

THE NEW CREATION

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2 CORINTHIANS v. 13 - 21

It is blessed to see in this chapter how the thought of "God" comes out in the New Creation.

In this aspect man is gone as to his sins and responsibility - dead in them. The judgment of the first Adam is complete. The old thing is entirely gone. It is a new creation now, and, in this new creation, I find God instead of man.

Even Christ Himself, as known after the flesh, is known no more. True, He was, when down here, the hope and expectation of faith as coming into the world. But the apostle only knows Him now as having died for all and glorified, all under death, whether Jew or Gentile, and Christ no more known after the flesh - that is as come after the hopes of man in it - but Head of a new creation, where all things are of God, and in which we have been made in Him the righteousness of God. God has manifested Himself in the second Man, and wrought atonement in His death, and now we are the righteousness of God in Him.

In the first creation we see man and his responsibility. In the new creation all things are of God, and man is reconciled by Jesus Christ unto Himself. We want to have the power of this in our souls to live as belonging to the new creation, as reconciled by God to Himself, all that belonged to the old creation for ever gone to faith - "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

We see how the apostle walked in the power of this in verse 13: "Whether," he says, "we be beside ourselves, it is to God." That is, if he were beyond the influences that belonged to him as a man, it was not an excitement that belongs to these influences; it was because he was absorbed in God. It is what is called ecstasy. When his spirit was free to rise above present service in what he was in Christ, he was lost in God, carried out beyond himself. If he were sober, if he had to weigh difficulties-come down into the sober estimate of what was before him - it was God in love working in him. His thought was entirely for others in that love. This was his daily life; as to himself transported with God; and, when he did think about things down here, all his thoughts were for others.

It was the love of Christ that constrained him, and he looked upon all around in connection with the death of Christ. It was no longer a living Messiah in the Flesh with promises for Israel. All this was over. Christ had died, and he judged that Christ would not have gone into death, if men had not been there. The whole history of Adam's race is closed in death. If they had not all been dead, Christ would not have been found in death; why have gone down there if others were not lying there? And, therefore, those who from amongst these lived, were now to live not to themselves, but to Christ, who died for them and rose again.

Thus, if he met an unconverted man, he would not think of him as an old acquaintance, and know him as such. He would look upon him as one that was dead, and needed to be saved by the death of Christ. Or if the person were a Christian, it would be just the same. He would not know

him after the flesh according to an old acquaintance with him; he would look upon him as one alive with Christ, and his one thought would be that Christ might be glorified in him. Even Christ himself was not to be known any more in connection with this creation. He had died to it, and if any man is in Christ, he is of the new creation, where old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God. Man is looked upon as dead, and God brings in a new creation.

We have the same aspect of truth, when in the nineteenth verse he speaks of Christ's coming in the flesh. It is not looked upon as fulfilling promises to Israel, but God revealing Himself in grace to the world. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This was the aspect of Christ's first coming, in which the apostle thought of Him. We know He came to His own, and was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers. All this is blessedly true; but here we have God in man come here, and the apostle sees neither Jew nor Gentile. If God were in Christ, He acts towards the "world." To what portion of it can you confine Him, if it be a question of God displaying Himself in grace in the world? For the same reason, when he speaks of the love of Christ, he judges all to be dead, and sees neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation, in which God counts every man that is in Christ.

We know that that is God as to the glory of His divine Person, but the apostle is speaking here historically; and therefore when he looks upon the Lord Jesus living in the world, he sees God in Him acting in overtures of grace to the world. God "was" in Christ; that is the great fact, that God has been here as the reconciler, and man would not be reconciled. Does the apostle say that God is reconciling us? No, but that God "has reconciled us by Jesus Christ unto himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." We are made the righteousness of God in Christ, and now we go out with the word of reconciliation to the world. Specially, no doubt, the apostles, but in their measure true of all. Man would not have God when He came, and therefore He had to make Christ sin, to work atonement for us, and now He is at God's right hand, in whom we become the righteousness of God.

The apostle does not say to the Corinthians, Be ye reconciled, for they "were" reconciled; but Christ being in heaven, having gone there through death in working out atonement for us, and His presence there being necessary to complete all in glory, He must have ambassadors to carry out His word of reconciliation here; so the apostle says, when he preaches- that is the gospel to sinners- "We pray in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." That is what he had to say to men as Christ's ambassador.

How far are we living thus? Living in the power of God's new creation, judging the whole thing belonging to the first creation as gone to faith, and entering into the blessedness of our place in Christ in the power of an ungrieved Spirit? Exercised for others, that the life of Christ may have power in their walk and ways; judging evil practically in our own path through the world, but yet having our souls so full of our blessedness in Christ, of what it is to be reconciled to God, that directly opportunity arises our hearts burst forth in praises to God, and ever go forth after others still dead in their sins.

That this may be so practically, we must bring the death of Christ to judge everything in ourselves and in our ways. As the apostle says: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. iv. 10. If we do not daily and hourly bring everything under the sentence of Christ's death, and judge everything by it, the Spirit will be grieved in us, and, instead of filling us with the joy of our

portion in Christ, He will cause the light of Christ to awaken us to the judgment of ourselves and of our ways.

May the Lord give us to walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, bringing everything into subjection to Christ, that we may know what the apostle goes on to say, "Death worketh in us, but life in you." In thus bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, Paul found death to self, and the result was life to the Corinthians. Paul held the power of Christ's death on the natural man, so that when he ministered among the Corinthians there was no Paul at all, but only Christ. It was life to them because death was working in Paul.

May the Lord give us thus to live. And may He grant us, especially in a day like this, to judge of men as Paul did, so that whatever the boast of human nature may be, we may see that all are dead, because Christ died for all in grace -for the highest act of grace and love is the proof of it- and that the only living ones are they that live to Him, who died for them and rose again, while in our own souls we enter into His new creation. We may have to go down to babes, and feed them with milk, and not with strong meat; but may we ourselves live in the light of this new creation, where all things are of God.

We must pass through exercise, and be tried and tested to learn what is in our hearts, and to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. This is all needful and profitable, but then there is our distinct place in Christ, as part of the new creation, where, instead of having the first man responsible to God, we have God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself in grace, and making Christ sin for us to bring us into this new Creation, where all things are of God, and where man is before God in divine righteousness, and, as to his enjoyment, finding himself lost in God.

It is God, and not man. It is what God is to man, and the blessedness of man being with God. God, we know, revealed in Christ; but nevertheless God revealed, and man made the righteousness of God, a part of God's new creation.

J N Darby, quoted from "Food for the Flock", Vol. 2, 1875.