

THE NEW MAN

BY WITNESS LEE

The New Testament reveals that the church is the assembly, the house of God, the kingdom of God, the Body of Christ, and the counterpart of Christ. We need to see that the church is also the new man.

The book of Ephesians reveals that the church is the Body of Christ (1:22-23), the kingdom of God, the household of God (2:19), and the temple, the dwelling place of God (vv. 21-22). In 2:15 and 4:24 we see that the church is the new man. Ephesians 2:15 says, "Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace." Ephesians 4:24 says, "Put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality." Furthermore, Colossians 3:10 says, "Put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him." The Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, means those called out for a gathering; hence, an assembly. This is the initial aspect of the church. From this aspect we need to go on to the aspects of the house of God and the kingdom of God. These are higher than the initial aspect but not as high as the aspect of the church as the Body of Christ. Yet the new man is still higher than the Body of Christ. Thus, the church is not just an assembly of believers, a kingdom of heavenly citizens, a household of God's children, nor even a Body for Christ. In an even higher aspect, the church is the new man to accomplish God's eternal purpose. The emphasis on the church being the Body of Christ is on life, whereas the emphasis on the church being the new man is on the person. As the Body of Christ, the church needs Christ as its life. As the new man, the church needs Christ as its person. The body without life is not a body but a corpse. However, when the body makes a move, it is decided not by life but by the person. Hence, in the new man we need to take Christ as our person. The new man as a corporate person should live a life as Jesus lived on earth, that is, a life of truth, expressing God and causing God to be realized as reality by man.

God's creation of man in Genesis 1 is a picture of the

new man in God's new creation. This means that the old creation is a figure, a type, of the new creation. In God's old creation the central character is man. It is the same in God's new creation. Therefore, in both the old creation and the new creation man is the center.

God created man in His own image (v. 26) and then gave man His dominion. Image is for expression. God wants man to be His expression. Dominion, however, is a matter not of expression but of representation. God wants man to represent Him in His authority for His dominion. In the old creation man was created to have God's image to express Him and also to have His dominion to represent Him.

The image refers to God's positive intention and dominion to God's negative intention. God's positive intention is that man would express Him, whereas God's negative intention is that man would deal with God's enemy, Satan, the devil. In the universe God has a problem, the problem of dealing with His enemy. Since God's enemy, the devil, is a creature, God will not deal with him directly Himself; instead, He will deal with him by man, a creature of His creation. God deals with His enemy through man. Hence, in God's creation of man there were two intentions. The positive intention is that man would bear God's image for His expression; the negative intention is that man would have God's dominion to represent Him to deal with His enemy.

In the old creation the dominion given to man was limited to the earth. This means that in the old creation the dealing with God's enemy was restricted to the earth. However, in God's new creation the dominion has been enlarged to the entire universe.

Eventually, the church as the new man is the man in God's intention. God wanted a man, and in the old creation He created a figure, a type, not the real man. The real man is the man Christ created on the cross through His all-inclusive death. This man is called the new man.

The term *the new man* reminds us of the old man. The old man did not fulfill God's dual purpose. However, the new man in God's new creation does fulfill the twofold purpose of expressing God and dealing with God's enemy.

Created by Christ

Ephesians 2:15 reveals that the church as the new man was created by Christ. Christ created the one new man with God's nature wrought into humanity. This action was something new. In the old creation God did not work His nature into any of His creatures, not even into man. In the creation of the one new man, however, God's nature has been wrought into man to make His nature one entity with humanity.

The new creation, like the old creation, is not something individual but something corporate. In the old creation God did not create millions of men; on the contrary, He created one man, Adam, who includes all men. The principle is the same with God's new creation. In the new creation we are all parts of the new man, the church, composed of the many sons of God.

There is a basic difference between the new creation and the old creation. God's life and nature are not wrought into the old creation, but the new creation does possess the divine life and the divine nature. Although the old creation came into being through the work of the mighty God, He Himself does not reside in it. Hence, the first creation has no divine content. The divine nature does not dwell in the old creation, and that is why it has become old. Adam did not have the life of God or the nature of God. We can receive the divine life and the divine nature only by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and being regenerated by the Spirit. When we believed in Christ, God's life and nature were imparted to us and made us a new creation.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new." Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old things of the flesh have passed away through the death of Christ, and all has become new in Christ's resurrection. To be in Christ is to be one with Him in life and in nature. This is of God through our faith in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:26-28).

The words *Behold, they have become new* are a call to watch the marvelous change of the new creation. The word *they* refers to the old things. The old creation does not have the divine life and nature; however, the new creation, composed of the believers born again of God, does have the divine life and nature (John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). Hence, the believers are a new creation, not

according to the old nature of the flesh but according to the new nature of the divine life.

The new creation is actually the old creation transformed by the divine life, by the processed Triune God. The old creation was old because God was not part of it; the new creation is new because God is in it. We who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God are still God's creation, but we are now His new creation. However, this is real only when we live and walk by the Spirit. Whenever we live and walk by the flesh, we are in the old creation, not in the new creation. Anything in our daily life that does not have God in it is the old creation, but what has God in it is part of the new creation.

If we would be in the new creation, we must enter into an organic union with the Triune God. Apart from such a union we shall remain in the old creation. But now, by the organic union with the Triune God, we are in the new creation. As believers in Christ, we are the new creation through an organic union with the Triune God.

In Adam we were born into the old creation, but in Christ we were regenerated into the new creation. Here in the new creation we are not only God's assembly, God's house, and God's kingdom and not only Christ's Body and counterpart—we are also the new man. God's intention is to have a corporate, universal man. God wants such a man for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. On the one hand, we were created in God's old creation and became the old man; on the other hand, we have been re-created in God's new creation and have become the new man.

In Himself

In Ephesians 2:15 we see that the new man was created by Christ in Himself. The phrase *in Himself* here is very significant. It indicates that Christ was not only the Creator of the one new man, the church, but also the sphere in which and the essence with which the one new man was created.

Christ is the element of the new man. Nothing of our old man was good for the creation of the new man, for our former essence was sinful. But in Christ there is a wonderful essence, in which the one new man has been created. This new man, created by Christ in Himself, is corporate and universal. There are many believers, but there is only one new man in the universe. All the believers are components of this one corporate and universal new man.

On the Cross

The new man was created by Christ in Himself in a particular way. This particular way was Christ's death, for Christ created the new man when He was on the cross.

While Christ was being put to death, He was working to create the one new man. In His death He created the different peoples into the new man. His death, therefore, was a tool used to work out the new creation.

The new man, unlike the old, was not created out of nothing. On the contrary, the new man was created out of the old man. This is indicated by the fact that, according to Ephesians 2:15, Christ brought the Jews and the Gentiles to the cross and there, through His death, created them into the one new man.

By Abolishing in His Flesh the Law of the Commandments in Ordinances

On the cross Christ created the new man in Himself by abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances (vv. 14-15). When Christ died on the cross, not only did He deal with sins, the old man, Satan, and the world; He also dealt with the ordinances. On the cross Christ abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances.

The Middle Wall of Partition: Ephesians 2:14 speaks of “the middle wall of partition.” This middle wall of partition is “the law of the commandments in ordinances” in verse 15, which was given because of man’s flesh. The first of these ordinances is circumcision to cut off man’s flesh. This became the middle wall of partition between the circumcision and the uncircumcision.

The Enmity: In Ephesians 2:14 Paul also speaks of “the enmity.” The middle wall of partition, which is the distinction (mainly made by circumcision) between the circumcision and the uncircumcision, became the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles.

It is crucial for us to see that, for the creation of the one new man, Christ abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmity. Ephesians 2:14 and 15 say, “He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances.” Here we see that Christ died on the cross to abolish all the ordinances among mankind. Due to man’s fall, among mankind there are many ordinances, many

customs, habits, ways to live, and ways to worship. All these differences among peoples have divided, scattered, and confused mankind. Therefore, among the human race there is no peace. Christ died on the cross to abolish all these ordinances. In particular, He died to take away the partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Not only was there a partition between the Jews and the Gentiles; there were also partitions between every nationality and race. Without the removal of these partitions, there would be no way for us to be one in Christ as the new man.

All the ordinances were abolished by Christ on the cross. When He was crucified, His death abolished, annulled, the different ordinances of human life and religion. Furthermore, the differences among the races and the differences of social rank have been abolished by the death of Christ.



Ephesians 2:14 says, “He Himself is our peace.” The word *our* refers to both Jewish and Gentile believers. Through the blood of Christ we have been brought near both to God and to God’s people. Christ, who has accomplished full redemption for both Jewish and Gentile believers, is Himself our peace, our harmony, in that He made both one. Because of the

fall of mankind and the call of the chosen race, there was a separation between Israel and the Gentiles. Through Christ’s redemption, this separation has been removed. Now the two are one in the redeeming Christ, who is the bond of oneness.

In the law of Moses there were two kinds of commandments: moral commandments, such as the commandments concerning stealing and the honoring of parents, and ritual commandments, such as the commandments concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. The commandments regarding circumcision and the eating regulations were ritual commandments, not moral commandments. The moral commandments will never be abolished, not in this age nor in the millennium nor in eternity. The ritual commandments, on the contrary, are not permanent. By the middle wall of partition Paul meant the law of commandments in ordinances, the ritual commandments related to circumcision, the Sabbath, and diet. The law of ritual commandments was a middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Actually, any ordinance or ritual is a middle wall of partition.

In Ephesians 2:15 Paul tells us that Christ abolished “in His flesh” the law of commandments in ordinances. Because mankind became flesh (Gen. 6:3) and was thus kept from God and His purpose, God ordained His chosen people to be circumcised from the flesh. This ordinance was given because of man’s flesh. It was in the flesh that Christ was crucified. When He was crucified, His flesh, which was typified by the separating veil in the temple, was rent (Heb. 10:20). By breaking down the middle wall of partition on the cross, Christ has made peace.

Christ brought all the races and nationalities with their different kinds of ordinances, habits, and regulations, to the cross. Then on the cross He put the old creation to death and abolished all the ordinances among the old creation. This Christ did in order to create in Himself the one new man.

According to God

Ephesians 4:24 says, “Put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.” The old man was created according to the image of God outwardly, without God’s life and nature (Gen. 1:26-27). But the new man was created according to God Himself inwardly, with God’s life and nature.

Actually, for the new man to be created according to God is for the new man to be created according to God’s image. To be created “according to God” means to be created according to the image of God.

Because the new man has been created in Christ and with Christ according to God, the new man bears the image of God. Eventually, the new man will bear the image of God in holiness and righteousness of the reality.

In Righteousness and Holiness of the Reality

Ephesians 4:24 tells us that the new man was created in righteousness and holiness of the reality. Righteousness is being right with God and with man according to God’s righteous way; the denotation of the word *holiness* here in Greek, different from that of the word *holy* in Romans 1:2, is being godly and devout before God. Righteousness is mainly toward men, and holiness mainly toward God.

Righteousness and holiness here refer to the two main characteristics of the life of Jesus in His humanity as indicated in verse 21. The new man is created according to God in both of these aspects.

The righteousness and holiness of the new man are of “the reality.” The article before *reality* in verse 24 is emphatic. As “the deceit” in verse 22, related to the old man, is the personification of Satan, so reality here,

related to the new man, is the personification of God. This reality was exhibited in the life of Jesus, as mentioned in verse 21. In the life of Jesus righteousness and holiness of reality were always being manifested. It was in the righteousness and holiness of this reality, which is God realized and expressed, that the new man was created.

Dean Alford says that in 4:24 *reality* denotes the essence of God, for God is reality. This is in contrast to the lusts of the deceit mentioned in verse 22. Deceit is the essence of Satan, who is a liar, but reality is the essence of God, who is reality. Thus, the lusts are of Satan, who is the deceit, whereas righteousness and holiness are of God, who is the reality. M. R. Vincent points out that in these verses *deceit* and *reality* should be personified. The new man is created according to God in righteousness and holiness, two aspects of God’s essence.

Righteousness, holiness, and the reality in 4:24 are actually God Himself. All these are embodied in Christ. Therefore, righteousness is Christ, holiness is Christ, and the reality is Christ. When Christ created the new man on the cross through His death, He did this according to God in Himself as righteousness, holiness, and the reality. This is marvelous. In the present age we cannot exhaust the experience of Christ as righteousness, holiness, and the reality. When we are in the New Jerusalem, however, we shall realize and understand how Christ created us into the new man through His cross according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality. We shall understand that all these are attributes of Christ. Christ created us according to God in Himself as all these attributes. He is the model, the mold. In His work of creation on the cross, He molded us in Himself. As a result, we shall bear His image; that is, we shall bear His righteousness, holiness, and the reality.

Whereas Ephesians 4:24 says that the new man was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality, Colossians 3:10 says that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. The image of Christ in Colossians 3:10 is the righteousness and holiness of the reality in Ephesians 4:24. Christ is the image of God and the embodiment of God (Col. 1:15; 2:9). When He was on earth, He was a man who was righteous and holy and full of love and light. This was God’s image expressed in Jesus. Today the church as the new man bears the image of God; that is, the new man bears God’s righteousness and holiness and also His love and light.

Of the Two Peoples—the Jews and the Gentiles

The new man is of the two peoples—the Jews and the Gentiles. This is the reason Paul in Ephesians 2:15 speaks

of Christ's creating "the two in Himself into one new man." The word *two* in this verse refers to the Jewish and the Gentile believers.

Reconciled to God

Ephesians 2:16 says, "Might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it." The word *both* refers to the Jews and the Gentiles. Not only the uncircumcised Gentiles but also the circumcised Jews needed reconciliation to God through the redemption of Christ accomplished on His cross.

Originally, we were not only sinners but also enemies of God. Enmity is the greatest problem between man and God. Through the redeeming death of Christ, God has justified us, the sinners, and has reconciled us, His enemies, to Himself. We were reconciled to God when we believed in the Lord Jesus. By faith we have received God's reconciliation.

Ephesians 2:16 says that the Jews and the Gentiles have been reconciled in one Body. This one Body, the church (1:22-23), is the one new man in the previous verse. It was in this Body that both the Jews and the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the cross. We, the believers, both Jews and Gentiles, were reconciled not only *for* the Body of Christ but also *in* the Body of Christ.

We usually regard reconciliation as an individual matter; we do not often think of corporate reconciliation. However, the proper and genuine reconciliation is in the Body. The Body is the instrument, the means, by which we were reconciled to God.

This corporate concept of reconciliation pervades the New Testament. Our concept, however, is that we were reconciled to God as individuals. But in the sight of God, we have been reconciled to Him in the one Body. The exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt is a clear picture of this. In Egypt the children of Israel were, in a sense, far off from God. After they were brought out of Egypt and had passed through the Red Sea together, at Mount Sinai they were reconciled to God as one congregation, not as individuals. That was a type of our being reconciled to God in the one Body. We need to have this corporate concept. Instead of thinking that we have been

reconciled individually, we need to see that we have been reconciled to God corporately in one Body.

Brought into Peace

Because the Jews and the Gentiles have been reconciled to God, they have been brought into peace. By Christ's abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances and creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, peace was made between all believers. For this reason, in Ephesians 2:15 Paul speaks of Christ's "making peace." Christ has abolished on the cross all the differences due to ordinances. In so doing, He has made peace for His Body. Now this peace should bind all believers together and thus become the uniting bond (4:3).

Before Christ was crucified, there was no peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. According to 2:15, by

Christ's abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances and creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, peace was made between all believers. Furthermore, on the cross, Christ dealt with all the negative things between us and God. This means that He also made peace between man and God. Now there is no longer a separation between the Jew-

ish believers and the Gentile believers nor between us and God. However, at the time Ephesians was written, some of the Jewish believers still held the concept that they should be separate from the Gentile believers. For this reason, Paul said that the middle wall of partition has been broken down and that the Jewish and Gentile believers must be one. Otherwise, there can be no oneness, and without oneness there cannot be the one Body. If we would be brought into peace and stay in the peace, we need to realize that the differences between the Jews and the Gentiles have been abolished on the cross.

Equaling the One Body

The new man equals the one Body. The new man, the Body, is of Christ. Hence, it is not individual but corporate (Col. 3:10-11).

The creating death of Christ created not the Body but the new man. The Body was formed in Christ's resurrection and ascension. Eventually, however, the new man created by the creating death of Christ equals the Body



formed in Christ's resurrection and ascension. Ephesians 2:16 clearly indicates that the new man created out of two collective peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, is the Body of Christ. Hence, the new man and the Body are synonymous terms and may be used interchangeably.

The fact that the new man is the Body and that the Body is the new man is a strong indication that the new man is not an individual entity but a corporate entity. Therefore, it is a serious mistake for some versions of the Bible to speak of putting on the new self. The New American Standard Version makes this very error in Ephesians 4:24 by adopting the rendering "put on the new self." The Greek word does not mean self; it means man. According to Ephesians 4:24, what we have put on is the new man, not the new self.

No Room for Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, Barbarian and Scythian, Slave and Free Man

In the church as the new man there is no room for Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. After referring to the new man in Colossians 3:10, Paul goes on to say in verse 11, "Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man." The word *where*, referring to the new man in verse 10, means in the new man. There is no natural person in the new man. Furthermore, there is no possibility, no room, for any natural person.

M. R. Vincent says that in the Greek language the words translated "cannot be" are very strong and mean that there is no possibility. In the new man there cannot be Greeks, who are for philosophical wisdom, and Jews, who are for miraculous signs (1 Cor. 1:22). There cannot be circumcision and uncircumcision. Circumcision refers to the observers of the Jewish religious rituals; uncircumcision refers to those who do not care for the Jewish religion. Furthermore, in the new man there cannot be barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free man. A barbarian is an uncultured person, the Scythians were considered the most barbarous people, the slaves were those sold into slavery, and the free men were those who had been freed from slavery. No matter what kind of person we may be, as far as the new man is concerned, we must regard ourselves as nobodies. In the new man there is room only for Christ, not for any kind of natural person.

In saying that there cannot be any natural person in the new man, Paul in verse 11 is very strong. It is a great mistake, therefore, to translate the Greek here as "the new self," as is done in the New American Standard Version. It is foolish to say that in the new self there is no Greek and Jew, no circumcision and uncircumcision. According

to the context, the new man in Colossians 3:10 certainly does not denote the new self, for the new man is made up of believers from many different cultural backgrounds. This is not true of the so-called new self. No doubt, the new man here is a corporate man, the church, Christ's Body. Although many different kinds of people make up the new man, all are part of Christ. They are no longer the natural person.

Christ Being All the Members and in All the Members

In Colossians 3:11 Paul says not only that in the new man there is no room for any natural person but that in the new man "Christ is all and in all." In the new man there is room only for Christ. He is all the members of the new man, and He is in all the members. He is everything in the new man. This means that actually He is the new man.

The word *all* in verse 11 refers to all the members who make up the new man. Christ is all these members. Because Christ is all the members of the new man, there is no room in the new man for any race, nationality, culture, or social status. For us to experience the reality of Christ being all the members of the new man, we need to take Christ as our life and person and live Him, not ourselves. If Christ is the living of all the saints, all the members of the new man, then in reality only He will be in the new man. When all the saints, whatever their nationality may be, live Christ, then in a real and practical way Christ will be all the members of the new man.

In 3:11 Paul also says that Christ is in all. On the one hand, Christ is all the members of the new man; on the other hand, He is in all the members. It is very significant that Paul says both that Christ is all and that He is in all. If Paul did not say that Christ is in all, only that He is all, we may think that in the new man Christ is needed and that we are not needed. We should not think that, because Christ is all the members in the new man, we are nothing and are not needed. On the one hand, Paul does say that in the new man there is no place for the natural person because Christ is all the members. Nevertheless, he also says that Christ is in all the members. The fact that Christ is in all the members of the new man indicates that the members continue to exist.

When we take Christ as our life and person and live together with Him, we shall have the sense deep within that we are one with Christ and that Christ is us. However, simultaneously we shall also sense that Christ is in us. Therefore, it is true to say that Christ is both in us and that He is us. We are parts of the new man with Christ in us. We continue to exist, but we do not exist without Christ. Rather, we exist as those who are indwelt by Christ. This is what it means to say that in the new man Christ is everyone and that He is also in everyone. It

is crucial for us to see that in the new man Christ is everyone and in everyone. In the new man there is nothing but Christ.

To Be Put On by the Believers

Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10 both speak of putting on the new man. Although the new man has already been created, we still need to put him on. We need to put on the new man who has already been created in Christ. This new man is the Body of Christ. Hence, to put on the new man means to live a life by the Body. Before our salvation, we were living in the old man, in the old society, but now we are members of Christ, living in His Body. We should put off the old man with the old social life and put on the new man, the church. In this new man there is nothing natural, nothing of social rank, for everyone is full of Christ. Christ is everyone and is in everyone (vv. 10-11). There is nothing but Christ in the new man. Our life is Christ, our living is Christ, our intention is Christ, our ambition is Christ, our will is Christ, our love is Christ, and everything else about us is Christ. He saturates our entire being.

According to Ephesians 4:17-32, the new man lives a life by grace and truth. These are the two main factors in the living of the new man to fulfill God's purpose. God needs such a new man on earth to fulfill His purpose, to carry out His intention.

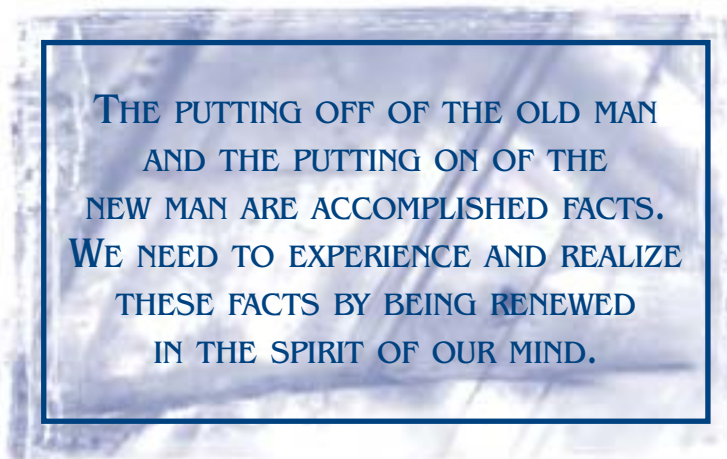
By Being Renewed in the Spirit of Their Mind

The believers put on the new man by the renewing in the spirit of their mind. In Ephesians 4:23 Paul says that we are being renewed in the spirit of our mind. To be renewed is for our transformation to the image of Christ (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). The spirit in Ephesians 4:23 is the regenerated spirit of the believers mingled with the indwelling Spirit of God. Such a mingled spirit spreads into our mind, thus becoming the spirit of our mind. It is in such a spirit that we are renewed for our transformation. In this way our natural mind is conquered, subdued, and put under the spirit. This implies a process of metabolic transformation. As this process takes place, the mingled spirit spreads into our mind, takes over our mind, and becomes the spirit of our mind.

By the spirit of the mind we are renewed to fulfill in

experience what was accomplished in the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man through baptism. The putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man are actually accomplished facts. Now we need to experience and realize these facts by being renewed in the spirit of our mind.

The way to put on the new man is for the spirit, which is mingled with the Spirit, to become the spirit of our mind. Our mind dominates and directs our whole being. For the spirit to become the spirit of our mind means that the spirit directs, controls, dominates, and possesses our mind. When the spirit directs our mind, it governs our entire being. When this is the case, our being is under the control of the spirit. It is in this spirit of our mind that we are renewed, and by means of this spirit we put on the new man experientially.



It is crucial for us to see that the new man has already been created and, by regeneration, has been put into our spirit. The need now is for our spirit to become the dominant part of our being. This means that our spirit mingled with the Spirit of God must become the spirit of our mind. If our spirit is the spirit of our mind, then all our living will be by the spirit,

and whatever we do will be according to the spirit. This spirit of our mind will then become the renewing spirit. As we are renewed by this spirit, we put on the new man.

How much in experience we put on the new man depends on how much our spirit directs our being. Therefore, experientially speaking, putting on the new man does not take place once for all. On the contrary, it is a life-long matter, a gradual process that goes on throughout our Christian life. When we were regenerated, the new man, created with Christ as the divine essence, was put into our spirit. Now day by day we need to put on this new man by permitting the spirit to control our being and renew our mind. Every time part of our mind is renewed, we put on a little more of the new man. Hence, the more we are renewed through the spirit controlling our mind, the more of the new man we put on.

By Being Renewed unto Full Knowledge according to the Image of Him Who Created the New Man

Ephesians 2:15 says that the new man was created, but

Colossians 3:10 says that the new man is “being renewed unto full knowledge.” Although Ephesians and Colossians are sister books, what they say concerning the new man is not exactly the same. How can we say that, on the one hand, the new man has been created and that, on the other hand, the new man is being renewed? Because the new man was created with us who belong to the old creation, he needs to be renewed. This renewing takes place mainly in our mind, as indicated by the phrase *unto full knowledge*. In our spirit the new man has already been created. Before the new man was created in our spirit in resurrection, we did not have the Spirit of God or the life of God within us. Although we had a spirit, our spirit did not contain the divine life. But when the new creation took place in our spirit in resurrection, the Holy Spirit with the divine life was added into our being. This addition of the Spirit and the divine life to our spirit produced a new being, a new man. For this reason, we can say that in our spirit the new man has been created.

However, there is still the need for renewing in our soul and even in our body. Our mind, which represents our soul, needs to be renewed. Eventually, when our body is transfigured, it also will be renewed. Therefore, our spirit has been regenerated, but our soul is being renewed. On the one hand, in our spirit the new man was created with new elements, the elements of the divine life and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, in our soul the new man is being renewed.

In Colossians 3:10 Paul says that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge “according to the image of Him who created him.” The image here refers to Christ, God’s Beloved, as the expression of God (1:15; Heb. 1:3). It was God the Creator who created the new man in Christ (Eph. 2:15).

Ephesians 4:24 indicates that the new man was created according to God directly. But Colossians 3:10 reveals that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge, which is according to the image of God. Because the new man was created according to God, in a very real sense

the new man is the same as God. Nevertheless, in our experience the new man must be renewed unto the full knowledge, that is, according to the image, the expression, of God who created him. The creation of the new man according to God has already been completed, but in our experience the new man is renewed unto full knowledge little by little. In this way the new man experienced by us becomes the expression of God. The more we put on the new man, the more we are renewed according to what God is, and the more we bear His image, the expression of what He is.

The more we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, the more the new man with the divine element will spread from our spirit into our soul. This spreading within us is according to Christ, who is the image of God, God’s expression. The more renewing that takes place in our soul, the more we shall be able to express God. In other words, the more renewing we experience in the soul, the more we shall have of the image of Christ.

Fighting against the Enemy of God

Ephesians 6:10-20 reveals that the church, which is the new man, needs to fight against the enemy of God. Elsewhere we have pointed out that the church is a warrior. However, the warrior is not a status of the church but an aspect of the church as the new man. The new man has the obligation of fighting against God’s enemy. This is indicated in Genesis 1, where we are told that when God created the old man, He commissioned him to bear His image for His expression and to have His dominion for His representation to deal with the enemy. From this we see that in the old creation the old man had a twofold obligation. The new man in the new creation also has the twofold obligation of bearing God’s image to express Him and of fighting against God’s enemy. Therefore, the church as the new man is a warrior fighting against God’s enemy, for the new man is now fulfilling God’s purpose to express God and to fight against God’s enemy for God’s dominion, God’s kingdom. **AC**

Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians

The problem in Colossae was not sinfulness, as in Corinth; it was culture. Asceticism and philosophy are two of the leading products of culture. Uncultured people are wild, altogether without any form of asceticism. Furthermore, those of a low culture do not have philosophy. The more cultured people are, the more highly developed their philosophy is. The Greeks are strong in philosophy, whereas the Jews are known for their religious observances. Most religious observances are related to the putting down of the flesh and to the suppression of the self. The church in Colosse was composed of both Greeks and Jews. With the Greeks the problem was philosophy, but with the Jews the problem was religious practices. This indicates that various cultural practices had invaded the church life and pervaded it.

From the *Life-study of Colossians* by Witness Lee, p. 268