

WHO IS “WE”?

(Discourse below by Irwin J. Doran.)

[Comment by T. A. Smith: in typing this discourse for printing, it is our belief that Bro. Doran has violated the rules of grammar intentionally, to emphasize his point that as Christians, WE ARE NEW CREATURES NOW and this has a world of meaning to us who are running for the prize of the high calling.]

In 2 John 6 and 8, the word “we” is used 4 times. “And this is the love that WE walk after his commandments. This is the commandment that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. Look to yourselves that WE lose not those things which WE have wrought, but that WE receive a full reward.”

In the New Testament, this word WE is used 861 times. Who is this WE which the New testament writers considered so important that they used it so many times? Why is it so important for us to know who WE is? How does this knowledge of who WE is affect us? Let’s start with answers to these questions and then see if the scriptures bear out these answers.

Question 1: Who is WE?

Answer 1: WE is a spirit being in a fleshy body. WE is the New Creature.

Question 2: Why is it important for us to know who WE is?

Answer 2: Because knowing the answer will cause us to protect the New Creature from destruction by the flesh.

Question 3: How will we react if we recognize who WE is?

Answer 3: WE will claim the exceeding great and precious promises that by these WE might become partakers of the divine nature. Now for proofs that these answers are correct.

The first answer is that WE is a spirit being in a fleshy body. It is a New Creature. What do the Scriptures say? Let’s start with 2 Cor. 5:17 where Paul says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.” Can we recognize WE in this Scripture?

Please notice how definite this scripture is. It does not say WE is going to be a new creature. It says “WE is a new creature.” If this embryo (begotten) new creature is not destroyed, WE will enjoy everlasting life, immortality. This is not a matter of pride, to get puffed up about it. It is that a proper appreciation of who WE is will motivate us to make our calling and election sure.

But more proof. How do we qualify as the WE class, the New Creature mentioned in 2 Cor. 5:17? We qualify because we are in Christ. We are not conformed to this world, but

we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, as Paul counseled in Rom. 12:1, 2. Remember, again that Paul does not say we are going to be, but the WE are new creatures—meaning right now. Let's us keep that in mind that WE is a new creature, now. We will be referring back to this fact, more and more.

On Reprint page 4961 (Z. 1912) Pastor Russell received a letter asking: "Is it correct to think of ourselves as a new creature while in the begotten condition; or is it only when born from the dead that this condition is attained. In other words, is the new mind the new creature?" The Pastor's answer, abbreviated, was "yes, the new mind is the new creature? The scriptural thought is that this new creature is now an embryo, a beginning. If anything should check the development of the embryo, the birth will never take place. There will be a miscarriage. This means, brethren, that we must not let anything check the development of the embryo." Now in addition to getting used to the fact that we are now new creatures, not later on but already. Here is another thing we should begin to see: we as new creatures are no longer human beings—we are spirit beings. (Reprint page 5325, par. 8)

How can we understand this? The Apostle Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:16: "Henceforth know WE no man after the flesh. Yes, though WE have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know WE him no more." On page 476 of the Fourth Volume, the Pastor said "WE know no man [in Christ] after the flesh," explaining that WE know those in Christ according to the spirit, and not according to their fallen flesh. On Reprint page 3831, the Pastor says: "Our Father's dealings and commands are never to the flesh but to the New Creature. From that standpoint, '[WE] are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of Christ dwell in you.' (Rom. 8:9)" Also the Apostle Peter said in 1 Pet. 4:6, "[WE are] judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

So, two important points WE should remember as WE continue in our discussion:

1. WE are new creatures in Christ, now. This is important for us to know so that WE will be busy in the development and protection of the embryo new creature.
2. WE should remember WE are spirit beings as new creatures, and not human beings. This is important because God is dealing with us as spirit beings, and not as in the flesh.

What else is important before WE consider our conduct as new creatures? The third thing we should consider is that WE has a new personality as a child of God and begotten of the Holy Spirit at consecration. God looking at WE in this transformation, no longer counts sin to WE. He gives WE a new standing—no longer as sinners but as holy ones. WE are set apart from the world. The fact that this change is merely in our sight and mind but not in our bodies, doesn't alter the matter at all. According to science, every seven years a complete change takes place in our bodies. Does that make one a new, different man—because his body is changed? If this were so, WE would have been several different people by now. A change in the body does not change the personality, especially of a spirit being.

Take our Lord—how many bodies did He assume after resurrection, but before ascension? Approximately twelve bodies. Did that change his personality? No. Look at it another way. Suppose our body were changed because we lost a hand? Would WE still be the same personality? Of course. The personality is the mind, the ego. When our mind was changed—and it was changed by being transformed by the renewing of our mind—our personality changed. WE came a new creature, distinctly separate from the old creature. The fact that WE do not yet have a spirit body does not matter. WE are new creatures using a renewed old mind, but using the old body. WE is a new creature under adverse conditions. Now, the world sees only the old body and does not know that WE are now children of God. WE should remember that it is not the life of the old creature, but of the new creature that is hid in Christ in God. It is the embryo new creature that is in danger of death.

WE might have a little difficulty understanding how WE as new creatures have changed, simply because we are accustomed to identifying the body, rather than identifying the personality. The New Creature, the new personality, is represented by the will, the mind, but there can be no new creature without a body. God does not give the new creature its own spiritual body in the present life, but permits it to practice in the old body which once belonged to the old nature.

According to the new creature's faithfulness in the old body will be its reward: either as a member of the little flock, or, a member of the great company, or, through unfaithfulness, second death. By way of illustration, the new creature owns the mortal body and possesses that body. The body is not the new creature, except in a possessed sense. For instance: if one were living in a log cabin temporarily, while one's house was being built, and someone were to ask "Is that log cabin your house?" We would say: "No, WE're staying here until our new house is built." In the same manner, the new creature occupies the old body. WE are only staying in it until WE get our new spiritual body. Now why is it important that WE know that WE are a new personality?—that WE are a different person than WE were before consecration? This will become obvious as WE progress with the consequences of being who WE are, but the most important reason for remembering that: **1.** WE are new creatures now, and **2.** WE are spirit beings in fleshly body, and **3.** WE are a new personality—is to bring us into proper focus as to who is doing what, when WE consider our conduct as new creatures. WE as a new creature are one personality. Our fleshy bodies are something separate which WE, as new creatures must control if WE are to live.

WE, as a spirit begotten child of God, may speak of ourselves as already possessing eternal life. This WE possess by faith. Developing and protecting the embryo new creature means protecting this spiritual life. If WE are successful, the new life will be given a new spiritual body, after which WE will have the divine nature—life inherent, death proofness, life everlasting, eternal. The danger is that the flesh can kill this embryo

new creature, this eternal life. If that happens, there will be nothing for a new spiritual body to go with. The new mind and will, if overcome by the flesh will be forever destroyed.

This brings us to the second point that knowing who WE are will affect our conduct. Knowing WE are a distinct and separate new life that needs protection and development, or the flesh will kill us, means that we will protect the new creature. It's bound to have an effect that WE would not have if WE thought WE were the same old person WE always were, and that WE were in no particular danger. WE have this new situation where WE died as an old creature. The new creature can now die, but there is no more redemption. WE are now facing eternal life—as divine beings; or everlasting life as the Great Company; or second death as failures.

Our life as new creatures is hid with Christ. In Rom. 6:11 Paul says: “Reckon you yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In Rom. 8:4 he says, “Walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.”

Let's go back to the Apostle John, 1 John 5:18, where he describes our conduct if WE know who WE are: “Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not.” In 1 John 3:9, he says: “Whosoever is begotten of God does not commit sin,” or, the Diaglott says, “does not practice sin.” What's John saying? He is saying: So long as WE are under such Holy control, under the power and influence of God, so long as WE are inspired by the great and precious promises, so long as WE possess the Holy will, WE can not sin willfully. WE cannot willingly practice sin in our lives. For us to sin willfully, would signify WE have lost the holy spirit. Who would we be then? The new creature would be dead. All that would remain temporarily is the fleshy body and the spirit of life.

The soul that sins it shall die (the second death). Peter explains that WE, the new creature, would in effect be overcome by the flesh, like the sow that was washed, returning to wallowing in the mire. John was saying that one begotten of the holy spirit, keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not. Peter meant: WE will not only not sin willfully but will keep constantly on guard, watching ourselves, watching this embryo eternal life, just as a watchman guards a place in the city, or a house. He watches all the doors, and all the avenues of access.

How, do WE keep ourselves watchful so the wicked one cannot touch nor injure us through the flesh WE are using? WE watch in the Lord. The Lord is the great center of righteousness, purity, truth. WE who are on the side of the Lord will shun sin—WE will have no fellowship with it. Even if WE should not sin in act, if WE have any sympathy with it, WE would be to that extent out of harmony with the Lord. As in a circle, where God is the center, the nearer WE are to the center, the greater our safety. So with the circle of righteousness whose center is Jehovah himself. The slightest sympathy with sin

would cause the child of God to depart to that extent from the center of purity. If WE widen the distance between ourselves and the Lord, who is the center, WE would draw nearer to the outer rim of the circle. Think of an island surrounded with crocodiles. The person who would remain in the center of the island would be safest from those crocodiles. But the nearer one approached the coastline, the greater would be his danger. Any sympathy with what is not in fullest harmony with the mind of the Lord, any participation in sin, carries us away from our Lord and closer to the place of danger—closer to the power of Satan, and his fallen angels, his minions, who are even now running amuck, without their master having the power to control them.

Every one of us has had something of this experience of drawing near to the place of danger and away from the Lord. The more WE live near the Lord the closer we are to divine protection. As WE waver in loyalty to the will, the flesh, the adversaries, WE come nearer to Satan. WE might thus endanger ourselves without sinning. Our hearts might be true to the Lord, yet WE might be touched by sin by being involved with others in some way. That's why God's word warns us to watch our actions, watch our companionship, watch our conduct, to abide in the secret place of the Most High—to make straight paths for our feet lest that which is weak and lame be turned out of the way. Rather, let's keep very close to God, as far away as possible from the point of danger, from the crocodiles. Let's be in the world, but not of it.

Is it possible for us to live without sin? When the Apostle wrote in 1 John 2:1, "These things I write unto you that ye sin not" was it his thought that it's possible for us to live without sin? The Apostle also declared in 1 John 3:8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil" and yet he declared that if WE say we have no sin, WE deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. How shall we reconcile these opposing statements, and how understand the scripture which declares in Rom. 6:18, "being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness"? WE, from this standpoint, can see that the scriptures ascribe no sin to the new mind, and no perfection in righteousness to our fallen flesh. Both of these facts must be kept in mind in studying this subject.

The new creature, that is, WE, who are begotten of God, whose flesh is reckoned dead, and which is represented by the new mind, cannot sin. WE are opposed to sin, according to James 1:18. WE the new creature, are so fully in accord with righteousness, so fully imbued with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, that WE delight in holiness and WE cannot sin. He that is begotten of God, sinneth not, that is, doesn't sin willingly, does not approve of, nor take pleasure in sin, because his seed remaineth in him. What seed? The seed of truth, the spirit of truth with which WE are begotten and that wicked one toucheth us not. So long as the heart, the mind, the will is holy, in harmony with God and with righteousness, so long as the seed of our begetting, truth and holiness continues in us, WE, the new mind cannot approve of sin, but must and will be its opponent.

Even though many battles are fought with the members of our fallen and weak human

nature, its appetites and desires, WE, nevertheless, as new creatures, are separate and distinct from the flesh, and its weaknesses and imperfections are not imputed to the new creature in Christ Jesus, but are reckoned as covered and hidden under the merit of our Lord's redemptive sacrifice. Thus, although our flesh, through weaknesses of the fall and through evil besetment, may never come up to the standard of Divine law, notwithstanding all our efforts to bring it into subjection to the same, nevertheless, WE as new creatures have scriptural assurance that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh, but resisting, day by day, the seductive influences to the best of our ability, and seeking Divine aid.

WE are walking after the spirit. Probably not UP to the spirit, but following, day by day, to arrive at the glorious condition of character as new creatures which the heavenly Father can accept, which the Apostle tells us about in Rom. 8:4. So, then, if we know who WE are as new creatures, WE know that WE cannot sin, and therefore, our conduct is changed. WE know that WE are new creatures, spirit beings, in fleshly bodies, that WE are a separate and distinct personality from the old creature that formerly inhabited our old bodies.

This brings us to our third and final point that knowing who WE are and because it improves our conduct, WE have the promise in 2 Peter 1:4, "WE have exceeding great and precious promises given to us by God, that by these WE might become partakers of the Divine nature."

WE have to remember that ours is a day of great mental activity in every direction. It's a day of "push," of feverish excitement along every line—highly seasoned foods and drinks whet the physical appetites and lead on to spicy desires in every direction. The strain is too great for our race considering its weakness and its degeneration which was attached during the past 6,000 years. The world is in a condition of intense excitement, easily aroused to expression along every line: anger, malice, hatred, strife, envy, and crime. WE, although not of the world, are in the world. Although WE are new creatures with new wills, sanctified in Christ Jesus, WE do have this treasure in earthen vessels. Our earthen vessels are subject to like passions and storms which assail the world in general.

If WE are right in supposing that the fallen angels have much to do with the excitement of passions in wrong directions, WE may be sure that these spirit adversaries would be especially alert to entrap and ensnare the consecrated followers of the Lord. In 2 Cor. 2:11 Paul says, "WE are not ignorant of his devices" and that includes Satan's minions' devices—WE realize that flesh and blood is not competent for a struggle against the wicked spirits in influential places. (Eph. 6:12.)

WE, therefore, need to be on the alert more than do others, even though all need to be especially alert now to withstand the evil tendencies of our day which all admit, however

they might explain them.

WE have our strength in having given up our old will—the will of our old flesh and having instead the will of Christ. Our danger consists of the endeavor of our flesh to override the decision of our new will. Our flesh insists that this and that and the other thing are not wrong, because they are natural. It insists that its rights should be conserved. It even sometimes insists that the new creature would commit a crime in mortifying the flesh with its affections and desires. (See Col. 3:5 and Gal. 5:24.)

WE, the new creature, cannot rely on suggestions of the flesh. Experience has taught us that WE would be deceived and ensnared if WE give heed to the counsels of the flesh. WE, the new creature, must rely wholly on the Lord and His counsel, the Word of God. WE the new creature, must reason upon any subject only along the line of Divine instruction. WE dare not trust our judgment. Neither do WE trust the judgment of our fellow new creatures, who might be more or less influenced by their fleshly minds, no matter how conscientious. WE, the new creature must hear from the Word of the Lord, the outline of our proper course and that is what WE must follow. These are the exceeding great and precious promises that WE have which, if WE would take hold, by these WE might become partakers of the Divine nature. WE dare not deviate from these instructions of the Word. WE don't know what dire results might follow. WE do know that the results are good when WE follow the Lord's instructions.

As the new creature advances in spiritual development, in the control of the flesh, the appreciation of the mind of Christ, WE certainly do, in one sense of the word, become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might through the power of the holy spirit. WE become more gentle, more meek, more patient, more loving. WE thus develop the fruits in growing in the graces of the holy spirit, and in character likeness to the Master.

But WE need continually to keep in mind that WE are classed by God as new creatures, and not as men. That's why it is important to know who WE is—that WE is a new creature now—that WE is a spirit creature in a fleshy body, and that WE are separate and distinct personalities from the old creature and the fleshly mind which is dead. If the new creature should sin willfully, it would cease to be a new creature.

But if any man sin, let him not cast away his confidence in God. Let him remember that the Father foreknowing that WE the new creature, could not control every thought, word and act of the flesh, He has made provision for these—an Advocate has been provided for WE—Jesus Christ, the righteous. Our Lord has already become our Advocate. In Heb. 9:24, we are assured that He has appeared before the Father and made satisfaction for us. Remembering this, if WE find that through lack of faith, or weakness of the flesh, a step is taken contrary to the Lord's will, and contrary to our best spiritual interest, WE should waste no time in retracing our steps and calling upon the Lord. WE have an altar consecrated with the precious blood of Christ, far superior in every way to that which

Abraham consecrated with the blood of typical animals; and the Apostle says in Heb. 4:16, “Let us THEREFORE come boldly and courageously, full of faith unto the throne of grace that WE may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.”

WE as new creatures have a right to life. From the time WE become new creatures in Christ, a right to live on the spirit plane is given us, just as a right to live on the human plane was given to Adam when he was created. That right to life, as a new creature, is a very different matter than anything we had before. Before, WE had a right to die. Since we became new creatures, WE have a right to life. WE have that right now—“our life is hid with Christ in God.” So then, if WE remember the importance of knowing who WE is, that WE are now new creatures in Christ, that WE are spirit beings with whom God is dealing, and that WE are separate and distinct personalities from the flesh—if we remember that in this new situation our conduct must be improved as new creatures, and if WE remember to take hold of the precious promises so that we get the help WE need—the promise is that WE can become partakers of the Divine nature.