

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

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HOW TO EXPLAIN HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

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"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:18-20). "Among 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" (Eph. 2:3).

Why do men act like they do? What is the explanation of human conduct? Why do men hate and make war against one another? Why do we have to have officers to keep the peace in a community? Why do we need policemen in our cities? Why do we have to have

a courthouse with a judge and sheriff? Why can't we have freedom? Why can't everybody be let alone to do as he pleases? The enactment and enforcement of laws is a costly expedient, but everyone will admit that it is a necessary expense. And we would not want to live here without all this protection.

A good question for everyone: If everybody were just like me would we need all this protection? What is the law for, so far as I am concerned? Is it to protect me from others, or protect others from me?

Why do men shun God and try to escape from Him? Why is man against his Creator and Benefactor? Why is it so difficult to get people to church when we see them other places? Why are theaters filled when it costs money to attend them; and the



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

- Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
- Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
- Evening Service 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned Nursery Provided

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churches are empty when it costs nothing to attend? Many will answer, "It is because the theater is interesting and the church is dull and boresome." But what makes the theater interesting, and why is the church so dull? Is the theater more important than the church? Are actors better people than the preachers? What makes people go where they go and do what they do? What is it that controls human actions?

1. Is it law? There is no question that fear of the law--fear of the penalty--does prevent a lot of crime. But it does not absolutely control the actions of men. We have a lot of crime in spite of all the laws. And to do away with law would open the flood-gates of human iniquity. Law acts as a brake on the car of human iniquity, but it does not stop the car altogether. Law keeps a lot of crime locked up in the human heart. Law is for the protection of human society, but it does not make men good.

2. Is man governed by reason? Does reason control human actions? Man is a reasoning creature. He can think over things, reach conclusions, and pass judgment on himself and others. Reason is the use of intellectual powers. Is man controlled by reason? Does he do what his judgment dictates? The fact is that men do the most unreasonable things. No man will hardly claim that he has used good judgment in all he does. The drunkard, the gambler, the philanderer and everybody else will admit in his own heart that he had not followed the dictates of reason. Most every man admits the existence of God and then ignores Him. And this is the most unreasonable thing a man can do. God is the One with whom we have to do. He cannot be safely ignored or sinned against in any way. No, man is not governed by reason.

3. Is man governed by custom? Custom does have much to do with how men live. When in Rome do as Rome does, is a principle that affects all men more or less. The clothes we wear is largely determined by what the custom or style is. Men follow other men just like sheep follow the bell-wether. One of the divers laws God gave to Israel was this: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). But custom does not altogether explain human conduct. Salvation is not in following custom.

4. Man is controlled by his desires. As a moral agent, man does what he wants to do unless he is physically restrained. And a man's desires are determined by his nature. Everything acts according to its nature, both in the physical and in the moral realm. That is why the horse eats corn and hay. It explains why the bee buzzes instead of crowing.

Every moral action comes from desire. And the heart is the seat of desire. Heart stands for man's moral nature. Heart is never used in the Bible as pertaining to animals except in the sense of the bodily organ. The horse has a bodily organ called the heart, but he has no heart such as man has morally. Man is a twofold being; physical and moral. He has a physical heart which is tangible, and he has a moral heart which is intangible and invisible.

The Pharisees of our Lord's day were terribly confused as to the question of sin. They associated moral defilement with physical eating. They washed their hands to keep moral germs from getting into the mouth and defiling a man. Christ taught them the source of defilement was in the heart. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Sin is in the

heart or human nature, and this nature controls human actions.

Sin is an attitude before it is an act. Sin is in the heart before it is executed by the hand or other physical organ. The physical organs are only instruments of human nature.

Sin is an attitude towards God--it is a wrong attitude towards God. Every man has to have a god, but no man in his natural state wants the true God. Men are seeking a god, but when the true God is presented they do not want Him, for he is not the God they love. Their nature is out of harmony with the true God. The one and only God that can satisfy is the very God men, in their natural state, do not want. "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. 107:9).

CAN HUMAN NATURE BE CHANGED? This is involved in salvation. Salvation, in the sense of conversion, is such a change in human nature that the person may have proper regard for God. This is to fear God and love Him. The man who does not do right out of regard for God does not do right at all in the sight of God. For a deed to qualify as a good deed in the sight of God, it must be done out of regard for God. A good deed done for human reward will not be rewarded by God.

Salvation means right relationship with God. And to be in right relationship with God, two things must be done: sin must be forgiven and the nature or heart must be changed. Forgiveness is the legal aspect of salvation, and regeneration or the change of nature is the experiential aspect of salvation. And there is not one without the other. One is justification and the other is regeneration. In justification we have right standing before God as Lawgiver; in regeneration we have a nature that is in fellowship with God.

To be in fellowship with God we must be in agreement with Him about sin and about His Son. To be in agreement with God about sin, we must hate it and to be in agreement with God about His Son, Jesus Christ, we must trust Him and love Him.

Justification means safety--the justified man is in no danger of Divine punishment. Regeneration puts the love of God in our hearts--regeneration gives new desires--desires after God, the desire to please God. We also have a desire to glorify God. The highest and best motive of all good is the glory of God. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

We are living epistles read and known of all men. The Gospel according to me is the gospel the sinner reads.

The born again person has conflicting desires because he has a twofold nature. The flesh lusteth or desireth against the Spirit, etc.

If Jesus Christ cannot make character he can make nothing else. He can change human nature. He found the nature of Zacchaeus greedy and he changed it. He found the nature of Augustine lustful and He changed it. He found the nature of Saul of Tarsus proud and boastful and He changed it.

Has He met and changed your nature? Can you say with a prominent member of the staff of the London Daily News: "If you should ask me by what authority I talk about the power of Christ to change human nature, I should reply to you simply (and God knows without one word or thought of boasting) because he has changed my nature. I can look anybody in the face today--my friends, my colleagues, and what, perhaps is most difficult of all, the members of my own household and family--and be sure that they know, as I know, that I am really and literally a new creature in Jesus Christ, since the day when He came into my life."

Can you and I afford to say--can we dare say-- "By the grace of God I am what I am."