

The Believer's Two Natures

by C.I. Scofield

The regenerate person possesses two natures: the old nature, which is wholly and hopelessly bad, and the new nature, which is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:9

Topics: "Regeneration", "Sanctification"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches about the two natures possessed by every regenerate person: a wholly bad nature received by natural birth and a wholly good nature received through the new birth, which is the nature of God Himself. The Scriptures reveal God's view of the old, or Adam nature, emphasizing the deceitful and wicked heart of man and the incapacity of the unregenerate to please or understand God. The believer, though still having the old nature, has received a new nature created in righteousness and true holiness, originating from God through regeneration.

Transcript

The Scriptures teach that every regenerate person is the possessor of two natures: one, received by natural birth, which is wholly and hopelessly bad; and a new nature, received through the new birth, which is the nature of God Himself, and therefore wholly good.

The following Scriptures will sufficiently manifest what God thinks of the old, or Adam nature: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5).

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9)

"There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

God does not say that none of the unregenerate are refined, or cultured, or able, or sweet-tempered, or generous, or charitable, or even religious. But He does say that none are righteous, none understand God, or seek after Him.

It is one of the sorest of faith's trials to accept the divine estimate of human nature, to realize that our genial and moral friends, who, not infrequently, are scrupulous in the discharge of every duty, filled with sympathy for the woes and the aspirations of humanity, and strenuous in the assertion of human rights,

are yet utter despisers of God's rights and untouched by the sacrifice of His Son, whose divinity they with unspeakable insolence deny and whose word they contemptuously reject. A refined and gentle lady who would shrink with horror from the coarseness of giving a fellow creature the lie, will yet make God a liar every day! (See I John 1:10; 5:10). And this difficulty is vastly increased for thousands by the current praise of humanity from the pulpit.

How startling the contrast between appearances and realities in the time before the flood. "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Gen. 6:4).

And so it appeared that the world was growing better, in men's eyes; a continual improvement they probably would trace, and the apparent result of the unholy intermarriage of the godly with the worldly was the lifting up of human nature to still grander heights.

But "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile man" (Mark 7:21-23).

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7-8).

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3).

By these it appears that the unconverted man has a three-fold incapacity. He may be gifted, or cultured, or amiable, or generous, or religious. He may pay his honest debts, be truthful, industrious, a good husband and father-or all these together-but he can neither obey God, please God, nor understand God.

The believer, on the contrary, while still having his old nature, unchanged and unchangeable, has received a new nature which "after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The following Scriptures will show the origin and character of the new man.

It will be seen that regeneration is a creation, not a mere transformation-the bringing in a new thing, not the change of an old. As we received human nature by natural generation, so do we receive the divine nature by regeneration.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee [Nicodemus, a moral, religious man], Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

It will be observed what bearing these Scriptures have upon that specious and plausible, but utterly unscriptural phrase so popular in our day, "the universal fatherhood of God, and the universal brotherhood of man -- an expression all the more dangerous for the half-truth of the last clause. Not all who are born, but all who are born again are the children of God. The Scripture tells us indeed that Adam was the son of God, but it is also careful to state that Seth was the son of Adam (Luke 3:38).

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [literally, a new creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

And this "new man" is linked with Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3-4).

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8: 10).

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11-12).

"But this new, divine nature, which is Christ's own, subsists in the believer together with the old nature. It is the same Paul who could say, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," who also says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18); and, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me (Rom. 7:21). It was Job, the perfect and upright man," who said, "I abhor myself." It was Daniel, eminently a man of God, who said, "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption," when he saw the glorified ancient of days.

Between these two natures there is conflict. Study carefully the battle between the two "I's": the old Saul and the new Paul in Romans 7:14-25. It is an experience like this which so discourages and perplexes young converts. The first joy of conversion has subsided, his glowing expectations become chilled, and the convert is dismayed to find the flesh with its old habits and desires within himself as before his conversion, and he is led to doubt his acceptance with God. This is a time of discouragement and danger. Paul in this crisis, cries out for deliverance, calling his old nature a "body of death." The law only intensifies his agony (though a converted man), and he finds deliverance from "the flesh," not through effort, nor through striving to keep the law, but "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24-25).

The presence of the flesh is not, however, an excuse for walking in it. We are taught that "our old man is crucified with Christ"; that, in that sense, we "are dead," and we are called upon to make this a constant experience by mortifying ("making dead") our members which are upon the earth.

The power for this is that of the Holy Spirit who dwells in every believer (I Cor. 6:19) and whose blessed office is to subdue the flesh. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:16-17).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). Therefore, instead of meeting the solicitations of the old nature by force of will, or by good resolutions, turn the conflict over to the indwelling Spirit of God.

Romans 7 is a record of the conflict of regenerate man with his old self, and is, therefore, intensely personal. "I would," "I do not," "I would not," "I do," is the sad confession of defeat which finds an echo in so many Christian hearts. In chapter 8 the conflict still goes on, but how blessedly impersonal! There is no agony, for Paul is out of it; the conflict is now between "flesh" Saul of Tarsus-and the Holy Spirit. Paul is at peace and victorious. (It will be understood that this refers to victory over the flesh, such inward solicitations to evil as lust, pride, anger, etc.; temptations from without are met by recourse to Christ our high priest).

Consider attentively the following passages: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled, rendered powerless] that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

"For ye are dead [have died-in Christ], and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 11).

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Rom. 8:12).

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