

**COME  
TO THE  
MARRIAGE**

*Guilt is an evidence of sin and of a defective character. Man is guilty by nature. As long as man trusts in the substitutionary righteousness of Christ he is free of guilt. Theories that teach that man is not guilty by nature are theories that if followed to their logical conclusion do away with the necessity of Christ as our substitute or atonement.*

## Chapter 7

### GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY

The purpose of this discussion on guilt is to help us determine when the character of man is perfect. The presence of guilt tells us that sin is present and therefore if a person has guilt he has imperfection of character. Imperfection of character would help us to see our need on relying on Christ as our substitute. The area we want to consider is whether man has guilt because of the sinful nature. If we are guilty by nature then a person will see the need of relying on Christ as his substitute. As long as he is guilty he needs a substitute. As soon as a person is not guilty then he would logically not need a substitute. So a study on guilt can help us to understand the substitutionary role of Christ. If we are guilty by nature and we still have that nature at the judgment then it is clear that we must rely on Christ as our substitute at the judgment. But if this nature for which we are guilty remains until the second advent then we would have imperfection of character until Christ comes.

To start our study let us analyze the character of man at birth.

**"They have inherited the defective characters of their parents. . ." CT 192.**

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

The above quotation clearly states that a defective character is inherited. Also note that a defective character is sin. Man has the existence of sin in him before any choices are made. That would demonstrate that man is sinful by nature and it is his character that makes him sinful because it is defective. If a defective character is sin, then that sin should make man guilty at birth.

**"Adam sinned, and the children of Adam share his guilt and its consequences; but Jesus bore the guilt of Adam, and all the children of Adam that will flee to Christ, the second Adam, may escape the penalty of transgression." ST 5/19/1890**

**"Parents have a more serious charge than they imagine. The inheritance of children is that of sin. Sin has separated them from God. Jesus gave His life that He might unite the broken links to God. As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death." E.G. White Letter 68, 1899.**

**"These dear children received from Adam an inheritance of disobedience, of guilt and death." Letter to W.L.H. Baker 1896 (Quoted in the Canadian Union Messenger) May 1988**

If man is guilty at birth, he is guilty by nature. If he is guilty at birth then there must be sin present for man to be guilty of. Since imperfection of character is sin then we are guilty because of his imperfect character at birth. For perfection of character to take place, the cause of his imperfection at birth would need to be removed. It is the inherited selfishness that makes man corrupt and sinful.

**"In the human heart there is a natural selfishness and corruption, which can only be overcome by most through 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**

This selfishness is also referred to as propensities. All disobedience is selfishness. A propensity of disobedience would be a propensity of selfishness.

**"Because of sin his (Adam's) posterity was born with inherited propensities of disobedience." 5 BC 1128.**

If a person is guilty by nature, before any choices are made, then a person would be guilty as long as he had that nature. The word nature refers to more than character. It also includes, the physical, mental, and moral powers which are not character. But the reason a person is guilty at birth is because he is born with an imperfect character. That is sin. As long as a person has a defective character he is in a state of sin and is guilty. The next quotation we need to consider is: How long do we have an imperfect character?

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

A person is guilty at birth because he is born with a defective character. The character is defective because it is naturally selfish. It naturally tends to go wrong. Man has a propensity to sin. That is what makes man defective. The fact that man is guilty at birth shows that the propensity is sin. If the above concepts are right, then after a person is converted he would remain guilty because of his defective character that still has the propensity to sin. This propensity would exist but a person has the victory over it and is developing the propensity to be unselfish. Let us analyze the concepts of guilt at conversion.

**"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; so in the type the blood of sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement." PP 357**

When a person is converted or commits a sinful act, he asks forgiveness. The blood of Christ releases the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law. Condemnation means guilt. So when we are repentant we are freed of guilt because Christ's character stands in place of my character. But notice the sin was not cancelled. It stood on record. If the daily service of repentance and conversion cleansed us from sin and the record of sin was in fact only a record, then there should be no guilt after conversion. The sin in us left a scar but if that scar makes a defective character then we would still be guilty. So the existence of guilt after conversion would help us to understand the nature of sin. The above quotation states that the sin was not cancelled. If the sin was not cancelled

and it stood on record, then we should be guilty until the final atonement. This would be true if the sin was still in us. We would still be guilty after conversion if guilt applies to the nature of man.

**"Important truths concerning the atonement were taught the people by this yearly service. In the sin offerings presented during the year, a substitute had been accepted in the sinners stead; but the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin. It had only provided a means by which the sin was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood, the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed the guilt of his transgression, and expressed his faith in Him who was to take away the sin of the world; but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law. On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied. Then in his character of mediator the priest took the sins upon himself, and, leaving the sanctuary, he bore with him the burden of Israel's guilt." PP 355, 356.**

The above statement teaches us that the daily service did not make a full atonement. Notice carefully that the daily repentance and conversion did not entirely release the sinner from the condemnation of the law. *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 357 said that the blood of Christ released the sinner from the condemnation of the law and this quotation states he was not entirely released from guilt. When a person is converted and is trusting in Christ as his substitute then he does not have guilt. But the reason he does not have guilt is because the perfect character that Christ developed here on earth stands in his place. He is consciously freed of guilt when he is consciously trusting in Christ as his substitute. But the facts of the case are that he himself is still defective in character because of the inherent tendencies to selfishness. Therefore he is still guilty by nature. The sin on his record illustrates that man is still guilty. That is trying to teach us that the record of sin in our mind makes us guilty. If the inherited tendencies to sin make us guilty at birth then the inherited tendencies would make us guilty until they are removed. The record of sin is not blotted out until after the investigative judgment for the individual. Since the record is a perfect photograph of our character then our character would still be defective because the sin is in us. This helps us to see why we constantly need the intercession of Christ to place His obedience to our account.

**"Now he (Satan in the investigative judgment) points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character." GC 484.**

Satan is not saying that the saints have not gained the victory over every wrong word and action. He is pointing to the record of their sins. It is the record that illustrates that man is defective because of his past sinfulness. Let us review what that record is.

**"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 the record that will one day appear against you? Can you afford this?" R&H Nov 4, 1884 (Vol 1, page 474)**

The blot on the record is made by a bad selfish habit. These are the old sinful habits. Remember habits make up character.

**"Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery. . . AA 477**

The old habits are hereditary tendencies to wrong. The selfish habits are a blot on the record and the old habits are hereditary tendencies. This means the blot is a hereditary tendency. At the beginning of this study we found that man was born with a defective character. It was defective because it had selfish hereditary tendencies. At the end of a person's probation we still have a defective character and the record of that character shows that the character is defective because of the hereditary tendencies to wrong. If man was guilty at birth, because of the hereditary tendencies to selfishness, before any choices were made, then man should be guilty as long as he has these hereditary tendencies. The blots represent hereditary tendencies in our character, therefore we are guilty by nature until these are blotted out at the final atonement.