thy children; this is a thousand times better than leaving them thousands a year. Should not you desire that one heaven may hold those hereafter, whom one house holds now? O tremble to think when your house breaks up, of one going to heaven, another to hell; let your charity extend itself to all you are acquainted with, and let your practice be convincing and winning to all about you. Alas, what multitudes are there, who are unacquainted with this mighty work, yet must feel it, or never be happy; do what thou canst to call in all to this blessed feast, "yet there is room," Luke xiv. 22. Hast thou none thou lovest so well as to wish them thy happiness? There is no envy in spiritual things, the more and happier, and no less cheer; it will add some pearls

to thy crown to win souls. If a neighbour locked himself in a room on design to murder himself, wouldst thou not break open the door and rescue him? O happy souls that are employed and successful in this spiritual charity!

I have long ago, seen a book written by Mr. Reiner of Lincoln, called, "The Rule of the New Creature," to which I refer the reader that can procure it; at present I shall sum up my thoughts in these twenty brief rules of direction.

(1.) Reason justly, and reckon straight; let your reason be regulated by the word of God; it must follow faith, not give law and measure to it. Be sure your accounts be squared by the golden rule of scripture; set all straight against the reckoning day.\*

(2.) Demur at no sufferings for Christ, to avoid sin against Christ; be content to fill up Christ's sufferings; nay, be glad to suffer, but tremble to sin. Sinless sufferings are sweet, but sweet sins will be bitterness in the end.† Bear any thing but sin.

(3.) Profess what you are, and be what you profess. Think not to dissemble among men, for worldly ends; but upon a just cause and call, own godliness; be indeed Nathaniels; pretend not more than truth; God knows the heart.‡

(4.) Serve God for the service itself, not for wages; or rather, let his service be your wages or reward, for so it is, "God himself is the saint's reward." Hypocrites make religion a step to ascend to some other end; let God be thy all.||

(5.) Be most for God, when God seems most against

\* Luke v. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 15. 1 Cor. iv. 3. Rom. xiv. 12.

† Col. i. 24. Matt. v. 11. Heb. xi. 26. Rev. ii. 22.

‡ Rom. x. 10. Matt. x. 32, 33. John i. 47. Heb. iv. 13.

|| Psal. xix. 11. Gen. xv. 1. Matt. vi. 4. Psal. lxxiii. 25.



thee. It is pure faith and love to hang close to an angry God: to conceive most hopes through Christ, when sense and reason make against you, this is a faith to be admired.

(6.) Join pure precepts to precious promises; look on precepts as pure, therefore lovely;\* dare not to divorce them; see to the law within you, and before you, as well as plead the promises of the gospel for you.

(7.) Be best when least in men's sight. God and souls have the most intimate intercourse when alone;† make God your witness, not men only. Friends are most familiar when they are withdrawn from all other company.

(8.) Sail low, but aim high; conclude you have not attained to perfection; but still be designing it, be not high-minded, yet mind highest things, aspire to be better than others, "yet esteem others better than you," Phil. ii. 3, 4.

(9.) Do all you ought, not all you may:‡ walk to the height of a command, not to the utmost bound of lawful liberty, go not near the pit's brink, stand fast in your christian liberty, Gal. v. 1, 13; but do not always use it.

(10.) Be best when others are worst: be as Noah in the old world, Lot in Sodom, Timothy in Ephesus, Joshua among the Israelites; be hottest in the coldest weather, brightest in the darkest night, savour of heaven in hell.||

(11.) Be rational, when most spiritual; do nothing at hap-hazard, or with a blind zeal, let all services be

\* Job xiii. 15. Hos. vi. 3. Matt. xv. 28. Psal. cxix. 140.

† Heb. viii. 10. Rom. vii. 12, 14, 22. Psal. xvii. 3. Matt. vi. 6.

‡ Phil. iii. 13—15. Rom. xii. 3. Eph. v. 15. 1 Cor. x. 23.

|| Gen. vi. 9. Neh. v. 19. v. 15. Phil. ii. 15.

reasonable. God's will is our rule, and his ways are equal; the highest reason in man, is to comply with God's pleasure.

(12.) Naturalize religion, and spiritualize the world; let godliness be as a second nature;\* let common objects and occurrences, mercies and afflictions, be well improved to good ends and purposes; spiritual chymists turn all to gold, Rom. viii. 28.

(13.) Be dead while living, and lively in thoughts of death, Col. iii. 3. Gal. vi. 14. A child of God is a paradox, dead to the world, and crucified, yet the most active and vigorous person in the world: you must have the best death and best life, then fear not death.

(14.) Suit grace to every case: in confessing sin, mourn; in begging mercy, cherish desires; in thanksgiving, joyfulness, yet "rejoice with trembling;" in prosperity, have humility; in adversity, contentment; your foot must still stand in an even place. †

(15.) Let your life be a comment on your faith; let your believing and living be harmonious; let doctrine of faith, grace of faith, life of faith, sweetly correspond, "Doctrine being according to godliness, godliness according to truth;" let not head and hands be at variance. ‡

(16.) Eye God who eyes you in all you do; think the King of heaven sees thee, the omnipresent God is in the room with thee, the omniscient God knows thy heart; approve thy heart to God, let thine eyes be ever towards him, Psal. xxxiv. 15. xxvi. 3.

(17.) Answer to divine calls, when God hath a mouth to speak, have an ear to hear, and a tongue to say,

\* Rom. xii. 1. Ezek. xviii. 29. 2 Pet. i. 4. Phil. ii. 20.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 31, 55. Heb. ii. 15. Psal. xxxviii. 18. Matt. v. 4. Psal. ii. 11. Phil. i. 3, 4. Psal. xxvi. 12.

‡ James ii. 18. 1 Tim. i. 5. Tit. i. 1. Rom. ii. 18, 23, 24.

here I am. Hear the word or rod, a call to duty or from sin; ask what is the meaning of this? O that I could attain God's end, and not resist or "quench the Holy Spirit."\*

(18.) Observe and make up daily decays, keep on your watch that you sin not; but if you sin, remain not in it, but rise, mourn, and act faith on Christ, your great advocate, let not an ill matter go on quickly, recover your first love, Rev. ii. 4, 5.

(19.) Give no offence carelessly, and take no offence causelessly; let there be "no occasion of stumbling in you;" judge not uncharitably, take all that is said and done in good part; make no sinister constructions.†

(20.) When you have done all, say, all this is as nothing to appease God's wrath, or satisfy justice, in an absolute sense, or to do what is required in a comparative sense, "without Christ I can do nothing."‡

## CHAP. XIV.

### ANSWERS TO SOME CASES OF CONSCIENCE.

4. THE last thing proposed under this division was to answer some cases of conscience which pious people are ready to introduce, when this subject is brought forward.

1 *Case.* Whether it is possible that a man be a new creature, and not know it, since it is so remarkable a change?

\* 1 Sam. iii. 10. Psal. xxvii. 8. Mic. vi. 9. 1 Thess. v. 19.

† Matt. xxvi. 41. 1 John ii. 1, 10. Matt. vii. 1.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 32. Luke xvii. 10. Phil. iii. 7, 8. John xv. 5.

*Answ.* I have hinted at this before, but observe it, you must distinguish between a reflexive sense of a change in heart and life, and a due apprehension of this change morally considered as saving; many a person can truly say, something hath been done, but I know not whether that which may be entitled a new creation, I am much in the dark about it; I cannot but say, I have had convictions, and something like conversion, though not consolation; I am kept still in dependance upon a promise, though I cannot say I have assurance of my interest in the covenant. Precious Mr. Paul Bains could say, "Sustentation I have, but suavities spiritual I do not experience." So you may have the root, though not the flower; water of sanctification, though not the oil of gladness; wait on God, and in due time you may have this cleared up to you; if "you follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning," Hos. vi. 3. Grace and peace shall not be long parted; "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart," Psal. xcvii. 11. It is not lost, but laid up and hid in the furrows of the believer's bosom.

2 *Case.* Is it possible that he who is a new creature, should have a self-accusing, self-condemning conscience?

*Answ.* You must distinguish respecting the conscience of a man condemning himself.

(1.) It may be passively, when our hearts censure us, and we stifle convictions, such a one indeed is self-condemned.

(2.) If we be active in condemning ourselves, it is a good sign, and a great duty, as we shewed before; but this query, refers to the state of a man, whether the conscience of a new creature may censure the real Christian, and condemn him as a hypocrite? To which I answer, If conscience act according to the rule of



the word, it must be regarded as God's officer, speaking by his authority, but if it speak not in God's name, and by his order, we may appeal to the higher court of the holy scriptures, and it is certain that conscience may be corrupted, and is often used by Satan, to deceive good men as well as bad, and they shall at last have their action against Satan for false imprisonment, and disturbing their peace. Your safest way therefore is to have recourse to the word, for conscience is but an under officer, and must be accountable for its verdict. Remember, it is one thing to have hypocrisy in thy heart, another thing to be a hypocrite; the best will find much guilt within them, which conscience rebukes them for, while they bewail it; but they are not therefore hypocrites.

3 *Case.* Whether God may conduct himself austere-ly as if he were an enemy to a new creature, that should seem to be dear to him?

*Ans.* Thou art a stranger to scripture, and the experience of all God's children, if thou think God must always be dandling this new creature on his knee, or giving it his embraces; no, no, he hath reserved the best things for the upper table in heaven; there is great reason that thou shouldst have his frowns, as well as smiles, to humble thy heart, exercise thy graces, discover the necessity of Christ, and the desirableness of heaven. God can and may, without any impediment to his love, hide it for a season from his own dearest child. David indeed called in question God's love and faithfulness, when he hid his face; but at last, he found that it was his infirmity, and doubtless, lamented it as his sin. God hath given abundant security in his promises of his love without present sense; you must not think much at him, if he do not come to visit you, and take you up in his arms as oft

as you would have him. Thou needest some operative physic as well as cordials; a son may merit a frown, as well as a smile from his father. God is a free agent; but it is well thou art so sensible of his access and recess, his smiles and frowns; it is a sign of some spiritual life in thy soul.

4 *Case.* But you said the new creature grows; I find it otherwise, I cannot see that I grow in grace, nay, I decline and go backwards, what think you of that?

I answer, As the Christian grows in grace, so he grows in light to discover his state; he sees more depravity in himself, and is still more sensible of decays in grace, which keeps him humble, self-denying and vile in his own eyes; that is growth too, bless God for it: but observe it, grains of allowance must be given to old age, when natural parts decay, and persons may not be so quick and lively as formerly, yet may be more solid and increasing in experience. Mr. Greenham said, "It is a hard and rare thing to keep up young zeal with old discretion." Dost thou not keep up a more constant course of duty, and cherish more settled resolutions for God? Is not thy heart more deadened to the world, and taken up with things unseen? art thou not more composed under afflictions? dost thou not more clearly discover and bewail spiritual sins? dost thou not long more after the good of relations, take more delight in God's word, breathe after more of God's presence in ordinances? Speak out, man, deal faithfully, bear not false witness against thyself; yet it is true, the growing tree meets with a fall of the leaf, and a sharp winter; still doth a spring come, and it grows in the summer. Peter's fall became the means of recruiting him to greater boldness for God; but I hope thou art "not a backslider in

heart," to dislike the ways of God; thou art but "overtaken with a sin," against thy strong purposes. When thou "sleepest, doth not thy heart wake?" Thou art not pleased with this declining state; "thy spirit is willing, but thy flesh is weak."\*

5 *Case.* But, alas, I have such strong, impetuous, yea, imperious workings of corruption in my heart, as never any had that hath a principle of grace; none like me. Is it possible I should be a new creature?

I answer, The "heart knows its own bitterness," and wickedness, Prov. xiv. 10. Every gracious soul thinks his own heart the worst, because he knows it best. But who told thee that thy heart was so bad? was it always thus with thee? was there not a time when thou thoughtest thy heart was as good as any one's? is it not spiritual light that makes these unusual discoveries? "Whatsoever doth make manifest, is light." Did not sin "revive upon the coming of the commandment?" But friend, let me ask thee; Dost thou think that upon the planting of this new principle in the soul, sin should be utterly extirpated, and that thou shouldst hear no more of it? Dost thou not find even blessed Paul, "groaning still under a body of death?" Will not the flesh still "lust against the Spirit?"† Surely thou knowest little of a Christian state, if thou imaginest a total immunity from the body and indwelling of sin, in this world. It is well if sin be not upon the throne, though thou hast it in the field to fight with; the gospel privilege is, "sin shall not have dominion over thee, because thou art under grace," Rom. vi. 14.

6 *Case.* But what will you say of a man that can-

\* Prov. xiv. 14. Gal. vi. 1. Cant v. 2. Matt. xxvi. 41.

† Eph. v. 13. Rom. vii. 9. Rom. vii. 21. Gal. v. 17.

not give a precise account of the time and manner of this divine change taking place in his heart, that never had such terrors as some have ?

I answer, Will any say that the river Nile is no river, because men never found out the head of it ? God is a free agent, and hath different seasons and manners of working. Some have been wrought upon in their younger days, they were religiously educated, and never stept aside into gross sins, and God steals in gently with them, he opens their hearts as he did Lydia's, Acts xvi. 14. and gently attracts them to himself, picking the lock, as it were, without much noise ; whereas he breaks the wards in others, with overwhelming convictions, as he has dealt with Paul, and Luther, and others, among whom Mr. Bolton may be mentioned. Some are of mild and gentle natures, and God sees they cannot bear hard blows, which some others need, who are of sturdy and stubborn spirits. Do not murmur, but thank God that he hath come so sweetly into thy soul ; he knows thy frame and constitution. See the work be there, and a scriptural work, and leave God to his liberty. But this thou canst say through grace, it is not with thee now, as it hath been ; as the blind man said, I may be ignorant of some circumstances, " but one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," John ix. 25. Things are otherwise represented to me, and my spirit working otherwise within than formerly ; so that I may say as Rebecca with her twins in her womb, " if it be so, or not so, why am I thus ?"

7 *Case.* But alas, nobody knows what a frame of spirit I have in my prayers, such distractions and wanderings from God, as cannot be consistent with a spiritual change : what think you ?

*Ans.* It is sad thing, that such vermin should



crawl in God's sanctuary, especially when thou art in God's immediate worship. But dost thou approve of them, and make them welcome? are they not troublesome guests? do they not forcibly assault thee, as so many unmannerly visitants? Suppose in your family as you are kneeling in prayer, a noisy, boisterous rabble stand under your window, roaring and hallooing, though it disturb you, would you thence question your sincerity in the duty? And it is all one, whether the disturbance be in the room or in the bosom, since both are disliked as a burden to thee. I often reflect on a passage I read many years ago,\* "The good Lord keep the hearts of his people under a due sense of their distractions, for they are never like to be rid of them while they live." Thou dost reckon thyself to be as in the belly of hell with Jonah, while thou art yoked with such thoughts and sendest many a deep groan to heaven against them, and sometimes dost obtain some help against them, and gettest near thy God in duty.

I shall however add no more of these cases, but only two words as a close of this discourse, for if poor doubting souls would, instead of their complainings and objections, but do these things, it would tend more to their satisfaction, and the glory of God.

(1.) That they would spend that time in examining their own consciences, which they take up in fruitless complaints. Alas, many professors have got a method of whining and complaining to ministers and christian friends, and think to be better thought of for such complaints; but this is a sad judgment of God, for persons to "pine away in their iniquity, and yet mourn one towards another," Ezek. xxiv. 23. If persons would spend such time in searching their own consciences

\* Mr. Thomas Shepard Treat. on Distraction.

and conversation, it would tend more to clear up the sincerity of their hearts, and a saving work of grace. Begin, sirs, enter into your closets, commune with your own hearts, deal faithfully and effectually; put not off yourselves with unproved conceits and groundless imaginations, but go through with the work: ransack your hearts, they are your own; be not put off with such mannerly excuses as Rachel's: take such an account as you must give to God: let no darling sin escape your view, or the least grace be denied with any scorn or disregard. When David "thought of God, he was troubled," and expresseth many discontented murmurings; but when "he communed with his own heart," he clears God, and condemns his unbelief, indicts the thief, and clears his conscience of that troublesome Jonah in his bosom. This plain dealing evidenceth a Christian's state sooner than wrangling; and yet if still thou art at a loss, appeal to God, and say as Job, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked;" or, as Peter, "Thou knowest that I love thee;" or, as David, "Do not I hate them that hate thee? Search me, O God, and know my heart." \* As wise physicians trust not their own judgment about their own health, so the saint knows God's line reacheth lower than his own, and to his judgment he will stand.

(2.) Instead of complaining, commence vigorously the work of sanctification, to mortify the deeds of the body, "to cut off a right hand, and pluck out a right eye," Matt. v. 29. When you have searched out the leaven, purge it out, "1 Cor. v. 7. Lay aside "every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset you," Heb. xii. 1. Run the sword of the Spirit to the heart of every lust; "lay the axe to the root of the Psal lxxvii. 3, 6. Job x. 7. John xxi. 15. Psal. cxxxix. 21, 23.

tree;" cut up sin by the roots. If a vain thought, a proud, sensual, worldly, passionate thought arise in your hearts, suppress it, militate against it, "crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. So will you evidence yourselves to be Christ's, 2 Cor. vii. 1; be daily "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Observe wherein you missed it in such a duty, and be still improving, as Apelles, when he had drawn a picture, was ever and anon spying defects, and then altering with his pencil; so do you. Observe when conscience speaks such language as the following: Oh my soul, in such a duty thou wast cold, distracted, unbelieving, hard, and vain; in such an affliction thou wast froward, peevish, and discontented; in such a company thou spakest idly, or wast guilty of sinful silence; in the enjoyment of such a mercy, or in thy prosperous state, how proud wast thou, secure, self-conceited, and slighting others! Oh mourn for these faults, watch against them for the future; walk more closely with God, maintain daily intercourse with him and your own consciences; thereby you will be better acquainted with God and your own souls, and discern better how your principles operate; "for if you walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon you," Gal. vi. 16. Hence the blessed apostle's words, 2 Cor. i. 12, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." Dying Hezekiah could plead this with God in his appeal, Isa. xxxviii. 3.

Oh sirs, learn to exercise every grace in every duty; the exercise of grace is the clearest evidence of grace, both to ourselves and others; as the man who confuted his antagonist, that disputed against motion, by starting up and walking. So do you walk with

God, "hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments," 1 John ii. 3, 6. If you walk as he walked, you evidence that you abide in him; as he "which hath called you is holy," so be "ye holy in all manner of conversation," 1 Pet. i. 15. If you expect that God's Spirit will witness with your spirits, and so subscribe your certificate for heaven, you must be uniform and universal in your course of godliness, both in your worship and walking, walking before God, and with God, Gen. v. 24. xvii. 1. Then indeed will you be found upright or perfect; but if thou hast any close drawer in the cabinet of thy heart, wherein thou secretest any beloved sin, or if thou delayest in thy journey along heaven's road, by idleness, sleeping, or backsliding, and losing thy first love, then no wonder if thou canst not discern the impress of God's image upon thy soul, but callest thy very state into question.

Yet above all, I advise thee to shut the mouth of conscience, with that only which has satisfied the justice of God. Nothing can reconcile a man to himself, but that which reconciled God and man.

It was Dr. Sibbs' advice, When the water of sanctification runs muddy, betake yourselves to the blood of justification. There, there must lie your comfort, and confidence, by this only must you answer all the objections raised by Satan and conscience, from justice, law, or whatsoever opposeth your peace, arising from the defects and imperfections of grace or this new creation within you: and indeed, the best of us must anchor and centre here, as to our justification, acceptance with God, or composedness of conscience.

Come then, let us go, in this gospel-way, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 24. Amen, so be it.



