

THE OLD MAN

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"Put off the old man . . . which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the (very) spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Eph. 4:22-24.

"Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." Thus spake David with reference to what Presbyterians call Original Sin; Methodists, Inbred Sin; some others, Inherited Depravity; Paul in Romans, "Sin that dwelleth in me," and in our text, "the Old Man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Whatever it is called, it is an inward, sinful activity against God, which manifests itself as soon as we are born. Well sang Watts, the poet of Methodism,

"Lord we are vile, conceived in sin,
And born unholy and unclean,
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts his race and taints us all.

"Soon as we draw our infant breath,
The seeds of sin grow up for death;
Thy law demands a perfect heart,
But we're defiled in every part."

This evil nature is there without our willing either for or against. Volition is in no way consulted or involved. It is there back of, independent of, and in spite of our will. It does not consist in wicked doings, but in promptings to evil. In the unsaved it has unrestrained and continuous dominions, reigning without and within. In the regenerated it remains, but does not reign. It is restrained, and if occasionally, though but for a moment, it does break loose, such indulgence deprives us of the smile of God and must be repented of.

We have this old nature not because of our immediate parentage, but because we are federally related to Adam. Since all are so related, every one has this monster within, unless he has been purged of its defilement.

No one has ever seen the old man, but all have felt his stirrings. He does not affect every one alike. His manifestations are so numerous and diversified, that we have all, in one way or another, felt his motions within. While we do not come by his presence because of any moral, mental, or physical condition of our parents, nevertheless, in his manifestations he does take advantage of our natural, characteristic dispositions. He can act ugly and devilish, or sweetly, cleverly, and even religiously, if circumstances so demand. He stirs, obstructs, disputes and argues. He never wearies, is more rapid than thought, can in the wink of an eye slam a door, or kick a coal scuttle. The baby throws its spoon across the table with a howl; the old man breaks the cow's ribs with a milk-stool; the same spirit actuates both. The old nature is Satanic and in league with hell to frustrate the work of God.

Just as a man with a capital of several thousands can invest that and in a few years find it increased by thousands, so the soul may invest its inherited sin-capital in an evil course and later find itself in an awful state, with original depravity horribly aggravated by the wicked investment made. Mental depravity is increased by reading bad books, looking at bad pictures, and wilfully observing and meditating upon the lewd nudity of present-day, immodest fashions; physical depravity by the pursuit of wicked and unlawful habits, or by the over-indulgence of the

legitimate; spiritual depravity by resisting the influences of the Holy Spirit and postponing the day of salvation. Birth-sin is thus increased; responsible sins are added; the monster gets a firmer grip. New habits are formed as sins against light are added; sin's power increases, and as sin's power over us increases, the capacity for sin increases. Thus, men and women, boys and girls, young and old, refusing grace, become increasingly depraved, sinking deeper and deeper into sin.

"But," says one, "if the will must act before sin-guilt can be imputed, and if the will is neither consulted nor involved with respect to inheriting the Adamic taint, how then is it sin?"

It is the root of all sins. Its fruit is sin. The Christian conscience condemns it. The regenerate heart deplores it. And every honest heart prays against it. It must be, then, in its nature sinful. It is the mainspring of all evil. It lies in the human heart ready to spring into action at the least provocation, and has in it the seed, germ, or possibility of every sin that has ever cursed the human race. Said Jesus, the most celebrated Doctor of Depravity, the only successful Heart-Sin Specialist, "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 the man." Mark 7:21-23.

The secret power of the spray always lies back of the mouth in the fountain-head. So down there, in the heart-fountain-head, sin seethes, froths, works, boils and bubbles, always eager and ready to break forth, like Old Faithful Ceyser, and exhibit the intense corruption of the fountain by the vileness of its outflowing streams.

In regeneration, "our old man is crucified with Christ," and we lead a victorious life as we walk in the light. Tendencies to evil, however, are still felt within stirrings which would lead God only knows where, were it not for restraining regenerating grace. Nor will the believer want for opportunity to indulge these evil tendencies, should he be inclined to "let down his guard." The devil will see to it, that real temptation, put forward in the most seductive form, affords ample opportunity for breaking away and giving evil proclivities full rein. Considering this and the fact that our own carnal heart "is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," how ought we to watch unto prayer against the uprisings of evil tendencies, and how ought we to thank God for providing a full and sufficient remedy.

Realizing what a faithful ally he has in the old man, Satan does his best to keep man in ignorance of the identity and true character of sin, and of the wonderful panacea provided for its cure. By accepting false teaching, by shunning holiness gatherings, by watching sin's manifestations in others, such are some of the equally potent ways by means of which Satan endeavors to keep the soul in ignorance; and, if in ignorance, then unconfessed; and, if unconfessed, then in sin. Some dear souls are thus kept for years in unhappy possession of their old, troublesome, sinful nature, fighting, falling, confessing, crying, afraid to give up, and able to make but little progress in grace.

Some modern Pelagians profess the old nature no longer present since justification. A fifty-six inch saw, running at eight hund-

red revolutions per minute, bit into a log on the carriage and sliced off a good sized slab. The carriage reversed, came on again, the saw bit deeper. Suddenly, without warning, it smashed with a shriek and a howl into something imbedded in the log and shivered into a thousand pieces. Imbedded in that log was an old cannon ball which had lodged in the tree during the heavy cannonading days of the civil war. There was no indication on the outside that such an impediment lay within, but the second cut laid bare the secret. Friend Pelagian, you may flatter yourself and endeavor to deceive others by declaring there is no old Jonah in the hold of your vessel, but submit your case to the deep cutting gospel saw, the Word of God, and it will expose the hidden, unholy matter even in your heart. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I. John 1:8.

Since in inheriting depravity of nature volition is neither consulted nor involved, we are not to blame for its presence a bit more than we are to blame for having black or red hair, brown or blue eyes. And we remain irresponsible until light reveals the disease and the remedy. Infants, idiots, fools, etc., are all irresponsible and their cases are, in great mercy, covered by the precious blood. Clearly justified persons, who, while walking in the light, die without receiving this light, are also irresponsibles. They are walking in all the light they have; they are not responsible for sin's inherited presence; they have not received light on the possibility of having it removed; yet "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." What then? The precious blood intervenes, as in the case of all irresponsibles; real "Dying Grace" is given; that precious soul "goes sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb." Glory to Jesus!

But, just as a consumptive, who refuses a cure, lingers on, spreading the dread contagion, and finally dies, can be regarded as a responsible menace to the public health and in the end a suicide, so the man, who, with light on inbred sin, its presence and cure, refuses the remedy, becomes responsible for its retention and culpable in all the havoc it may afterward work through him. O thank God! Thank God! there is a cure.

We cannot get rid of the old nature either by pardon or piece-meal a bit more than we can cure a tree of rotten heart by plucking off bad fruit and pruning out dead branches. God's treatment of the sin principle is expressed by the words wash, cleanse, purge, crucify, kill, destroy. (1) Let confession be made of its inward existence. (2) Let confession be made of its real character. (3) Let special prayer be made with faith for deliverance from it. (4) Walk thus in the light by obeying these scriptural admonitions and the cure will be God-wrought, immediate and complete. The Spirit's message is as follows: with the verbs "forgive" and "cleanse" in the aorist tense (Greek), thereby signifying suddenness and completeness of action—"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." I. John 1:10, 9, 8, 7.—The Pentecostal Herald.