

The Doctrine of Inherited Sin

by Charles Ewing Brown

Charles Ewing Brown delves into the doctrine of original sin, refuting claims that it was unknown to the New Testament church, by highlighting its presence in the Old Testament and Jewish teachings before Christ. He explores the concept of sin as an hereditary inclination of the heart to evil, emphasizing the transmission of sin and the struggle against sinful tendencies. Brown discusses the Jewish belief in inherited sin and the implications of inbred sin on human nature, drawing parallels between instinctive behavior and the corruption of human impulses by sin. He addresses objections to the doctrine of inbred sin, clarifying its distinction from regeneration and entire sanctification, and the results of its removal on the Christian life.

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Transcript

the-doctrine-of-inherited-sin.pdf" txtUrl: "/pdf-text/text/c/charles-ewing-brown---the-doctrine-of-inherited-sin.txt" thumbnailUrl: "" hasTranscript: true oneLinerSummary: "The sermon explores the doctrine of original sin, arguing that humans are born with a sinful nature due to the fall of Adam and Eve, and that this nature is related to the concept of instinct." sermonType: "teaching" topics: - name: "Original Sin" slug: "original-sin" - name: "Human Nature" slug: "human-nature" bibleRefs: outline: - heading: "The Doctrine of Original Sin" - heading: "Definition of Original Sin" - heading: "The Teaching of the Old Testament" - heading: "The Jewish Teaching in the Apostolic Age" faq: - q: "Is the doctrine of original sin taught in the New Testament?" a: "Yes, the doctrine of original sin is taught in the New Testament, although it is not explicitly stated as such." - q: "What is the difference between original sin and sinful behavior?" a: "Original sin refers to the inherent tendency towards sin that is present in humanity, while sinful behavior refers to the actual act of sinning." - q: "Can humans be born with a sinful nature?" a: "Yes, according to the Bible, humans are born with a sinful nature due to the fall of Adam and Eve." - q: "Is the concept of original sin supported by Jewish teaching?"

a: "Yes, Jewish teaching in the apostolic age supported the concept of original sin, with the idea that humans are born with an evil inclination." - q: "What is the relationship between instinct and sin?" a: "According to the sermon, instinct can be related to sin, as humans have a natural inclination towards sin due to their fallen nature." quotes: - "The original state of man, according to the Bible, was sinless and gifted with the moral image of God." - "It was, he thought, originally instinctive in humanity that without taking thought everyone should unconsciously and naturally do the thing, and follow the pattern of behavior, that would contribute most to the welfare of the whole of humanity." - "The lack of that instinctive pattern, together with the infection of man's impulses by self-regarding desires, lays the citadel of man's soul open to sin through every avenue of his being." applicationPoints: - "Recognize that humans are born with a sinful nature and that this nature is related to the concept of instinct." - "Understand that the fall of Adam and Eve is the source of humanity's sinful nature." - "Seek to overcome the sinful nature through the power of God's grace and the moral image of God." keywords: - "Original sin" - "Inherited sin" - "Jewish teaching" - "Apostolic age" - "Instinct" - "Sinful nature" - "Fall of Adam and Eve" - "Moral image of God" ---

It is not uncommon to read in theological works some expression to the effect that the doctrine of original sin was unknown to the New Testament church and was never introduced until the days of Augustine. Such statements could not do very much harm, perhaps, if the readers understood the subject. The only way a scholar could make such a remark conscientiously is by giving a special definition to the doctrine of original sin. If by original sin he means a sinful state of the infant for which it stands guilty before God, the statement might have some meaning; but if we define original sin in the sense in which it is used in this book, namely, as an hereditary inclination of the heart to evil, but not as incurring guilt in infants, then the doctrine of original sin is very plainly taught throughout the Old Testament and in Judaism before the time of Christ and Paul. Regarding the teaching of the Old Testament, Dr. Gustav S. Oehler, of Tubingen University, writes as follows:

THE STATE OF SIN

Sin as an Inclination -- Transmission of Sin

In consequence of the Fall, sin appears as a state of mankind -- that is, as an inclination which rules man, and as a common sinful life which is transmitted partly in mankind in general, and partly in an especial degree in particular races, and so subjects these to the curse of guilt and judgment.

1. After once appearing by the free act of man, sin does not remain in this isolation. The second sin, that of self-excuse and palliation of the offense, follows immediately on the first, the sin of disobedience (Gen. 3:10). This is the deceit (Ps. 32:2), which, when sin has once entered, prevents the realization of earnest opposition thereto. As sin thus joins to sin, it becomes a habitus, and in this way a definite feature of the heart, or, as it is termed, a yetzer lev, imagination of the heart, an inclination, which gives a perverted tendency to man's will. Thus it is said before the flood (Gen. 6:5), "Every imagination [yetzer] of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually," and after it again (8:21): "The imagination [yetzer] of man's heart is evil from his youth. That this [yetzer] is not to be understood simply as a physical disposition, as is taught by Rabbinical theology, is shown by the more exact expression in 6:5 (compare I Chron. 28:9). Because this sinful inclination -- this is the meaning of the variously explained passage Genesis 8:21 -- cleaves to man from his youth, the human race would lie under a continual sentence of destruction if God gave severe justice its course. The ground for sparing him is, according to the context of that passage, that man still seeks communion with God, as is shown by sacrifice. The natural striving of man against God's law -- the stiffneckedness and hardness of heart so often spoken of in the Pentateuch -- is based on

this sinful inclination. Therefore, when Israel promises to keep the divine law, the divine voice complains (Deut. 5:28-29): "They have spoken right, but oh, that they had a heart to fear me and keep all my commands."

2. That this sinful inclination is hereditary is indirectly contained in the passages cited, although it is not expressly said. It is also to be noticed, that Mosaism, although it derives the propagation of man's race from God's blessing, still regards all events and conditions which refer to birth and generation as requiring a purifying expiation; compare the law (Lev. 12:16) in which the thought lies that all these conditions are connected with the disturbance of sin. Hence Psalm 51:7 expresses the idea of the law: "Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Even if this passage spoke only of an iniquity and sin of the parents, according to the explanation which is now more common, it would still follow, from the fact that the very origin of man is connected with sin, that even the newly-born child is not free from sin; as Job 14:4 expresses it, "How can a clean thing come from an unclean? Not one" -- a thought which is certainly connected with the passage in the Psalms. But there is nothing to prevent iniquity and sin in the passages in the Psalms being referred, as is done by Hitzig, to the child itself as soon as conceived and born; according to which, the passage says directly that evil is ingrown in man from the first moment of his origin. [35] (Here I have transliterated part of the Hebrew quotations.)

JEWISH TEACHING IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE

The Jewish teachers of the time of Christ taught that man was created with two inclinations: an inclination (yetzer) toward good, and another inclination (yetzer) toward evil. [36] This evil (yetzer) worked in man from the beginning of time, but it was the thing which made infants inclined to sin. That the Jews of the first century taught the inheritance of this evil nature from Adam is plainly set forth in IV Ezra. This Jewish book is dated by scholars somewhere between A.D. 70 and 100, but it certainly reflects Jewish belief in the time of Christ; for that belief would scarcely change overnight. In it we read:

And yet thou didst not take away from them the evil heart, that thy Law might bring forth fruit in them. For the first Adam, clothing himself with the evil heart, transgressed and was overcome; and likewise also all who were born of him. Thus the infirmity became inveterate; the law indeed was in the heart of the people, but (in conjunction) with the evil germ; so what was good departed, and the evil remained. . . . The inhabitants of the City committed sin, in all things doing even as Adam and all his generations had done: for they also had clothed themselves with the evil heart.

Who is there of those who have come (into the world) that has not sinned? . . . And now I see that the coming Age shall bring delight to few, but torment unto many. For the evil heart has grown up in us which has estranged us from God . . . and that not a few only, but well nigh all that have been created! . . . For though it was thou that sinned, the fall was not thine alone, but ours also who are thy descendants!" [37]

In the apocryphal book, The Wisdom of Sirach, written about 180 B.C., we also have evidence of Jewish belief in inherited sin: O wicked thought! Why were you shaped To cover the earth with deceit? [38]

Here the base nature is the yetzer-ha-ra, or evil inclination, or tendency toward evil -- "the imagination of man's heart" (Gen. 8:21).

Inasmuch as the Jews of Christ's time believed in an inherited evil nature, one must think that the New Testament writers would have denied this doctrine if they had rejected it. On the contrary, that they write in the same vein themselves is proof that they taught some such doctrine.

HOW SHALL WE THINK OF INBRED SIN?

Among the pious young people of our times this has become a tantalizing question. Undoubtedly, here is a massive psychological fact worthy of the deepest study, and yet no scientific psychologist has ever dealt with it in terms of sin. This very fact will puzzle some students, although others will understand that physical science is by definition and by the very nature of its task precluded from transgressing into the fields of religion and theology. For this reason it must ignore some of the most colossal facts in human nature, such as the ever-present and enduring tendency to sin. As previously noted, modern depth psychologists, Freudians in particular, have at last taken notice of this outstanding quality of human nature which makes it so antisocial, but by the traditions of science even they are shut up to a non-religious approach to the subject. They are bound to study it from a secular viewpoint if they are to give it any attention whatever.

But we, as Christian students and believers in the Word of God, are shut up to no such narrow method. In fact, we are bound to study this enormous abnormality in human nature from the standpoint of scriptural and Christian thought. Nevertheless, we find that the Lord Jesus translated the profound and hidden facts of the spiritual life into the simple forms of country life and work which he saw around him.

THE MEANING OF INSTINCT

In the language of our own times, just what is this "radical evil" of Immanuel Kant? this yetzer-ha-ra of the ancient Hebrew teacher, this "body of sin" of Paul? In order properly to study this question it is necessary first to glance at the meaning of instinct. Hitherto, we have hesitated to use the word instinct, as that term has been criticized by modern psychologists. However, all psychologists admit the facts of the nature of living things which correspond to the common word instincts. We may call these urges, appetites, unconscious patterns of behavior, or whatever we will. A recent edition of Webster's dictionary defines instinct as follows:

A tendency to actions which lead to the attainment of some goal natural to the species; natural and unreasoning prompting to action; as, the web-building instinct of spiders. As distinguished from habit, instinct is not dependent on the individual's previous experience; as distinguished from emotion, it is a tendency to an external act affecting the environment; and, as distinguished from a reflex, it is more complex, more adaptable, and less stereotyped, and may involve a conscious impulse to activity.

Examples of instinctive action are young storks, which although they were hatched in northern latitudes and never saw any other, will on the approach of autumn wend their way to the south. Even a single stork that never saw any other stork in his life will do just that. This point is also illustrated by the way sparrows build their nest without any training. Such also is the behavior of bees in making their cells, and they will even make larger cells for young queen bees. Notice, too, the way in which a caterpillar will weave his shroud and prepare the way for the butterfly which he is to become later, although at present utterly unaware of that fact.

INSTINCTIVE HOLINESS

It seems to us that a modern philosopher, Henri Bergson, unintentionally gave a suggestion regarding the nature of inbred sin. Observing how nests of ants and hives of bees will patiently and sacrificially work together for the good of the whole group, Bergson guessed that the original instincts of human nature were like that. It was, he thought, originally instinctive in humanity that without taking thought everyone

should unconsciously and naturally do the thing, and follow the pattern of behavior, that would contribute most to the welfare of the whole of humanity. When the mind of man was lifted to the height of conscious intelligence, the bonds of instincts were weakened, and under the promptings of selfish desire man excused himself from working for the good of others and centered his attention and effort upon the attainment of his own selfish ends.

It is noticeable that man has very few complex patterns of instinct, such as those of ants, bees, beavers, and the like. His complex patterns of instinct have been broken up by the tremendous expansion of his intellect, which suggests new and varied patterns of conduct, capable of yielding him more abundant and specific satisfaction of his natural desires. This fact supports the suggestion previously made that it was in some such way as this that his original sound moral instinct was broken by the abuse of intelligence and the satisfaction of individual personal desires; also that even a wholly sanctified man, who has had his sound moral instincts reconstituted by the grace of God, will, because of his comparatively great intelligence, find a tension in deciding against personal selfish impulses in favor of his godly moral instincts -- much greater than any tension a beaver would have in deciding to build a dam, or which a stork would have in deciding to fly south in the fall.

The exact measure of this tension could be almost scientifically stated as the difference between the intelligence of the man and the stork. In other words, intelligence and freedom furnish the grounds of man's first probation and the occasion of his first fall. While he lives in this world they will never cease to have the same meaning in his moral life.

No kind of instinct could ever be as strong in a highly intelligent being as it would be in an animal without the intelligence to suggest methods of doing things other than the instinctive methods. The lower animals do not have to balance instinct against impulse, as even a holy man must often do.

Some Christians may object to this picture because Bergson was an evolutionist, but if we remember that it is only a kind of parable, I think we can apply it to the Biblical representation of man's original nature and fall. The original state of man, according to the Bible, was sinless and gifted with the moral image of God. Was he not then as Bergson imagined him to have been, except that he had high intelligence and sound moral instincts at the very beginning? Nevertheless, Bergson comes near to the truth when he describes the Fall as being from original instinctive goodness and social co-operativeness, to the present anarchy of selfish individualistic desire; for the Bible teaches clearly that it was man's intelligence and capacity for choice that furnished the occasion for his fall.

When, according to the story, Adam broke that pattern, he shattered an instinct which we know as the moral image of God, an instinct which has never been put together again in human nature, except by a miracle of the grace of God. One thing to remember in this figure of Bergson's is that being philosophical, it is non-theological; consequently, Bergson omitted the place of God in man's original sound moral instinct, but we do not need to omit that, and when we place that firmly in position we can see what possession of the moral image of God in Adam must have meant. It meant that Adam would instinctively do by preference and inward bent of desire those things which would contribute to the welfare of the whole human race whenever it came into existence and would express the love and devotion of his heart to God as Father and personal Friend.

CAN INSTINCT BE SINFUL?

Dr. Sangster has challenged the common doctrine that the instincts of a sinful man may be sinful instincts. He identifies the sinful instincts of humanity with the normal urges of human life, such as the hunger for food, sexual desire, self-respect, and the like. These, he thinks cannot be sinful in themselves. It is only when they are consciously yielded to sin that they may be said to be of the nature of sin.

In reply, it can be said that these impulses of human nature, which make life possible both in its beginning and in its continuance, were not essentially sinful in themselves at the beginning. This can be conceded, because we believe that Adam possessed these natural urges at the beginning of his existence. What we hold is that these urges have been infected and poisoned by the nature of sin, just as if a man should get arthritis in his hand, which would cause his hand to swell and be painful and deformed. Such a man would not want his hand cut off, but, in popular language, he would want "something taken out" of it, namely, the fever and the disease. That figure fairly well describes the infection of sin in the impulses of human nature.

Furthermore, there is a strange quality about instinct to which previous allusion has been made, namely, it combines many natural impulses into a distinct pattern of behavior that produces a result entirely unforeseen and not consciously planned. The original nature of man, as Bergson has suggested, was endowed with an instinct like that, directed toward moral and religious living. Adam's fall involved a breaking up of that instinctive pattern of moral and religious behavior. The lack of that instinctive pattern, together with the infection of man's impulses by self-regarding desires, lays the citadel of man's soul open to sin through every avenue of his being. Broken fragments of the original instincts remain in the most evil and depraved heart which, when touched by the Spirit of God, awaken a hope of holiness and salvation in the most wicked soul. But the tendency toward sin does not need any organized pattern; for in its essential nature sin is anarchy. Holiness, however, represents a definite pattern of life that cannot successfully be followed in constant warfare against an inward tendency to sin. Moreover, consistent pursuit of the good life requires something like an instinctive organization of all man's powers to follow the ideal of holiness, not merely by will power, but by inward desire.

FIGURES OF DEPRAVITY

From the beginning of man's thought about the eternal, he has been baffled by all efforts to describe the invisible things of the spirit in the language of his earthly life. It has always been necessary to use figures of speech to say that this is like that. Despisers of religion have mocked this use of figurative language in all religious literature. In doing so they have scoffed at all the terminology of man's intelligent life, which lifts him above the beast; for not only the language of religion, but also the language of the intellect, is based upon figures of speech. Prof. W. S. Jevons, in his book on logic, has described this process as follows:

METAPHORICAL EXTENSION OF MEANING

In addition to the effects of generalization and specialization, vast additions and changes are made in language by the process of metaphorical extension of the meaning of words. This change may be said no doubt, to consist in generalization since there must always be a resemblance between the new and old applications of the term. But the resemblance is often one of a most distant and obscure kind, such as we should call analogy rather than identity. All words used metaphorically, or as similitudes, are cases of this process of extension. The name metaphor is derived from the Greek words, "meta," over, and "pherein," to carry; and expresses apparently the transference of a word from its ordinary to a peculiar purpose. Thus the old similitude of a ruler to the pilot of a vessel gives rise to many metaphors, as in speaking of the

prime minister being at the helm of the state. The word governor, and all its derivatives, is, in fact, one result of this metaphor, being merely a corrupt form of gubernator, steersman.

"The words compass, polestar, ensign, anchor, and many others connected with navigation, are constantly used in a metaphorical manner. From the use of horses and hunting we derive another series of metaphors; as, in taking the reins of government, overturning the government, taking the bit between the teeth, the government whip, being heavily weighted, etc. No doubt it might be shown that every other important occupation of life has furnished its corresponding stock of metaphors.

Origin of the Mental Vocabulary

This process, besides going on consciously at the present day, must have acted throughout the history of language, and we owe to it almost all, or probably all, the words expressive of refined mental or spiritual ideas. The very word spirit, now the most refined and immaterial of ideas, is but the Latin spiritus, a gentle breeze or breathing; and inspiration, esprit, or wit, and many other words, are due to this metaphor. It is truly curious, however, that almost all the words in different languages denoting mind or soul imply the same analogy to breath. Thus soul is from the Gothic root denoting a strong wind or storm; the Latin words animus and anima are supposed to be connected with the Greek anemos wind; psychic is certainly derived from psucho to blow; pneuma, air or breath, is used in the New Testament for Spiritual Being, and our word ghost has a similar origin.

Almost all the terms employed in mental philosophy or metaphysics, to denote actions or phenomena of mind, are ultimately derived from metaphors. Apprehension is the putting forward of the hand to take anything; comprehension is the taking of things together in a handful; extension is the spreading out; intention, the bending to; explication, the unfolding; application, the folding to; conception, the taking up together; relation, the carrying back; experience is the thoroughly going through a thing, difference is the carrying apart; deliberation, the weighing out; interruption, the breaking between; proposition, the placing before; intuition, the seeing into; and the list might be almost indefinitely extended. Our English name for reason, the understanding, obviously contains some physical metaphor which has not been fully explained; with the Latin intellect there is also a metaphor.

Every sense gives rise to words of refined meaning; sapience, taste, insipidity, gout are derived from the sense of taste; sagacity, from the dog's extraordinary power of smell; but as the sense of sight is by far the most acute and intellectual, it gives rise to the larger part of language; clearness, lucidity, obscurity, haziness, perspicuity, and innumerable other expressions, are derived from this sense.

These scientific facts give us an insight into the meaning and positive necessity of figurative language and parables in all attempts to describe mental and spiritual things.

INBRED SIN AS A ROOT

In the past a great deal of ridicule has been poured upon the efforts of the pioneers to describe the carnal nature as the root of the tree whose branches become developed habits of sin and whose evil fruit is likened to transgression and the results of a sinful life. In a previous passage I have attempted to give a modern estimate of the meaning of inbred sin. Nevertheless, long contemplation of the subject fails to shake my opinion that the figure of a tree, whose roots are carnality and whose fruits are transgression, is still a valid parable of this evil element in the human life.

It is true that Dr. W. E. Sangster, in his recent book, *The Path to Perfection*, mildly censures the idea of eradicating sin, or of thinking of sin as "a thing." He condemns the idea that sin can exist in the heart like a cancer or a rotten tooth.

However, we are only using figurative language when we speak of the "root of bitterness" (Heb. 12:15). If we were debating with physical scientists, who think of "things" as being physical substance like rocks, stones, trees, etc., we might have as great a debate over whether the soul itself is a "thing" as whether the nature of sin is a "thing." Viewed from the physical standpoint, a transgression that pollutes human nature is not a "thing," but a relationship to God. That, of course, is true. Nevertheless, throughout the Bible writers describe this condition as filth and pollution, from which we are washed by the blood of Christ.

Just what shall we call that instinctive pattern of evil laid down in the very constitution of human nature, corrupting the life of all human society everywhere. It is a tendency toward sin, just as there is a tendency in a straightened wire spring to return to its former condition. Strictly speaking we know that this tendency in the spring to coil is not a thing in the spring. Nevertheless, it is a pattern in the spring, and it represents a certain conformation of the materials of the spring. Those materials lack the inner pattern of arrangement that makes them tend to lie straight. They possess a bent which makes them curve.

INBRED SIN AND DIVINE JUSTICE

Perhaps the weightiest objection in popular belief to the doctrine of inbred sin is that it would be unjust for God to allow children to be born into the world handicapped by an inherited nature of sin at the moment when they are as innocent as lambs. The answer to this is that in the Arminian view of inbred sin it is first of all the lack of something; it is the lack of the image of God, and inherited sin is the inheritance of the poverty of Adam and the poverty of the race. A man with ten million dollars may through poor management lose it all and his child will inherit his poverty. In logical language we might say that the child did not inherit anything, but to the child his inheritance will seem a very positive evil. This question as to whether sin is something, like a cancer, or whether it is nothing, like blindness, being, as it is, the absence of something, has puzzled theologians for ages. Undoubtedly it is easier to understand the doctrine of inbred sin as being a reasonable consequence of Adam's transgression if we think of it as the loss of something -- just as blindness is not the addition of something, but the loss of something, i.e., the loss of sight. Inbred sin is the loss of the image of God. Experience shows us that such poverty and such negative consequences of a parent's sin do fall upon children all over the world and in all times; and it is a waste of words to say that it is not just, for it is obviously a part of the nature of the universe.

We do not mean there is nothing positive in the nature of inbred sin. We regard the positive evil of inbred sin to be corruption arising from a lack of the image of God. We might illustrate it in this way: A person lacks lime in his bones. On account of this lack of lime the weight of his body makes his leg bones bend until they are badly deformed. The deformity illustrates the corruption of man's nature arising from the defect due to the lack of the image of God. Blindness is certainly a positive evil, and yet it arises from the lack of sight. That usually comes from a defect in the eye itself.

Another objection is: How can there be any distinction between regeneration and entire sanctification? The answer is that in regeneration all the sins of the individual are forgiven, the corruption of his nature arising from his own misbehavior is removed, but the inherited depravity, or bent of his nature, is not removed. There is still a lack of the perfect image of God. This lack is compensated in the heart of the Christian by the supernatural grace of God, but it is not completely made up until he is entirely sanctified

and his heart is purified by faith.

Another objection is of a self-contradictory nature. People who do not believe in inbred sin and those who believe it is all removed in conversion or by baptism or by confirmation, nevertheless pour their ridicule on those who believe it is removed by faith through the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost and the atoning work of Christ. Infidels, atheists, and liberal Christians have no right to ridicule this cleansing, because they all teach that people are not born with a sinful nature; and if that is true, then our claim to be free from that nature is -- or ought to be considered perfectly reasonable by them. This is no more than they claim for themselves. Members of the old ritualistic churches should not ridicule us for professing this experience; for they themselves profess to have received it in baptism or in confirmation. Christians who believe that we are sanctified only at death should find no fault with those who claim to have received that experience earlier in life.

RESULTS OF THE REMOVAL OF INBRED SIN

Harm has been done by leading young converts to expect emotional and ecstatic experiences which may not be realized. In estimating the meaning of deliverance from inbred sin it is important to remember that this does not mean a deliverance from human nature itself as God first gave it to man. A study of biology reveals the fact that the very existence of man's life is dependent upon a few very positive urges. We might liken these to the cylinders in an automobile engine. The most important of these urges are (1) hunger for food, (2) a desire for human fellowship, (3) the sex urge, (4) escape from pain, (5) the urge to self-fulfillment -- achievement, (6) self-preservation. If you have seen a different way of arranging or naming these urges it is immaterial; for uniformity is not essential here.

These are the general principles and, for the most part, all sin in a person's life takes place through the abuse and misuse of these urges. This fact is so certain that it has led many Christians to identify these urges with the nature of sin itself. Consequently, they suppose that deliverance from the nature of sin means deliverance from these urges. Now it is obvious that deliverances from these urges would end any person's life unless he were confined in an institution under expert, professional care. Therefore it is important to remember that deliverance from inbred sin cannot possibly mean destruction of these instincts by which human life is maintained and made vigorous. A destruction of carnality can be nothing other than the cleansing of these urges from the fever of sin, so that they will be more amenable to the control of the Christian conscience and will.

It is well also to remember that even the experience of entire sanctification is the endowment of a vast spiritual potentiality which will be realized in each given individual only in part, and quite largely in proportion to his light and his spiritual sensitivity. This is a fact of the Christian life which multitudes of Christians ought to know. It is natural for us to judge the size of a man's gift by the use to which he has put it, but that is not a reasonable conclusion to make. Two young men each inherit a million dollars. One manages to preserve his fortune intact and live upon the income thereof without ever making any impression of any kind on the world. Another seems to thrill every dollar with the vitality of his own vigorous personality so much that he multiplies his fortune manifold and becomes known to the world far and wide. Obviously, we cannot judge of the size of the gift they received by the use which they made of it.

Two boys are born with great natural ability -- practically equal, yet one turns his attention to the humble work of his own community and the other develops his ability in such a way as to achieve world fame. So it is with Christians who receive the priceless gifts of God. It is unreasonable to demand the same

astonishing world-shaking fame of all sanctified believers. The majority of even that famous company of the twelve apostles lived obscure and hidden lives and died unknown to men, except that their names alone appeared in that immortal company. Yet we have scriptural evidence that these were men of pure heart, soundest consecration, perfect in love, wholly acceptable in the kindly eyes of the Son of Man. In heaven their crown will not be dimmed in anywise by the humility and obscurity of their gentle and self-effacing lives.

Perhaps our Christianity needs more of a consecration to anonymity, more of willingness to be the least in the kingdom of heaven. Purity and humility are the passions of the saints.

35 Gustav Friedrich Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 161-162

36 Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 167

37 Apocrapha, IV Ezra 3:21-28; 7:46-48, 118-119

38 Apocrapha, *The Wisdom of Sirach* 37:3

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