

The Lord's Day

April 28, 1946

**“A New Man in Christ Jesus”
Ephesians 2:15**

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Things had not gone well in the home; a young man had been unhappily married. One day he took his wife for a boat ride. The boat was accidentally upset and the wife drowned. Afterward the police made an investigation and it was found that what appeared to be an accident was no accident at all. After trial, the young man was sentenced to death. His father spent the last night in the cell with his son. The next morning the son was led forth and executed. After a few moments, they called the old, broken-hearted father. He came and, standing over the lifeless form of his son, he was heard to say, “Oh, my son, if only I could impart to you my life – if only I could put my life into you that you might become the man I had intended you to be!”

This is something of the meaning of what Christ did for us. God had made us in His image. He had high and holy purposes for us. But sin came and ruined man, cutting him off from God and from the life of God which would flow through him. In other words, man became spiritually dead.

But God, seeing man in trespasses and sins, said, “I will send My Son, My only Son, into the world and redeem him.” So He did send Christ to be man's Redeemer.

The redemptive work of Christ can be divided into two parts. First, He came to bring forgiveness for our sins. One cannot say too much about the gloriousness of what this means. Last fall one of our church members allowed me to use his yard boy to help me sow winter grass on our lawn. When I had the yard boy in my car on the way home, I began talking to him about becoming a Christian. I tried to tell him what it meant to accept Christ as his Savior; that God loved him and wanted him to be saved. After we had finished our chore, and I was taking him back to the house where he worked, I again urged upon him the importance of accepting Christ. I said to him, “Do not put it off too long. None of us can be sure how long we will live. You may come to work in the morning and these people will tell you that the man you helped sow the winter grass is dead.” He answered, “That would be bad.” “Yes,” I said, “it would; but thank God, I know where I am going.” He said, “You do?” I replied, “Yes, I know I am going to heaven. I do not pretend to be good, to say nothing of claiming to be perfect; so I cannot claim Heaven because of anything I have done. I know God sent Christ to die for the sinner and He has said all who will receive Him shall have forgiveness and I have accepted Christ as my Savior and I am sure God has saved me.”

One cannot magnify this great truth of redemption too much. However, I am afraid that we have not placed enough emphasis upon the other part of the redemptive work of Christ. He came not only to bring us forgiveness of sins, but He came to give us a new life. Remember, the father said, “I would like to give my life for you. I would like to put my life in you that you might

become all I intended you to be.” So God sent Christ not only to give us life, but that His life might be lived out in us, enabling us to become what God intended us to be.

This redemptive work of Christ we call regeneration or a new birth. This regeneration makes one a new man. The word for “new” in our text literally means something different from what has been. As an illustration, we had bombs of several descriptions, but the atom bomb was something new. God made animals, but when He made man, He made him a new kind of animal. There had been men in the world for centuries – Jewish men; Greek men; Roman men; but Christ made man a new type of being – no longer merely a Roman or a Greek or a Jew, but man became a Christian, a child of God. This means something tremendous. It is bound to have a great repercussion in the life of one who experiences this regeneration. When one becomes a new man, great and glorious things will happen to him.

Let me call your attention to just four. First, this man will have a new center of life. Second, he will come to have a new purpose. Third, there will be a new life produced in him. Fourth, there will come to be a new power in his life.

First, then, we find that this new man about whom we are talking will have a new center of his life. Heretofore, he has worked for self, thought of self, and lived for self. Most decisions have been made on the basis of self and selfish desires. It is much like one of our modern airports. All planes coming in or going out must report and receive directions about landing or taking off. This place from which instructions and directions come is called the Control Tower. The old man’s control tower was self while the new man will have a new control tower, namely Christ. His whole life will be under the direction and control of Christ.

Dr. Egbert W. Smith, for many years the Executive Secretary of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., tells of the first convert in a tribe in Africa. This new convert was a chief. After his conversion, he erected a church and began to preach. The king commanded him to tear down the church and to stop his preaching, but to this the chief paid no attention. He was then summoned before the king and when reprimanded and threatened with beheading, he said to the king, “My head belongs to you, but my heart belongs to Christ.” The king put out his eyes, and, for eight years, he lived before his people blind because he would recognize no greater authority in his life than Christ.

Because this trust is of such great importance, let me give you another illustration. One day Miss Margaret Slattery, that great Christian worker and author, was sitting under the pines at Northfield talking to a young lady. After a time, the young lady said, “I have taken my class of girls lightly. Often I have not even studied the lesson. Sometimes I have talked to them about other things. Not one of them is a member of the church. I am going to give them up. You make the standard too high. It is so hard.”

Miss Slattery answered, “Yes, it is hard. Have you asked to be let off?”

“Oh, no,” she said, “I will not see the Superintendent of the Sunday School until in the fall.”

Miss Slattery said she did not mean the Superintendent. She meant the One who had taught His class of twelve and was so patient against such odds. "He commanded us," she said, "to go and teach." The young lady said she had never thought of that; to which Miss Slattery replied, "Before you give up the class, you had better get an honorable discharge from Headquarters." She was then reminded of all her qualifications and ability as well as the great advantages she had.

One the last night they were at Northfield, they were again in conference and the young lady told her that she did not get the discharge and that she was planning to take a course of study two hours a week which would help her to be a better teacher. "I'll make that class over," she said.

The point is we should take orders from the Headquarters of Christ instead of the control tower of self.

The second point I wish to make is that the New Man will have a new purpose in life. Many of us have thought our chief purpose in life was running a business, feeding a family, doctoring or nursing the sick, passing our grades in school, or winning a law suit, or making a crop. But Christ would give the new man a new purpose in life. That purpose would be the supreme aim Christ had while He was here on earth, which was to glorify the Father. You will remember He was facing the cross and cried, "What shall I pray? Father, save me from this hour" – and then He answered His own question, "For this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thyself." The task of the New Man will be to glorify God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

It will be something like what happened to Holman Hunt. When a young man, he wanted to be a painter, but when he was only twelve years old he was put to work. At work he spent his spare time drawing pictures and at one time, it is said, he drew a fly on the window which looked so real the boss tried to brush it off. At sixteen he began his career as a painter. Several of his pictures were well received and won him some prizes. However, he became very discouraged because it was so difficult to sell any of his pictures. He decided to give up painting and become a farmer. At that time, a great new idea came to him. That idea was that he would paint pictures which would make people see and appreciate the wonderful things God had done for them. So instead of becoming a farmer, he went to Palestine to make live again on canvas the great Biblical scenes and spiritual truths of Scripture. That first year he painted his most famous picture, "The Light of the World," which made him famous as an artist and has inspired thousands of people to a finer, nobler life. It was a great new purpose which made him a successful and useful artist.

We, too, when born again, will have a great purpose in life, namely, to do all in our power to make all men come to a knowledge of God.

The third thing about the New Man to which I desire to call your attention, is that he will come to live a new life. Many things which seemed so important before will lose much of that importance and many things which previously seemed insignificant will become very essential. Self will be buried and Christ will be crowned in our lives. We will come to see that we cannot afford to do anything which will not be a credit to our Christ. We will come to allow Him to live His life out in us.

The story is told of a very mean man who lived in a certain village. This man sold wood to his neighbors and always took advantage of them by cutting his logs a few inches under the required four feet. One day the report went around that the wood cutter had been converted, but no one believed this could be true. One man, however, slipped quietly out of the grocery store, where the conversion was being discussed, and in a short time came back in great excitement, shouting, "It is so; He has been." When asked how he knew, he answered, "I have been over and measured the logs he cut yesterday and all of them are a good four feet long." That testimony convinced the crowd. This homely incident brings out the truth that a person who has accepted Christ becomes a new man, and that fact that he is a new man will be manifested in his daily living.

Francis Xavier at times received the most mortifying treatment in the prosecution of his missionary task. The story is told that at one time while preaching in a city of Japan, the multitude made sport of him. One man much meaner than the rest went to him while he was giving an address, and made as though he wanted to whisper something to him. When Dr. Xavier leaned over to hear what the man had to say, he spat into his face. The missionary without showing the least bit of anger and without speaking a word pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and, wiping his face, he continued his sermon. By such control, the scorn of the audience was turned into admiration. A learned doctor of the city who was present said to himself that a religion which taught men such virtue and inspired them to such control and would give a man such a disposition surely must be from God. Yes, as New Men we should live like Christ under all circumstances of life.

The fourth truth about this New Man about which we have been speaking is of the utmost importance, for without it none of the others can be true. No man can be such a person unless there comes to him a new power. God does not make us new men merely in what He expects of us, but He will also bestow upon us the power to enable us to live up to His expectations. We need to remember that God had the power to raise Christ from the grave, and since He has that power we can be sure He has the power to change and transform our lives and make us what He intended us to be.

The great trouble with most of us Christians is not that we do not know what we should be, but that we do not become that because we will not yield our lives to the great power of Christ. God would give us the power to live like New Men.

One tells us that when he was in college he and a group of students were invited to the X-Ray Room of a well-known physician and surgeon. This physician, with a nurse to assist him, gave a demonstration of X-Ray, which was then a new invention. They were all thrilled when the doctor placed one of the students on a stool having glass legs and had him take hold of the electrodes. The doctor set the electric machine going, but nothing unusual happened until the doctor pointed his finger at the young man's nose and fire leaped between the doctor's finger and the young man's nose. This happened because the body of the student had become saturated with electricity.

Here is what God will do for us. He fills us with the Spirit of Christ and our lives will then be constantly showing forth the life of Christ.

Let me tell you two stories which it seems to me will sum up all I have been trying to say. One day a millionaire called at a friend's house in England. A maid opened the door and showed him in. She did not know who he was, but when she went to the kitchen she said to the cook, "That is the most miserable man I have ever seen in my life." Contrast that man with the greater Christian from India who also called upon a minister friend in London. When the maid came to the door, she asked what name she should give. The great Christian replied, "Sadhu Sundar Singh." This name was more than the maid could manage to pronounce, so she went to the study to inform the minister and said, "There's a gentleman to see you, sir." "What name?" asked the minister; to which the maid replied, "I did not quite catch the name, but he is wonderfully like Jesus Christ."

Here is the point: God sent Christ to redeem us that He might make New Men out of us: men who will have a new center of life, a new purpose in life, and will so be empowered by Him that they will act like Christ – even perhaps come to *look* as people picture Him looking.