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**Man as God Made Him
Man as Sin Made Him
Man as God Re-makes Him**

A three part view of man by
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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

A Three-Chapter Story: Man as God Made Him Chapter 1

Man, the crowning work of God, remains to this day an unfathomable mystery. David long ago recognized our inability to fully know even ourselves. “Who can understand his errors?” (Psalms 19:12). Jonah was evidently a puzzle to those pagan marines with whom he sailed. In apparent amazement they asked, “Why hast thou done this?” (Jonah 1:10). After six thousand years of learning, the study of human behavior continues unabated. Yale University devoted seven and one-half million dollars to investigate “why man acts as he does.” They are evidently convinced that man is a highly complex being.

An acquaintance with the Bible is the best possible introduction to the study of man. According to the Bible, the study of man includes three chapters: (1) man as God made him, (2) man as sin made him, and (3) man as God remakes him. This article will attempt to identify the natures associated with these stages of human experience.

Man as God Made Him

This stage, man in his unfallen state, is the stage with which we are least acquainted. Adam and Eve were part of God’s “very good” creation. Moreover, their being made “in the image of God” made them unique. They alone resembled God in the sense that they were rational, moral, and spiritual beings.

Man is both material and nonmaterial in nature. Each part is essential because man is meant to be related to two worlds: the seen and the unseen, the natural and the spiritual. The material part of man consists of his body, while the nonmaterial consists of his soul and spirit. Although in some ways the soul and the spirit may be inseparable, they do have separate functions and constitute two distinct parts. The totality of man consists therefore of spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). By means of his spirit, Adam was God-conscience; and by means of his body he was world-conscience. The soul, the center of personality, relates with the spiritual world through the spirit, when, like in unfallen Adam, the spirit is alive unto God. In like manner, the soul relates with the material world through the body. To the soul was given the power to choose which of these worlds should dominate. Evidently the spirit cannot act directly upon the body. It

needs a medium and that medium is the soul. The intended function of the soul is to keep itself and the body in subjection to the God-indwelt human spirit. Because of this key role, the soul can be viewed as the “real you.” You have a body and you have a spirit, but you are a soul. The soul is the seat of those non-corporal traits which distinguish one person from another.

Having noted the complexity of man’s constitution, it is needful to emphasize now the unity of his being. Man’s being “very good” would imply that at that stage there was a harmonious working together of all his constituent parts. We can assume without any hesitation that spirit, soul, and body blended together perfectly. For however long he remained in that state, man was a well-integrated personality. Very likely the frustrations that now arise from conflicting loyalties and internal discords were entirely absent.

While it is the divine image which differentiates man most significantly from other creatures and gives him his highest worth, the Bible as a whole avoids a dualistic conception of man’s nature whereby his spirit alone is considered good and his body evil.

To gather up what has been said, Adam, being neither carnal nor divine, was a prime specimen of human nature. And his pre-fallen experience amply demonstrates that being human does not in itself necessitate being sinful. However, his being human, and therefore a free moral agent, made it possible for him to sin. On the other hand, the absence of a sin-prone nature and the blessing of communion with God also made it possible for him to not sin. Adam’s sinless, innocent human nature was clearly an integral part of the Creator’s masterpiece.

Aside from Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only other being who knows what it is to possess the unmarred human nature. Like Adam, he too was without a human father. Having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, it is not hard to understand how he escaped the fallen nature from that side. But to protect the normally-born Jesus from receiving the fallen nature by way of His imperfect mother, may have required nothing less than a miracle.

As a man, Jesus was all that Adam was meant to be. He was both perfectly human and humanly perfect. He has been, and will be, the only man to maintain sinless perfection. In this respect He likely far surpassed Adam. For although Adam was for a time sinless, his untested character was surely inferior to the gradually perfected human character of our Lord who

“learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). The writer recalls hearing Adam compared to the boxer who is floored in the first round, whereas Christ survived all fifteen rounds.

Furthermore, it needs to be emphasized that Jesus was God in human form. The incarnation was not the deification of humanity but the humanizing of deity. Through the doorway of His supernatural conception there came into this world such a Person as had never lived in it before or ever has since. In Jesus of Nazareth, God and man met in a harmonious union of natures. All that God was, Christ Jesus is. All that unfallen man was, He is. Nothing that belonged to sinless humanity is lacking in Him. “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren” (Hebrews 2:17). By virtue of this inexplicable fusion of natures, He is the God-man, wholly God and wholly man.

In this connection it is noteworthy that the Gospel accounts convey the distinct impression that Jesus did not rely upon His Divinity as an easy way out of His predicaments. Although He did not cease to be God, He began to live as a man. It was as a man that He triumphed over temptations and prayed down His Father’s help. It is true that by some strange power He escaped a crowd that sought to kill Him before His hour had come. But He refused to employ divine power to escape suffering when that fitted into God’s plan for man’s redemption.

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of the Father preparing a body for His Son. That Deity could dwell in a human body is a fact of tremendous significance. The fusion of Greek thought with Christian thought has at times resulted in a low view of the body. The one thing that no Greek would ever have dreamed of was that God would dwell in a body. This strand of Greek thought formed part of the Gnostic heresy. This was possibly the major doctrinal threat that faced the church in the early centuries.

One of the leading doctrines of Gnosticism was the mistaken assumption that matter (physical substance as opposed to spirit) is evil. For them, “salvation” must therefore be conceived of as deliverance from imprisonment in one’s supposedly evil body. It was this pagan concept, introduced into Christianity, which sent monks scurrying off into the desert to “punish” their bodies. It is true that because of man’s sin his physical environment was put under a curse. Nevertheless, sin is not resident in the physical world but is the rebellion of man’s will against God. The fact that the divine Son of God became incarnate in a genuinely human body should serve as convincing evidence that there is no inherent evil in the body itself.

We have already affirmed the categorical likeness of the human nature of Jesus to that of unfallen Adam. But what about His body? Did it, too, throb with the same vitality that Adam possessed? It is said that Christ was sent “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3). The question could be raised, does this suggest that in some ways Jesus stooped even lower than the level on which Adam began? Was Adam made “in the likeness of sinful flesh”? Definitely not! The human nature with which Adam was originally endowed was very likely characterized by a greater measure of vitality than that which characterizes fallen human nature. Many believe that before his fall Adam possessed an intellect and a physique superior to that which is possible today. From the long lives that he and his contemporaries lived it does appear as though the original deposit of vitality was so great that even the consequences of the Fall could not immediately throttle it down.

There is no conclusive evidence that Jesus was the “superman” that Adam, by present standards, likely was. While there are indications that Jesus had remarkable endurance, it is equally obvious that He had so completely laid aside His role of deity that He did frequently experience human weariness. If these observations are correct, they would add validity to the assumption that although Jesus remained sinless, He nevertheless may have subjected himself to human weaknesses that the unfallen Adam had not yet experienced. His being “in the likeness of sinful flesh” and the fact that “in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren” may mean that the humanity He assumed, while not a sinful humanity, was a weakened humanity. One student of the Word interprets these passages as meaning that Christ took our nature as it is in us, compassed with infirmities, with nothing to distinguish Him as man from sinful men, save that He was without sin. However it actually was, marvelous indeed was His condescension!

In 1 Timothy 2:5 one finds this rather singular statement, “the man Christ Jesus.” That occurs in a context where Christ is declared to be man’s mediator. Even in His present glory, He is the Man. This serves to underscore the fact that Christ did not shed His humanity at His ascension. The incarnation had a beginning but it has had no ending and never will. The Christ who arose from the dead and returned to heaven continues to be one with us in the human aspect of His nature. With the resurrection of Christ, human nature for the first time became glorified humanity, the highest form of existence that it will ever know.

The fact that Christ has retained His humanity is of more than incidental importance. For it is His humanity that qualifies Him to act now as our sympathetic High Priest. He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15), meaning, the general, overall weakness of human nature. He is familiar with those things in our nature that make us vulnerable to temptations, fears, and anxieties.

Having looked at the unfallen Adam and the sinless perfect Second Adam, along with His voluntarily assumed and possibly modified humanity, we must now leave those heights and descend to life on the lowest plane.

A Three-Chapter Story: Man as Sin Made Him Chapter 2

Chapter two of human experience marks the commencement of life in the world as we know it today.

One of Adam’s distinctive characteristics not yet mentioned was that amid all God’s vast terrestrial creation, he alone could become a sinner. One factor accounting for this possibility was his being endowed with the power of choice. A second factor was God’s plan for man’s testing; He put before him one restriction. Whether aware of it or not, man was on probation. A third factor was the existence of the tempter.

Responding to the enticements of Satan, our first parents knowingly disobeyed God. Afterward, Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed Eve. God, however, viewed their yielding as a responsible and blameworthy act. Human sin was born by the will of man in revolt against God.

The advent of sin brought consequences with dimensions that stagger the mind. Among the most important of these consequences was the change of nature that man underwent. It was really a degeneration, a “new birth,” downward. An immediate change came over Adam and Eve. And that change perpetuated itself. The “image of Adam” has clung to all his posterity. The human germ now had in it the poison of sin and that poison has gone down through the human family. “By one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners” (Romans 5:19).

So then, a vast difference exists between man as he was created and man as he now is in his unregenerate state. Something has gone wrong which affects him to the very center of his being. Deep down in the subconscious mind of man there appears to be a universal awareness of the fall. Honest men everywhere have acknowledged that they are not as good as they know they ought to be. And why is it that for a multitude of human beings the appetite for food is out of all proportion to the needs of the body? This, when rightly viewed, should be seen as one of many indicators that the balance of human nature has been upset.

One of the immediate effects of the fall appears to have been the inversion of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical. One expositor puts it this way. "In the fall, the soul refused the rule of the spirit and became the servant of the body and its appetites." Significantly, the subject of eating, a bodily appetite, was the point at which the serpent began his dialogue with Eve.

When life conforms to God's plan, "the spirit is like a mistress, the soul is like a steward, and the body is like a servant. The mistress commends matters to the steward who in turn commands the servant to carry them out." However, in the fall the proper order of spirit, soul, and body was disrupted.

There are grounds for believing that the human spirit was the first to feel the damage inflicted by man's act of disobedience. Sin's entry closed the windows of the spirit God-ward and made it a death chamber. Adam's predicted death began in his spirit and culminated finally in the death of his body. In fallen human nature, this supremely spiritual faculty is darkened, deadened, and dethroned. In this state, although it is incapable of communion with God, some believe that it can yet serve as the medium of communication with evil spirits.

Secondly, the poison of sin spread to the soul and blighted man's intellectual, emotional, and volitional powers. The mind of fallen man is so blinded that he "calls evil, good," and can be easily persuaded to "believe a lie." His thoughts have been declared by God to be "only evil continually." Man's heart, the seat of his emotional life, is characterized as "desperately wicked." That which should be hated is loved. God is dethroned in favor of self. The will has turned against God and grown stubborn. In areas where its resistance ought to be strong, it has grown feeble, even allowing itself to be enslaved.

Thirdly, the body also is suffering the ravages of sin. In fact, the body is the field where the growth of sin becomes most visible. The sins that are born in the defiled heart eventually express themselves outwardly through the instrumentality of the body. Also, the body, with its numerous “gates” to the surrounding sin-saturated environment, soaks up a lot of stimulants to sin and channels them into the already perverted mind and sin-loving heart thus creating a chain reaction of sin. And the undisciplined body itself clamors for the satisfying of its own pampered and perverted desires. So complete was the reversal, brought about by the fall, that the body, instead of serving as a servant of the higher faculties, has in many instances become the powerful master to whom the whole man bows. God moved Paul to give new believers this warning: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12), implying that the body of the natural man had become sin’s territory. It appears as though the downward course of man moves from “spirit-control” to “soul-control” and from “soul-control” to “body-control.”

This, then, is the ruin that the human race has suffered. No longer is man controlled by God through His Spirit. The soul now operates independent of the spirit. The “natural man” of 1 Corinthians 2:14, who cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, is literally “the soulish man.” This is an important observation. Even though the powers of one’s soul may be somewhat disciplined, highly polished, and capable of remarkable achievements, all this avails nothing, for the man is like “a cake not turned” in that his spiritual powers are cold and dormant.

God made man human; sin made him carnal. The “carnal man” is a Biblical term for human nature viewed as ruled by sensual appetites and fleshly desires. Another expression, “the natural man”, is human nature ruled by unsanctified reason and other of the higher powers of the soul. This label is also used to emphasize that man is now naturally sinful; he is born that way. Sinfulness is to man what fierceness is to the lion and what gentleness is to the lamb; it is his inborn nature. Another name, “the old man” is the personification of what we have been looking at. And “the old man” is “the natural man” considered chronologically — prior to that operation of the Holy Spirit by which he is renovated into the “new man.” Possibly the most commonly-used label today with a meaning synonymous with these Biblical labels is the simple term, self.

At this point a note of caution may be in order with respect to the extreme views propagated by the Calvinistic concept of “total depravity.”

Man as sin made him is indeed a helpless creature. However, the impression is sometimes given that he is so depraved that God, in His saving attempts, cannot count on even his cooperation; that no “point of contact” remains. That should be viewed as an exaggeration of the facts. It is this false assumption that makes necessary the operation of a supposedly “irresistible grace.” All men, like the prodigal son, can, if they choose to do so, arise and go to their heavenly Father’s house.

Although the divine image in man has been defaced, it has not been obliterated. One indication that man’s depravity is not entirely total is the fact that honest sinners know themselves to be miserable and some will make that acknowledgment. The muffled voice of a better nature tells the sinner. “You were not made for this.” In confused and distorted ways, man still seeks the fulfillment of his true destiny. And, when willing, he is yet able to respond to God’s call.

The often-heard assertion that man is no longer “able not to sin” does not mean that he can do nothing that is morally good. Neither should we suppose that all men are equally bad, nor as bad as they might be. One writer uses the analogy of a fallen temple. Not every block of a fallen temple is broken or marred in the same way, but every block is a part of the ruin. Sin is so pervasive that it has blighted man’s entire nature. In all the behavior of the unregenerate man, the repulsive motive of self-interest is seen by God to be very prominent. We must accept the Biblical verdict that all the world is “guilty before God” for “there is none righteous, no, not one.”

Adam was created with a potential for sin. In addition to that potential we inherit a propensity toward sin. But we do not inherit guilt. And although we are not responsible for acquiring the sinful nature, we are responsible for what we do with it when God offers us the remedy for it. What is the difference between Adam’s choice in Eden and my choice at the cross? Innocent Adam deliberately chose to do evil, thereby incurring guilt and a sinful nature. In contrast, today guilty man may deliberately reject a divine arrangement to undo the ravages of sin. Which is worse, Adam’s choosing wrong, or my rejecting help? Fallen man falls lower yet when he turns away from the only One who can lift him out of the miry clay.

We are now prepared to observe the Divine Potter as He works with this spoiled lump of clay.

A Three-Chapter Story: Man as God Remakes Him Chapter 3

Chapter three of human experiences revolves around God's work of restoration. Out of the ruin of the Fall, God determined to salvage for Himself a people who would be so thoroughly remade that they would conform to "the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29).

Tracing our steps, it will be noted that we have moved from generation (chapter one), to degeneration (chapter two), to regeneration (chapter three). Christ Jesus was made like us that we might be made like Him. In the incarnation, there was the union of Deity with humanity that in regeneration there might be the union of humanity with Deity. The glorious reality of this oneness of the believer with Christ comes into sharp focus in that affirmation recorded in 1 Corinthians 6:17, "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," provisionally, and by faith, experientially. Whenever that union occurs, regeneration follows.

God moved His servants to employ a variety of terminology in their referring to this supernatural work of regeneration. Viewing it from a distance, Ezekiel spoke of it as God giving to man "a new heart. . . and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 36:26). In the language of Paul, it is a creative act of God making the sinner "a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). John describes it as having "passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14). Jesus described it as being "born again" (John 3:3). In this article, our interest lies primarily with the aspect of regeneration to which Peter refers when he notes that Christians become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Remember, chapter one brought in focus unfallen human nature; chapter two, sinful human nature; and now we are introduced to a third, the divine nature as part of human experience. Before elaborating on this aspect, let us review some basic facts.

In the experience of regeneration, God is the Actor and the one acted upon is the penitent, believing sinner. Man is unable to regenerate himself; that work is "the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12), with the Holy Spirit serving as the principal agent. In simplest terms, the new birth is an inward transformation that leads to an outward change in one's way of living. Although it is sometimes called a miraculous work, the term supernatural is preferable. The term miraculous denotes a divine intervention against the ordinary methods of God's working. The New Birth is not that. It is God's

chosen way of making saints out of sinners. Neither is regeneration a physical change. The biological structure is not altered; even the genes of the individual remain the same. However a new principle of direction comes in; what controls the inherited make-up does change. The basic human drives are cleansed, redirected, and united under a single controlling purpose. Ideally, the life that had revolved around self is reoriented around Christ.

Now let us move closer to our particular interest. Colossians 3:10 speaks of “the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” This would seem to suggest that regeneration is a renewing of something that has fallen into decay. It also lends validity to our sectional heading, Man as God Remakes Him. Regeneration is the restoration of our true humanity; we become more nearly the man or woman God originally wanted. Through regeneration, the fragmented human personality is “made whole.” And, in becoming more truly human we also become more godly for we were originally created in “the image of God.” It is only in the nature of the regenerated saint that perfect compatibility exists between being human and being godly.

And now there comes into view an amazing fact that confirms the declaration that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” By God’s making us partakers of the divine nature, we have gained a spiritual dimension that innocent Adam never had! At least in a provisional way, we have been lifted out of our low estate and elevated to a level higher than that on which innocent Adam began! More is gained through Christ than was lost through Adam.

Now what happens in the realm of our nature when regeneration occurs? First of all, it is imperative that we recognize that God makes no attempt to reform our old sinful nature. “The carnal mind. . . is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). So then, although the regenerated one undergoes a change of nature, it is not a change of his old nature for that nature cannot be changed. Regeneration is not Ishmael changed but Isaac born. The change is of the nature of a displacement. There is a displacement of the old nature by the introduction of a new nature. God’s plan is neither eradication nor suppression but counteraction. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2). This is the divine ideal and it is gloriously attainable as the Christian applies this law or principle to the crucifying of his old nature, reckoning himself dead to sin and alive to God.

All of us have the deeply ingrained tendency of trying in one way or another to escape personal responsibility for our actions. A commonly taken route is the one taken by Old John. Old John was a rather peculiar kind of Christian, if, in reality, he could be called a Christian. He had a small farm and raised some turkeys. One time a motorist accidentally killed one of his turkeys. The motorist stopped and said he was sorry about the accident. Old John became very angry and threw a stone through the car window. The motorist had him arrested. Old John appeared before the judge. He said, “Your Honour, it was not the new John who threw that stone. It was the old John!” The judge did not understand. John carefully explained that when he became a Christian, he became a dual personality. He still had the old nature, but he also had a new one. It was the bad, old John who threw the stone, not the new, good one. The judge said, “I see; you are a kind of double personality, an old man and a new one, and the old one threw the stone.” “Yes, that’s it, your Honour,” said Old John. “I’m sorry,” said the judge, “but I am afraid that both of you will have to go to jail!”

Where did Old John’s reasoning go wrong? His basic mistake was his attributing personal responsibility to a thing that is incapable of carrying that burden. Allow me to explain what I mean. What really constitutes a nature? Is “the will to choose” a component part of any nature? The mere asking of these questions may begin to dispel some fog. Is it not wrong to view any of these three natures as an entity with volitional powers? To think rightly in this area requires viewing one’s nature not as a substantive entity but as a governing disposition. Its powers are influential rather than volitional. It can exert a wrong influence, but it cannot make you act wrong. Consenting to act is the human will in operation; it is one of the powers of the soul, the real you. Evidently the judge who sentenced Old John perceived that making a scapegoat out of our sinful nature is an irresponsible evasion.

A relevant question frequently asked is: “How many natures does the Christian have?” It appears to this writer as though the dual nature concept is most prominent among expositors that put the Romans seven experience at the beginning of Christian experience rather than prior to it, and have a big field labelled carnal Christianity. Denying the dual nature concept doesn’t necessarily mean that one subscribes to the eradication doctrine. Perhaps the better way to state the question is as follows: How many natures are operative in the victorious Christian? When stated this way, the answer should be obvious — only one, the graciously-shared divine nature.

But even the victorious Christian still has the old nature. He is, however, rendering it inoperative as he, by faith, appropriates the power to keep it crucified. In the same way he “mortifies the deeds of the body.” However, unlike “the old man,” the body is not inherently evil; it is only the illegitimate expressions of the body that need to be curbed. Gathering up what has here been said, it appears to this writer as though some of the differences of opinion revolving around the question here raised is due to failure to state the question with precise accuracy. The answer may depend on how the question is taken.

But I can imagine someone saying, “If most of my actions are influenced by the divine nature and a few by the carnal nature — doesn’t that indicate that I really have two natures?” This depends on how one views becoming “partakers of the divine nature.” Our reception of the divine nature is not at all like having a package placed on our doorstep by some heavenly messenger. Just as the eternal life we receive is not a life independent of its source, so the new nature of which we partake is not experienced apart from the indwelling Christ. When we receive Christ, we receive His nature along with Him. We are then metamorphosed as we abide in Him and make Him our life and Lord. Robert Shank, in *Life in the Son*, explains it thus: “Partaker does not denote what one possesses in himself, as his own, but a partial communication of what does not belong to him, but to another.” So then, the sinful nature that is essentially our own must be rendered inoperative to make room for the rule of Him who brings His nature into our being.

Is it then proper for the Christian to view his spiritual conflicts as the strife of the two natures? Some claim they find support for this concept in Galatians 5:17. “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.” Is this to be viewed as the normal, ongoing experience of the Christian? Whether normal or not, it certainly is not the divine ideal for the Christian. A careful reading of the context should convince one that the preceding verse is telling the reader how to rise above the persistence of that strife. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). Although we may feel its power, we need not fulfill its demands. But what we are objecting to mainly is the interpretation that “the believer himself is only a bystander observing the struggle — an interested spectator, but not actually a participant. . . . The spiritual conflict within the believer is, in reality,

nothing less than his own personal striving against the Spirit. It is the struggle to determine whether the whole of his person shall surrender to the inclinations of his own carnal nature, or to the demands of the divine nature of which he partakes by faith. . . . The works of the flesh are not deeds somehow done by ‘the flesh’ as an entity separate and distinct from the person himself; they are deeds done by the whole person in response to the inclinations of the only nature which is his own — the flesh!” (Life in the Son — page 215.)

As a concept, the strife of the two natures of the believer must be challenged whenever it is construed in such a way that it minimizes personal responsibility or does violence to the unity of the individual. Quoting Shank again, “The Christian is a single spiritual entity who can only act as a unit. The whole of his person is involved in whatever he does “after the Spirit,” and in whatever he does “after the flesh.” Another man of wide experience said this. “We conscientiously feel that we are just one person. When I have sinned, deep down I know that I did it.”

The introduction of the new nature does hold the probability of making one more painfully aware of the presence and perverseness of his old nature. It is not uncommon for new Christians, especially young ones, to make confessions such as this: “Since I became a Christian, I have had struggles within that I never had before; I didn’t know I was such a sinner.” This can be expected, for the Holy Spirit, when He comes into one’s life, exposes evil, sensitizes the conscience, and awakens a desire to be clean and free from sin. Maybe the prodigal son experienced this too when “he came to himself.”

Many things happen when the divine nature is allowed to interpenetrate one’s being. God’s transforming power is brought to bear upon the scars and lingering vestiges of our twisted humanness. All our ailing components feel the touch of the Great Physician. The changes are most pronounced in the non-corporal parts of our being. But in many instances, the newly-found health of the spirit and soul spills over into the body.

The glorified Christ, in a believer’s heart, will act the same as He acted when He lived among men in the person of Jesus. His disposition is the same now as then. This accounts for the way regeneration tends to produce among the saints a uniform, Christ-like character. As Christ is “formed in you,” the beauty of Jesus begins to radiate from your life as those beautiful attitudes, The Beatitudes, take root and grow in your life.

As one receives “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16), the pride that once had been so natural is replaced by what appears to the world as an unnatural humility. This renewing of the mind brings with it also new powers of discernment and a new awareness of the springs of action. We begin to scrutinize our motives and sharpen our obedience. Decisions are weighed more carefully. Influences are identified more accurately. Dangers are detected more quickly. Matters formerly viewed as neutral become moral and spiritual issues. We begin to realize that actions and activities not inherently evil may take on moral character and become sinful. Normally, eating is a morally neutral activity. But when it becomes gluttony or eating out on the Lord’s Day, then it has become sinful. For Jesus, eating at the direction of Satan was clearly a spiritual issue. There is a purely human love that can be expressed legitimately; but when it turns into lust, it becomes sinful. Under many circumstances, it is perfectly legitimate to satisfy the body’s demand for sleep. But to sleep when we are told to “watch and pray,” or to sleep during a worship service brings in a spiritual dimension and makes it a spiritual issue.

Regeneration brings with it also a new potential for disciplining the body. Although the seat of sin lies deeper than the body, outward expressions of sin do call for the involvement of the body. Furthermore, with the entrance of sin, the controllable desires of the body have acquired a propensity toward excess and perversion. Intemperance of any kind is incompatible with the holiness of the divine nature and must therefore be mortified. On the other hand, recognizing that the body’s proper role is that of a servant, the Christian presents his body to the Lord as “a living sacrifice,” yields his members “as instruments of righteousness unto God,” and seeks to glorify God in even his body. For he reads in 1 Corinthians 6:13 that “the body is. . . for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” That now becomes an attainable ideal.

With his newly-energized will assuming once again its rightful role, the regenerated person is equipped to master his emotions. And they are not only subdued but also purified. The cringing fear of man is displaced by a reverential fear for God. The idolatry of self-love is repented of and replaced by newly-acquired, outgoing love. Outbursts of anger are recognized as an inexcusable sin.

It is particularly gratifying to learn that regeneration can modify even a predominately physically-based characteristic like temperament. God wants you to be you. Therefore it is not His purpose to divest you of your

temperament. But inasmuch as your temperament is a part of your fallen nature, the blight of sin is upon it. Regeneration is God's way of repairing sin-blighted temperaments! The temperament native to the individual is modified as the Divine Temperament, "the fruit of the Spirit," begins to appear. Peter, after Pentecost, retained his native temperament, but minus the rough edges it once had. Brother, sister, claim your spiritual birthright! Do not allow a temperamental weakness to rob you of victory! We are different temperamentally because of the constitutional make-up with which we are born. But because of God's uniform way of modifying our natural dispositions, we acquire, in the second birth, a temperamental adjustment that gives us our family likeness.

Yes, it is gloriously true that what we receive from our first birth can be altered by what we receive in our second birth. Emotional imbalance, stubbornness of will, laziness of mind, quickness of temper, looseness in morals, debasement of appetite, ingrained selfishness, loss of purpose, and personality defects of all kinds can be corrected.

The provisions for restoration into the divine image are so abundantly adequate that there is absolutely no excuse for sub-Christian behavior! It is high time we admit that contentment with sinful imperfection represents possibly a more serious threat than the mistaken concept of sinless perfection.

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