

**COME
TO THE
MARRIAGE**

Conversion starts the process of perfection. Therefore an analysis of the change made at conversion that started the process of perfection would be a key to help man understand what needs to be finished in order for man to have a sinless character.

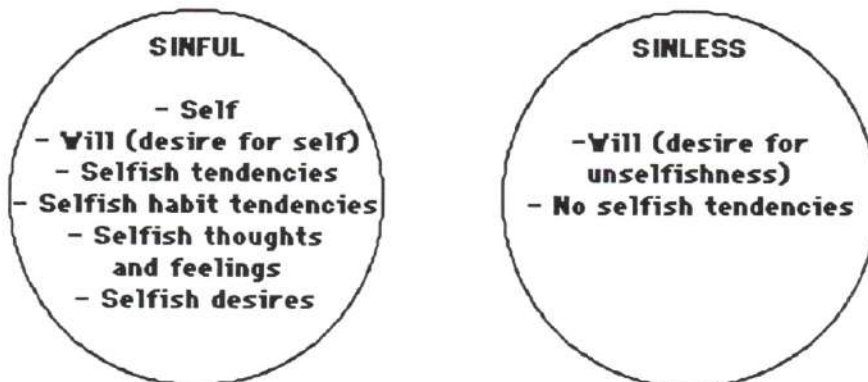
Chapter 6

CONVERSION OF NATURE

MAN'S CHARACTER



From our previous chapters we have demonstrated that the above definitions are used to describe the character of man. The character is also referred to as nature. If the above terms do, in fact, apply to character, then conversion would bring a change in each of the above. Conversion brings a change in character not a change in the flesh. Conversion is the start or beginning of a process that is to bring us to perfection of character. We can analyse what is changed at conversion and whatever is changed at the beginning would be what needs to be completed in order to arrive at perfection. If the term nature is in fact used to refer to man's character then there would be a change of nature at conversion. The inherited selfish tendencies refer to nature and therefore would need to be changed if man is to be perfected. If we compare man's character at birth with the character of Christ or with the law, we would observe the following defectiveness in man.



The defects in man's character are innate thoughts with a desire for self-exaltation. Let us take some quotations about the changes that take place in character at conversion. Let us note that a change takes place in man's nature (character). It is his inherent character that is changed at conversion.

"It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an

unclean? not one.' 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Job 14:4. Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. . .

"The Saviour said, 'Except a man be born from above,' unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God.' John 3:3, margin." SC 18, 19

Man can, through education and exercise of the will, produce an outward correctness. But it clearly states that he cannot change the heart. The heart is the character. It is made up of thoughts and feelings. These thoughts and feeling are called habits, tendencies. Man is born with a desire for selfishness. This is the will of sinful man. Without a conversion experience all his acts are done with a desire for self-exaltation. Only God can change the will so that man has a desire for unselfishness. Let us observe some quotations to see what is changed at conversion. Let us note that the changes have to do with man's nature. Man receives new motives, new tastes, new tendencies.

"The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the formal habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ." 6BC 1101

Hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are changed.

"A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong." 6 BC 1101

The will, self, or desires are changed.

"Often it seems to us that to surrender the will to God is to consent to go through life maimed or crippled. But it is better, says Christ, for self to be maimed, wounded, crippled, if thus you may enter into life. . . If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death." MB 61,62

Self and the will are equated in the above statement. The noun "will" means desire. Conversion brings death to the old desires or death to the old ways of self.

"The Saviour said, 'Except a man be born from above,' unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life,. . ." SC 18

At conversion man receives new desires. Conversion is a progressive work, so the new life has just begun. God does not change completely all the old desires and habits.

"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 477

"A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong." 6 BC 1101

"A new nature is imparted." 6 BC 1117

"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. . ." 7 BC 943

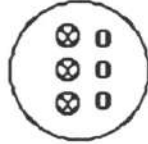
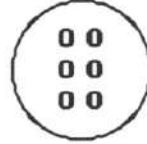
The above statements show that conversion and sanctification are a removal of the inherited nature of man. The hereditary tendencies are cut away from the character. We are receiving a new nature.

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

For the nature to be pure and holy one must cut away all of the old desires, old habit patterns, old tendencies to wrong. It clearly states that man need not retain one inherited tendency. It is also clear that it is the work of conversion to change and cut away the inherited tendencies to evil. But it is a work of a lifetime. A failure to understand that important point would be fatal.

"None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality." 2T 505

Let us illustrate these concepts as follows:

CONVERTED MANCHRIST - LAW

- X The inherited desire or propensities (desire for self-exaltation)
 ⊗ Victory over the old habits but they still remain
 O The new desires (Desires for unselfishness).

Since conversion is the work of a lifetime, man's character will always remain in a sinful condition. He will always have the old self, the inherited tendencies to evil, to contend with. These old habit patterns will continue to give him a defective character as long as his probationary time shall last. If the inherited tendencies to evil remain after conversion, and if these are part of the character, then man can only be righteous by substitution. That was what the daily service taught. The lamb was the substitute. The daily service had an altar of continual atonement and of perpetual intercession. But the fact that we are righteous only by substitution does not mean that we cannot have victory over our inherited nature.

"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action." EW 71

The preparation for the judgment is victory over sin. The purpose of this study is not to prove that man must have victory over every wrong word and action. That point is well substantiated. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that overcoming every wrong word and action is not perfection. Man's obedience falls short of fully satisfying the divine law and needs Christ's character to stand in place of man's character. We can have a perfect standing with God as long as we do not cherish sin.

"The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin." COL 316