Children of Wrath

J. C. Ryle | Holiness | Chapter: “Sin”

‘We are by nature children of wrath.’—‘The carnal mind is enmity against God.’—‘Out of the heart [naturally as out of a fountain] proceed evil thoughts, adulteries’ and the like (John 3:6; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 8:7; Mark 7:21). The fairest babe that has entered life this year, and become the sunbeam of a family, is not, as its mother perhaps fondly calls it, a little ‘angel’, or a little ‘innocent’, but a little ‘sinner’. Alas! as it lies smiling and crowing in its cradle, that little creature carries in its heart the seeds of every kind of wickedness! Only watch it carefully as it grows in stature and its mind develops, and you will soon detect in it an incessant tendency to that which is bad, and a backwardness to that which is good. You will see in it the buds and germs of deceit, evil temper, selfishness, self-will, obstinacy, greediness, envy, jealousy, passion—which, if indulged and let alone, will shoot up with painful rapidity. Who taught the child these things? Where did he learn them? The Bible alone can answer these questions!—Of all the foolish things that parents say about their children there is none worse than the common saying, ‘My son has a good heart at the bottom. He is not what he ought to be; but he has fallen into bad hands. Public schools are bad places. The tutors neglect the boys. Yet he has a good heart at the bottom.’—The truth, unhappily, is diametrically the other way. The first cause of all sin lies in the natural corruption of the boy’s own heart, and not in the school.

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