

THE TWO NATURES

Jesus' „being in the form of God,” implies *Divine powers*, etc.; this on our account he left, taking „not the nature of angels,” (which would have implied angelic powers and qualities) but he took the nature of men, which implies the qualities and powers of man, (before man sinned). He undoubtedly *knew* of His own pre-existence as he frequently referred to it as glory had with the Father before the world was; and „For this cause (death) came I unto this hour.” (Jno. 12:27.) and „For this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. (Jno. 18:37.) In a word we understand that the *man* Jesus up to his 30th year was in every respect like Adam except that he knew what *sin and death* meant and had seen their destructive operation on the human family for 4000 years while Adam did not „know *good and evil*.” Adam had never seen a sinner nor a sinner's punishment—death; therefore while created sinless and perfectly able to abstain from sin, yet not realizing „the exceeding sinfulness of sin” and its destructive effects, he sinned as God had foreseen and fore-arranged he should do.

This knowledge which Adam lacked Jesus possessed as we read: „By his *knowledge* shall my righteous servant justify many.” Isa. 53:11. The man Adam was created by the operation of God's spirit (Gen. 1:2.) The child Jesus was formed equally by miraculous power of the same spirit. Both were holy [pure sinless]. Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature until he reached his thirtieth year. Now the work for which He came into the world must begin. What was the work for which this body was prepared? Paul answers—“for the suffering of *death*.” And now He is represented as saying: „Lo I come [as] in the volume of the book [bible] it is written of me, *to do thy will O God*.” Heb. 10:7. Thus Jesus covenanted at 30 years to do the Father's will [the special work for which he came] and going to John at Jordan he made *the same outward sign* of His covenant which he *asks us to make*, of our covenant, when he was immersed. Thus he expressed his determination to die for our sins by being buried in water, and His trust in the promise of the Father to raise him again to the *Divine life*.

But even a perfect human being could not crucify *himself* so the Father imparted the *Divine Spirit* to the *man* Jesus and from that moment he is the *anointed* [the Christ] „The man Christ Jesus.” And he went up out of Jordan in the *power of the Spirit*, “filled with the Spirit for „the Father giveth not the Spirit by *measure* (in limited quantity) unto Him.” Now He is different from Adam for Adam never partook of the *Divine Spirit* and nature. We saw in article on BAPTISM in last issue [a second reading of which we suggest,] that our *baptism* represents a similar covenant to die; to be

„conformed to *His death*:” to be „Baptized into *His death*.” And as Jesus could not crucify the flesh until anointed with the Spirit so with us; He is our pattern and fore-runner. We follow „in His footsteps” in every particular. Now, let us closely examine *his death*, for unto it we are to be conformed.

In our own view, it is a mistake to suppose that our giving of ourselves „living sacrifices, wholly acceptable unto God,” is the giving up of the *sinful* desires of our human nature. Not so. It is the giving up of things that are right and proper enough for *men*. Let us look unto Jesus: As a man (tempted in all points like as we are, yet never yielding) with a human nature, He had to withstand the same temptations of the *devil*, and to avoid the use of His *perfect* human power for self-exaltation.

As the only *perfect man*, he could have placed himself speedily at the head of all earthly governments; could have inaugurated wise and beneficial reforms and laws, and could have had the respect and homage of all the fallen race. But instead of doing according to the desires of his earthly nature and will, he did as he had covenanted: „Lo, I come to do *thy will*, O, God.” And so he did. Wherever he went, and whatever he did, he ascribed *all the honor* to the Father. „The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” As the spirit in Jesus was the *miracle* working power, yet never used by him as a means of gratifying the human appetite, or of exalting self (see Matt. 4:3-7), so we, who possess a *measure* of the same spirit, would find it powerful to-day, if we could but have faith to exercise it. But it would be sin to use this spiritual power for the gratifying of our human nature when it was given us wherewith to crucify it. When the multitudes hung on his words, and said, „Never man spake like this man,” he declared: „As I *hear*, I speak.” (John 12:49.) Again, when the people, perceiving his real human greatness and perfection, desired to bestow earthly power upon him, we read: „Jesus, perceiving that they would take him by force and make him a king, withdrew himself to a desert place, alone.”

These things were lawful to his human nature, but they were not expedient; for by so doing he could neither redeem the race from death, nor bring „many *sons* to glory and immortality. And *often* the conflict between the human and divine natures in Jesus was so great that he needed and spent whole nights in prayer. He came to the same „throne of heavenly grace” (not to obtain *mercy*, for he needed not mercy, being without sin), but to „find grace to help in every time of need.” And when, at the close of his three and a half years of self-sacrifice for the good of others, the hour of death came, *it* was the severest trial to his human nature. To permit himself, pure and sinless and benevolent, to be crucified as a *vile criminal*, and open not his mouth in self-defense; to be regarded as an impostor, in some degree at least, by his followers; to permit the soldiers to mock and scourge and kill him, while having done no sin, he had a right to live. He could have asked the Father, and he would have given him more than twelve legions of angels to defend him.

These things, one and all, were severe trials to the human nature, and he must have failed without the aid of the Divine nature.

No wonder he said: „Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! But for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name.” (Jno. 12:27). No wonder if when he came to Gethsemane, he again found it needful to go to the Father for help to do his will, saying: „If thou be willing, remove this cup (death) from me.” Then he obtains strength, and continues, „Nevertheless, not my (human) will, but thine be done.” Luke 22:42. (Vss. 43 and 44 are omitted in old MSS.)

Now, we can readily see that to be conformed to his death does not mean that we should give up only sinful things to which we never had a right. Many things are proper enough to us as *human beings*, that

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we covenanted to give up if we might have the Divine nature. To illustrate: It is proper enough for a

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worldly man to seek the honor and respect of his fellow men by such lawful use of his talents as would commend him to their esteem. It would be right enough for him to participate in worldly governments, both by voting and holding office. It is right for him to seek all uninjurious pleasures; operas, concerts, games, &c.; to seek wealth and ease and human happiness. It is not wrong for earthly women to engage in the same pleasures, and to wear braided hair, jewelry and costly apparel, if rightly and honestly obtained. But if any man or woman be *in Christ* a new creature, these should remember that their covenant was *to crucify* the natural will and mind of the flesh, and to develop the new nature, and they will find that every such *natural* pleasure permitted in their hearts fills a place consecrated to God, and excludes a measure of the joys of the Spirit, as well as requiring some of *the time* which they have consecrated wholly to God.

A mistake is made by Christians in trying to apply to *the world* rules and laws given only to saints. The worldly man does not covenant to make his body a living sacrifice. We do. True, we must, as long as we abide in the flesh, eat, drink and wear, but the amount of time which we shall give for these necessary things should be decided according to our understanding of God's will as expressed by his word, and the example of Jesus. Our earth life should, like Jesus' life, be spent more for others than for self—“Doing good to all men, as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith.” Each one has opportunity to carry out this principle of self sacrifice in the

everyday affairs of life. The mother may spend her life and sacrifice her comfort for her children; the father for his family; the teacher for his pupils; the editor for his readers, &c.; for charity should begin at home, though it should not end there.

In our judgment, the common habit of speaking and thinking of the *new nature* as being an engrafting of a spiritual element into a *natural* man and of the *blending* in us of the human and divine natures, are serious and hurtful errors. There is no league, no blending or uniting of the two natures. When we receive the *new nature*, it is not that we may blend and unite it with our old human nature, but that we may crucify and put to death the human. Not my will and God's will, my plans and God's plans, my work and God's work, blended. They will not blend. Like oil and water, they are of different natures. My will, plan, work, &c., must all be lost. Though our wills were perfect human wills, as Jesus' was, we must ignore them, and say with him—"Not my will, but thine, be done." We can see no blending of two natures in our Master, but a complete control by the Divine, and a crucifying of the human. „Let us walk in his footsteps as he hath set us an example.”

WHAT peace He bringeth to my heart,
Deep as the soundless sea,
How sweetly singeth the soul that clingeth,
My loving Lord to Thee.

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