

**COME
TO THE
MARRIAGE**

Man's character cannot, today or at the judgment, fully satisfy the requirements of a perfect law because it is defective by nature. The reason man's character is defective by nature is that it has inherent tendencies or desires for self-exaltation.

Chapter 4

THE MIRROR DEFINES CHARACTER

"Therefore he (Satan) misrepresented God, attributing to Him (Christ) the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men." DA 21

Satan wants to be worshipped. But note that Satan is not trying to be worshipped as Satan, he is the false Christ. In the above quotation he is trying to make the character of Christ appear to have a desire for self-exaltation. Man worships Satan by believing that the character of Christ has a desire for self-exaltation. Another way of stating it, is that the worship of a Christ with the attributes of Satan, is worshipping Satan.

"Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness." DA 24

The law is an expression of character. By attacking the law Satan attacks the character of Christ. When Satan claimed that God's law was a law of selfishness he was really saying that God was selfish. This was another way of stating that God has a desire for self-exaltation. It is very important that we note that misrepresenting the character of Christ was the way Satan deceived the angels, and it was the way he deceived Eve. It is also the way he deceives man today. The law is the standard of all character. The law is the standard at the judgment. That fact makes it important to understand what character is. We want to be sure we do not have the wrong conception of the standard of character we must aim for.

What is character?

"If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character." 5T 310

Character has two aspects:

- (a) Thoughts
- (b) Feelings

The dictionary definition of feelings include synonyms as follows:

Affection, emotion, sentiment, and passion.

Your affections are feelings that are your likings or inclinations. Your passions are emotions of love, hate, fear, joy, etc. This suggests that character would include the passions, emotions, inclinations, propensities.

The law is an expression of character. By observing what the law judges or requires, a better understanding of what is included in character may be attained. Notice below that the law applies to both the the thoughts and feelings.

"The tenth commandment strikes at the very root of all sins, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the sinful act." PP 309

"If the law extended to the outward conduct only, men would not be guilty in their wrong thoughts, desires, and designs. But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness." ISM 211

"The law of God takes note of the jealousy, envy, hatred, malignity, revenge, lust, and ambition that surge through the soul, but have not found expression in outward action, because the opportunity, not the will, has been wanting. And these sinful emotions will be brought into the account in the day when 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'" ISM 217

"By this law, which governs angels, which demands purity in the most secret thoughts, desires, and dispositions, and which shall 'stand fast for ever;' Ps. 111:8, all the world is to be judged in the rapidly approaching day of God." ISM 220

DISPOSITIONS means: tendency resulting from natural constitution;. . . propensity."

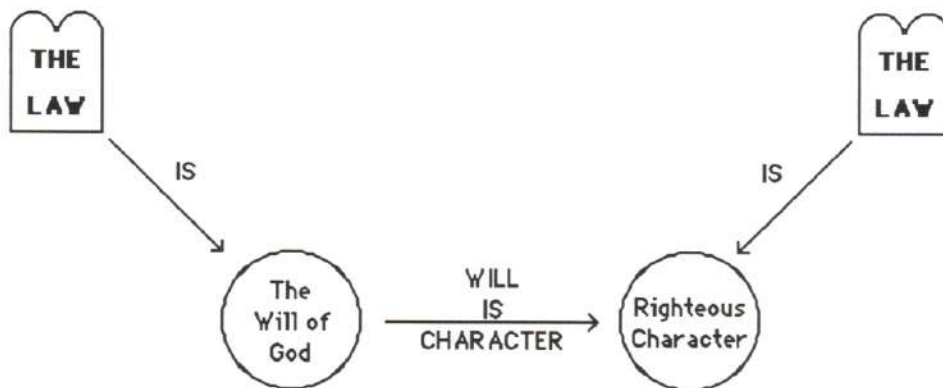
From the above quotations we can see that the law of God covers:

- thought and feelings
- desires
- emotions
- dispositions(propensities)

"It (the law) is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character. . ." GC 467

"The will of God is the law of heaven" CG 79

"The will of God is expressed in the precepts of His holy law, and the principles of this law are the principles of heaven" MB 109



The word "will" can denote both the desire and the power of choice. The context of the statements from CG 79 and MB 109 clearly refer to the *desire*. The will of God is His desire or inclination. Man also has a will. He, too, has desires. Since the law reflects the desires and inclinations of God, it would also apply as the standard for man's desires and inclinations. The will of God is the law. This law is a perfect expression of character. The will must, therefore, be a part of the character. God has a desire for unselfishness. The phrase, 'desire for unselfishness, describes the character of God.

When man sinned, he lost the desire for unselfishness. He no longer reflected the character of God, which was a character with the desire for unselfishness. He received a desire for self-exaltation, and that desire was in his nature.

"Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil." SC 17

"But when man fell, the law of self was set up. This law harmonizes with the will of sinful humanity." ST January 25, 1899

The next section will attempt to demonstrate that this law of self, the will or desire for self-exaltation, is in man's nature and gives a defective character from birth.

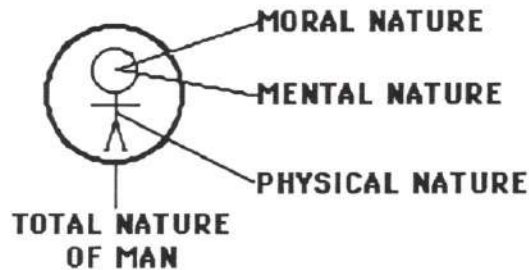
Character is referred to as man's nature as in the following quote:

"The transformation of character must take place before His coming. Our natures must be pure and holy;. . ."OHC 278

The term 'nature' refers to character in the above statement, because the only nature in man that is perfect before the second advent is character. God requires perfection of nature that pertains to character.

The word "nature" means: "innate or inherent character". The word "natural" means: "by birth, innate, or inborn". If something is by nature or natural then it would mean that we are born with it. It is in our being, innate.

Let us illustrate the nature of man.



The nature of man is threefold. He has a physical nature and he has a mental nature. But he also has a spiritual nature. From the above illustration we could say that the term character always refers to nature because the character is within the total nature of man. The nature of man does not always include character, because nature can refer to physical, mental and moral powers, which are not character. But the context of the statements should help us to determine whether the nature being talked about refers to character or to another part of man's nature. We will discuss the physical, mental, and moral powers later under the chapter, "The Fatal Choice".

The physical nature of man, the flesh, will not be perfect until Christ comes. But the character must be perfected while Christ is still in the most holy place. By definition, the inherited propensities to sin are included in the nature of man. The sinful nature, then, would include the propensities and desires to sin. In the following quotations, we would like to point out that the propensities and desires that exist in us by birth, or nature, are part of the character. If the inherited character of man, the propensities to sin, are part of the character, they must be removed, if man is ever to have a perfect character.

If we are going to use the term 'character' interchangeable with 'nature', then character would have to be inherited, because nature means inherent character. But keep in mind in the following statements that our use of the term nature refers to that part of man's nature we call character.

"They have inherited the defective characters of their parents, and the discipline of the home has been no help in the formation of right character." CT 192

"Fathers and mothers may study their own character in their children. They may often read humiliating lessons as they see their own imperfections reproduced in their sons and daughters. While seeking to repress and correct in their

children hereditary tendencies to evil, parents should call to their aid double patience, perseverance, and love.

"When a child reveals the wrong traits which it has inherited from its parents, shall they storm over this reproduction of their own defects?" AH 173,174

The very fact that we inherit a defective character demonstrates that character and nature are interchangeable terms, because nature means inherent character. This also shows that our natures must be pure and holy (see OHC 278) if our characters are to be perfect. By definition, character is made up of our thoughts and feelings. If we inherit character then we would have to inherit thought patterns or ideas.

"In your study of the Word, lay at the door of investigation your preconceived opinions and your hereditary and cultivated ideas." ST October 3, 1906

The thought patterns we inherit are naturally selfish; our characters are naturally selfish. The word natural means: of, from, or by, birth; innate.

"In the human heart there is natural selfishness and corruption, which can only be overcome by most thorough discipline and severe restraint; and even then it will require years of patient effort and earnest resistance. God permits us to experience the ills of poverty, and places us in difficult positions, that the defects in our characters may be revealed and their asperities be smoothed away." 4T 496

"Under the general heading of selfishness comes every other sin." 4T 384.

Notice that selfishness is sin. This inherited or natural selfishness is what gives us a tendency to commit sinful acts.

"Many children have inherited selfishness from their parents, but parents should seek to uproot every fiber of this evil tendency from their natures. Christ gave many reproofs to those who were covetous and selfish. Parents should seek, on the first exhibition of selfish traits of character, . . . to restrain and uproot these traits from the character of their children." CG 132

Notice in the above statement that this selfishness was inherited. It was called an evil tendency to be uprooted from their natures and to be uprooted from their character. Here it again ties nature and character together. Since character is thoughts and feeling, this selfishness we are born with in our character would have to be selfish thought patterns. These thought patterns are what gives us the tendencies to sin. Selfishness is thinking about oneself. It has to do with our thoughts. A natural selfishness would mean selfishness we are born with. This would tell us that the propensity to sin, the inclination

to sin, or the bent to sin is part of our character. Let us observe some more quotations to help substantiate the fact that propensities are part of the character.

"We must realize that through belief in Him it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. . ."

"As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character,. . ." 7BC 943

The sinful nature is by definition the inherited propensity to sin. If nature and character are the same, then partaking of Christ's nature would cleanse our nature. As we partake of His nature, hereditary tendencies (that is nature) are cut away. They are cut away from our character. For them to be cut away from the character they would be part of the character to start with. But it is the sinful nature (inherited propensities) that is being cut away from the character. Our nature must be pure and holy. Nature and character are used interchangeable.

"A new nature is imparted. Man is renewed after the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness." 6 BC 1117

A new nature is imparted during the process of conversion and sanctification. The new nature is the divine nature and therefore must be the character of Christ. If the new nature is character, the old nature would logically be character.

"From the cross to the crown.... there is a wrestling with inbred sin;... RH 11/29/1887

The word inbred means bred within, innate. Innate means inborn, native, natural, not acquired. "Syn. innate, inbred, hereditary means not acquired after birth." Webster.

The word sin in the above definition is defined as inbred sin. The means it was sin that was inherited or not acquired after birth. That tells us that sin is in our nature and if we have sin in our nature we would be guilty by nature. This helps to see that the propensity to sin that we inherit is called sin.

Let us analyze the nature of man as it pertains to our habits.

"You should be cautious how you encourage a habitual train of thought from which habits are formed that will prove your ruin." 3T 236

"Thus actions repeated form habits, habits form character,. . ." COL 356

Our character is made up of a habitual train of thought. If character can be interchanged with the term nature then you would have to inherit habits because nature means that you are born with them.

"Their wrong habits of eating and dressing, and their general dissipation, are transmitted as an inheritance to their children. . . Parents bequeath to their offspring their own perverted habits, and loathsome diseases corrupt the blood and enervate the brain." 3T 140

Character consists of habits and we are born with perverted habits. This helps us to see that character is inherited and therefore man is totally depraved at birth. Man is sinful by nature, physically, mentally and morally. Just from experience we know that a habit thought pattern gives us a tendency to do the old habit that has been established. The following quotation brings this out.

"Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is to be ever on guard, striving in Christ's strength for victory." AA 476, 477

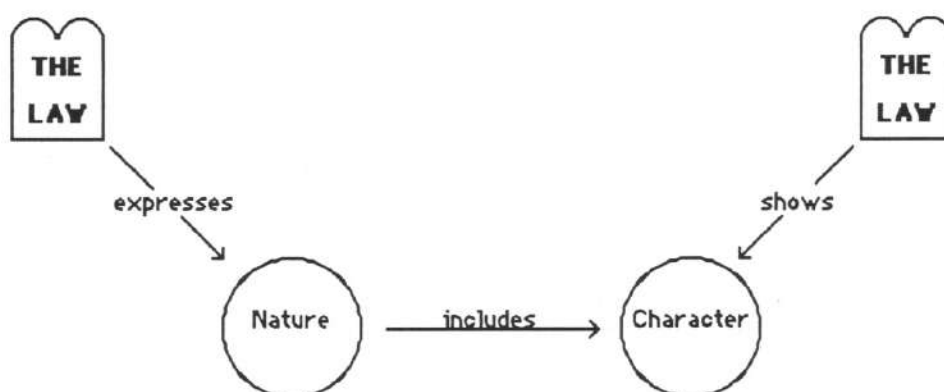
The old habits are the hereditary tendencies to wrong. "Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery. . ." The expression, "hereditary tendencies to wrong," is an appositive. The phrase, "hereditary tendencies to wrong", renames and identifies the noun before it. That noun is old habits. Old habits would therefore be the hereditary tendencies to wrong. This would mean that the inherited tendencies to wrong would be inherited selfish thought patterns. That would be so because a selfish thought often repeated makes a habit and habits form character. If a character is inherited then man would inherit habits and tendencies. These would be the desires and tendencies man is born with. That means character is nature.

Let us analyze the nature of man as it pertains to the law.

"The law of God is an expression of His very nature."
SC 60

"It (the law) is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him (the sinner) to discern the defects in his own." GC 467

The law expresses God's nature. If the law is a mirror that shows a righteous character, then we could say that the law reflects the nature or character of God. We could also say that the law shows me my defects of character or the defects of my nature.



Character is referred to as man's nature as in the following quote:

"The transformation of character must take place before His coming. Our natures must be pure and holy;. . ." OHC 278

The term 'nature' refers to character in the above statement, because the only nature in man that is perfect before the second advent is character. God requires nature perfection as pertains to character. Notice that there was a character change at the fall of man and that change was in his nature.

"The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist." Ed 29

"Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil." Ed 26

The above phrase, "the knowledge of evil", is an appositive and means that the knowledge of evil is the character of Satan. The statement above on *Education* page 29 describes the knowledge of evil as a bent to sin. Let us diagram this below:

Knowledge of evil is bent to sin. (Ed. 29)

Knowledge of evil is character of Satan. (Ed. 26)

Therefore one can conclude that the:

The bent to sin is the character of Satan.

This tells us that the bent to sin, the inherent selfish tendencies, are the defective character that man inherited from Adam. For man to have a sinless character God must

deal with the inherent character or nature of man. This bent, which is the character of Satan, is the desire to exalt self.

**"If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong,
and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral
character." 5T 310**

The character of Satan was referred to as the knowledge of evil. (See Ed. 29) The above quotation suggests the same idea. Character is thoughts and feelings combined. Thoughts are the same as knowledge. So wrong thoughts or the knowledge of evil gave man the character of Satan. That character has a desire to exalt self. That desire is in the nature of man.