

Avoiding Extremes

Written by Ben Winslett
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While controversy often results in precision in how theology is expressed, we must be careful not rush to the opposite extreme of that which we disagree. There is a ditch on each side of the road. Opposing an idea by swerving to the opposite extreme renders one in just as much error as he initially and rightly rejected.

Example:

Error 1 - Every born again person - bar none - will grow in sanctification and holiness to the extent that they are effectively "supersaints" by the time they die.

Error 2 - The new birth makes no difference in a person's life, leaving him effectively the same in internal governance and behavior as before.

The fact is, the truth is neither of those options. We all fail, and many Bible heroes actually appeared more holy earlier in their lives than at their deaths (David, Solomon, Samson, etc). Sin can wreck our lives. Further, in multiple places in the New Testament, writers scolded believers for their lack of growth, which strongly implies they were not indeed growing as they should have been. At the same time, the new birth is the greatest change a person experiences between conception and death. In it, the laws of God are written on our minds and hearts, we experience conviction of sin, chastening, and our hearts burn for Christ. This is a permanent change.

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Error 1 - God's sovereignty means He is the cause of wickedness and the creature has no liberty of his own. Every action of man, both righteous and wicked, spring from Him.

Error 2 - God does little to nothing in the world. He lays aside His sovereignty. Nothing that happens around us (whether positive or negative such as calamity) is ever His doing.

Again, both of these are extreme examples. Either takes ignoring substantial portions of scripture, both in terms of God's immutable, Righteous nature (He is in NO wise the author of sin - ever) and also His actions and agenda throughout Bible times (wherein He sent plagues, judgments, calamities, raised up nations, etc). Neither extreme reflects the testimony of scripture.

May we seek to pursue biblical truth and avoid the extremes, the ditches on each side of the road.