

**COME
TO THE
MARRIAGE**

Character is made up of habits. The record books are a perfect photograph of man's character. The blots on the record are a perfect photograph of man's old bad selfish habits that give him the tendencies to sin. Satan, pointing to the record of sin, would show that it is these tendencies that are the reason why the saints are defective in character.

Chapter 5

THE BLOTS OF SIN

"Sin is the transgression of the law.' This is the only definition of sin." 7 BC 951

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

If sin is a transgression of the law and the law reveals the nature of God, then sin would be a violation of God's nature. The original sin made a change of nature. The nature of man violates the nature of God. The law of self is in opposition to the law of unselfishness

These two laws are an expression of character or nature.



"Every act of life is a revelation of character, . ." Ed 61

Therefore sin is transgression of the law of unselfishness. The very first sin committed by both angels and men was a desire to exalt themselves. Man is born with a defective character. He is born with the desire to exalt himself. That desire makes him a transgressor from birth. The law of self in his nature transgresses the law of unselfishness. That is sin.

"We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin." COL 330

Since man is born with a defective character, he is born sinful. The above statement clearly shows that an imperfect character is sin. The above sentence uses a predicate nominative. That means the noun in the predicate refers back to the subject and renames or identifies the subject.



Sin is, therefore, in man's nature; it is innate. Sin is in the character. Choices are just a revelation of the sin in man. We need to understand how the character is sinful. It

has already been shown that thoughts and feelings combined make character. Let us keep that idea in mind, while we analyze the following statements.

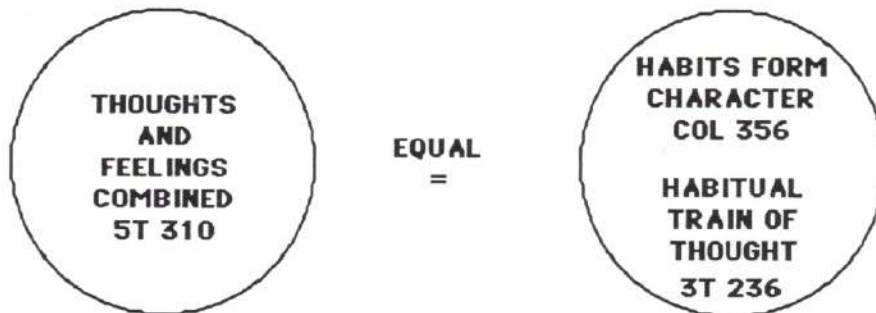
"You should be cautious how you encourage a habitual train of thought from which habits are formed that will prove your ruin." 3T 236

"Any one act, either good or evil, does not form the character; but thoughts and feelings indulged prepare the way for acts and deeds of the same kind." CG 199

"It is. . . by a repetition of acts that habits are established and character confirmed." CG 199

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

From the above it can be seen that thoughts and feelings (character) indulged prepare the way for acts. There are two types of thought patterns in our minds. Thoughts combined with a desire for unselfishness or thoughts combined with a desire for self-exaltation. The sin is a thought with a selfish desire. The act is merely the outward revelation of the thoughts. The law holds a person accountable for the thoughts and desires even when the act never takes place. These thoughts and feelings indulged (repeated over and over) are what make habits. When a person does what he is thinking about, that also strengthens the thought patterns. A thought pattern with a selfish desire repeated over and over makes a habitual thought pattern and these form character. These habitual thought patterns are the innate tendencies in the mind from which comes the conscious thoughts.



So the definition of character could be a group of innate habitual thought patterns, each with a desire for selfishness or unselfishness. These habitual thought patterns are revealed by acts of the same nature. These acts do not need to be revealed in outward acts but can be a dwelling on the innate thought pattern. The acts are not character. They reveal character.

Let us review how a habit is made.

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

Now the individual instances that an individual consciously chose to think in a selfish way constitute sin. These thoughts would be acts of thinking. But as a result of these acts of thinking a thought habit pattern would be forming in the mind and would be a habitual train of thought. This habitual thought pattern would remain in the mind even after a person quit consciously thinking along that line. It would seem logical to assume that if the conscious act of thinking selfish thoughts was sin then the recording of that selfish habitual thought pattern in the mind would also be sin. After all, the act reveals character. So when a person thinks in a selfish way he is just revealing the selfish record in his mind. The resulting habit would also be sin, only much stronger than the beginning thought pattern. This habitual thought pattern with a selfish desire is a defect in our character. That defect is sin.

The books of heaven are a perfect photograph of man's character. A careful analysis of the record books should be helpful in the study on character.

"As the artist transfers to the canvas the features of the face, so the features of each individual character are transferred to the books of heaven. God has a perfect photograph of every man's character, and this photograph He compares with His law, He reveals to man the defects that mar his life, and calls upon him to repent and turn from sin." 5 BC 1085

The books of record reveal the defects in man's character. By observing what makes the defect a student can gain a clearer insight into character and the problems involved in character perfection. If the defect is bad choices, then strengthening the will would remove the defect. Perfection would be possible when all the choices were right. But the record books show that the defect is much deeper and needs a salvation more involved than choice.

"In the case of each individual there is a process going forward which is far more wonderful than that which transfers the features to the polished plate of the artist. The art of the photographer merely imprints the likeness on perishable substance; but in the life-record the character is faithfully delineated, and this record, however dark, can never be effaced except by the blood of the atoning Sacrifice. Then young friends, will you not stop and think what record the books in heaven present of your life and character? What kind of a picture are you making to confront you in the final Judgment? Will you consider that the harboring of a polluted thought, the formation of a bad, selfish habit, which debases your own soul and ruins others is a blot upon that record that will one day appear against you? Can you afford this?" RH 11/04/1884 (Volume 1, Page 474)

Notice the twofold aspect. The harboring of a polluted thought, the formation of a bad selfish habit, makes a blot on man's record and it debases his soul. It made a blot on his character -- it debased his soul. Man has sin in him. What made the blot on man's record? It was "the harboring of a polluted thought, the formation of a bad, selfish habit, which debases your own soul, . . ." The record books are a perfect photograph of man's character, and man's character is made up of habitual thought patterns. A defect or a blot would have to be a defective habitual thought pattern. The standard of a perfect character has only habitual thought patterns with desires for unselfishness. Every habitual thought pattern with a desire for self would be a defect in our character and a blot on the heavenly record.

"But suffer not a blot to tarnish your Christian character. Never, never for the sake of gain stamp your life record in heaven, which is viewed by all the angelic host, and by your self-denying Redeemer, with avarice, penuriousness, selfishness, or false dealing." 2T 72

These selfish habitual thought patterns make a blot on man's character and a blot on the heavenly record. Here again is demonstrated that the books of heaven are a perfect photograph of man's character. What happens to the heavenly record teaches man what is happening to his character. The next aspect we need to consider is this. If the harboring of a polluted thought made a blot on the character and on the record, then does the exercise of will power to repel that thought remove the blot? Does repentance, confession, and a new heart experience remove the blot from the character and from the record? Remember the blot was made by forming a bad, selfish habitual thought pattern.

"The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement. . ." PP 357

The sanctuary service clearly teaches that the blot remains until the final atonement (blotting out of sin). The final atonement comes after our case has been investigated and judged. We will study this more in a further chapter. If the blot or sin remains until the final atonement then the bad, selfish, habitual thought pattern remains in man's character until the final atonement. These blots are what gives the propensity to sin, but one does not have to give in to them. Christ gives the victory over them, but the selfish habitual thought pattern remains in the record and in the mind. These old habits keep striving for the mastery. The old habit thought patterns are called self, propensities, desire, tendencies, old nature, and other similar terms.

"We cannot, of ourselves, conquer the evil desires and habits that strive for the mastery." MB 142

The above implies victory over the old habits of selfishness and the following quotation also demonstrates that the old habitual thought patterns remain to tempt the Christian. Remember, the sanctuary service called these bad selfish habits blots on the record and character.

"Through the power of Christ, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. . .

"When the Spirit of God controls mind and heart, the converted soul breaks forth into a new song; for he realizes that in his experience the promise of God has been fulfilled, that his transgression has been forgiven, his sin covered. . .

"But because this experience is his, the Christian is not therefore to fold his hands, content with that which has been accomplished for him. He who has determined to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle with evil. 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 blots on the record are the old habits. Notice that these are the hereditary tendencies to wrong. "Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery. . ." This expression displays an appositive. The phrase set off by commas, "hereditary tendencies to wrong", renames and identifies the noun before it. That noun is "old habits;" old habits would therefore be called 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.

The dictionary tells us that a habit is an inclination toward some action. When man has formed a habit he knows from experience that he just naturally keeps on doing that habit. So the very nature of a habit suggests an inclination to do some action. So for all practical purposes inclinations are habit.

The repentant sinner is released or cleansed from the condemnation or guilt, but sinful habit thought patterns are not cancelled or removed. They stand on record in the sanctuary. If the sinful tendencies stay on the record, then those sinful tendencies must remain in the character because the record is a perfect photograph of the character. This does not mean one dwells on the sinful thought or does sinful acts. But the sin still remains. It is still recorded in the character. This also helps in understanding the nature of sin. When man repents from sin, he is still sinful. Since character is called nature, it could be said that he has a sinful nature. In other words, the character is full of sin. This helps to understand statements such as the following:

"Their lives may be irreproachable, they may be living representatives of the truth which they have accepted; but the more they discipline their minds to dwell upon the character of Christ, and the nearer they approach to His divine image, the more clearly will they discern its spotless perfection, and the more deeply will they feel their own defects." SL 7

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power;. . .

"No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. . ." SC 64, 65

What makes these people sinful and defective? Notice that man's imperfections are being compared with Christ's perfect nature. The sinfulness then would be a sinfulness of nature. It is man's inherited tendencies that cause man to be defective in character. The following statements reinforce the above concepts.

"Every impure thought defiles the soul, impairs the moral sense, and tends to obliterate the impressions of the Holy Spirit. It dims the spiritual vision, so that men cannot behold God. The Lord may and does forgive the repenting sinner; but though forgiven, the soul is marred." DA 302

"Every mistake, every error, unimportant though it may be regarded, leaves a scar in this life and a blot on the heavenly records." OHC 227

"We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin." COL 330

"A wrong action, by frequent repetition, leaves a permanent impression upon the mind of the actor,. . ." CG 201

"What the child sees and hears is drawing deep lines upon the tender mind, which no after circumstances in life can entirely efface. The intellect is now taking shape, and the affections receiving direction and strength. Repeated acts in a given course become habits. These may be modified by severe training, in afterlife, but are seldom changed." CG 199, 200

"He may be converted; he may see the wickedness of his injustice to his fellow-men, and, as far as possible, make restitution; but the scars of a wounded conscience will ever remain." 3BC 1158

"But even if pardon is written against your names, you will sustain terrible loss; for the scars you have made upon your souls will remain." TM 447

Sinful thought patterns, even though forgiven, make a defect in our character. These defects are not entirely removed by sanctification. The fact that sinful thought patterns, even though they are overcome and forgiven, gives a defective character can be

demonstrated by observing the condition when a name comes up in judgment. At that time there is no more time for any defects to be removed. Probationary time has closed. It must be emphasized that these defects are not sins that man is giving in to. He must overcome every inherited tendency to wrong before his name comes up in the judgment. (see EW 71)

Let us note man's condition when his name comes up in judgment.

"Now he (Satan in the investigative judgment) points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects.

"Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: 'I know them by name.'" GC 484

Satan is not saying they are still choosing to sin. He is pointing to all their past sins. This is what makes them defective and imperfect. *Christ's Object Lessons* page 330 states that, "We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin." We are sinful because we have sinful habitual thought patterns in our minds; even though we don't cherish them, they are still there. These sinful habitual thought patterns are the blots of sin.

The blots on the heavenly record teach about the sinfulness of sin. When a person forms a bad selfish habit pattern; that is sin. That sin remains in the nature. It is indelibly written on the mind. It does not go away by confession. The conscious guilt is removed, but the sin remains. Man can gain the victory over it, but it still is in the being. He is born with it and transmits it to his children. A true conversion begins the process of cutting these away, but these blots are not removed until the final atonement. If one could see the permanent effect of sin and the tendencies he cultivates by cultivating his inherited nature, he would be much more careful and refuse to develop bad selfish habits. A habit, once formed, is an evil to be battled with for the rest of the lives. From this we can learn that the blots on the character clearly teach justification by faith. We are righteous only by substitution until the final atonement.