

***The
Believer's***
**TWO NATURES
TWO VALUES**



By E. C. Hadley

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THE BELIEVER'S TWO NATURES

Every child of God has been made a partaker of the divine nature by new birth. This new divine nature implanted in the believer is a sovereign act of God by His Spirit through the Word. So the believer has the same nature in him as is in God. Just as he partook of the fallen nature by natural birth, so in the new birth he partakes of God's nature.

Here's what the Bible says about how the believer acquires this new divine nature:

- “That which is born of the flesh is flesh (the nature we have by natural birth); and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (the nature we have by new birth). Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (Jn. 3:6-7).
- “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (Jas. 1:18).
- “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Pet. 1:23).
- “By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4).

This new divine nature that has been implanted in the believer is inseparably bound up with the Person of Christ who is its source. So we read, "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 Jn. 5:11-12). And again, "Your life is hidden with Christ in God ... Christ who is our life" (Col. 3:3-4).

This new divine nature flows from Christ. He is its fountain head and it has the same qualities and characteristics in the believer as it has in Christ – the same longings and delights. Therefore it can only have freedom when it can act in the believer in the same manner as it did in Christ when He was here on earth.

Some may say that today we are living in different surroundings than those of Christ. When it comes to technology and modern conveniences, this is true. But human nature and human relationships have not changed, and it was in these that the divine nature in Christ manifested itself as He was in constant contact with mankind. It is in these human relationships that the divine nature in the children of God is to find its sphere of activity and service to God and man.

Without being born again – without possessing this divine nature – there is no possibility of any lasting happiness. The

worm of conscience gnaws at the roots of all the passing pleasures of the unconverted, and all their pleasures are like the fading beauty of a withering flower (1 Pet. 1:24). "Like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool" (Eccl. 7:6). Even while crackling it is being consumed, to be heard no more. But he who is born of God is brought into eternal relationship with God. He is made a partaker of His divine nature and of His eternal life (Eph. 2:5). Now this divine life in the believer must have activity according to its own nature, according to its own desires and longings to be happy.

Divine life is essentially characterized by holiness and love. It finds its highest ideals and its greatest pleasures fulfilled in helpful service to God and man. The believer can only be happy as he lives this kind of life, for only in such a life can the divine nature in the believer have activity according to its tastes and ideals.

Why did God redeem us at such a cost of the sacrifice of His own Son? Why was Christ willing to pay the price of our redemption in His own blood? Certainly not because of compulsion from some outward force, for there is no outward force above God that could be brought to bear upon Him. Then surely it must be because of the compulsion of His own nature that found its pleasure in

unselfish love and service to others. The children of God have partaken of this same divine nature and so a life of love and unselfish service makes them happy. But a self-centered life depresses the divine nature in the believer and makes him feel miserable.

Another point to consider is that the believer also has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him to strengthen and develop this new nature. As we feed on the Word of God with an obedient heart and in a spirit of prayer, the Holy Spirit declares to us the things of Christ (Jn. 16:14).

The new nature, of which the believer has been made a partaker in new birth, being divine, takes pleasure in God and His will for man as well as in His love towards man. So there is not only an unselfish desire to serve man, but at the same time a yearning desire to please God in all that it does.

The believer can only find full freedom and liberty in his new nature, when everything he does is considered in the light of God's will; for the desires of the divine nature in the believer's will and God's coincide because they both come from the same source. The divine nature in God is the source of His own will; and because the believer is indwelt and energized by the Spirit of God, his divine nature produces desires in him consistent with the will of God.

To sum it up, we can say God wills what He wills because it delights His nature; and since the believer has been made partaker of this same divine nature he finds his delight in the will of God as well. This responsive delight in the will of God is strong and active just in the measure that the believer's divine nature is strong and active. His happiness is proportional to how much he allows his divine nature to develop and be active. The more he gives way to the desires of his fallen nature, the more he will become miserable and unhappy because of the depressing effect it has on his divine nature.

WHY ARE WE SO OFTEN UNHAPPY?

The unregenerate man does not have a new divine nature; only those who are born of God have it. But the unregenerate man has a conscience. He knows in his conscience that he should love, respect and obey his Creator. But this thought is distasteful to him because he wants to have his own way and be master of his own destiny. He thus refuses to think about God. "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest ... 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked'" (Isa. 57:20-21).

Sin is particularly destructive to the happiness of one who is born again. Sin throws his soul into conflict. His conscience condemns it, and the divine nature hates it and is depressed by it. Sin produces a humiliating sense of defeat.

When you do something that your heart detests and your conscience condemns, you are miserable. You may try to forget or refuse to think about it because the thought of it is so unpleasant, but that is no solution to your difficulty. Then distressing doubts as to salvation often spring up as one begins to reason, "If I am saved, why am I this way?" What is the answer to this unhappy state?

There are two things that you must know before you can get deliverance: first, how you can be absolutely sure of your salvation; second, how you can have power for victory over sin in your life. Let's consider these two points in detail.

HOW CAN WE BE SURE OF OUR SALVATION?

To answer the question about assurance of salvation, let's consider two cases of people with doubts and the replies to their questions.

Case study #1: Removing doubt

"I accepted the Lord as my Savior at age 13. I married at 18. My husband isn't a Christian and neither are my parents. I've been away from any Christian influence and now I am cold and backslidden. Satan tries to tell me I never was saved in the first place. My question is: How can I know without a doubt that I am saved? And if I am saved, can I get back to God? I've tried to pray but I feel like my words just won't go any higher than the ceiling. I want to be a Christian and live for God, but my life is a mess! I'd give anything to know I'm saved forever and that heaven is my home. Can you help me?"

I understand your distress and am happy that the Lord has awakened you to realize your great need. I assure you that the Lord desires to meet your need and give you, through faith in Him, the assurance of eternal salvation and the peace that surpasses all understanding.

You say, "I've tried to pray but I feel like my words just won't go any higher than the ceiling." From this expression it appears to me that there are two things causing your trouble: you are looking for feelings instead of just believing God; and perhaps you have not frankly confessed your sin and backsliding to

Him. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9). This is the sure promise of God. Have you confessed your sins and your backsliding to Him? If so, then believe He has forgiven you according to His Word.

You are looking for feelings of forgiveness; but what do your feelings have to do with it? God's forgiveness is what God feels about you, not what you feel. When He forgives He feels all right about it, or He wouldn't forgive. Don't be looking at yourself; look at what God says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive." After you have confessed your sins to Him, believe He has forgiven your sins just as He says He would. Believe Him to be true to His promise. Don't make Him out to be a liar by doubting what He says.

Notice the verse says that God "is faithful and just to forgive." Faithful and just towards whom? Towards Christ! Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). When you confess your sins to God, believing that Christ bore them on the cross, God would be unfaithful and unjust towards Christ if He didn't forgive you. It would be the same as if God said, "I am not satisfied with what Christ did when He died for your sins so I still have to hold them against you." Can you imagine

God being so unjust toward Christ, after Christ paid the debt, as to still hold you accountable for it? Perish the thought! Christ's work is perfect and God's Word is sure.

You say you were saved when you were 13. What kind of salvation did Christ purchase for us with His own blood? Something temporary that would give out on us if we made a mistake? Or was His blood precious enough in God's eyes to purchase an eternal salvation? Certainly it was! The infinite Son of God became Man, apart from sin, and shed His blood for us on the cross.

How much value was in that blood? Just as much value and worth as that of the One who shed it, the infinite, eternal God, the Son made manifest in the flesh. Therefore the value of His blood is infinite and eternal. And this is exactly what God's Word tells us: "With his own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" for us (Heb. 9:12). The only redemption Christ purchased for us is an eternal one. If you have something today that you can lose tomorrow, that is not redemption in Christ Jesus, because His is an eternal redemption.

"By that will (God's will) we have been sanctified (set apart unto God) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for

all.” It can never be repeated. “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (Heb. 10:10,14). These are the simple and clear teachings of God’s Word. It was God Himself who set us apart for Himself through the sacrifice of Christ. Christ died once for all sin and for all eternity; so every believer stands before God perfected forever through the eternal effectiveness of that one sacrifice.

No sin can ever come into the believer’s life that has not already been paid for by that one sacrifice for all the sins of all who believe. Their standing is perfect forever before God because God has placed them before Him on the ground of that eternal redemption that Christ has purchased for them.

God never receives anyone except on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ. Since that sacrifice was offered once for all, all believers stand forever perfect before God through that perfect sacrifice of Christ, who put away all their sins – past, present and future – once and forever when He offered Himself without spot to God.

Some say, “If that is true, then it doesn’t make any difference what a believer does.” This is true, as far as his standing before God is concerned. No sin can come into a believer’s life that has not already been accounted for by the perfect sacrifice of Christ. But sin

makes a great difference as to the believer's happiness and fellowship with God. How can he be happy when he knows he is sinning against God who loves him so much?

God hates sin; He can neither have fellowship with it, nor make a believer happy when he goes on with it. How could God walk with him in such a path? Further, as a Father who loves His child, God is obliged to discipline and correct him for his own good when he is disobedient; and such chastening is not joyous, but grievous. Afterwards however, it yields peaceable fruit to those who learn by it to hate and forsake sin. (See Heb. 12:4-11.)

When a believer sins and fails to confess and judge himself before God, he loses the joy of fellowship with his Father and exposes himself to His chastening. He is still a child of God. He has not lost his salvation, which is eternal, but he has lost the joy of communion with his Father. He cannot get that back until he confesses his sin to his Father with a firm purpose of heart to forsake it.

Read Psalm 32 and see what misery David was in while he refused to confess his sin. Then read the songs of deliverance and confidence in God that were his as soon as he confessed it. So it always is. The believer must honestly confess to God, believing that Christ has already settled the matter with His blood. Then, he must take sides with God

against his sin, thanking Him for giving His Son to die for it on the cross, and believing in his heart that He has forgiven it for Christ's sake, according to His Word. Then God will restore his peace.

If you will yield yourself afresh to God so that He may take you and make you what He would have you be, He will strengthen you and give you the joy of knowing that you are His forever. Talk often with Him. Take time to read and meditate on His Word. It will be food for your soul, joy for your heart, strength for your inner man and a light for your path.

Case Study #2: Regaining joy

"I want you to pray for me because years ago I was sure that I was saved, but then I backslid and was living in sin for several years. A few months ago I became so sick of sin and the world that I prayed and asked God to forgive me for having drifted so far away. I believe He did, but for some reason, I do not have the joy I once did. Doubts come to mind that perhaps I never really have trusted Jesus completely.

"This was my experience. As I prayed I saw a hand writing my name. I stopped praying until it was finished. Then I said out loud, 'Thank You, dear God.' I spent most of the next day on my knees thanking Him. I believed with all my heart that my name had

been written down in the Book of Life. I was so happy I told everyone God had saved me. I began to read my Bible and for the first time I saw Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible. I was so happy for a while, but then I began to grow cold and drifted away. I've wondered why I did that if I really was saved."

There are two things that you need to see more clearly to understand your experience and the reason for your doubt.

In the first place, you are basing your assurance on your experience rather than on the finished work of Christ. Experience, however precious, is neither the foundation of our eternal security nor the basis of real assurance. Christ died for our sins; that alone is the basis of our security. He died for our sins and bore the condemnation and judgment that is due us not only because of our sins but also because of our sinful nature. Sins, whether in thought, word or deed, are only the outworking of our sinful nature.

If you had only a holy nature you could not sin because your holy nature would so abhor sin that you would reject every temptation to sin. That is what we see in Christ. He had an absolutely holy nature and therefore repelled every temptation. His food was to do His Father's will. He never sought His own will but the will of the Father who sent Him (Jn. 4:34; 5:30). But we have a fallen nature that

loves its own will and wants to have its own way regardless of whether it is pleasing to God. So Christ not only had to die for our sins, but our sinful nature had to be condemned and judged with death.

When Christ was on the cross for you, all your sins (past, present and future) were before God. What is more, your sinful nature with all its sinful thoughts, feelings and deeds were all under His eye; for God sees the future as well as the past. Time does not count with Him. Christ took your place and God dealt with Him instead of you. He treated Christ as though He was what you are and had done what you did, are doing and will do. That is what 2 Corinthians 5:21 means: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us."

Further, He condemned our sinful nature and sentenced it to death. In sovereign grace and love for us, God passed our death sentence over on to Christ who took it in our place. That is the reason He cried in agony, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). He was forsaken because of what you are and what you do. He took your place and bore your sin. As you look at Christ dying there and bearing God's judgment against sin, you can say, "Death and judgment are behind me."

Where is Christ now? Is He dead? No, He is at the right hand of God. God laid your sins

upon Him and judged Him for you. Could Christ be in glory if there was even one sin left that He had not satisfied God about? Certainly not! God could not allow Him in His presence if there were any of your sins still on Him. So this is the great thing to see: "He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). When Christ was delivered up on the cross He had all your sins upon Him, but when God raised Him from the dead, it was because all your sins had been completely washed away by His blood.

There is no sin that can be charged against you now that you have believed in Christ, because God has already charged them all to Christ who bore all the judgment of them. Christ has left all the sins and judgment behind Him when He arose from the dead and sat down at the right hand of God. So now you are justified and cleared from all sin.

In John 5:24, Christ said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." Why? Because He was judged and condemned for us and bore our full penalty on the cross. Now that He is risen again all who believe in Him have passed from death unto life.

Another great point to see is that when you receive Christ you also receive a new life in

Him. You were “made alive.” The Spirit of God makes you a partaker of that life which Christ received when He was raised from the dead. That is why we read in Colossians 2:13, “You, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

God has given you a new life together with Christ. You were dead in your sins. There was no life there for God, but now He has made you alive with the same life that He gave to Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Now this life, that you have received together with Christ, can never come under judgment since Christ received this life after He had passed through judgment and left it all behind Him.

We stand before God identified with Christ who has been accepted at God’s right hand after He passed through death and judgment. This is the basis of your acceptance before God and this is where you must look for assurance. You are in Christ. His death is yours, His life is yours and His place of acceptance at God’s right hand is also yours.

So you not only have a new standing before God in Christ who is risen from the dead, but you also have a new life in Him. The very nature of this new life is to love God and to hate sin. That’s why you felt so miserable and

unhappy when you were living in sin after you backslid.

Although you have been born again and have a new nature, you still have your old sinful nature. That accounts for all your conflicts. The new nature hates sin, the old nature loves it. Besides, your conscience disapproves of sin and the Holy Spirit is dwelling in you to convict you of your sin and to make you unhappy with it. You saw your sins and felt them and then began to question yourself: "If I am saved, why do I do these things?" The very fact that you asked yourself such a question shows that you are looking to your experience to know whether you are saved instead of looking to what Christ has done for you.

Your salvation, acceptance and security depend upon Christ and His work for you on the cross, not on anything you do. But if you do give way to your old nature and sin, it is bound to make you unhappy. You don't lose your salvation or your security, but you lose your joy.

What has to be done then? You must confess your sins to God, judge yourself and surrender your will to Him; then you will be happy again. You may not have the same feeling of joy you had at first, but you will have real peace of heart.

How can you get victory over your old nature so you won't backslide again? Certainly not by struggling against it or fighting it. If you try to gain victory in your own strength, you will fail.

POWER FOR VICTORY OVER SIN

The power for victory over our old nature is in Christ. But before we are ready to turn to Christ for power we must learn of our weakness.

Understanding our weakness.

In Romans 7:15-25 Paul describes the wretchedness of one struggling against sin which he hates, and finding in himself no power to overcome it. Every born-again person, before he learns the secret of victory gained through the power of Christ by His Spirit, goes through these distressing experiences of giving way to sin. Inwardly he hates and struggles against sin, only to learn by sad experience that he is powerless to overcome it in spite of all his resolutions not to fall into it again. Paul's description of these struggles leads us to finding God's way of deliverance and victory in Christ:

“For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not

want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in *God's law*; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the *law of my mind* and making me a prisoner of the *law of sin* at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:15-25 NIV).

These verses speak of three laws: the law of God, the law of the mind and the law of sin. The law of God is that revelation given of God's will for man. The law of the mind is the uniform working of the new divine nature in every born-again person that always delights in the will of God and hates sin. The law of sin is the working of the old nature that always wants to have its own way without concern for God's will.

The law of sin is said here to be in his “members,” while the delight he has in the

law of God (called in verse 23 “the law of the mind”) is said to be in his “inner being.” The new divine nature that every born-again person has is the source of this delight in the law of God and hatred of sin, which causes him to struggle against the working of sin in his old nature. This new nature is looked at as being in reality his real self – his “inner being” – what he is really now in the depth or at the center of his renewed being.

These two natures – the new divine nature that every Christian received from God when he was born-again, and the old sinful nature derived from Adam by natural birth – are set in sharp contrast to one another and are entirely opposite in their desires and aims. One loves and clings to sin while the other loves and longs to do the will of God. This longing of the new nature to do the will of God gives rise to struggles against the sin it hates, and also makes the Christian feel so wretched and unhappy whenever he gives way to sin.

Another important thing to notice in the struggle described in Romans 7:15-25 is that no mention is made of either Christ or the Holy Spirit. The believer is struggling against his old nature in his own strength without looking to Christ or counting on Him to give power by His Spirit against sin.

This experience of struggle and defeat, often prolonged for years, is very humiliating and painful, but there are two valuable lessons mentioned in verse 18 that are learned through it: "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." In other words, by these repeated struggles he comes to realize that in his sinful or fallen nature (that he has by natural birth from Adam) there is no good thing. That nature always tends to sin and do evil.

Moreover, even though he now has a new divine nature that delights in the will of God and hates sin, he has no power in himself to overcome his old sinful nature. So he learns first that there is no good thing in him by nature, and second that even after he has been made partaker of the divine nature, he has no power in himself to carry out the will of God that his new nature longs to do.

After having learned the painful truth of his utter sinfulness and powerlessness to combat sin in his own strength, he cries out in desperation, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" He now has learned that if he is ever to get victory over sin in his life, the power for it has to come from a source outside himself. He must have someone else come in and give him power for deliverance and victory.

As soon as the believer looks outside himself for a deliverer, his eyes are directed immediately to Jesus Christ whom he gladly claims as Lord. Yes, Christ is the answer to his agonizing cry, "Who will rescue me?" What a change from misery to thanksgiving! When he sees this he says, "Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord." He is the only One who can set us free from both the condemnation and power of sin.

No condemnation

Much of the misery of going through these struggles with sin is due to the Christian's conscience continually condemning him for giving way to sin. And it is right that his conscience should condemn him, not only for every sin he commits but also for every failure to do the good he knows he ought to do.

The great and glorious fact of the gospel of God's grace is that, although the believer's conscience always should condemn sin and failure in him, God never condemns him for it. God always sees the believer in Christ as having already passed through, and left behind him forever, all the condemnation and judgment due him for sin. So he is ever free and beyond the reach of condemnation and judgment.

This seems too good to be true, so the first impulse when we hear this statement is to say, "That can't be true. God has to condemn sin." Yes, it is true that God has to condemn sin, but the wonderful fact is, He already has judged our sin when Christ took our place on the cross. We died, so to speak, in the Person of Christ, our Substitute. Christ's death is reckoned as ours before God. So we are no longer under condemnation because of the old nature and our sins: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

The only source of power

Christ is the answer to all our struggles against sin. In Him alone is the power we need for victory. What relief we get from our misery, what victory we experience when we give ourselves over completely to Him to let Him deliver us from the bondage of sin by His power!

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who

do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:2-4). As long as we cling to any confidence in ourselves and struggle on in our own strength, we only hinder Him from working in power by His Spirit in our lives.

Christ gave us a simple illustration of how this power works in John 15 when He used the figure of the vine and the branches: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:4-5).

Look at those big bunches of grapes hanging on that branch. Where did that branch get the power to produce such wonderful fruit? Surely not by its own efforts, but by remaining in living contact with the vine, which sends its life-giving sap into the branch to produce the fruit.

So it is with the Christian. He has no power himself to produce fruit, even though in the new nature he longs to do so. All his struggling in his own strength only ends in miserable failure. But when he realizes his powerlessness, gives up the struggle and looks to the Lord, power flows from Him by the Holy Spirit to give victory over sin and to produce fruit in his life, thereby bringing joy and peace.

We have another illustration of this in Peter's walking on the water in Matthew 14:28-33. Peter had no power in himself to walk on the water and he knew it. But while he kept his eyes on the Lord, the Lord upheld him by His power in every step he took. When Peter turned his eyes from the Lord he began to sink. What did he do? Struggle to keep up? No. He did the only sensible thing He could. He called out to the Lord to save him from sinking, and the Lord immediately stretched out His hand and lifted him up.

So it is in our spiritual lives. We have no power in ourselves to walk right. But if we keep counting on the Lord for it and step out, He will give us power by His Spirit to walk on for His glory. If we fail to do this and begin to sink, what should we do? Simply cry to Him for help as Peter did; He will lift us up again.

Let us never forget that Christ is always the answer to everything that troubles us. Without Him we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5). The more we keep in touch with Him the more victory, peace and joy we will have in our lives.



The Believer's Two Natures

by E. C. Hadley

When we are born again, we become partakers of a new, divine nature – one that loves God and hates sin. But what happens to our old, sinful nature?

This very important question is answered by looking at two case studies relating to the assurance of our salvation, and by explaining the power needed for victory over sin.

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