

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Relation of the Nature & Will

### The Relation of the Nature & Will, on: 2006/12/27 15:42

I see a great need today for a theological reformation. And I do hope that this article may be a step in that direction.

#### The Relation of the Nature and the Will

By Jesse Morrell

Much confusion arises in the theological realm when a confusion of the relation between the nature and the will exists. Often, there is an assumption made regarding the relation of the nature and the will. But theology is too serious for assumptions. We must not merely ask what is man's nature and what is man's will, but what is the relation between the two?

#### I propose to answer the following questions:

1. What are the existing views of the relation of nature and will?
2. What is inevitably implied in both views?
3. Which relation between these two does the bible support?

#### 1. What are the existing views?

##### - THE CAUSATION VIEW

One view is that the relation between man's nature and man's will is that of causation or determination. That is, if man's nature is biased towards sin, man's will would be caused or forced to choose sin. Man's will is not merely influenced by his nature, according to this view, but man's will is caused and determined by his nature.

In this view, the will is but the servant or slave of the nature, not being free or independent.

##### - THE INFLUENCE VIEW

The other view is that the relation between man's nature and man's will is that of influence. That is, if man's nature is biased towards sin, man's will could be influenced to commit sin, but not caused to commit sin. Man's will is not determined or caused by his nature but is influenced by his nature.

In this view, the will is independent and free, not being the servant or slave of the nature.

#### 2. What is inevitably implied in both views?

For the sake of argument, let's assume each position to see its contrary implication.

##### - THE CAUSATION VIEW

If this were true:

**A.** A sinful nature would force a man's will to choose sin, seeing that the will is the slave of the nature, being incapable of willing anything other than the demands of the nature.

**B.** This would imply that if a being had a good nature, or a nature biased towards the good, he would be incapable of willing or doing that which is sinful. His will would be determined by his nature, thus his good nature would render him impossible of sinning.

Very simply, if a sinful nature means the will is incapable of doing good, a good nature means the will is incapable of doing evil.

### **- THE INFLUENCE VIEW**

If this were true:

**A.** Man's will would be free to obey even if his nature influenced him to commit sin. Man's will would be capable of willing obedience despite his nature's demand for disobedience.

**B.** This would imply that a man's will would be free to disobey even if his nature influenced him to obey. Man's will would be capable of disobedience despite his nature's demand for obedience.

Very simply, whether man had a good nature or a sinful nature, man's will could still either obey or disobey the demands of his nature.

### **3. Which relation between these two does the bible support?**

The proper view of the relation between nature and will is the scriptural view. The scriptures are the only court of competent jurisdiction, being the unquestionable and final authority on all matters theologically.

If it can be shown anywhere within the scriptures, that there has been at least one single case where the will has gone contrary to the influence of the nature, the causation view is seen to be entirely false. Only one single scriptural instance is needed to show that the nature does not force, cause or determine the will. But there is more than one instance of this in scripture, there are multiple instances of this in scripture.

Observe,

**A.** God created Heaven and earth, angels and man, and declared all of it to be "good". (*Genesis 1:31*)

**B.** Mankind especially was good because it was made in the image of God. (*Genesis 1:26*)

**C.** Despite their good nature, Adam and Eve sinned against God. (*Genesis 3:6*)

**D.** Despite their good nature, Lucifer and many other angels sinned against God. (*Isaiah 14:12-16*)

All theological camps, those who hold to the causation view and those who hold to the influence view, unite and agree as to the original condition of mankind, namely, that it was completely good. The Augustinians, the Pelagians, the Semi-Pelagians, the Calvinists, the Armenians, the Wesleyans and the Finneyites all concur that man (*Adam and Eve*) was not created by the hands of God as inherently evil, but that man (*Adam and Eve*) came from the hands of God originally good.

Cornelius Van Til, a late professor of Calvinism at Westminster Theological Seminar with a Ph.D. from Princeton writes, "If God does exist as man's Creator, it is as we have seen impossible that evil should be inherent to the temporal universe. If God exists, man himself must have brought in sin by an act of willful transgression." He goes on to say that "a denial of man's responsibility for sin" is to make "God responsible for sin." Even John Calvin wrote that there was no "disturbance" in the nature of man as he came forth from the hands of God, but that sin originated with the will of man.

Very simply put, God did not make man inherently evil in his nature, but evil came into existence because of the will of man, and to deny this is to make God the author of sin. Augustine, Pelagius, Arminius, Finney, and Wesley, would all give a hardy amen to Calvin and Van Til.

Adam was not created with a sinful nature, seeing that he was made in God's image and declared by God to be "good". Neither did Adam have any physical depravity that influenced him on the inside to be biased towards sin. Adam's nature was good, his flesh was good, his mind was good, and everything about him was good, seeing that God created with His hands nothing that wasn't good.

Yet, even with a good nature, and a good flesh, and a good mind, *Adam sinned*.

Eve was not created with a sinful nature, seeing that she too was made in the image of God. Eve did not have any physical depravity that influenced her on the inside to be biased towards sin. Eve's nature was good, her flesh was good, her mind was good, and everything about her was good, seeing that God created nothing with His hands that wasn't good.

Yet, even with a good nature, a good flesh, a good mind, *Eve sinned*.

Lucifer, the arch-angel, was not created with a sinful nature. Lucifer did not have any sort of physical depravity that influenced him or biased him towards sin, seeing that angels are spirits and not made of flesh. Lucifer's nature was good; in fact, everything about him was good, seeing that God creates nothing with His hands that isn't good.

Yet, even with a good nature, and no flesh to influence him to sin, *Lucifer sinned*.

Not a single angel ever created by the hands of God was created evil, seeing God only creates that which is good.

Yet, even being made good by the hands of God, many of the angels sinned by following Lucifer.

### **WHAT THEN IS THE CAUSE OF SIN?**

In Genesis we scripturally see that the will has gone contrary to the nature. Adam's will, Eve's will, Lucifer's will, and many of the angels, went entirely contrary to their nature in their will. This is not one single instance, but multiple instances where the will has acted contrary and against the nature.

If nature was a sure cause or determiner of the will, the fall of Adam, Eve, Lucifer, and many of the angels would not have occurred at all to begin with, seeing that they had good natures. But their good nature did not force them to do good, nor forced them to sin, rather, it influenced them to do good and not to sin, and yet, despite the demands of their nature, they sinned anyway.

A good nature does not render the will incapable of evil, and a bad nature does not render the will incapable of good. Causation has never been the relation between the will and the nature, causation is not the relation between the will and the nature, and so the nature has never been nor never is responsible for the will of man.

If original sin, or a sinful nature, or total depravity, rendered man's will incapable of rejecting sin and choosing good, then original holiness, a good nature, total perfection (*as was the agreed original condition of Adam, Eve, Lucifer, and all the angels*), then that would have rendered their will incapable of choosing sin and rejecting what was good. If the causation view is correct, then the good are incapable of doing evil, and the evil are incapable of doing good. This is absurd, unscriptural, and soul destroying.

We can clearly see from the testimony of scripture, the story of Adam, Eve, Lucifer, and the angels, that it is not the case that the relation between nature and will is that of causation, but that it is a relation of influence. This is crystal clear. The causation view is entirely and totally incompatible and irreconcilable with the story of the fall of Adam, Eve, Lucifer, and the angels.

Since the nature is an influence, and not a causation, and the will is free to do contrary to the demands of the nature or free to conform to the demands of the nature, we can see why Adam, Eve, Lucifer, and many of the angels sinned - because their will was selfish. But they did not sin because their nature was sinful or even biased towards sin. Sin is always caused by a sinful will, and while it may be influenced by a sinful nature, sin is never caused by a sinful nature.

The sole determiner of any moral agent's actions and intentions is his own will, though his nature (*either good or evil*) is only an influence. A moral agent then can and does make decisions completely independent of his nature, but never independently of his will.

The choice to sin is entirely a choice of the will, not a necessity of the nature:

\*The fountain of sin has always been the will or heart of man, in which Christ said out of which proceeded all sin. (*Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21*).

\* The heart, or will, of man is capable of being desperately wicked. (*Jeremiah 17:9*)

\*The heart, or will, of man is capable of keeping God's commands and being perfect. (*1 King 8:61; 1 King 15:14; 2 King 20:3; 1 Chronicles 29:9; 2 Chronicles 19:9; Isaiah 38:3*)

\*Man must obey the gospel out of the heart, that is, with his will, in order to be saved. (*Romans 6:17*)

\*Christ rebuked unrepentant sinners, not because they were not capable of repenting, but because they did not "want" to repent and come to Him. (*Matthew 22:3; John 5:40*).

\*Man's will is capable of rejecting God's will, even rejecting God's will for their salvation, and is therefore responsible. (*Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34*)

\*From the perversion of Sodom and Gomorrah to the modern day Sodomite parades, we clearly see that man's will can, has and sometimes still does go "against nature". (*Romans 1:26*)

Man's sin and man's damnation, though both entirely avoidable, is entirely his own fault. Man cannot blame nature for what was his own doing. No man is the victim of his own sin, being forced to commit it by necessity, but each man is a criminal for his sin, being the originator of it.

We can see then that mankind needs Jesus Christ, not because we cannot obey God, but because we haven't obeyed God. If man couldn't obey God, man wouldn't need Jesus, because man would have no guilt. But because man can obey, but hasn't obeyed, has guilt, and therefore needs Christ.

No moral agent has ever sinned out of the necessity of his nature. For such is impossible. But a moral agent can only disobey out of the heart, that is, out of the will. And no moral agent ever obeyed out of necessity of his nature. For such is impossible. A moral agent can only obey out of the heart, that is, out of the will. There is no virtue in necessity, no personal deserve of personal blame or deserve of personal reward for what was not a willful choice, but for what was done out of necessity. Choices of the will are the only kind of personal choices. Choices out of necessity are not choices at all. It is impossible for virtue to consist in doing what you cannot but do, and it's impossible for guilt to consist in doing what you couldn't help but to do. Virtue must consist of willful obedience to the revealed Law of God. Nothing else can constitute virtue.

So men are not dictated by their nature, but rather influenced by their nature. Men sin only when it is in their will to do so. And men obey only when it is in their will to do so. Therefore each man is entirely responsible of all of his moral actions, seeing it was their will that caused their moral actions and not necessity that caused their moral actions, thus leaving all men without any excuse for sin and disobedience.

Failure to recognize that the will can act contrary to the demands and dictates of the nature requires either a lack of understanding of the fall of Adam, Eve, and angels, or is a flat out denial of the fall of Adam, Eve, and angels.

### **CONSISTENT OR PRE-COMMITTED?**

There are some who will still hold to the causation relation view because their pre-committed theological system requires it; however they must be inconsistent if they agree that:

1. In the beginning God created *all* things *good*.
2. Therefore Adam, Eve and Lucifer had *good natures*.
3. But Adam, Eve, and Lucifer *sinned anyways*.

To hold to the causation view, one must deny one of these scriptural points. The influence view alone is consistent with these scriptural points.

Genesis clearly shows that a good nature does not cause obedience, and likewise, a sinful nature cannot cause disobedience. However, both a good nature and a sinful nature can be an influence, inclining towards the good or inclining towards the evil, but never causing it. The nature is but an influence and the will is the cause. Therefore both sin and obedience are possible to all men, whether their natures are good or evil. And God requires holiness and obedience from all, reg

ardless of their nature, because they are completely capable in their will.

**There are other questions I'd like to answer in the future, such as:**

What is the condition every man is born with?

What is the practical result of the wrong view regarding the relation between will and nature?

What is the practical result of the right view regarding relation between will and nature?

How does the proper view of relation affect our view of God, His nature, His will, and His holiness?

How does the proper view of relation affect our view of man, his nature, his will, and his sin?

How does the proper view of relation affect our view of eternity in Heaven with a glorified body?

And most importantly, how does the proper view of relation affect the perspective and presentation of the gospel?

But as of now, the foundational argument of the nature's influence, but not causation, will suffice. If one can grasp a proper understanding of this relation, it lays a proper foundation for a good understanding of other theological doctrines. But if one does not grasp a proper understanding of this relation, a soul-destroying theology will result.

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For further reading of sound theology, I highly recommend the 1851 edition of "Lectures on Systematic Theology" by Professor Charles G. Finney.

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**Quotes:**

Cornelius Van Til: The Defense of the Faith, page 74. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. Phillipsburg, New Jersey. 1955

**Re: The Relation of the Nature & Will, on: 2006/12/27 17:42**

This is one of my first, thorough theological articles.

Feedback from people who hold all different theological beliefs would be quite interesting and certainly welcomed.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/12/27 19:11**

Brother,

Good article, not that I agree at all points but one recommendation is to at the preamble of your article define some of the terms more fully that you are using. Even "nature" and "will" that could be helpful for some readers.

**Re: The Relation of the Nature & Will - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/12/27 19:19**

why does man need the Spirit?

Re: The Relation of the Nature & Will - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/12/28 11:38

Quote:

-----Observe,

- A. God created Heaven and earth, angels and man, and declared all of it to be "good". (Genesis 1:31)
  - B. Mankind especially was good because it was made in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26)
  - C. Despite their good nature, Adam and Eve sinned against God. (Genesis 3:6)
  - D. Despite their good nature, Lucifer and many other angels sinned against God. (Isaiah 14:12-16)
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As it is the whole creation that is declared good it is plain that the scripture is not using the word 'good' in a moral sense as opposed to 'evil' but as conformity to the declared will of God. You are presuming that man was born morally 'good' but was he born 'good' or was he born 'innocent'? It was Oswald Chambers view that Adam was created innocent with the purpose of becoming holy; it is mine too. Holiness being not an absence of 'sin' but conformity to the perfect will of God for our species.

Quote:

-----In Genesis we scripturally see that the will has gone contrary to the nature. Adams will, Eves will, Lucifer's will, and many of the angels, went entirely contrary to their nature in their will.

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This is built on several presuppositions, not the least being that man has a faculty called 'the will'. I doubt that you have any biblical basis for this but have followed Finney in regarding 'the will' to be 'self-evident'. It also continues to build on the supposition that man had a morally good nature at his beginning. If holiness is a nature is it a virtue? If sin is a nature is it a vice?

Quote:

-----The heart, or will, of man is capable of being desperately wicked. (Jeremiah 17:9)

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The KJV does not do justice to the original here. Young's gets us closer...  
"Crooked the heart above all things, And it is incurable — who doth know it?" (Jer 17:9 YNG) When the 'heart' is incurable the only possible solution is 'replacement' which is exactly what is promised in the New Covenant.

Quote:

-----So men are not dictated by their nature, but rather influenced by their nature. Men sin only when it is in their will to do so.

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Do you accept the distinction between Sin as a dynamic and sins as individual transgressions?

Re:, on: 2006/12/29 15:02

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

### 1. Does the bible say that a sinner is not capable of obeying God?

Often, the scripture used to say sinners cannot obey God is: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7) The scriptures go on to clarify what this means, "so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8)

This verse is not saying that moral obligation does not extend to the mind, or that the carnal mind is somehow exempt from the law. We certainly know that "to be carnally minded is death" and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God". The scriptures are not saying by "are not subject to" that the carnal mind is not disobeying the law because it is not under obligation to the law, but rather that the carnal mind is very simply not being controlled by the law. Simply, it's

clearly saying that the carnal mind is in disobedience to God, and therefore cannot please God.

We see this scripture must be properly understood as saying that the carnal mind does not please God (is not subjected to the law) and that the carnal mind cannot please God (neither indeed can be), that is, as long as it's carnal. A sinner does not please God; neither can please God, so long as he's a sinner, walking according to the flesh. If the carnality is forsaken, the disobedience repented of, a sinner can please God. If he exercises faith and repentance and is reconciled through the cross, then he actually does please God. But so long as the mind is used for carnality, and so long as a sinner chooses sin, they do not, and they cannot, please God, seeing that God can never be pleased with carnality and sin.

It also should be noted that 1 John 3:9 teaches that "whosoever is born of God cannot commit sin". "Cannot" is a reflection of their will, not their ability. When Joseph was tempted with adultery and he cried out, "how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9) this was not a reflection upon his ability but upon his will. His ability was capable of committing adultery, but his will was not capable of committing adultery. Likewise, sinners are capable in their ability of obeying, but not willing in their heart. And saints are capable in their ability to disobey, but are not willing in their heart.

Those who are "born again" cannot sin while they are walking in "newness of life". But if they forsake the newness of life, they commit sin. And those who are carnal cannot please God while they are walking in carnality. But if they forsake the carnality and walk in obedience, then they please God.

But if we interpret "cannot" in regards to sinners as lack of ability; we would have to say "cannot" in regards to saints as lack of ability, or else we become theologically biased in our interpretation. But if we interpret "cannot" in regards to ability, we would be concluding that sinners cannot obey God and saints cannot disobey God. But this is contrary to the whole of the bible, logic, and experience.

## **2. Doesn't the bible say God created evil?**

"That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." -- Isaiah 45:6-7

We know for certain that all that God created in the seven days of creation were "good" and that God looked upon all of it and said that it was "very good". Nothing evil was created by God during those seven days of creation.

However, the bible does speak of an "evil" God has and does create. But this evil does not consist as immorality. That would make God a sinner. God does not create or tempt man with what evil that He Himself creates. That would make God a hypocrite. The evil God creates does not consist in maliciousness, for that would be contrary to the benevolent nature of God. God is love. God did not originate the existence of immorality. God does not tempt man with sin. God is light and in Him is no darkness.

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" Amos 3:6

But this evil could also be translated "calamity". God created "evil" is identical with God created "calamity".

"Is there calamity (or evil) in the city and I have not caused it?"

This evil would not constitute the immoral choices of man's will, but rather the punishment of man's immorality. Noah's flood was God's punishment for the heart of man, the will of man, being intent on evil continually. Noah's flood would be considered a calamity, or an evil, but not in the sense that it's immoral, for it was a moral act of The Moral Governor, but in the sense that it was destructive.

Judgment Day is considered "the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31) a day that is "darkness, and not light" (Amos 5:18). But Judgment Day will be just and all punishments given will be deserved. So it is not "evil" or "darkness" in the sense that it's immoral or unjust, but strictly in the sense that it is destructive and miserable.

Evils like the flood and darkness like Judgment Day come by law of necessity because of the evil hearts of sinners, not b

because of the evil heart of God.

The heart of the Lord, the ultimate intention of the Lord that He would most willingly give to all if all meet the conditions is that of eternal well-being. "For I know the thoughts I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

### **3. Aren't sinners servants of sin?**

There are only two available answers to this question, only two available options in this inquiry.

1. Sinners willfully serve sin and are thus servants of sin.
2. Sinners un-willfully serve sin and are thus servants of sin.

It cannot possibly be both. A person cannot willfully and un-willfully do the same thing at the same time. These are total and complete opposites. So it is not extreme or unbalanced to say it is either one or the other, for there is no false dilemma.

What says the scriptures?

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:34)

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16)

To obey anything is to serve the thing that you obeyed. Obeying always precedes the serving. You are not serving anything until you obey it. And once it is obeyed, then it is being served.

The scriptures say that sinners are servants of sin upon the condition that they obey sin. But they do not obey sin upon the grounds that they are servants of sin. The ground or reason they sin is because it is their choice, they are seeking self-gratification. But the result is that they inevitably serve what they are obeying, seeing that you cannot but serve that which you obey.

The scriptures never say sinners obey sin because they are servants of sin, but it says they are servants of sin because they obey sin. By law of necessity, you serve whatever you obey; hence you are the servant of whatever you obey. In both the scriptures relating servanthood to obey, the obeying always precedes the serving; the obeying is the condition of the servanthood. Not a single scripture credits their obeying to serving, but the scriptures always credit their serving to their obeying.

They serve sin willfully and are therefore willful servants. They "let" sin reign in their mortal bodies (Romans 6:12). They "yield" their members as instruments of unrighteousness (Romans 6:13). "Let" and "yield" are undeniably acts of the will.

Christians are "servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). But we do not obey righteousness because we are servants of righteousness; rather, we are servants of righteousness because we obey righteousness. Obeying is the cause, serving is the effect. But we are not servants of righteousness contrary to our will, that is, without our "letting" and "yielding". Paul exhorts Christians that as they previously "let" themselves be servants of sin, now they must "yield" themselves to be servants of righteousness. (Romans 6:19)

### **4. Isn't the will capable of choosing between right and wrong before the choice, but once the choice is made then the will is rendered incapable of choosing anymore?**

There is no scripture that says such a thing. To readily accept this view requires prejudicial conjecture, or a theological bias, to assume such a doctrine is true, seeing there is no scriptural backing for it.

Those who hold to such a view, that after the original choice is made, the will is rendered incapable of later choosing the contrary are not consistent in their view. That is, they do not want it both ways. If the will is rendered incapable of choosing right after choosing wrong then the will could also be rendered incapable of choosing wrong after choosing right. But this is absurd, and those who hold to such a view know it is.



Observe,

1. Suppose the will is rendered incapable of choosing anything other than its original choice.
2. Adam and Eve obeyed God multiple times, by refraining from eating the tree, and by choosing to walk with God. Every second they refrained was a second they obeyed.
3. Even after making the original choice to obey God, and walking in a continual obedience, walking with God, they later choose to disobey God.
4. Therefore Adam and Eve's will was not rendered incapable of disobedience after choosing to obey.
5. Likewise, Adam and Eve's will was not rendered incapable of obeying after they choose to disobey.

Christ did not believe that the original choice of an object did not render the will incapable of later choosing the opposite object. Scriptures directly contradict this supposed doctrine. Christ taught that those who originally choose to obey can later choose to disobey, and those who originally choose to disobey can later choose to obey. Remember the parable that Christ told when a father was instructing his two sons. The first said he would obey the instructions, but then later did not. The other said he would not obey the instructions, but then later did. Here we see that original heart-disobedience does not render executive obedience impossible, and likewise original heart-obedience does not render executive disobedience impossible.

The scriptures nowhere teach that the original choice determines all future choices, but rather says the opposite, that the will is not bound to obey the nature, neither is the will bound to obey its own previous choices. But at every given moment, the will of every moral agent is entirely free to intend any ultimate end, either selfishness or benevolence.

After every choice the ability of the will stays the same, only the aim of the will changes. The original choice does not determine the possible future choices. One can choose to obey God, and then later disobey God. Thus, a saint is capable of sinning even after conversion. And one can choose to disobey God, and then later obey God. Thus, a sinner is capable of converting, that is, a sinner is capable of obeying the gospel from the heart, of surrendering his will (heart) to God, of giving his heart (will) to Jesus Christ.

Think of Peter who chose to deny the Lord three times and then later was reconverted. Also, the Apostle Paul speaks of those who had previously been in sin, who later "obeyed the gospel from the heart". If one cannot obey from their heart, that is to say from their will, after choosing wrong, true heart conversion would be rendered impossible! But the Apostle Paul tells us that such is not the case. The only alternative would be forced obedience. But forced obedience is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms.

If the will is rendered incapable of choosing the opposite of its original choice, thus making it impossible to choose right after choosing wrong, then the will would also be rendered incapable of choosing wrong once it was used for choosing right. But those who hold to this would never dare say such a thing! They want to believe the will cannot choose right after choosing wrong, but do not want to believe that will cannot choose wrong after choosing right. This is theological inconsistency, because this whole view is inconsistent with scripture, logic, and experience.

### **5. Are you sure that man's heart is man's will?**

The heart is the seat of the will, where a man's secret purposes, intentions, designs come from. A man's heart is a man's real intention, or strictly speaking, his ultimate intention.

But what else could "adultery in the heart" mean other than willing adultery? Who else is guilty of "adultery in the heart" but those who have a will for adultery? (Matthew 5:18)

What else could be meant by "the heart of man was upon evil continually" other than that the will of man was for evil constantly? (Genesis 6:5)

What else is meant by saying that King David was a "man after God's own heart" other than that King David's will was God's will that? And that David desired what God desired. (1 Samuel 13:44)

What else is meant by saying that King David had a "perfect heart" if it does not mean he had a perfect intention, or genuine sincerity of the heart? (1 Kings 11:44)

What else could "obeyed the gospel from the heart" mean other than willingly obeying the gospel? (Romans 6:17)

What is meant in the English language when a person says, "God see's my heart" other than that "God see's my motive" or that "God see's my intention"?

What does it mean by someone who says of a person, "you could really see his heart" or "he's got a good heart" other than genuineness or sincerity in the intentions or in the will of a person?

The heart of man could be nothing other than the will of man, or more strictly, the ultimate will of man.

**Re: The Relation of the Nature & Will - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2006/12/29 15:21**

Hi Jesse,

I am quite impressed that you have chosen to study this out. At least it is a sign that you are thinking. I feel for someone who dialogues a lot more with people about the eternal aspects of their souls, knowing what you believe and why you believe is a good thing.

I sincerely hope and pray that a distillation of truth that is biblically sound decants into your fiery bosom. :-D

blessings,

**Re:, on: 2006/12/29 15:52**

Thank you ZekeO.

I have dedicated myself to study more theology than I debate about theology. And it's been wonderful. Time I used to spend debating is now spent studying, and I'm able to understand more and be able to explain my views better.

I hope that these articles may be a good theological influence on some.

**On the other hand - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2006/12/29 15:57**

Quote:

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Lazarus1719 wrote:

I hope that these articles may be a good theological influence on some.

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That all depends on whether they are biblical. :-P

God bless man,

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/12/29 15:59**

Quote:

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The heart is the seat of the will, where a man's secret purposes, intentions, designs come from. A man's heart is a man's real intention, or strictly speaking, his ultimate intention.

What is meant in the English language when a person says, "God see's my heart" other than that "God see's my motive" or that "God see's my intention"?

What does it mean by someone who says of a person, "you could really see his heart" or "he's got a good heart" other than genuineness or sincerity in the intentions or in the will of a person?

The heart of man could be nothing other than the will of man, or more strictly, the ultimate will of man.

-----  
Please document these statements. If we are going to discuss theology you will need to be willing to engage rather than moving on to the next point.

Common English usage is not the best starting point for trying to discover the meanings of Biblical concepts.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/12/29 16:12**

Quote:  
-----It also should be noted that 1 John 3:9 teaches that "whosoever is born of God cannot commit sin". "Cannot" is a reflection of their will, not their ability. When Joseph was tempted with adultery and he cried out, "how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God" (Genesis 39:9) this was not a reflection upon his ability but upon his will. His ability was capable of committing adultery, but his will was not capable of committing adultery. Likewise, sinners are capable in their ability of obeying, but not willing in their heart. And saints are capable in their ability to disobey, but are not willing in their heart.  
-----

Darby's translation captures the meaning of the passage better than the ambiguity of the KJV.  
"Whoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God." (1 John 3:9 DRBY)

In Joseph's case Young's gets the sense better...  
"none is greater in this house than I, and he hath not withheld from me anything, except thee, because thou his wife; and how shall I do this great evil? — then have I sinned against God." (Gen 39:9 YNG)  
Joseph was appalled at the idea of sinning against God. This verse tells us nothing about his ability or lack of it.

I think you will find on examination that the scriptures do not use the word 'will' in the sense in which Finney and yourself have chosen to use it. The scripture uses 'the will' in the sense of the decree or choice. It is simply an expression of man's ability to choose and then to carry out his choice.

There are many biblical words which need to be incorporated into a full expression of your theme. They include words like spirit, heart, soul, conscience, lust, desire, believe, choose and more. 'The Will' is not among the ways that the scripture express these things.

**Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/12/29 16:27**

Quote:  
-----There are many biblical words which need to be incorporated into a full expression of your theme. They include words like spirit, heart, soul, conscience, lust, desire, believe, choose and more. 'The Will' is not among the ways that the scripture express these things.  
-----

Amen. I think it is dangerous to be talking Bible theology and redefine Bible words into different words. Wouldn't that end up being your own theology rather than the theology of the Bible?

**Re:, on: 2006/12/29 16:32**

How is one guilty of adultery "in their heart"?

Isn't it when they will adultery?

If the heart of man is not the will of man, what is it?

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/12/30 4:38**

Quote:  
-----How is one guilty of adultery "in their heart"?

Isn't it when they will adultery?

If the heart of man is not the will of man, what is it?  
-----

“but I — I say to you, that every one who is looking on a woman to desire her, did already commit adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt 5:28 YNG)  
This is 'looking with intent', hence the Greek phrase *pros to epithumesai*. 'pros' with the accusative, as here, gives the sense of purpose and might be translated 'in order to'. While 'epithumao' is the word for strong desire.

The phrase 'one who is looking' also implies the characteristic of this 'one'. This is not a glance but a pattern.

So, in this passage, we have reference to 'desire/lust' and 'patterns of behaviour' but no reference to this thing that Finney (and most others) calls 'the will'.

You are also using the word 'will' as a verb. I have the same objections as to its use as a noun.

Many, if not most, Bible students regard 'the will' as a faculty of the heart. Are you saying that 'the will' and 'the heart' are simply synonyms?

**Re: What is this 'thing'? - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/12/30 10:16**

I have got to admit that even to this day this whole matter I find quite challenging indeed. It is redundant to express it again, but Ron's very earlier comment of "*There is just you*" taken from ([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id9249&forum34#70374](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id9249&forum34#70374)) Ron Bailey Instant Sanctification (if you scroll down to the 4 part series mentioned there) one of these messages, I forget which one now ... Has stayed all these years and ... I must also admit, this 'faculty' in its isolation, well I cannot find it, hence the difficulty, hence the appreciation, hence the admittance that we are really quite screwed up in the core of ourselves or 'depraved' but that is another subject altogether I suppose.

Either way, a great appreciation for the reminder to go back and dig up some 'old' things that are entrenched here and bring them back up for everyone's consideration and encouragement. This is cutting across many a thread up at the moment.

... *Into the bowels of SermonIndex*

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/1/2 9:42**

Quote:  
-----Ron's: “but I — I say to you, that every one who is looking on a woman to desire her, did already commit adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt 5:28 YNG)  
This is 'looking with intent', hence the Greek phrase *pros to epithumesai*. 'pros' with the accusative, as here, gives the sense of purpose and might be translated 'in order to'. While 'epithumao' is the word for strong desire.

The phrase 'one who is looking' also implies the characteristic of this 'one'. This is not a glance but a pattern.  
-----

This is interesting and brings to mind something I have been wondering now for some time. Does it not seem that in being zealous to condemn a sinner as a sinner by charging 'looking with lust' as the same as adultery a pattern has developed that makes all sorts of 'sins of the heart' (as it were) an ongoing issue on the conscience of many simply because an excessively strict construction was placed on like passages in order to condemn a sinner? This position may work well for condemning a person as a sinner, but is it necessary? To be consistent the same construction we put on the passage for the sinner is the one that we must also apply to ourselves post regeneration. Perhaps this behavior in soul winning is having an adverse effect on folk once they are saved not knowing the true sense of the original text(s) in question?

Re: - posted by JaySaved, on: 2007/1/2 14:22

Quote:  
----- THE CAUSATION VIEW  
One view is that the relation between man's nature and man's will is that of causation or determination. That is, if man's nature is biased towards sin, man's will would be caused or forced to choose sin. Man's will is not merely influenced by his nature, according to this view, but man's will is caused and determined by his nature.  
In this view, the will is but the servant or slave of the nature, not being free or independent.  
-----

You do an admirable job of describing the Causation view but you do not come to the proper conclusions.  
You wrote

Quote:  
----- If this were true:  
A. A sinful nature would force a man's will to choose sin, seeing that the will is the slave of the nature, being incapable of willing anything other than the demands of the nature.  
-----

What you must be aware of is that all that an unbeliever does or does not do is Sin in God's eyes. Romans 14:23 makes this clear when it says, 'For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.' An unbeliever does not have Faith therefore all that they do is sinful, even wonderful charity work. The unbeliever is incapable of choosing not to sin.

Quote:  
----- If this were true:  
B. This would imply that if a being had a good nature, or a nature biased towards the good, he would be incapable of willing or doing that which is sinful. His will would be determined by his nature, thus his good nature would render him impossible of sinning.  
Very simply, if a sinful nature means the will is incapable of doing good, a good nature means the will is incapable of doing evil.  
-----

Here is where you make a presumption that is not biblically based. You are logically inferring that if a bad nature keeps a person from doing good, then a good nature keeps a person from doing bad.

It is true that a person with a sinful nature can do good things. It is true that a person with the Spirit of God can do bad things. The important difference is God's attitude towards them. Romans 8:8 says that 'Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.' They cannot please God because they are hostile to him. In God's eyes they are incapable of doing good because even their good is not good because it is not done in faith. The person with the Spirit of God can do bad things, but he is not hostile to God because God has forgiven his sins. This person is set free. 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.' (John 8:36).

We must not get caught up in worldly concept of good and bad. We must view sin in this instance from God's perspective which is:

- All an unbeliever does is sinful.
- \* Note - The unbeliever stands under God's condemnation at all times.
- All a believer does is forgiven
- \* Note - God is not pleased with a believer who sins and does correct the believer as a Father corrects his son. This is done in love and never in condemnation.

A believer can do bad and a non-believer can do good from a worldly perspective but from God's perspective, a believer is never condemned and a nonbeliever is always condemned.

Re:, on: 2007/1/2 17:55

It's true that anything that is not faith is sin, but what is unbelief?

Unbelief is rejecting the truth of God. Faith is confidence or trust in the truth of God.

The argument that:

1. Unbelief is sin
2. Unbelievers are in sin.
3. Therefore, an unbeliever cannot obey God

Requires a huge step! To go from #2 to #3 is not following a logical path.

It's true that unbelief (rejecting God's truth) is sin. It's true that an unbeliever is in sin, because they reject God's truth. But this does not imply nor logically conclude that an unbeliever cannot choose to accept God's truth, and therefore become a believer.

While an unbeliever is an unbeliever, they are sin in. An unbeliever cannot please God, while they are an unbeliever.

But if they put their faith (their trust) in the truth of God, then they do please God.

Quote:

-----A believer can do bad and a non-believer can do good from a worldly perspective

In God's perspective, a person is either entirely depraved or entirely holy.

What is holiness other than conformity to God's law? And what actually fulfills the law except love? If a person loves God supremely and his neighbor equally (which is obedience to God's law) the only way they could sin is if they do not love God supremely and their neighbor equally (which is disobedience to God's law).

These cannot both exist at the same time. If a person obeys the law, they cannot be disobeying it at the same time. They may obey it one minute and the next break it, but they cannot obey and break it at the same exact time. Only love to God and neighbor is obedience to the law, anything else is sin.

If a person loves God and neighbor, they are entirely holy. If a person does not love God and neighbor, they are entirely depraved.

Holiness does not exist in outward actions. The Pharisees appeared righteous outwardly, but inwardly were full of iniquity.

True holiness is of the heart.

A holy heart is a heart that loves God and neighbor. Such a heart is a perfect heart. A sinful heart is a heart that loves self above God and neighbor. Such a heart is entirely depraved, seeing that it does not obey God's law at all.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/1/2 18:13

Quote:  
-----A holy heart is a heart that loves God and neighbor. Such a heart is a perfect heart. A sinful heart is a heart that loves self above God and neighbor. Such a heart is entirely depraved, seeing that it does not obey God's law at all.  
-----

So, is it possible for a holy heart to sin? Does not sinning make the heart holy or does a holy heart not continue in sin?

If any man sin... how would your view finish that sentence? Does a single transgression cause the 'heart' to degenerate to its unholy state? Isn't this getting close to the position referred to by Robert when he described the Finney implication that your last 'action' determines whether or not you are sinner or saint, and hence hell or heaven?

You are working with the word 'sinful' as though man were some kind of inanimate vessel that can be 'filled' with either sin or holiness. In fact, I am not sure that the Bible uses the word 'sinful' at all in the way that you are using it. Sin-full may be a dramatic way of expressing something but the word is just the adjective that derives from the word 'sin'. People are 'sin-people' rather than 'sin-full people'. That is to say they are people who are characterized by their sinning; it has nothing to do with capacity or percentages.

And... when you are able, I would like to hear your clarification as to whether or not you are saying that 'the will' and 'the heart' are simply synonyms.

I am persisting in these questions, not because I am against 'holiness teaching' but because I am a passionate believer and preacher of New Covenant Holiness and fear that Finney's view makes the whole thing unworkable and, literally, incredible.

Re:, on: 2007/1/2 19:48

By "depravity" I do not mean inability. But I mean crooked.

A person is capable of sinning. A person is capable of not sinning.

Those who choose to "love God and keep His commandments" are entirely holy, because they love God and love neighbor. Such a state excludes the possibility of sin, while the person is in such a state of love.

But if a person chooses to no longer "love God and keep His commandments" and no longer love God and neighbor, but they love self supremely and God and neighbor secondly, then they are no longer entirely holy but are entirely depraved, that is, entirely crooked in their will, in their heart.

Such a state of the heart, a state of the will, excludes the possibility of holiness, so long as the will (the heart) is intent on sin.

Sin and holiness cannot co-exist within the same heart, within the same will. A person can be holy one moment and sinful the next moment, but cannot be both holy and sinful at the same moment.

Understanding that depravity is not inability helps to clearly understand that a sinner can choose to obey, just as a Christian can choose to disobey.

The view that a Christian can sin and a non-Christian can stop sinning is only consistent with the view that:

1. The relation of the nature and the will is that of influence and not causation
2. Moral depravity and physical depravity are distinctly different, and a sinner is morally regenerated when converted.
3. Depravity does not consist in or imply inability, but it simply means crooked or perverse.

Your physical constitution stays the same when you are converted. A cigarette smoking may still have physical cravings. But the moral constitution, the will, is different.

The new birth or regeneration is a radical change within the will of man, that is, within the heart of man. It's a radical transformation of a man's will, a man's heart. So that his desires, his intentions, and ultimately his conduct is entirely and radically different than it previously was.

**Re: - posted by JaySaved, on: 2007/1/2 21:08**

Quote:

-----While an unbeliever is an unbeliever, they are sin in. An unbeliever cannot please God, while they are an unbeliever.  
-----

This is a huge step! You are saying that an unbeliever--who is an enemy of God, who can do nothing to please God, who are dead in their sins (Eph 2:1) are going to OF THEIR OWN WILL just decide that they are going to change?

Regeneration must occur before Faith! God's grace that enables us to believe. It is this understanding that makes Ephesians 2 come ALIVE:

1And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3Among 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, even as others.

4But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

**Re:, on: 2007/1/2 21:39**

Titus 2 says the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness. And we must therefore receive and obey what it teaches. But the grace of God does not receive and obey its own teaching for us. Or else it's not our own receiving and not our own obeying. As John Fletcher said, "forced obedience is a contradiction in terms". If a sinner doesn't repent of his own will, then a sinner doesn't repent at all. God grants the possibility of repentance, but does not force anyone to repent, but rather calls all men to repent, but men must receive and obey the call.



**Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2007/1/3 4:59**

John 8:38-45 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Is not what Jesus is saying, a position of who we are and who we are, of that, gives us the truth of who we are in doing the deeds of our positional state of either our father since Adam by choice, our father the devil? Or, This being who we are, making us do the deed of our Father God, by believing in Jesus Christ, then in a new position of being and nature, make us do the things this new nature and position by the rebirthing. We are either of our father the devil or our Father God by Jesus Christ's birthing in us bring forth the fruit of the vine in who we are the nature of Our New Father God.

Holiness is not what we do but who we are, then we do the things of what we hear. John 8:38-45 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. Now that God is our Father we will do the things of Him. God depends on His Seed that He has birthed in us, that is Jesus Christ to do the changing of the believer, He does not depend on the believer, if He could depend on the believer, we would not need Jesus Christ born again in us so we can see the things of the Kingdom of God. Jhn 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Depending on the Incorruptable Seed birthed in us, God Who is now our Birthing Father, not of the corruptible seed of the devil, we become son's of God.

Position = Deeds of that position. Position in Satan = works of the devil, our old father's sons. Position in Christ with God our Father = works of Christ in us by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Are we not just containers to hold the spirit of Satan or God. Clay pots for the Potters Glory and pleasure. Who are we?

In Christ, son's of God to His glory and for His pleasure.

In Christ: Phillip

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/1/3 6:16**

Quote:

-----Sin and holiness cannot co-exist within the same heart, within the same will. A person can be holy one moment and sinful the next moment, but cannot be both holy and sinful at the same moment.

what a roller-coaster this would be! What would happen to the man if he died during the 'moment' that he was sinful?

Quote:

-----1. The relation of the nature and the will is that of influence and not causation

You have still not demonstrated that this phantom you call 'the will' actually exists.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/1/3 6:19

Quote:

-----As John Fletcher said, "forced obedience is a contradiction in terms".

If we are talking about John Fletcher of Madeley, Wesley's contemporary and friend you ought to acknowledge that both Wesley and Fletcher were strong believers in the 'traditional theology' of original sin.

Re:, on: 2007/1/3 8:25

philologos, Fletcher both agrees with original sin and also original ability in his "Checks to Antinomianism" just as Wesley believed in both.

**Another very common view is: Doesn't the bible teach that Paul was an unwilling servant of sin in Romans 7?**

There are so many interpretations of the battle Paul is describing in Romans 7. Some say it's the battle between the will and the flesh, others between the will and the mind, others between the mind and the flesh. But we should let Paul interpret what he is saying.

The passage which helps to properly interpret what Paul is talking about is:

Ro 7:23 - But I see another law in my members, warring against the **law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the **law of sin** which is in my members.

Here, we see Paul speaking about the law of his mind, the law of his intelligence, which is in collision with the law of sin, the physical desires of sin, which he finds within his own members.

This helps us to understand Romans 9:19 - "For the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not , that I do ."

This is describing the battle between Paul's mind and Paul's flesh. Remember, Paul here is in a state of conviction for his sin because of the commandments (vs 13). This conviction is not a mere phenomenon of the sensibilities, not a mere feeling or emotion, but is a convincing of the mind, when the intellect becomes totally convinced of guilt. Paul's mind has been utterly convinced, or utterly convicted by the law of God that he is guilty of sin, and that sin must not be chosen. He undeniably knows that the commandment is good and holy (vs 12). But Paul's flesh has been corrupted by his habit of sin, so that his flesh is almost crying out for sin because of the gratification that it brings.

A great illustration of this battle Paul is having can be seen in the struggle of a cigarette smoker. Suppose a smoker is utterly convinced in their mind that smoking is not good for them whatsoever. They do not want to smoke, that is, in their mind they do not want to smoke. But their flesh now has a law for smoking, a demand for smoking. There is now a conflict between the law of their mind and the law of their flesh.

Motivation has not yet been introduced into this scenario. When a smoker's heart motivation, or their ultimate will, is that of self-gratification, they will smoke. They do not smoke because they love the cigarette. For in fact, they hate cigarettes. But they love self-gratification. And so they do what they don't want to do, what they in fact hate to do, because they love what it brings. They go contrary to the "want" of their mind to fulfill the "want" of their flesh. The will's "want" submitted to the flesh's "want" rather than the mind's "want".

This is where Paul is in his story of his conversion in Romans 7. His mind has been utterly convinced of the rightness of God's requirements. He delights, with his mind, in the law of God (vs 7). He consents, with his mind, that the law is good (vs 16). Therefore he hates, with his mind, the sin (15). He does not want, with his mind, the sin (vs 15). But with his flesh, he wants the sin, not for the sake of the sin, but for the sake of what it brings (vs 18). His mind wants to do good, but his flesh wants to do evil (vs 23). His mind serves the law of God, his flesh serves the law of sin (vs 25).

But this has not yet mentioned the "want" of his will, but only the "want" of his mind and the "want" of his flesh. These "wants" mentioned by Paul are not of the heart or the intention, but of the mind and of the flesh. His motivation or his intention determines which direction he will walk in. If his motivation is self-gratification, he will obey the flesh. If his motivation is the glory of God and the well-being of all, he will walk according to the Spirit. And he goes on to Romans 8 about walking

king after the Spirit instead of the flesh.

The struggle Paul is describing in Romans 7 is not the struggle between his own will and his own flesh. Nor the struggle between his own will and his own mind. Paul is not saying that he is an unwillful servant of sin. For that would contradict what Jesus said about servanthood (John 8:34), and what Paul elsewhere said about servant hood (Romans 6:16) that what you willfully obey is what you are serving. That servanthood is always preceded by willfull obedience. But the specific "warring" which Paul is describing in detail is the battle between his minds demands and the demands of his flesh. ( vs 23). But it cannot be properly interpreted to say that Paul was sinning against his will, or a servant of sin against his will, but rather that the "want" described was not regarding the will at all, but was regarding the "want" of his mind and the "want" of his flesh.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2007/1/3 8:59**

Quote:

-----A great illustration of this battle Paul is having can be seen in the struggle of a cigarette smoker. Suppose a smoker is utterly convinced in their mind that smoking is not good for them whatsoever. They do not want to smoke, that is, in their mind they do not want to smoke. But their flesh now has a law for smoking, a demand for smoking. There is now a conflict between the law of their mind and the law of their flesh.

But this places the blame on the body itself which is essentially dualism. It also lends to the idea that folk need some physical remedy and not 'deliverance' from the particular sin. The nicotine 'patch' in this illustration would likely resolve the persons problem. But the law of Sin is much deeper than this and Finney rejected the notion.

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (Romans 7)

Here the law is the catalyst for concupiscence. Sin was relatively dormant until the law came. When the law came 'sin revived' and I died. Without the law sin was dead. This is how the law exposed man's need to be born again of the Spirit. It does not justify man's sin in any way. Man can still do as God has commanded or he/she is not culpable for their crimes. But there was a simultaneous effect happening here to God's will being given. The law was 'exciting' a desire to rebel against God's law. There is nothing to rebel against where there is no law- even though the sin nature was present. This is why the law that was intended to bring life actually brought death. Until the sin nature could be dealt with by regeneration a person would both desire the will of God and to rebel against it at the same time.

I do not believe Finney appreciated this because he was trying to understand these things post-regeneration and not simply relying on the revelation of the scriptures. Being born again he was in a much different place than the unrepentant and unregenerate sinner. His theology was almost certainly influenced by his experience. This is why we have to trust the word of God and take it as it is written. The life giving law brought death to Paul because it stirred up all manner of concupiscence. This was caused by the law of Sin that was in his members. He had to die to that law of Sin as well as The Law. This is not antinomianism it is a new creature. Christ took Sin down into death so that we being in Him are free from the law of Sin by which Sin operates. We are now espoused to Christ and operate according to the laws of God through the Spirit. The Spirit and the Word (laws of God) agree.

**Re:, on: 2007/1/3 9:10**

Robert,

The physical flesh does influence man to sin, but the mind of man undeniably knows sin is wrong.

The physical flesh is not sin, as some claim. But the physical flesh can influence us to sin. It doesn't cause us to sin. But who can deny that the flesh at least influences us to sin, while our conscience does not! There is a collision between the conscience (mind) and the flesh (body).

Quote:

----- This is why we have to trust the word of God and take it as it is written.

-----  
Paul specifically said that the mind and the body were in collision regarding their demands. Ro 7:23 - "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Shouldn't we take the scripture for what it clearly says?

But the blame is not on the body. The blame is not on a sin nature. But the blame for sin is upon the will, seeing that the will does not have to submit to the dictations of the flesh.

But to view the relation of the nature and the will as that of causation, THAT is putting the blame on the flesh rather than the will.

But regeneration in conversion is not physical, though God may or may not take away physical cravings for certain things. But regeneration is spiritual, it's a changing of the heart, a completely radical transformation of the will, so that a man's conduct is entirely different because his will is entirely different.

PS. Did Finney hold to this interpretation? Is it found in the systematic theology? If so, I haven't read it yet. This is simply what I saw clearly shown in Romans 7.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/1/3 10:34**

Quote:  
-----philologos, Fletcher both agrees with original sin and also original ability in his "Checks to Antinomianism" just as Wesley believed in both.  
-----

I know it. In fact, as you will know, Wesley believed in 'original sin' so strongly that he judged those who did not as 'heathen still'.

Quote:  
-----But this has not yet mentioned the "want" of his will, but only the "want" of his mind and the "want" of his flesh.  
-----

But what is this thing you call 'the will' and are you saying it is simply another word for 'the heart'? Your argument just goes around in circles and each time I ask you to justify the existence of something called 'the will' it just disappears into the sand.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/1/3 10:41**

Quote:  
-----The physical flesh is not sin, as some claim. But the physical flesh can influence us to sin. It doesn't cause us to sin. But who can deny that the flesh at least influences us to sin, while our conscience does not! There is a collision between the conscience (mind) and the flesh (body).  
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It is helpful to trace Eve's reactions prior to sin. God had said the fruit of the tree of knowledge was not to be eaten. God had not forbidden aesthetic appreciation or even desire.

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” (Gen 3:6 NKJV)...hence she looked: no sin  
she appreciated its food value: no sin  
she appreciated its aesthetics: no sin

she desired it: no sin

she took of its fruit and ate: this was transgression. 1Tim 2:14

Quote:

-----There is a collision between the conscience (mind) and the flesh (body).  
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Are you equating 'the flesh' with 'the body'?

**Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/1/3 14:03**

Quote:

-----He had to die to that law of Sin as well as The Law. This is not antinomianism it is a new creature. Christ took Sin down into death so that we being in Him are free from the law of Sin by which Sin operates. We are now espoused to Christ and operate according to the laws of God through the Spirit. The Spirit and the Word (laws of God) agree.  
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AMEN! This is a truth that I feel God has been allowing me to understand. At least a little bit. :-)

**Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2007/1/3 18:19**

John 8:38-45 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Is not what Jesus is saying, a position of who we are and who we are, of that, gives us the truth of who we are in doing the deeds of our positional state of either our father since Adam by choice, our father the devil? Or, This being who we are, making us do the deed of our Father God, by believing in Jesus Christ, then in a new position of being and nature, make us do the things this new nature and position by the rebirthing. We are either of our father the devil or our Father God by Jesus Christ's birthing in us bring forth the fruit of the vine in who we are the nature of Our New Father God.

Holiness is not what we do but who we are, then we do the things of what we hear. John 8:38-45 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. Now that God is our Father we will do the things of Him. God depends on His Seed that He has birthed in us, that is Jesus Christ to do the changing of the believer, He does not depend on the believer, if He could depend on the believer, we would not need Jesus Christ born again in us so we can see the things of the Kingdom of God. John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Depending on the Incorruptible Seed birthed in us, God Who is now our Birthing Father, not of the corruptible seed of the devil, we become son's of God.

Position = Deeds of that position. Position in Satan = works of the devil, our old father's sons. Position in Christ with God our Father = works of Christ in us by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Are we not just containers to hold the spirit of Satan or God. Clay pots for the Potters Glory and pleasure. Who are we?

In Christ, son's of God to His glory and for His pleasure.

In Christ: Phillip