

## The Believer A New Creature

A Sermon

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“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”—[2 Corinthians 5:17](#).

THIS TEXT IS exceedingly full of matter, and might require many treatises, and even multitudes of folios, to bring forth all its meaning. Holy Scripture is notably sententious. Human teachers are given to verbiage; we multiply words to express our meaning, but the Lord is wondrously laconic; he writeth as it were in shorthand, and gives us much in little. One single grain of the precious gold of Scripture may be beaten out into acres of human gold leaf, and spread far and wide. A few books are precious as silver, fewer still are golden; but God’s Book hath a bank note in every syllable, and the worth of its sentences it were not possible for mortal intellect to calculate.

We have two great truths here, which would serve us for the subject of meditation for many a day: the believer’s position—he is “in Christ;” and the believer’s character—he is a “new creature.” Upon both of these we shall speak but briefly this morning, but may God grant that we may find instruction therein.

I. First, then, let us consider THE CHRISTIAN’S POSITION—he is said to be “*in Christ*.”

There are three stages of the human soul in connection with Christ: the first is without Christ, this is the state of nature; the next is in Christ, this is the state of grace; the third is with Christ, that is the state of glory.

*Without* Christ, this is where we all are born and nurtured, and even though we hear the gospel, and the Bible be in all our houses, and even though we use a form of prayer, yet until we are born again, we are without God, without Christ, and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel. A man may stand at the banqueting-table, and may be without food, unless he puts out his hand to grasp that which is provided; and a man may have Christ preached in his hearing every Sabbath-day, and be without Christ, unless he putteth forth the hand of faith to lay hold upon him. It is a most unhappy condition to be without Christ. It is inconvenient to be without gold, it is miserable to be without health, it is deplorable to be without a friend, it is wretched to be without reputation, but to be without Christ is the worst lack in all the world. O that God would make all of us sensible of it who are now the subjects of it, and may we no longer tarry in the position of being without Christ.

The next state is that indicated in the text, “in Christ,” of which I will say more by-and-by. “In Christ” leadeth to the third state, which we can never reach without this second one, namely, to be *with Christ*; to be his companions in the rest which he has attained, all his

work and labour done; to be with him in the glory which he has gained, made to see it and to participate in it world without end. To be with Christ is the angels' joy, it is the heaven of heaven, it is the centre of bliss, the sun of paradise. Let us seek after it, and in order that we may have it, let us labour with all our heart and mind to be found in Christ now, that we may be in Christ in the day of his appearing.

Turn we now to the expression itself, "in Christ." I never heard of any persons being in any other man but Christ; we may follow certain leaders, political or religious, but we are never said to be included in them. We may take for ourselves eminent examples and high models of humanity, but no man is said in that respect to be in another. But this is a grand old scriptural phrase in which the disciple and the follower of Christ becomes something more than an imitator of his Lord, and is said to be in his Master. We must interpret this scriptural phrase by scriptural symbols. We were all of us in the first Adam. Adam stood for us. Had Adam kept the command, we had all of us been blessed. He took off the forbidden fruit and fell, and all of us fell in him. Original sin falleth upon us because of the transgression of our covenant head and representative, Adam the first; but all believers are in the same sense in Christ, Adam the second, the only other representative Man before God, the heavenly Man, the Lord from heaven. Now, as in Adam we all fell, so all who are in Christ are in Christ perfectly restored. The obedience of Christ is the obedience of all his people; the atonement of Christ is a propitiation for all his people's sins. In Christ we lived on earth, in Christ we died, in Christ we rose, and he "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places" in himself. As the apostle tells us that Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him, so were we in the loins of Christ from before the foundation of the world; faith apprehends that blessed truth, and thus by faith we are experimentally in Christ Jesus.

Noah's Ark was a type of Christ. The animals that were preserved from the deluge passed through the door into the ark, the Lord shut them in, and high above the foaming billows they floated in perfect safety. We are in Christ in the same sense. He is the ark of God provided against the day of judgment. We by faith believe him to be capable of saving us; we come and trust him, we risk our souls with him, believing that there is no risk; we venture on him confident that it is no venture; giving up every other hope or shadow of a hope, we trust in what Jesus did, is doing, and is in himself, and thus he becomes to us our ark, and we are in him.

Another similitude may be taken from the old Jewish law. By God's commands certain cities were provided throughout all Canaan, that an Israelite who should slay his fellow at unawares, might flee there from the avenger of blood. The city of refuge no sooner received the manslayer than he was perfectly free from the avenger who pursued him. Once within the suburbs or through the gate, and the manslayer might breathe safely, the executioner would be kept at bay. In the same sense we are in Christ Jesus. He is God's eternal city of

refuge, and we having offended, having slain, as it were, the command of God, flee for our lives and enter within the refuge city, where vengeance cannot reach us, but where we shall be safe world without end.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus explains this phrase of being in himself in another way. He represents us as being in him as the branch is in the vine. Now, the branch derives all its nourishment, its sap, its vitality, its fruit-bearing power, from the stem with which it is united. It would be of no use that the branch should be placed close to the trunk, it would be of no service even to strap it side by side with the stem, it must be actually in it by a vital union. There must be sap-streams flowing at the proper season into it, life-floods gushing into it from the parent stem; and even so there is a mysterious union between Christ and his people, not to be explained but to be enjoyed, not to be defined but to be experienced, in which the very life of Christ flows into us, and we by the virtue that cometh out of him into us, become like unto him, and bring forth clusters of good fruit unto his honour and unto God's glory. I trust you know what this means, beloved, many of you. May you live in the possession of it daily! May you be one with Jesus, knit to him, united to him never to be separated for ever. As the limb is in the body, even so may you constantly be one with Jesus.

We may be in Christ also as the stone is in the building. The stone is built into the wall and is a part of it. In some of the old Roman walls you can scarcely tell which is the firmer, the cement or the stone, for their cement was so exceedingly strong, that it held the stones together as though they were one mass of rock; and such is the eternal love which binds the saints to Christ. They become one rock, one palace wall, one temple, to the praise and glory of the God who built the fabric. Thus you see what it is to be in Christ: it is to trust him for salvation as Noah trusted the ark; it is to derive real life from him as the branch does from the stem; it is to lean on him, and to be united to him as the stone leans on the foundation and becomes an integral part of the structure.

The phrase "in Christ Jesus," then, has a weight of meaning in it. "How do we come to be there?" saith one. To whom we answer: our union to Christ is practically and experimentally wrought in us by faith when a man giveth himself up to Christ to sink or swim with Christ, when he leaneth his soul wholly on the Beloved, when as for his good works he abhorreth them, and as for his self-righteousness, he counteth it dross and dung, when he clingeth to the sole hope of the cross, then is such a man in Christ. He is further in Christ when he loves Jesus, when the heart having trusted and reposed in the cross, is moved with deep and warm affection to the Crucified, so that the soul clings to Christ, embracing him with fervent love, and Christ becomes the bridegroom, and the heart becomes his spouse, and they are married to one another in a union which no divorce can ever separate. When love and faith come together, then is there a blessedly sweet communion; these two graces become the double channel through which the Holy Spirit's influence flows forth daily,

making the Christian to grow up more fully unto Christ Jesus in all things. The riper the Christian becomes, the nearer to the glory, the closer to the perfection which is promised, the more completely will he think and act, and live and move, in Christ his Master, being one with Jesus in all things. I shall not detain you longer over that one matter, every true Christian is in Christ.

II. Now we survey THE BELIEVER'S CHARACTER, for it is said that if any man be in Christ he is a "*new creature*." This is a great utterance. We shall not attempt to dive into it—this were work for a leviathan divine—but merely like the swallow, we touch the surface of it with our wing, and away.

What is meant by the Christian being a new creature? Three thoughts seem to me to spring up from the words, and the first is, the believer must then have been the subject of a *radical change*. He is said to be a new creature, which is of all things a most sweeping change. There are many changes which a man may undergo, but they may be far from being radical enough to be worth calling a new creation. Saul is among the prophets: hear how he prophesies; if they speak with sacred rapture the secrets of God, so doth he. Is not Saul converted—the Scripture tells us that God gave him another heart! Ay, another heart, but not a new heart. A man may be changed from one sin to another, from reckless profanity to mocking formality, from daring sin to hypocritical pretension to virtue; but such a change as is very far from being saving, and not at all like the work which is called a new creation. Ahab went and humbled himself after his murder of Naboth, and God turned away His vengeance for awhile from him, but that temporary humiliation of Ahab was no sign of a renewal of his nature; it was like the changes of the sea, which today is smooth, but which anon will be as ravenous after wrecks as ever, being still unchanged in its nature, still voracious and cruel, fickle and unstable. Ahab may humble himself, but he is Ahab still, and as Ahab will he go down into the pit.

Conversion is sometimes described in Scripture as healing; yet the idea of healing does not rise to the radical character of the text. Naaman went down to the Jordan full of leprosy, and he washed himself, and came up, after the seventh immersion, with his flesh clean like unto a little child; but it was the same flesh and the same Naaman, and he was by no means a new creature. The woman, bowed down with infirmity those sad eighteen years, was marvellously changed when she stood upright, as a daughter of Abraham, loosed at last from her bondage; but she was the same woman, and the description does not answer to a new creature. No doubt there are great moral changes wrought in many which are not saving. I have seen a drunkard become sober; I have known persons of debauched habits become regular; and yet their changes have not amounted to regeneration or the new birth. The same sin has been within them, reigning still, though it has assumed a different garb, and used another voice. Ah, ye may be washed from outward leprosy, and ye may be made straight from your visible infirmities, but this will not suffice you; if you are in Christ you

must have more than this; for “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Nor will the most startling changes suffice unless they are total and deep. The Ethiopian might change his skin, the leopard might suddenly lose his spots—these would be strange prodigies; but the leopard would remain a leopard, and the Ethiop would still be black at heart; the improvement would not amount to new creation. So may a man give up every outward lust and every crying sin which he was wont to indulge, and yet, unless the change shall go far deeper than the outward life, he is not saved—he is not a new creature, and, therefore, he is not in Christ Jesus. I venture to say, that even the metaphor of resurrection, which is often applied to conversion, does not go so far as the language of the text. The young daughter of Jairus is placed upon her bed, and she dies, and our Lord comes and saith to her, “Talitha cumi,” and she opens her eyes, she awakes, she lives, she eats,” still she is not a new creature; her mother receives her as the selfsame child. Even Lazarus, who has been dead and is supposed through four days of burial to have begun to stink, when he is called from the grave by the voice of Jesus, is the subject of a remarkable miracle, but it scarcely amounts to a new creation. He is the same Lazarus restored, not a new creature, but the same creature vivified from a transient sleep of death. Do you see, then, how very searching the word is here, a “a new creature,” absolutely a new creation. It is a root and branch change; not an alteration of the walls only, but of the foundation; not a new figuring of the visible tapestry, but a renewal of the fabric itself. Regeneration is a change of the entire nature from top to bottom in all senses and respects. Such is the new birth, such is it to be in Christ and to be renewed by the Holy Ghost.

The text saith that we are new creatures through being in Christ. How comes that about? We have known persons inveigh very earnestly against the doctrine that men are saved by a simple faith in Jesus Christ. That is the gospel, and nothing else is the gospel, and those who do not preach that truth know nothing of God’s gospel at all; for it is the very soul and essence of the gospel—the article, as Luther used to say, by which a church stands or falls. We are saved by a simple faith in Jesus, but these people argue against this on the ground that there must be a great moral change in man before he can be reconciled to God and made meet to be with God for ever. But, my brethren, if the text be true, that those who are in Christ are new creatures, what greater change than this can be desired? I know no language, I believe there is none, that can express a greater or more thorough and more radical renewal, than that which is expressed in the term, “a new creature.” It is as though the former creature were annihilated and put away, and a something altogether new were formed from the breath of the eternal God, even as in the day when the world sprang out of nothing, and the morning stars sang together over a new-made universe. Such is the fruit of being in Christ, to be a new creature. And what, ye moralists, want ye more than this? What, ye pretenders to perfection, what, ye mystic spiritualists, who strive after a strange holiness to which ye

never attain, what, ye that bind heavy burdens upon men's shoulders which ye do not touch with your fingers yourselves, what want ye more than this, for a man to be absolutely made a new creature by being in Christ?

How is this done? We reply that the man who is in the first Adam, being translated into the second Adam, becomes legally a new creature. As in the first Adam he is judged and condemned, his punishment is laid upon his substitute; but as viewed in the second representative Man, he is legally, and before the bar of God's justice, a new creature. But this is not all: he who believes in Christ, finding himself completely pardoned as the result of his faith in the precious blood of Jesus, loves Christ, and loves the God who gave Christ to be his redemption, and that love becomes a master passion. We have all heard of the expulsive power of a new affection; this new affection of love to God coming into the soul, expels love to sin. It enters into the heart of man with such a royal majesty about it that it puts down all his predispositions towards evil, and his prejudices against the Most High, and with a real and divine power it reigns within the soul. I suppose the mode of this great change is somewhat after this sort: The man at first is ignorant of his God; he does not know God to be so loving, so kind, so good as he is; therefore the Holy Spirit shows the man Christ, lets him see the love of God in the person of Christ, and thus illuminates the understanding. Whereas the sinner thought nothing of God before, or his few stray thoughts were all dark and terrible, now he learns the infinite love of God in the person of Christ, and his understanding gets clearer views of God than it ever had before. Then, in turn, the understanding acts upon the affections. Learning God to be thus good and kind, the heart, which was hard towards God, is softened, and the man loves the gracious Father who gave Jesus to redeem him from his sins. The affections being changed, the whole man is on the way towards a great and radical renewal, for now the emotions find another ruler. The passions, once rabid as vultures at the sight of the carrion of sin, now turn with loathing from iniquity, and are only stirred by holy principle. The convert groweth vehement against evil, as vehement as he once was against the right. Now he longeth and pineth after communion with God as once he longed and pined after sin. The affections, like a rudder, have changed the direction of the emotions, and meanwhile the will, that stubbornest thing of all, that iron sinew, is led in a blessed captivity, wearing silken fetters. The heart wills to do what God wills, yea, it wills to be perfect, for to will is present with us, though how to perform all that we would we find not. See then, beloved friends, how great is the change wrought in us by our being in Christ! It is a thorough and entire change, affecting all the parts, powers, and passions of our manhood. Grace doth not reform us, but re-creates us; it doth not pare away here and there an evil excrescence, but it implants a holy and divine principle which goes to instant war with all indwelling sin, and continues to fight until corruption is subdued, and holiness is enthroned.

I shall only pause to ask this one question—do my hearers all know what such a change as this means? Believe me, you must know it personally for yourselves, or you can never enter heaven. Let no man deceive you. That regeneration which is said to be wrought in baptism, is a figment without the shadow of foundation. The sprinkling of an infant makes no change in that child whatever; it is, as I believe, a vain ceremony, not commanded of God, nor warranted in Scripture; and as the Church of England practises it, it is altogether pernicious and superstitious, and if there be any effect following it, it must be an evil effect upon those who wickedly lie unto Almighty God, by promising and vowing that the unconscious shall keep God's commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life; which they cannot do for the child, inasmuch as they cannot even so do for themselves. Ye must have another regeneration than this, the work not of priestly fingers, with their hocus-pocus and superstitious genuflexions, but the work of the Eternal Spirit, who alone can regenerate the soul, whose office alone it is that can give light to the spiritually blinded eye, and sensation to the spiritually dead heart. Be not misled by the priests of this age. Ye profess to have cast off Rome, cast off her Anglican children. Wear not the rags of her superstition, nor bear her mark in your foreheads. Ye must be born again in another sense than formality can work in you. It must be an inward work, a spiritual work, and only this can save your souls. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, that is, he has experienced a radical change.

Secondly, another thought starts up from the expression in the text. There is *divine working* here. "A new creature." Creation is the work of God alone. It must be so. If any doubt it, let us bid them make the effort to create the smallest object. The potter places his clay upon the wheel, and shapes it after his own pleasure, he fashions the vase, but he is not the creator of it. The clay was there beforehand, he does but change its shape. Will any man who thinks he can play the creator, produce a single grain of dust? Call now, and see if there be any that will answer thee—call unto nothingness, and bid a grain of dust appear at thy bidding. It cannot be. Now, inasmuch as Paul declares the Christian man to be a new creature, it is proven that the Christian man is the work of God, and the work of God alone, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The inner life of the Christian is the sole work of the Most High, neither can any pretend to put his finger thereto to help the Creator. In creation, who helped God? who poised the clouds for Him? who weighed the hills in scales to aid His skill, or helped Him dig the channels of the sea? Who aided in rolling the stars along? who took a torch to light up the lamps of heaven? With whom took the Almighty counsel, and who instructed him? If there be any that can stand with God in the making of the world, then may some pretend to compare with Him in the conversion of souls, but until that shall be, the new creation is God's sole domain, and in it His attributes, and His attributes alone, shine resplendent. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." The sovereign will of God creates men heirs of grace.

My brethren, it was more difficult, if such terms are ever applicable to Omnipotence, it was more difficult to create a Christian than to create a world. What was there to begin with when God made the world? There was nothing; but nothing could not stand in God's way—it was at least passive. But, my brethren, in our hearts, while there was nothing that could help God, there was much that could and did oppose Him. Our stubborn wills, our deep prejudices, our ingrained love of iniquity, all these, great God, opposed thee, and aimed at thwarting thy designs. There was darkness in the first creation, but that darkness could not obstruct the incoming of light. "Light be!" was the eternal fiat, and light was. But, O great God, how often has thy voice spoken to us and our darkness has refused thy light! We loved darkness rather than light, because our deeds were evil; and it was only when thou didst put on the garments of thine omnipotence, and come forth in the glory of thy strength, that at the last our soul yielded to thy light, and the abysmal darkness of our natural depravity made way for thy celestial radiance. Yes, great God, it was great to make a world, but greater to create a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Chaos there was when God began to fit up this world for man; confusion dire, disorder rampant. But the Spirit of God moved on the face of the deep, and brought order speedily, for chaos could not resist the Spirit. But, alas! the disorder of our soul was stout in resistance to the order of God. We would not have His ways nor yield to His commands; but even as we could we set our faces like a flint against the will and power and majesty of the Eternal. Yet hath He subdued us, yet hath He made us the creatures of His mercy. Unto Him, then, be glory and strength! Unto Him be praise, world without end!

In the creation of the old world God first gave light, and afterwards he created life—the life that crept, the life that walked, the life that dived, the life that flew in the midst of heaven. So hath He wrought in our hearts; He hath given us the life that creeps upon the ground in humiliation for sin; the life that walks in service, the life that swims in sacred waters of repentance, the life that flies on the wings of faith in the midst of heaven; and, as God separated the light from the darkness, and the dry land from the sea, so in the new creature He hath separated the old depravity from the new life. He hath given to us a holy and incorruptible life which is for ever separated from, and opposed to, the old natural death; and at last, when the old creation was all but finished, God brought forth man in His own image as the topstone. A like work He will do in us as His new creatures. Having given us light, and life, and order, He will renew in us the image of God. Yea, that image is in every man who is in Christ Jesus at this hour. Though it is not yet complete, the outlines, as it were, are there. The great Sculptor has begun to chisel out the image of Himself in this rough block of human marble; you cannot see all the features, the lineaments divine are not yet apparent; still, because it is in His design, the Master seeth what we see not; He seeth in our unhewn nature His own perfect likeness as it is to be revealed in the day of the revealing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Thus, dear brethren, I have tried to show you that the work which wrought in us when we come to be in Christ Jesus, is a divine work, because it is a new creation. I shall pause here again, and say to each hearer, Dost thou know what it is to be under God's hand, and to be wrought by God's workmanship? Strangers to God must be strangers to heaven. Beloved, if you have no more religion than you have worked out in yourself, and no more grace than you have found in your nature, you have none at all. A supernatural work of the Holy Ghost must be wrought in every one of us, if we would see the face of God with acceptance. This change is assuredly wrought in every man that is in Christ Jesus. If thou believest in the Lord Jesus, this work is begun and shall be carried on in thee; but if thou hast nothing about thee but thine own strivings and resolvings, thine own prayings and reformings, thou fallest short of the glory of God, and thou hast not that which will be a passport to the skies. God grant you yet to have it. I pray God His truth may go right through and through your souls like refining fire, and may you not be satisfied unless a true new birth, the work of the living God, be really in your possession even now.

We shall now come to the third point which the singular expression of the text brings up. The expression "a new creature," indicates *remarkable freshness*. It is very long since this world saw a new creature. If geologists tell true, there have been several series of creatures in different periods of time, and each race has given place to another race of new creatures fresh from creation's mint, new from God's hand. But it is now six thousand years at least, and some of us think many thousand years more, since the day when this last set of creatures came into this world, and started upon the race of life: all the creatures we now see are old and antiquated. The flower which springs from the soil, is the repetition of its like which bloomed five thousand years ago. Yonder meads bedecked with yellow king-cups and fair daisies are the facsimiles of those our sires looked upon three score years ago. As for ourselves, removed by long lines of pedigree from the man whom Jehovah formed in the garden, we by nature show small signs of the undefiled hand and sacred finger. The world is hackneyed and stale and old. Time wearily drags on to its Saturday night, it draws near to the last of its work-days with heavy footsteps. Any new creature coming fresh into the world would startle and amaze us all. What would men give if the Almighty hand would form a novelty in life, and send it among us; and yet, ye Athenian wits, that are for ever seeking after some new thing, the text tells you that there are new creatures upon earth, positive new creations, fruits that have the freshness and bloom of Eden about them, flowers unfaded, life with the dew of its youth upon it; and these new creatures are Christian men; these new creatures fresh from the divine hand, as though just fashioned between the eternal palms, are the men that weep for sin, the inca that confess their iniquity, the men that say, "God be merciful to us, sinners," the men who rest in the blood of the atonement, the men who love Christ Jesus, and live to the glory of the Most High; these are new creatures. There is a freshness about them; they have just come from the hand of God, they enjoy nearness to God, they get to

the fountain-head of life, and drink where the crystal stream is cool and clear, and not mudded by long trickling through earthly channels. There is a freshness, I say, about them which is to be found nowhere else. I do believe this, believe it because I have experienced it. This world's a dream, an empty show; there is nothing lasting beneath the stars, everything of seeming joy soon palls upon the mind. Take to study, and ransack all the learned tomes, and your mind will soon be satiated with knowledge. Take to travel, and behold the fairest realms, climb the summits of the Alps, or traverse the valleys with all their picturesque beauty, and you will soon say, "I have exhausted all, I know it, I am weary of it." Follow what pursuit you will, like Solomon you may get to yourself gardens and palaces, singing men and singing women; or you may, if your folly be great enough, give yourself to wine; or if you will, addict yourself to commerce; but of the whole you will say ere long, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The world is but a mirage; it melts, it disappears as the traveller passes on, and mocks his thirst with the deceptive image of the true. But, beloved, the spiritual life is not so. There is a freshness, a vivacity, a force, an energy, a power about it that never grows stale. He that prayed yesterday with joy, shall pray in fifty years' time, if he be on earth, with the selfsame delight. He that loves his Maker, and feels his heart beat high at the mention of the name of Jesus, shall find as much transport in that name, if he lives to the age of Methuselah, as he doth now. Year by year its sweets grow sweeter, its lights grow brighter, its novelties grow fresher, its joys more joyous, and its exhilarations more intense. We dance yet before the ark. While heart and flesh are failing the spirit gathers new strength, and joy gathers growing force. Let us seek after this new creatureship, this new power, this fresh life, this ever-vigorous youth, that laughs at decrepit earth and worn out time; this new life which counts even sun, and moon, and stars, but dying things, like flickering lamps smoking out their lives for want of oil; while the life divine, since it is fed by God, wears within it a secret immortality which death, and hell, and time, cannot impair.

Now I shall appeal to you again. Do you know anything about this freshness? If you do, you will find that the world does not understand you. A new creature put into this world, would be in a very strange position, from the mere fact of its being a new creature. Believer, you will find that the world does not suit you as it once did. You will be out of your element, pining for another world; for there must needs be a new world to suit a new creature. Do you feel pantings after the new world? God will not give you what He has not taught you to long for, but your cravings and longings are the shadows of the coming mercy. Ask yourselves whether you know these mysteries. If you do not, may the Lord teach you; and if you do, praise and bless his name.

To conclude. This subject leads us to two things. It leads us to self-examination. May I press upon every one to search himself, whether he knoweth what this being made a new creature means! But I will not detain you on this point, lest I weary you on this sultry morning. Pursue practically the exhortation I fail to enlarge upon verbally.

I would lead you to another thought, on which I will dwell for a moment. Our subject excites hope in the Christian. If God has made a new creature of him, which is the greatest work of grace, will he not do the lesser work of grace—namely, make the new creature grow up unto perfection? If the Lord has turned you to himself, never be afraid that He will leave you to perish. If He had meant to destroy you, he would not have done this for you. God does not make creatures for annihilation. Chemists tell us that though many things are resolved into their primary gases by fire, yet there is not a particle less matter on the earth today than there was when it was created. No spiritual life that comes from God is ever annihilated. If you have obtained it, it never shall be taken from you—it shall be in you a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. If when you were an enemy, God looked upon you in grace, and changed you, and made you what you now are, will He not now that you are reconciled continue to preserve and nurture you till He presents you faultless before His presence with exceeding great joy? The Lord grant it to you.

One other word of hope, and it is this: If salvation be entirely a creation of God, if God alone can work it, what hope this ought to give the most forlorn sinner! Ah! my dear friend, if your salvation rested on you, you might well despair. Chaos, if it remained with thee to make order, order could never be! Darkness, if it were thine to create the light, light could never shine! But God's fiat brings forth order and light. Sinner, if it were for thee to make thyself a saint, and work out thine own salvation alone, thou mightst well despair; but it is God's work, and He can do whatsoever He will. He can instantly dispel thy gloom, He can immediately overcome thine unbelief. He can change thy heart, He can make thee, the greatest of sinners, to become the brightest of saints. Lift up thy heart to Him. He heareth prayer. Heaven's gate is open. Seek, for he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened; and God bless thee, for Christ's sake Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 [John 3](#).