

"There is a New Creation"

by T. Austin-Sparks

The following article has been paraphrased in some places for understanding purposes only with no intent of changing the author's meaning.

“Are you ignorant that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for He that has died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” Romans 6:3-8.

“In whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead... If you died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances... If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall you also with Him be manifested in glory” Colossians 2:11,12,20; 3:1,3,4.

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation” 2 Corinthians 5:17,18.

I am led to make a simple presentation of the foundations of the life of the believer, and it is the phrase from 2 Corinthians 5:17 out of which all divine things come: **“If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation”**. The words “he is” are supplied in many translations and are not hardly adequate. The interpretation, **“*there is a new creation*”** reaches beyond the man and embraces a great deal more.

The Necessity for a New Creation

The beginning of the book of Genesis is a type or illustration of this new creation in Christ; or, to put it another way, the new creation in Christ is spiritually what the old was materially. Often what

takes place in the new creation in Christ (*i.e. when a man or woman is regenerated and born anew*), has already been illustrated from the story of the creation in the book of Genesis. Yet, I feel very strongly that this principle is more true and applicable than what has been recognized. The Old Testament story of the creation contains a great deal more as illustrating the New Testament presentation of new creation than has been generally seen, and it goes a great deal further than we have recognized. The weakness comes in the failure to recognize the comprehensiveness of this truth and, the essential implications of it.

The word “**new**” is used in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and in other New Testament Scriptures. In this case it is connected with a creation: "there is a new creation". The first thing to take account of is the necessity for such a fact. Since there is a new creation brought about by God in Christ, then we must understand that such a new creation is necessary. You may retort, “there is nothing very profound about a new creation.” But when understood in terms of God’s creation in Genesis, it is of utmost importance. A large proportion of our trouble is due to not recognizing the necessity for a new creation. The fact that a new creation was necessary implies that the old creation is inadequate, insufficient, because it has entirely broken down and failed, making it necessary for a new creation. The old creation has failed, and will always fail; it will never be any more successful than it has been. Man may have his knowledge increased, he may become more clever and more wise, he may even do many wonderful things, but in the realm of having a relationship with God, the whole creation has broken down and is a failure, and will never be one fragment more successful than it has been, or is.

You and I are far too slow in coming to such a basic, elementary conclusion. Our trouble is that we are always trying to accomplish something in relation to God by means of the old creation, and we have not fully accepted that "finis" is written over it. In the sight of God, failure, wreckage, ruin, and uselessness characterize the old creation to which you and I belong by nature. We must come to this starting point: the necessity for a new creation.

God has Set Aside the Old Creation

Furthermore, we have to see that what has failed and broken down is completely and entirely set aside by God, implying that the essential governing principle of the old creation is never carried over by God into the new. Everything related to the old creation, including that which motivates the old creation, its driving force, its vital principle, that which energizes and actuates its mind, its will, its heart, its spirit, its soul, and its body, is set aside, and ruled out. Not one bit of the old creation is carried over into the new creation. The old creation has produced the “natural” person. Our life and nature in our human birth is of the old creation. This means that the mind of the natural man does not originate or come into the new creation, the will of the natural man does not originate or come into the new creation, the heart of the natural man does not originate or come into the new creation. Every aspect of our natural person has got to die in that old creation and be raised with an entirely new energizing, motivating, governing, vital principle - a new creation. Why? Because the old creation is entirely separated from God, and in its fallen state can never be reunited with God.

Man Attempts to Bring the Old into the New

The Word of God unveils that God never unites fallen humanity (old creation) with Himself, or unites Himself with fallen humanity. God never brings sinful man as sinful man or the old creation in its fallen state into a living relationship with Himself. God, Who is new creation, and the old creation are distinct and separated, and can never be brought together. However, man always attempts to bring the old into the new. Man broke his union with God. Man destroyed his fellowship with God. Man destroyed his relationship with God. The word “reconciliation”, a major proponent of salvation shows the state of things and the kind of relationship that exists between man and God. On one hand, the word reconciliation may seem to contradict what we just said about reuniting. When God reconciles us to Himself, is He not reuniting the old with the new? No, never! You and I, as sinful men and women in that fallen state of the old creation, can never be reconciled to God or reunited to God. On the other hand reconciliation shows there was a problem with the previous relationship.

The relationship, the union, between God and man has been broken, and the old creation is severed from God. The old creation can never again be united with God. Yet men, everywhere, are striving and struggling to get back to God. All the philosophies of man throughout the ages are an effort to discover how men may come into an amicable life with God, how to solve the problem of man's relationship to God. This philosophy is inescapable. Wherever you go in the world, you will find an effort being made in some way or another to solve the problem of relationship to God and living on amicable terms with Deity. Even in the most enlightened Christian lands, people still struggle and strive to reach up to God and to, so to speak, get hold of God, in order to have a relationship to God. All the philosophies, all the efforts, either ignore the fact or are ignorant that it is an impossible undertaking; it cannot be done. Let us settle the matter once and for all: that the old creation cannot be reunited with God.

Old Creation was Taken Possession of by Man.

Man took possession of the old creation for himself. This is the source of all the trouble. In the beginning (*i.e. before the fall*), God had given everything to man. Everything was for man, and man was to be the inheritor of the earth. Yet, this was not a license for man to act as he pleased. On the contrary, he was to have it all in relation to God, and only in relation to God. The one condition God imposed was that man possessed his possessions in the Lord. It was upon this one condition that man broke down, and at that one point man rebelled. He was prompted by one who sought to usurp God's place (*i.e. Satan*) to take his possessions out of relationship to God in order to have them for himself.

When God created the universe and man, He made it in relation to Himself. Psalms 24:1, says, “**The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.**” But within mankind is a nearly universal attitude and spirit based on the fallen creation to have what is God's, without deference to God, without reference to God, and without recognizing that God has rights, even the first rights. The fall of man has issued in the realm of gross sensuality and downright wickedness, but even more

so, the realm of religion. The old creation is constituted with religion, and one cannot eliminate religion no matter how they try. Man has taken hold of religion and has become possessed of it in everything.

Religion

Man made religion his own possession, something that he uses and organizes according to his own wisdom. For example, Saul of Tarsus (Acts 8:1; 9:1-9) was a representative of a particular class of religious men to whom the Lord Jesus had some very, very strong things to say. Saul of Tarsus was a man who fully took hold of religion in both hands. This represented the highest form of religion that the world has known. Judaism was a religion of Divine revelation, containing those things which every other religion outside of Christianity has recognized the value of. The gospels allude to this. For instance, the record of the Roman centurion at Caesarea whose servant lay sick to the point of death sent for the Lord Jesus to intervene for his servant (Luke 7:1-10). The centurion was a servant of Rome, not brought up in Judaism or Christianity. He was in charge of a 100 men in that part of the country which was now subjected to the Romans, and he was responsible for that territory. Therefore, he had daily contact with the Jews. He clearly recognized that there was something in the Jewish religion that he did not possess in himself, nor did his own religion, his paganism, possess it. He came to see that among the Jews there was this particular Jew who possessed something supernatural. What a marvelous spiritual story of that man's life! Despite his background from birth, he groped his way through all the terrible darkness and confusion of paganism, towards the light, at last reaching One whose person he did not recognize, but Whom he recognized as having power. He came into the light because he recognized something in Judaism, and through Judaism he pursued further to Christ, and from Christ he contacted Jesus, as he would have called Him.

Religion Opposes God

Judaism was the Jewish religion in the days of the Lord Jesus with all its tradition, with all its revelation. Saul of Tarsus mightily took hold of this religion and ran with it to the very last ounce of his strength. He poured into it all the wealth of his intellect, all the resource of his energy, and all the fires of his enthusiasm and passion. He considered himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews (Philippians 3:4-6), entirely sold out for his religion, the religion of his fathers as he called it. Yet, when he experienced the great crises in his life on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9), we discover that the whole thing was as diametrically opposed to God as anything could be. The whole thing is against God and not for Him. **“I truly thought to myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus ...”** (Acts 26:9) Saul had taken the strongest hold of religion. This man had taken possession of religion with his entire being. And religion was against God and was opposing God's intention and purpose concerning His Son.

The Jews were supposed to be God's people. Judaism was religion that the Jews had possessed for themselves, and their religion opposed God and His Son. God had appointed Jesus Christ, His Son, heir of all things, but religion was ruling out the heir. The Lord told a parable to the religious Jews

which spoke of how they said, “**This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize His inheritance**” (Matthew 21:38; Mark 12:7). God gave His Son as heir of all things, and this Heir created the universe; through Him God made the worlds (John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:16). Religion responded with, “Come, let us kill Him”. The Lord Jesus spoke this parable to the Jews (Matthew 21; Mark 12) and Saul of Tarsus represented one of the religious ones going about to kill the heir. This is religion. The whole thing has gotten away from God and is separated from God. Man had taken possession.

Christianity is Religion

In the old creation all things have become of man, even religion. Christian religion is as much of man as Judaism is of man or paganism is of man. Man can get hold of Christianity just as thoroughly as a Saul of Tarsus got hold of Judaism. The new creation has to be exactly the opposite: all things are of God.

The fact that we are religious, even a so-called "Christian" when it relates to religion, does not mean that we are in union with God or that we are in fellowship with God. Unfortunately, the term “Christian” today may only imply that the person distinguishes himself from being called heathen, Mohammedan, Confucian, Buddhist, etc.. Christians make a profession, conform to Christian requirements externally, follow the established outward forms of Christian religion such as Church going, Bible reading, and promoting their church, but this does not carry with it the necessity of a living union with God Himself. So many are part of a “Christian” religion with the same outcome as Saul: separation from God and without intimate fellowship with God. Religion does not work to produce God's goal: that in all things His Son shall have the pre-eminence.

The New Creation is Out of God, Not Us

The state of the old creation is to have all things out from man, including religion. In the new creation, however, the whole thing has to be changed. So, 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “**If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation (marg.); the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God**”. Notice that nothing issues out from man in the new creation. All things issue out from God. Yet, many still pursue religion by having things come out of themselves. History shows how futile this is. The sooner we recognize, realize, accept, and settle the matter that everything in the new creation is out from God and not out from ourselves, the happier we will be. Only then is there the beginning of hope. Our assurance begins there. Divine joy begins when we come to the place where we cannot do anything. When we get to that point, the Lord begins to show us what He can do. However, He will not grant us the lasting joy or peace that passes understanding until we come to that place. Even in the matter of the initial step of salvation that is true.

To illustrate how the new creation is out of God, let's consider a story. There was a man who could not swim and who fell off a dock into deep water. He floundered and struggled and screamed frantically that he needed help. Another man, who was a good swimmer, saw him fall in, heard

him shouting, watched him kicking, but just folded his arms and observed the struggling victim.. The man in the water submerged, came up again still kicking, still struggling, still trying to shout. Still the man on the side watched him, apparently unmoved. Finally, the victim surfaced one last time, stopped struggling in the water, and began to sink. At that point, the onlooker dove in and saved him. When the drowning man came to his senses, he asked, “Why didn’t you save me immediately? Do you know I nearly died?” His rescuer responded, “I knew you were in danger. In fact, I have saved many men in similar circumstances. The first time I saved such a man from drowning I found that his kicking and struggling dragged me down with him so we both nearly died. Therefore, I learned that I must wait until he gives up his own futile efforts to save himself, and then, I save him.”

I think the Lord takes that attitude towards saving us. Our struggles, our kicking and screaming, only dishonour the Lord. The truth of the gospel states that there is no salvation in man and man cannot save himself (Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9). When we continue to exert our own effort, we contradict the truth of the cross, making God a liar because now His salvation would include our efforts (*but in truth, our efforts are in vain*). The cross terminates us completely in the old creation. To allow self to have any existence before God dishonors God, and places the divine judgment and wisdom at a discount. It is in effect saying, “God does not know what He is talking about; God is not telling the truth.” If God allowed us to contribute to our own salvation, we would go about saying that it was our own will-power and according to our ability to fight that we overcome sin! (Deuteronomy 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:7) God will not have that. This does not mean that the Lord wants us to flop passively and have no interest in our salvation. On the contrary, we need to “**work out our salvation**” (Philippians 2:12), meaning we do have a role. However, God wants us to realize our helplessness and hopelessness in the old creation so we will look solely to the Lord in faith as our Savior and Deliverer. [1 Peter 2:7, “**To you, therefore, who believe is the preciousness.**” This implies that we are hopeless and helpless in ourselves, but fully believe and accept God’s way of salvation.]

New in Nature and On-Going

[This paragraph was adjusted for accuracy’s sake.]

We must emphasize that nothing of the old creation [*e.g. our fallen nature*] is carried over into the new creation. The new creation is entirely out from God so God makes everything new in His new creation. The new creation is a **new** creation. *There are two different Greek words for “new”: 1) neos (new in time, unheard of before) and 2) kainous (fresh, new in nature). The new creation Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 5:17 was “kainous” (new in nature). The fallen nature has no place in the new creation, which has a new nature from the old. The same word for “new” was used when speaking of walking in newness of life (Romans 6:4), putting on the new man (Ephesians 4:24), the new covenant (Hebrews 8:13), the one new man created from Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:15), and the new commandment to love one another (John 13:34; 1 John 2:8). When we touch the newness of Christ, all is fresh in terms of nature. The old creation nature is corrupted, decaying, and condemned. Therefore, our fallen nature can never accomplish what God desires.*

So, God renews us by giving us a new nature and this new nature only comes forth out of Christ Himself.

The Greek word, “neos” for new is also used throughout the New Testament relating to new wine (Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, Luke 5:37-38), the new man (Colossians 3:9-10), and the new covenant (Hebrews 12:24). It is the root of the word “renewed” as used in Ephesians 4:23 and Colossians 3:10 for “being renewed”. So, the new man and new covenant can be both “neos” (new in time), and “kainous” (new in nature). Both Greek words indicate a new source apart from our old life and nature. Both indicate on-going processes that are not once for all. The new creation in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is new in nature and therefore, on-going. We are not made a new creation once for all with no further processing. We would not want to eat last years vegetables, but desire fresh. Likewise, the new creation is “fresh” (kainous) and that implies an on-going growth process based on the new nature imparted into us by God.

What is the New Creation in Christ?

First, we may ask where is the new creation? The new creation is altogether in Christ, not in you or in me [*as part of the old creation*]. Second, how did the new creation come about? The new creation originated in the resurrected person of the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 1:5; Psalms 2:7; Romans 8:29). When the Lord passed through death into resurrection, humanity joined with God, and God joined with humanity, and this humanity is entirely according to God's thought and God's mind. It has nothing to do with our fallen humanity, but rather represents a humanity which is in the highest thought of God, the humanity of the Lord Jesus, with which God can unite Himself, and does. And the mystery of the person of Christ (Colossians 2:2, 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 5:32) is that God and humanity have become one in that Person, in that Representative. When God puts this new creation into a man or woman, He does not unite with fallen man, but God unites with the humanity after His own mind in His Son.

Pictured by the First Creation (Genesis)

It is *Christ in you* with Whom God is joined, and that is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27), and that is the new creation. Christ in you is the beginning of God's new creation in us, and from that point the new creation grows. The first creation in the book of Genesis was not consummated, finished, and perfected when Adam was put in charge of all living things (Genesis 2:19). He was given charge to develop the old creation and it was to be progressive development. [**The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.** (Genesis 2:15)] This is a picture of God's desire for the new creation. When Christ takes up His residence with those of us who become united with Him, from that point it is the development in us of a new creation, and the whole process of the work of the Lord, the Spirit within us, is conformity to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Everything that the Lord does in our experience is related to this one goal: that Christ may be fully formed in us (Galatians 4:19). This is the new creation.

A Dwelling Place

The new creation is something totally new; man never had the Lord dwelling within him before. It may sound strange to use such a phrase, but in this specific sense of Christ dwelling within, God is in us. John 14:23, **“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode with him.”** [Abode is a dwelling place explained by **“I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”** (John 14:20)] Carefully notice that we are *in Christ*, it is not ourselves.

Christians struggle with this truth. Some go so far as denying the existence of sin and the self-life once we receive Christ as life within us. They are incorrect because we still carry about with us a humanity that is not according to God, part of the old creation [*and the fact that we die physically shows we are still part of the old creation*]. The final end of the old creation is death; we all die physically. However, the marvel is that there is a renewed spirit as part of the new creation. This renewed spirit was borne by the Holy Spirit, and produces a humanity that is glorified in the presence of God: Jesus Christ, with which God is linked. That is the nature of the new creation. The new creation is in Christ. See Him and you see what God's new creation is. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus dwelling within the believer, the child of God, is God joined with Man, and this Man is according to God's own heart because He is God in us. He makes everything possible. There is nothing of the old man. This process takes place at the new birth. Christ comes in, meaning that God joined to man, not to our old creation, but to His own new Man, coming in to reside, to abide.

Originating Out of Death

It is necessary that we definitely take our position in relation to the death of Christ, His Cross, and His burial because everything of the new creation begins after the old creation is put away (Romans 6:3-5). The Cross of the Lord Jesus is the place where the old creation is judicially put away by God (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 3:23-25; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 9:12). This is represented in the Old Testament by the offering of the ram that goes out to Azazel, out to the wilderness, with the sin upon it to be lost in the eternal desolation where God is not (Leviticus 16:7-10). That is you. That is me. We have to take that position by faith. We have to accept the end of ourselves in the Cross of the Lord Jesus. Have you accepted that? And then, having accepted that by faith, we take our place in resurrected union with the Lord Jesus. From that time it is Christ in you, united with Him. **“For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,” “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death... so we also might walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:4-5). Can you perceive the new creation in Christ, and Christ in us?

The last word must always be the supreme word: that the old creation is put away and the new creation is all Christ: **“It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me”** (Galatians 2:20). It is not what I am, but what He is. The more we lay hold of the Lord Jesus (Philippians 3:12), the more we count upon Him, the more we draw upon Him, the more we dwell in Him, the more we will know the life of the new creation and the fulness of the new creation. If the enemy can distract us

from Christ as everything and get us turned in upon ourselves, with ourselves in view, we will lose all the benefit of the new creation and return to our former status: wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked creatures (Revelation 3:17). But if we can keep our eyes and heart focused upon the Lord Jesus alone, living in Him, walking in Him, and dwelling in Him, then all God's fullness will be measured out to us and we will find that Christ is all the fullness of God for us.

May the Lord lead us into the fullness of the new creation in Christ.

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