

## SERMON XXV.

## Of the Nature and Necessity of 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.*

**Y**OU have seen one trial of an interest in Christ, in our last discourse, namely, by the donation of the Spirit. We have here another trial of the same matter, from one of the greatest, and most noble effects of the Spirit upon our souls; namely, his work of renovation, or *new creation*: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The apostle’s scope in the immediate context, is to dissuade Christians from a carnal, sinful partiality, in their respects to men: Not to despise them after the manner of the world, according to the external differences, but the real internal worth and excellency that is in men. This the apostle presses by two arguments; one drawn from the end of Christ’s death, ver. 15. which was to take off from these selfish designs and carnal ends by which the whole world is swayed. *Secondly*, From the *new spirit*, by which believers are actuated: they that are in Christ are to judge and measure all things by a new rule: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are passed away;” q. d. we have done with that low, selfish spirit of the world, which was wholly governed by carnal interest; we are now to judge by a new rule, to be actuated from a new principle, aim at a new and more noble end; “Behold, all things are become new.” In these words we have three general parts, to be distinctly considered, viz.

1. The great question to be determined, “If any man be in Christ?”

2. The rule by which it may be determined, viz. “he is a new creature.”

3. This general rule more particularly explained, “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

*First*, We have here the great question to be determined, Whether a man be in Christ? A question upon the determination whereof, we must stand, or fall for ever. By [*being in Christ*] the apostle doth not here mean the general profession of Christianity, which gives a man the *reputation* of an interest in him; but by *being in Christ*, he means an interest in him, by *vital union* with his person, and real participation of his benefits. Now this is the question to be determined, the matter to be tried; than which, nothing can be more solemn and important in the whole world.

*Secondly*, The rule by which this great question may be determined, viz. *The new creation*; “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” By this rule all the titles and claims made to Christ in the professing world, are to be examined. [*If any man*] be he what he will, high or low, great or small, learned or illiterate, young or old, if he pretend interest in Christ, this is the standard by which he must be tried: if he be in Christ, he is *a new creature*; and if he be not *a new creature*, he is not in Christ, let his endowments, gifts, confidence, and reputation be what they will: [*A new creature*] not new physically, he is the same person he was; but a new creature, that is, a creature renewed by gracious principles, newly infused into him from above, which sway him and guide him in another manner, and to another end than ever he acted before; and these gracious principles not being educed out of any thing which was pre-existent in man, but infused *de novo*, from above, are therefore called, in this place, a new creature: This is the rule by which our claim to Christ must be determined.

*Thirdly*, This general rule is here more particularly explained; “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” He satisfies not himself to lay down this rule concisely, or express it in general terms, by telling us, the man in Christ must be a new creature; but more particularly, he shews us what this new creature is, and what the parts thereof are, viz. Both

1. The privative part; “Old things are passed away.”

2. The positive part thereof; “All things are become new.”

By old things, he means all those carnal principles, self-ends, and fleshly lusts belonging to the carnal state, or the old man: all these are *passed away*; “\* not simply, and perfectly, but only in part at present, and wholly in hope and expectation hereafter.” So much briefly of the privative part of the new creature, “Old things are passed away.” A word or two must be spoken of the *positive* part; “All things are become new.” He means not that the old faculties of the soul are abolished, and new ones created in their room; but as our bodies may be said to be new bodies, by reason of their new endowments and qualities super-induced, and bestowed upon them in their resurrection, so our souls are now renewed by the infusion of new gracious principles into them, in the work of regeneration. These two parts, viz. the *privative* part, the passing away of old things; and the *positive* part, the renewing of all things, do, betwixt them, comprize the whole nature of sanctification, which, in other scriptures, is expressed by equivalent phrases; sometimes by putting off the old, and putting on

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\* *Non simpliciter, et perfecte, sed partim spe.* Estius in loc.

the new man, Eph. iv. 24. sometimes by dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness, Rom. vi. 11. which is the self-same thing the apostle here intends, by the passing away of old things, and making all things new. And because this is the most excellent, glorious, and admirable work of the Spirit, which is, or can be wrought upon man in this world; therefore the apostle asserts it with an *ecce*, a note of special remark and observation, "Behold, all things are become new;" *q. d.* Behold and admire this surprising, marvellous change which God hath made upon men; they are come out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. out of the old, as it were, into a new world; "Behold, all things are become new." Hence note,

*Doct. That God's creating of a new supernatural work of grace in the soul of any man, is that man's sure, and infallible evidence of a saving interest in Jesus Christ.*

Suitable hereunto are those words of the apostle, Eph. iv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind: and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Where we have, in other words of the same importance, the very self-same description of the man that is in Christ, which the apostle gives us in this text. Now, for the opening and stating of this point, it will be necessary that I shew you,

1. Why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation.
2. In what respect every soul that is in Christ is renewed, or made a new creature.
3. What are the remarkable properties and qualities of this new creature.
4. The necessity of this new creation to all that are in Christ.
5. How this new creation evidences our interest in Christ.
6. And then apply the whole in the proper uses of it.

*First*, Why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation. This must be our first enquiry. And, doubtless, the reason of this appellation is the analogy, proportion, and similitude which is found betwixt the work of regeneration, and God's work in the first creation. And their agreement and proportion will be found in the following particulars.

*First*, The same almighty Author who created the world,

createth also this work of grace in the soul of man, 2 Cor. iv. 6. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The same powerful word which created the natural, createth also the spiritual light. \* It is equally absurd for any man to say, I make myself to repent, or to believe, as it is to say, I made myself to exist, and be.

*Secondly*, The first thing that God created in the natural world, was light, Gen. i. 3. and the first thing which God createth in the new creation, is the light of spiritual knowledge, Col. iii. 10. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

*Thirdly*, Creation is out of nothing; it requires no pre-existent matter; it doth not bring one thing out of another, but something out of nothing; it gives a being to that which before had no being: So it is also in the new creation, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. "Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." The work of grace is not educed out of the power and principles of nature, but it is a pure work of creation. The Heathen philosophers could neither understand, nor acknowledge the creation of the world, because that notion was repugnant to this maxim of reason, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing, nothing can be made. Thus did they *insanire cum ratione*, befool themselves with their own reasonings; and after the same manner some great pretenders to reason among us, voting it an absurdity to affirm, that the work of grace is not virtually and potentially contained in nature, the new creation in the old.

*Fourthly*, It was the virtue and efficacy of the Spirit of God, which gave the natural world its being by creation; Gen. i. 2. the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; it hovered over the *chaos*, as the wings of a bird do over her eggs, as the same word is rendered, Deut. xxxii. 11. cherishing, as it were by incubation, that rude mass by a secret quickening influence, by which it drew all creatures into their several forms, and particular natures: So it is in the new creation; a quickening influence must come from the Spirit of God, or else the new creation can never be formed in us; John iii. 8. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." And ver. 6. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit."

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\* *Minus est, te fecisse hominem, quam sanctum*, i. e. We may sooner make ourselves men, than saints..

*Fifthly*, The word of God was the instrument of the first creation; Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth: For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." The word of God is also the instrument of the new creation, or work of grace in man; 1 Pet. i. 23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; by the word of God, which liveth, and abideth for ever." So James i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." *Of his own will*; that was the impulsive cause; with the *word of truth*; that was the instrumental cause. Great respect and honour, love, and delight, is due to the word upon this account, that it is the instrument of our regeneration, or new creation.

*Sixthly*, The same power which created the world, still underprops and supports it in its being: the world owes its conservation, as well as its existence, to the power of God, without which it could not subsist one moment. Just so it is with the new creation, which entirely depends upon the preserving power, which first formed it; Jude ver. 1. "Preserved in Christ Jesus," and 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." As in a natural way "we live, move, and have our being in God," Acts xvii. 28. so in a spiritual way, we continue believing, repenting, loving, and delighting in God; without whose continued influence upon our souls, we could do neither.

*Seventhly*, In a word, God surveyed the first creation with complacence and great delight; he beheld the works of his hands, and approved them as very good, Gen. i. 31. So this also in the second creation; nothing pleaseth and delights God more than the works of grace in the souls of his people. It is not an outward privilege of nature, or gift of providence, which commends any man to God; "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but a new creature," Gal. vi. 15. And thus you see upon what grounds the work of regeneration in man is stiled a new creature; which was the first thing to be opened.

*Secondly*, Next we must enquire, in what respects every soul that is in Christ is renewed, or made a new creature: and here we shall find a threefold renovation of every man that is in Christ, viz.

1. In his state and condition.
2. In his frame and constitution.
3. In his practice and conversation.

*First*, He is renewed in his state and condition: for he passeth from death to life in his justification, 1 John iii. 14. He was condemned by the law, he is now justified freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ: he was under the curse of the first

covenant; he is under the blessing of the new covenant: he was afar off, but is now made nigh unto God; an alien, a stranger once, now of the household of God, Eph. ii. 12, 13. O blessed change, from a sad to a sweet and comfortable condition! "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

*Secondly*, Every man in Christ is renewed in his frame and constitution; all the faculties and affections of his soul are renewed by regeneration: his understanding was dark, but now is light in the Lord, Eph. v. 8. his conscience was dead and secure, or full of guilt and horror, but is now become tender, watchful, and full of peace, Heb. ix. 14. his will was rebellious, stubborn, and inflexible; but is now made obedient and complying with the will of God, Psal. cx. 2. his desires did once pant and spend themselves in the pursuit of vanities, now they are set upon God, Isa. xxvi. 8. his love did fondly dote upon ensnaring earthly objects, now it is swallowed up in the infinite excellencies of God and Christ, Psal. cxix. 97. his joy was once in trifles and things of nought, now his rejoicing is in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 3. his fears once were about noxious creatures, now God is the object of the fear of reverence, Acts ix. 31. and sin the object of the fear of caution, 2 Cor. vii. 11. his hopes and expectations were only from the world present, but now from that to come, Heb. vi. 19. Thus the soul in its faculties and affections is renewed; which being done, the members and senses of the body must needs be destined and employed by it in new services; no more to be the weapons of unrighteousness, but instruments of service to Jesus Christ, Rom. vi. 19. And thus all that are in Christ are renewed in their frame and constitution.

*Thirdly*, The man in Christ is renewed in his practice and conversation: the manner of operation always follows the nature of beings. Now the regenerate not being what they were, cannot walk and act as once they did; Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. "And you hath he quickened, who were once dead in trespasses and sins; wherein ye walked according to the course of this world." They were carried away, like water by the strength of the tide, by the influence of their own corrupt natures, and the customs and examples of the world; but the case is now altered. So in 1 Cor. vi. 11. the apostle shews believers their old companions in sin, and tells them, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," &c. q. d. the world is now well altered with you, thanks be to the grace of God for it. This wonderful change of practice, which is so universal and remarkable in all the regenerate, and immediately consequent upon their conversion, sets the world a wondering at them; 1 Pet. iv. 4. Wherein they think it

strange, that you run not “with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. They think it strange:” \* The word signifies to stand and gaze, as the hen doth which hath brooded, and hatched partridge eggs, when she seeth the chickens which she hath brought forth, take the wing and fly away from her. Thus do the men of the world stand amazed to see their old companions in sin, whose language once was vain and earthly, it may be, profane and filthy, now to be praying, speaking of God, heaven, and things spiritual, having no more to do with them, as to sin, except by way of reprehension and admonition: this amazes the world, and makes them look with a strange admiring eye upon the people of God.

*Thirdly*, In the next place let us enquire into the properties and qualities of this new creature, and shew you, as we are able, what they are; yet, reader, expect not here an exact and accurate account of that which is so great a mystery; for if questions may be moved about a silly fly, which may puzzle the greatest philosopher to resolve them; how much more may we conceive this great and marvellous work of God, the most mysterious and admirable of all his works, to surmount the understandings of the most illuminated Christians? O how little do we know of the nature, properties, and operations of this new creature! So far as God hath revealed it to our weak understandings, we may speak of it. And,

*First*, The scripture speaks of it as a thing of great difficulty to be conceived by man, John iii. 8. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The original of winds is a question of great difficulty in philosophy: We hear the voice of the wind, feel its mighty force, and behold its strange effects; but neither know whence it comes, or whither it goes. Ask a man, Do you hear the wind blow? Yes. Do you feel it blow? Yes, very sensibly. Do you see the effects of it, rending and overturning the trees? Yes, very plainly. But can you describe its nature, or declare its original? No, that is a mystery which I do not understand. Why just so it is with him that is born of the Spirit. The holy Spirit of God, whose nature and operations we understand but little of, comes from heaven, quickens and influences our souls, beats down and mortifies our lusts by his Almighty Power: These effects of the Spirit in us we experimentally feel, and sensibly discern: But

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\* *Εν ᾧ ξεπιζονται*, i. e. Then stand amazed, as at the sight of an uncommon thing. *Bern.* *Ils se trouvent tous nouveaux, et comme en un autre monde*, i. e. They find themselves all new, and as in another world.

how the Spirit of God first entered into, and quickened our souls, and produced this new creature in them, we understand little more of it than how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, Eccles. xi. 5. Therefore is the life of the new creature called a hidden life, Col. iii. 3. The nature of that life is not only hidden totally from all carnal men, but in a very great measure it is an hidden and unknown life unto spiritual men, though themselves be the subjects of it.

*Secondly,* But though this life of the new creature be a great mystery, and secret in some respects; yet so far as it is known, and appears unto us, the new creature is the most *beautiful* and lovely creature that ever God made; for the beauty of the Lord himself is upon it: "The new man is created after God," Eph. iv. 24. As the picture is drawn after the man, it is a draught of God himself delineated by the Spirit, that admirable Artist, upon the soul of man. Holiness is the beauty and glory of God; and in holiness the new creature is created after God's own image, Col. iii. 10. The regenerate soul hereby becomes holy, 1 John iii. 3. not *essentially* holy, as God is, nor yet *efficiently* holy; for the regenerate soul can neither make itself, nor others holy: But the life of the new creature may be said to resemble the life of God in this, that as God lives to himself, so the new creature wholly lives to God; as God loves holiness, and hates the contrary, so doth the new creature; it is in these things formed *after the image of God that created it*. When God creates this creature in the soul of man, we are said then to be "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. So that there can be nothing communicated unto men which beautifies and adorns their souls as this new creation doth: Men do not resemble God as they are noble, and as they are rich, but as they are holy: no gift, no endowment of nature embellishes the soul as this new creature doth: An awful Majesty sits upon the brow of the new creature, commanding the greatest and worst of men to do homage to it, Mark vi. 20. Yea, such is the beauty of the new creature, that Christ, its *author*, is also its *admirer*, Cant. iv. 2. "Thou hast ravished mine heart with one of thine eyes."

*Thirdly,* This new creature is created in man, upon the highest design that ever any work of God was wrought: the end of its creation and infusion is high and noble: salvation to the soul in which it is wrought; this is both the *finis operis*, and the *finis operantis*: It is the design both of the work and of the workman that wrought it. When we receive the end of our faith, we receive the salvation of our souls; salvation is the end of faith: as death is the end of sin, so life eternal is the end of grace. The new creature doth, by the instinct and steady direction of its own nature, take its course as directly to God, and to heaven, the place of its full



enjoyment, as the rivers do to the ocean; it declares itself to be made for God, by its restless workings after him; and as salvation is the end of the new creature, so it is the express design and end of him that created it. 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God;" by this workmanship of his upon our souls, he is now polishing, preparing, and "making them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. i. 12.

*Fourthly*, This new creation is the most necessary work that ever God wrought upon the soul of man: the eternal well-being of his soul depends upon it; and without it no man shall see God, Heb. xii. 14. and John i. 3, 5. "Except ye be regenerate, and born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God." Can you be saved without Christ? You know you cannot. Can you have interest in Christ without the new creature? My text expressly tells you it can never be; for, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." O reader, whatever slight thoughts of this matter, and with what a careless and unconcerned eye soever thou readest these lines; yet know thou must either be a new creature, or a miserable and damned creature for ever. If civility without the new creature could save thee, why are not the *moral Heathens* saved also? If strictness of life without the new creature could save thee, why did it not save the Scribes and Pharisees also? If an high profession of religion without the new creature can save thee, why did it not save Judas, Hymenæus and Philetus also? Nothing is more evident than this, that no repentance, obedience, self-denial, prayers, tears, reformations or ordinances, without the new creation, avail any thing to the salvation of thy soul: The very blood of Christ himself, without the new creature, never did, and never will save any man. Oh how necessary a work is the new creation! "Circumcision avails nothing, and uncircumcision nothing: but a new creature."

*Fifthly*, The new creature is a marvellous and wonderful creature: there are many wonders in the first creation, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein," Psal. cxi. 2. But there are no wonders in nature, like those in grace. Is it not the greatest wonder that ever was seen in the world, (except the incarnation of the Son of God) to see the nature and temper of man so altered and changed as it is by grace? to see *lascivious Corinthians*, and *idolatrous Ephesians*, become mortified and heavenly Christians? to see a fierce and cruel persecutor, become a glorious confessor and sufferer for Christ? Gal. i. 23. to see the carnal mind of man, which was lately fully set in a strong bent to the world, to be wholly taken off from its lusts, and set upon things that are spiritual and heavenly? Certainly it

was not a greater miracle to see dead Lazarus come out of his *sepulchre*, than it is to see the dead and carnal mind coming out of its lusts to embrace Jesus Christ; it was not a greater wonder to see the dead and dry bones in the valley to move and come together, than it is to see a dead soul moving after God, and moving to Christ in the way of faith.

*Sixthly*, The new creature is an *immortal creature*, a creature that shall never see death, John iv. 14. it is in the soul of man, a well of water, springing up unto eternal life. I will not adventure to say, it is immortal in its own nature, for it is but a creature, as my text calls it; and we know, that essential interminability is the incommunicable property of God: The new creature hath both a beginning and succession; and therefore might also have an end, as to any thing in itself, or its own nature. Experience also shews us, that it is capable both of increasing and decreasing, and may be brought nigh unto death, Rev. iii. 2. The work of the Spirit in believers, *may be ready to die*; but though its perpetuity flow not out of its own nature, it flows out of God's covenant and promises, which make it an immortal creature: when all other excellencies in man go away, as at death they will, Job iv. 21. this excellency only remains: our gifts may leave us, our friends leave us, our estates leave us, but our graces will never leave us; they ascend with the soul (in which they inhere) into glory, when the stroke of death separates it from the body.

*Seventhly*, The new creature is an *heavenly creature*; "It is not born of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. its descent and original is heavenly, it is spirit born of spirit, John iii. 6. its centre is heaven, and thither are all its tendencies, Psal. lxxiii. 8. its proper food, on which it lives, are heavenly things, Psal. iv. 6, 7. It cannot feed, as other creatures do, upon earthly things; the object of all its delight and love is in heaven, Psal. lxxiii. 26. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The hopes and expectations of the new creature are all from heaven; it looks for little in this world, but waits for the coming of the Lord. The life of the new creature upon earth, is a life of patient waiting for Christ; his desires and longings are after heaven, Phil. i. 93. The flesh indeed lingers, and would delay, but the new creature hastens, and would fain be gone, 2 Cor. v. 2. It is not at home whilst it is here; it came from heaven, and cannot be quiet, nor suffer the soul, in which it dwells, to be so, until it comes thither again.

*Eighthly*, The new creature is an active and laborious creature; no sooner is it born, but it is acting in the soul. Acts ix. 6. *Behold he prayeth!* Activity is its very nature. Gal. v. 25. "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." Nor is it to be

admired, that it should be always active and stirring in the soul, seeing activity in obedience was the very end for which it was created. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. and he that is acted in the duties of religion, by this principle of the new creature, or nature, will (so far as that principle acts him) delight to do the will of God; rejoice in the way of his commandment, and find the sweetest pleasure in the paths of duty.

*Ninthly*, The new creature is a *thriving creature*, growing from strength to strength, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and changing the soul in which it is subjected, from glory unto glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The vigorous tendencies, and constant striving of this new creature, are to attain its just perfection and maturity, Phil. iii. 11. It can endure no stints and limits to its desire, short of perfection; every degree of strength it attains, doth but whet and sharpen its desires after higher degrees: Upon this account, it greatly delights in the ordinances of God, duties of religion, and society of the saints; as they are helps and improvements to it, in order to its great design.

*Tenthly*, The new creature, is a *creature of wonderful preservations\**: There are many wonders of divine providence in the preservation of our natural lives, but none like those whereby the life of the new creature is preserved in our souls: There are critical times of temptation and desertion, in which it is ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. the degrees of its strength and liveliness, are sometimes sadly abated, and its sweet and comfortable workings intermitted, Rev. ii. 4. the evidences by which its being in us was wont to be discovered, may be, and often are darkened, 2 Pet. i. 9. and the soul in which it is may draw very sad conclusions about the issue and event; concluding its life not only to be hazarded, but quite extinguished, Psal. li. 10, 11, 12. but though it be ready to die, God wonderfully preserves it from death; it hath as well its reviving, as its fainting seasons. And thus you see, what are the lovely and eximious properties of the new creature. In the next place,

*Fourthly*, We will demonstrate the necessity of this new creation to all that are in Christ, and by him expect to attain salvation; and the necessity of the new creature will appear divers ways.

*First*, From the positive and express will of God, revealed in

\* Grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally lost, but there may be an omission of the act, though not an omission of the habit; the act may be perverted, though faith cannot be subverted; it may be shaken, though not shaken out; its fruits may fall, but its sap lies hid in the root; the effect of justification may be suspended, but the state of the justified cannot be dissolved.  
*Suffrag. Brit.*

scripture, touching this matter: Search the scriptures, and you shall find God hath laid the whole stress and weight of your eternal happiness, by Jesus Christ, upon this work of the Spirit in your souls. So our Saviour tells Nicodemus, John iii. 5. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Agreeable whereunto are those words of the apostle, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And whereas some may think, that their birth-right privileges, enjoyment of ordinances, and profession of religion, may commend them to God's acceptance, without this new creation; he shews them how fond and ungrounded all such hopes are. Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Christ and heaven are the gifts of God, and he is at liberty to bestow them, upon what terms and conditions he pleaseth: and this is the way, the only way, and stated method in which he will bring men, by Christ, unto glory. Men may raze out the impressions of these things from their own hearts, but they can never alter the settled course and method of salvation. Either we must be new creatures, as the precept of the word command us, or lost, and damned creatures, as the threatenings of the word plainly tell us.

*Secondly*, This new creation, is the inchoative part of that great salvation which we expect through Christ, and therefore, without this, all hopes and expectations of salvation must vanish. Salvation, and renovation, are inseparably connected. Our glory in heaven, if we rightly understand its nature, consisteth in two things; namely, our assimilation to God, and our fruition of God: and both these take their beginning and rise from our renovation in this world. Here we begin to be changed into his image, in some degree, 2 Cor. iii. 18. for the new man is created *after God*, as was opened above. In the work of grace, God is said to *begin that good work*, which is to be *finished*, or consummated, in the day of Christ, Phil. i. 6. Now nothing can be more irrational, than to imagine that ever that design, or work should be finished or perfected, which never had a beginning.

*Thirdly*, So necessary is the new creation to all that expect salvation by Christ, that without this, heaven would be no heaven, and the glory thereof no glory to us, by reason of the unsuitableness and aversion of our carnal minds thereunto; "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. and enmity is exclusive of all complacency and delight. There is a necessity of a suitable and agreeable frame of heart to God, in order to that complacential rest of our souls in him: And this agreeable temper is wrought by our new creation, 2 Cor. v. 5. "He that hath

“wrought us for the self-same thing, is God.” Renovation, you see, is the working or moulding of a man’s spirit into an agreeable temper, or as it is in Col. i. 12. the making of us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

From all which, it follows, that seeing there can be no complacency, or delight in God, without suitableness and conformity to him, as it is plain, from 1 John iii. 2. as well as from the reason and nature of the thing itself; either God must become like us, suitable to our sinful, corrupt and vain hearts, which were but a rude blasphemy once to imagine; or else we must be made agreeable and suitable to God, which is the very thing I am now proving the necessity of.

*Fourthly,* There is an absolute necessity of the new creature to all that expect interest in Christ, and the glory to come, since all the characters, marks, and signs of such an interest, are constantly taken from the new creature wrought in us. Look over all the marks and signs of interest in Christ, or salvation by him, which are dispersed through the scriptures, and you shall still find purity of heart, Mat. v. 8. Holiness both in principle and practice, Heb. xii. 14. Mortification of sin, Rom. viii. 13. Longing for Christ’s appearance, 2 Tim. iv. 8. with multitudes more of the same nature, to be constantly made the marks and signs of our salvation by Christ. So that either we must have a *new bible*, or a *new heart*; for if these scriptures be the true and faithful words of God, no unrenewed creature can see his face; which was the fourth thing to be opened.

*Fifthly,* The last thing to be opened is, how the new creation is an infallible proof and evidence of the soul’s interest in Christ; and this will appear divers ways.

*First,* Where all the saving graces of the Spirit are, there interest in Christ must needs be certain; and where the new creature is, there all the saving graces of the Spirit are: For what is the new creature but the frame or system of all special saving graces? It is not this or that particular grace, as faith, or hope, or love to God, which constitutes the new creature; for these are but as so many particular limbs or branches of it; but the new creature is comprehensive of all the graces of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” &c. Any one of the saving, special graces of the Spirit gives proof of our interest in Christ: how much more, then, the new creature, which is the complex frame or system of all the graces together?

*Secondly,* To conclude; Where all the causes of an interest in Christ are found, and all the effects and fruits of an interest in Christ do appear; there, undoubtedly, a real interest in Christ is

found: but wherever you find a new creature, you find all the causes and all the effects of an interest in Christ: For there you shall find,

*First*, The impulsive cause, viz. The electing love of God, from which the new creature is inseparable, 1 Pet. i. 2. with the new creature also, the meritorious, efficient, and final causes of interest in Christ, and union with him, are ever found, Eph. ii. 10. chap. i. 4, 5, 6.

*Secondly*, All the effects and fruits of interest in Christ are found in the new creature; there are all the fruits of obedience, for we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, Eph. ii. 10. Rom. vii. 4. there is true spiritual opposition to sin. 1 John v. 18. "He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." There is love to the people of God; 1 John iv. 7. "Every one that loveth is born of God." There is a conscientious respect to the duties of both tables; for the new creature is created after God in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 25. There is perseverance in the ways of God to the very end, and victory over all temptations; for whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world, 1 John v. 4. It were easy to run over all other particular fruits of our union with Christ, and shew you every one of them in the new creature. And thus much of the doctrinal part of this point.



## SERMON XXVI.

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.*

**A**FTER the explication of the sense of this scripture, we observed,

*Doct. That God's creating of a new supernatural work of grace in the soul of any man, is that man's sure and infallible evidence of a saving interest in Jesus Christ.*

You have heard why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation; in what respect every soul in Christ is renewed; what the eximious properties of this new creature are; the indispensibleness and necessity thereof have been also proved; and how it evidences our interest in Christ, was cleared in the doctrinal part:

Which we now come to improve, in the several uses serving for our

1. Information.
2. Conviction.
3. Examination.
4. Exhortation.
5. Consolation.

*First use, for information.*

Is the new creature the sure and infallible evidence of our saving interest in Christ? From hence then we are informed,

*Inference 1. How miserable and deplorable an estate all unrenewed souls are in; who can lay no claim to Christ during that state, and therefore are under an impossibility of salvation. O reader! if this be the state of thy soul, better had it been for thee not to have been God's natural workmanship as a man, except thou be his spiritual workmanship also, as a new man. I know the schoolmen determine otherwise, and say, that damnation is rather to be chosen than annihilation: a miserable being is better than no being: and it is very true, with respect to the glory of God, whose justice shall triumph for ever in the damnation of the unregenerate; but, with respect to us, it is much better never to have been his creatures, in the way of generation, than not to be his new creatures, in the way of regeneration. So Christ speaks of Judas, that son of perdition, Mark xiv. 21. "Good had it been for that man if he had never been born:" For what is a being without the comfort of it? What is life without the joy and pleasure of it? A damned being is a being without comfort; no glimpse of light shines into that darkness; they shall, indeed, see and understand the felicity, light, and joy of the saints in glory; but not partake, in the least measure, of the comfort, Luke xiii. 28. "They shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, but they themselves shut out:" Such a sight is so far from giving any comfort, that it will be the aggravation and increase of torment. O it is better to have no being at all, than to have a being only to capacitate a man for misery; to desire death, while death flies from him, Rev. iv. 6. The opinion of the schoolmen will never pass for sound doctrine among the damned. Think on it, reader, and lay it to thine heart, better thou hadst died from the womb, better the knees had prevented thee, and the breasts which thou hast sucked, than that thou shouldst live and die a stranger to the new birth, or that thy mother should bring thee forth only to increase, and fill up the number of the damned.*

*Inf. 2. And, on the contrary, we may hence learn, what cause regenerate souls have to bless God, for the day wherein they were born.*

O what a privileged state doth the new birth bring men into ! It is possible, for the present, they understand it not ; for many believers are like a great *heir* lying in the *cradle*, that knows not to what an estate and honour he is born : nevertheless, on the same day wherein we become new creatures by regeneration, we have a firm title and solid claim to all the privileges of the sons of God, John i. 12, 13. God becomes our Father by a triple title, not only the Father of our *beings* by nature, which was all the relation we had to him before, but our Father by *adoption*, and by *regeneration* : which is a much sweeter, and more comfortable relation. In that day the image of God is restored, Eph. iv. 24. this is both the health and beauty of the soul. In that day we are begotten again to a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. a hope more worth than ten thousand worlds, in the *troubles of life*, and in the *straits of death* : this is a creature which lives for ever, and will make thy life happy for ever. Some have kept their birth-day as a *festival*, a day of rejoicing ; but none have more cause to rejoice that ever they were born, than those that are new-born.

*Inf. 3. Learn from hence, that the work of grace is wholly supernatural ; it is a creation, and a creation-work is above the power of the creature.* No power but that which gave being to the world, can give a being to the new creature : Almighty Power goes forth to give being to the new creature. This creature is not born of flesh, or of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13. The nature of this new creature speaks its original to be above the power of nature ; the very notion of a new creation spoils the proud boasts of the great asserters of the power and ability of the will of man. When God, therefore, puts the question, who maketh thee to differ ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received ? Let thy soul, reader, answer it with all humility and thankfulness. It is thou, Lord, thou only, that madest me to differ from another ; and what I have received, I have received from thy free grace.

*Inf. 4. If the work of grace be a new creation, let not the parents, and friends of the unregenerate utterly despair of the conversion of their relations, how great soever their present discouragements are.* If it had been possible for a man to have seen the rude and indigested *chaos* before the Spirit of God moved upon it, would he not have said, Can such a beautiful order of beings, such a pleasant variety of creatures, spring out of this dark lump ? Surely it would have been very hard for a man to have imagined it. It may be, you see no dispositions or hopeful inclinations in your friends towards God and spiritual things ; nay, possibly they are totally opposite, and filled with enmity against them ; they deride and jeer all serious piety wherever they behold it ; this, indeed, is very sad ; but yet



remember the work of grace is creation-work : though there be no disposition at all in their wills, no tenderness in their consciences, no light or knowledge in their minds ; yet God, that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can shine into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ : he can say to the dry bones, live ; to the proud and stubborn heart, come down and yield thyself to the will of God ; and if he command, the work is done. God can make thee yet to rejoice over thy most uncomfortable relations ; to say with the father of the prodigal, Luke xv. 24. " This my son was dead, " and is alive again ; he was lost and is found ; and they began to be merry." Difficulties are for men, but not for God : he works, in conversion, by a power which is able to subdue all things unto itself.

*Inf. 5. If none but new creatures be in Christ, how small a remnant among men belong to Christ in this world !* Among the multitude of rational creatures inhabiting this world, how few, how very few, are new creatures ? It is the observation of the learned Mr. Brerewood, that if the world be divided into thirty parts, nineteen parts are heathenish Idolaters ; six parts Mahometans, and only five out of thirty which may be, in a large sense, called Christians ; of which the far greater part is overspread with Popish darkness : separate from the remainder, the multitudes of profane, merely civil, and hypocritical professors of religion ; and how few will remain for Jesus Christ in this world ? Look over the *cities, towns, and parishes* in this populous *kingdom*, and how few shall you find that speak the language or do the works of new creatures ? How few have ever had any awakening convictions on them ? And how many of those that have been convinced have miscarried, and never come to the new-birth ? The more cause have they, whom God hath indeed regenerated, to admire the riches of God's distinguishing mercy to them.

*Inf. 6. If the change by grace be a new creation, how universal and marvellous a change doth regeneration make upon men !* The new creation speaks a marvellous and universal alteration, both upon the state and tempers of men ; they come out of darkness, gross, hellish darkness, into light, a marvellous and heavenly light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Eph. v. 8. their condition, disposition, and conversation, (as you have heard) are all new ; and yet this marvellous change, as great and universal as it is, is not alike evident, and clearly discernible in all new creatures : and the reasons are,

*First*, Because the work of grace is wrought in divers methods and manners in the people of God. Some are changed from a state of notorious profaneness unto serious godliness ; there the change is conspicuous and very evident ; all the neighbourhood rings of

it: but in others it is more insensibly distilled in their tender years, by the blessing of God, upon religious education, and there it is more indiscernible.

*Secondly*, Though a great change be wrought, yet much natural corruption still remains for their humiliation and daily exercise; and this is a ground of fear and doubting; they see not how such corruptions are consistent with the new creature.

*Thirdly*, In some, the new creature shews itself mostly in the affectionate part, in desires and breathings after God; and but little in the clearness of their understandings, and strength of their judgments; for want of which they are entangled and kept in darkness most of their days.

*Fourthly*, Some Christians are more tried, and exercised by temptation from Satan than others are; and these clouds darken the work of grace in them.

*Fifthly*, There is great difference and variety found in the natural tempers and constitutions of the regenerate; some are of a more melancholy, fearful, and suspicious temper than others are; and are therefore much longer held under doubtings and trouble of spirit; nevertheless, what differences soever these things make, the change made by grace is a marvellous change.

*Inf. 7.* Lastly, *How incongruous are carnal ways and courses to the spirit of Christians! who being new creatures, can never delight or find pleasure in their former sinful companions and practices.* Alas! those things are now most unsuitable, loathsome and detestable, how pleasant soever they once were; that which they counted their liberty, would now be reckoned their greatest bondage; that which was their glory, is now their shame; Rom. vi. 21. "What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those things is death:" they need not be pressed by others, but will freely confess of themselves, what fools and mad-men they once were. None can censure their former conversation more freely than themselves do, 1 Tim. 13, 14.

*Second use, for conviction.*

If none be in Christ but new creatures, and the new creation makes such a change, as hath been described; this may convince us, how many of us deceive ourselves, and run into dangerous and fatal mistakes, in the greatest concernment we have in this world. But before I urge this use, I desire none may make a perverse and ill use of it; let not the wicked conclude, from hence, that there is no such thing as true religion in the world, or that all who do profess it, are but hypocrites; neither let the godly injure themselves by that which is designed for their benefit: let none conclude, that seeing there are so many mistakes committed about this new creature, that therefore assurance must needs be impossible,

as the Papists affirm it to be. The proper use that should be made of this doctrine, is, to undeceive false pretenders, and to awaken all to a more deep and thorough search of their own conditions; which being precautioned, let all men be convinced of the following truths:

*First,* That the change made by civility, upon such as were lewd and profane, is, in its whole kind and nature, a different thing from the new creature; the power and efficacy of moral virtue is one thing, the influence of the regenerating Spirit is quite another thing, however some have studied to comfort them. The Heathens excelled in moral and homolitical virtues: Plato, Aristides, Seneca, and multitudes more, have outvied many professed Christians, in justice, temperance, patience, &c. yet were perfect strangers to the new creation. A man may be very strict and temperate, free from the pollutions of the world, and yet a perfect stranger to regeneration all the while, John iii. 10.

*Secondly,* That many strong convictions and troubles for sin may be found where the new creature is never formed. Conviction, indeed, is an antecedent unto, and preparative for the new creature, as the blossoms of the tree are to the fruit that follows them; but as fruit doth not always follow where those blossoms and flowers appear, so neither doth the new creature follow all convictions and troubles for sin. Conviction is a common work of the Spirit both upon the elect and reprobate; but the new creature is formed only in God's elect. Convictions may be blasted, and vanish away, and the man that was under troubles for sin, may return again, with "the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire," 2 Pet. ii. 22. but the new creature never perishes, nor can consist with such a return to sin.

*Thirdly,* That excellent gifts and abilities, fitting men for service in the church of God, may be where the new creature is not; for these are promiscuously dispensed by the Spirit both to the regenerate and unregenerate: Matth. vii. 22. "Many will say unto me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" Gifts are attainable by study; prayer and preaching are reduced to an art; but regeneration is wholly supernatural. Sin, in dominion, is consistent with excellent gifts, but wholly incompatible with the new creature. In a word, these things are so different in nature from the new creature, that they oft-times prove the greatest bars and obstacles in the world to the regenerating work of the Spirit. Let no man, therefore, trust to things whereby multitudes deceive and destroy their own souls. Reader, it may cost thee many an aking head to attain gifts, but thou wilt find an aking heart for sin if ever God make thee a new creature.

*Fourthly,* Be convinced that multitudes of religious duties may

be performed by men, in whom the new creature was never formed. Though all new creatures perform the duties of religion, yet all that perform the duties of religion, are not new creatures; regeneration is not the only root from which the duties of religion spring, Isa. lviii. 2. "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God, they ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God." These are but weak and slippery foundations for men to build their confidence and hopes upon.

*The third use, for examination.*

Next, therefore, let me persuade every man to try the state of his own heart in this matter, and closely consider and weigh this great question: Am I really and indeed a new creature? or am I an old creature still, in a new creature's dress and habit? Some light may be given for the discovery hereof, from the consideration of the

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| 1. Antecedents,  | } of the new creation. |
| 2. Concomitants, |                        |
| 3. Consequents,  |                        |

*First*, Weigh and consider well the *antecedents* of the new creature; have those things passed upon your souls, which ordinarily make way for the new creature, in whomsoever the Lord forms it?

1. Hath the Lord opened the eyes of your understanding in the knowledge of sin and of Christ? Hath he shewed you both your disease and remedy, by a new light shining from heaven into your souls! Thus the Lord doth wherever he forms the new creature, Acts xxvi. 18.

2. Hath he brought home the word with mighty power and efficacy upon your hearts to convince and humble them? This is the method in which the new creature is produced, Rom. vii. 9. 1 Thes. i. 5.

3. Have these convictions over-turned your vain confidences, and brought you to a great concern and inward distress of soul, making you to cry, *What shall we do to be saved?* These are the ways of the Spirit, in the formation of the new creature, Acts xvi. 29. Acts ii. 37. If no such antecedent works of the Spirit have passed upon your hearts, you have no ground for your confidence, that the new creature is formed in you.

*Secondly*, Consider the *concomitant* frames and workings of spirit which ordinarily attend the production of the new creature, and judge impartially betwixt God and your own souls, whether they have been the very frames and workings of your hearts.

1. Have your vain spirits been composed to the greatest serious-

ness, and most solemn consideration of things eternal, as the hearts of all those are whom God regenerates? When the Lord is about this great work upon the soul of man, whatever vanity, levity, and sinful jollity was there before, it is banished from the heart at this time; for now heaven and hell, life and death, are before a man's eyes, and these are the most awful and solemn things that ever our thoughts conversed with in this world. Now a man of the most airy and pleasant constitution, when brought to the sight and sense of those things, saith of "laughter, It is mad; and "of mirth, What doth it?" Eccl. ii. 2.

2. A lowly, meek, and humble frame of heart accompanies the new creation; the soul is weary and heavy laden, Mat xi. 28. Convictions of sin have plucked down the pride and loftiness of the spirit of man, emptied him of his vain conceits; those that were of lofty, proud, and blustering humours before, are meekened and brought down to the very dust now: it is with them (to speak allusively) as it was with Jerusalem, that lofty city, Isa. xxix. 1, 4. "Wo to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt; thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust." Ariel signifies the *Lion of God*: so Jerusalem in her prosperity was; other cities trembled at her voice; but when God brought her down, by humbling judgments, then she whispered out of the dust. So it is in this case.

3. A longing, thirsting frame of spirit accompanies the new creation; the desires of the soul are ardent after Christ; never did the hireling long for the shadow, as the weary soul doth for Christ, and rest in him: if no such frames have accompanied that which you take for your new birth, you have the greatest reason in the world to suspect yourselves under a delusion.

*Thirdly*, Weigh well the effects and *consequents* of the new creature, and consider whether such fruits as these are found in your hearts and lives.

1. Wherever the new creature is formed, there a man's course and conversation is changed: Eph. iv. 22. "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind:" the new creature cannot but blush and be ashamed of the old creature's conversation, Rom. vi. 21.

2. The new creature continually opposes and conflicts with the motions of sin in the heart; Gal. v. 17. "The spirit lusteth against the flesh." Grace can no more incorporate with sin, than oil with water: contraries cannot consist in the same subject longer than they are fighting with each other; if there be no conflict with sin in thy soul, or if that conflict be only betwixt the

conscience and affections, light in the one, struggling with lust in the other; thou wantest that fruit which should evidence thee to be a new creature.

3. The mind and affections of the new creature are set upon heavenly and spiritual things, Col. iii. 1, 2. Eph. iv. 23. Rom. viii. 5. If, therefore, thy heart and affections be habitually earthly and wholly intent upon things below, driving eagerly after the world, as the great business and end of thy life, deceive not thyself, this is not the fruit of the new creature, nor consistent with it.

5. The new creature is a praying creature, living by its daily communion with God, which is its livelihood and subsistence, Zech. xii. 10. Acts ix. 11. If, therefore, thou be a prayerless soul, or if, in all thy prayers, thou art a stranger to communion with God; if there be no brokenness of heart for sin in thy confessions, no melting affections for Christ and holiness in thy supplications; surely Satan doth but baffle and delude thy over-credulous soul, in persuading thee that thou art a new creature.

*Fifthly*, The new creature is restless, after falls into sin, until it have recovered peace and pardon; it cannot endure itself in a state of defilement and pollution, Psal. li. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. It is with the conscience of a new creature, under sin, as it is with the eye, when any thing offends it; it cannot leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: and in the very same restless state it is, under the hiding of God's face and divine withdrawments, Cant. v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. If, therefore, thou canst sin and sin again without such a burdensome sense of sin, or restlessness, or solicitude how to recover purity and peace, with the light of God's countenance shining, as in days past, upon thy soul; delude not thyself, thou hast not the signs of a new creature in thee.

*Fourth use, of exhortation.*

If the new creation be a sound evidence of our interest in Christ, then hence let me persuade all that are in Christ, to evidence themselves to be so, by walking as it becomes new creatures.

The new creature is *born from above*, all its tendencies are heavenward; accordingly, set your affections on things that are above, and let your conversation be in heaven: if you live earthly and sensual lives, as others do, you must cross your new nature therein; and can those acts be pleasant unto you which are done with so much regret? wherein you must put a force upon your own spirits, and offer a kind of violence to your own hearts. Earthly delights and sorrows are suitable enough to the unregenerate and sensual men in the world, but exceedingly contrary unto that Spirit by which you are renovated. If ever you will act becoming the

principles and nature of new creatures, then seek earthly things with submission, enjoy them with fear and caution, resign them with cheerfulness and readiness; and thus "let your moderation be known unto all men," Phil. iv. 5. Let your hearts daily meditate, and your tongues discourse about heavenly things; be exceeding tender of sin, strict and punctual in every duty; and hereby convince the world that you are men and women of another spirit.

*Fifth use, for consolation.*

Let every new creature be cheerful and thankful: if God hath renewed your natures, and thus altered the frame and temper of your hearts, he hath bestowed the richest mercy upon you that heaven or earth affords. This is a work of the greatest rarity; a new creature, may be called, One among a thousand: it is also an everlasting work, never to be destroyed, as all other natural works of God (how excellent soever) must be: it is a work carried on by Almighty Power, through unspeakable difficulties and mighty oppositions, Eph. i. 12. The exceeding greatness of God's power goes forth to produce it; and indeed no less is required to enlighten the blind mind, break the rocky heart, and bow the stubborn will of man; and the same Almighty Power which at first created it, is necessary to be continued every moment to preserve and continue it, 1 Pet. i. 5. The new creature is a mercy which draws a train of innumerable and invaluable mercies after it, Eph. ii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. iii. 20. When God hath given us a new nature, then he dignifies us with a *new name*, Rev. ii. 17. brings us into a *new covenant*, Jer. xxxi. 33. begets us again to a *new hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. intitles us to a *new inheritance*, John i. 12, 13. It is the new creature which through Christ makes our persons and duties acceptable with God, Gal. vi. 15. In a word, it is the wonderful work of God, of which we may say, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." There are unsearchable wonders in its *generation*, in its *operation*, and in its *preservation*. Let all therefore, whom the Lord hath thus renewed, fall down at the feet of God, in an humble admiration of the unsearchable riches of free grace, and never open their mouths to complain under any adverse or bitter providences of God.