

In All Things Made Like unto His Brethren, III

The Nature of Christ

1. **IMPORTANT:** Jesus possessed neither inherited or cultivated any sinful trait of character; He had no sin dwelling in me, no tendencies or propensities of sin; this is where Jesus was altogether not like us even though He was made like unto His brethren in all things.

Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a **man with the propensities of sin**. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin his posterity was born with **inherent propensities of disobedience**. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but **not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity**. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden.—**5BC 1128**.

2. **QUESTION:** How could Jesus not possess any sinful trait of character, any propensity and tendency to evil and be said to have accepted the workings of the great law of heredity?
 - a. If He truly accepted the workings of the great law of heredity, would He not have these baleful elements of character as legacy from His long list of sinful ancestors? (Matt 1:1-17)
3. **ANSWER: Heb 10:5-7**—Jesus surrendered Himself fully to the will of God before He came to earth as a man; therefore, He was filled with the Spirit from His birth; as a result, all the inherited sinful traits of character present in His assumed fallen humanity were consumed, blotted out, as soon as the Holy Spirit made contact with our fallen humanity in the womb of Mary;
 - a. Sin dwelling in me could not exist in the presence of the fullness of God in Christ's humanity

To sin, wherever found, "our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. **DA 107**.

- b. **Luke 1:35**—This explains why Jesus could be born as that "holy thing" while retaining a fallen, dilapidated humanity;

4. This beautiful experience of receiving the Holy Ghost in its fullness and having every trace of sinful traits of character removed and blotted out from the heart, is promised to all who believe in Christ:
 - a. in this holy experience, Jesus is our Example:

To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. **So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling.** Our Lord Himself has given the command, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should “all the fullness dwell,” and “in Him ye are made full.” Colossians 1:19 , R.V.; 2:10, R.V. **MB 21.**

Sanctification Through the Daily Service

5. It is possible to daily counteract and neutralize the negative effects of sinful traits of character or inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong through the process of **daily sanctification**—the benefit of the work of Christ daily in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary; even though Jesus is now ministering in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, this benefit is still offered to those who exercise faith and repentance, from that apartment

The converting power of God can **transform inherited and cultivated tendencies;** (AH 206)

inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong must be **crucified** (MYP 68)

Whatever may be our **inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong**, we can **overcome** through the power that He is ready to impart MH 176.

As we partake of the divine nature, **hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong** are **cut away** from the character. **RH Apr 24, 1900**

- a. **Heb 9:13-14**—the ministration in the first apartment purges the **conscience** of dead works (sinful actions)
- b. **Eph 3:16**—strengthened with might in the **inner man**
- c. **2 Cor 4:16**—the **inward man** (the spiritual nature) renewed every day
- d. **Phil 2:5**—the **mind** of Christ given to the believer

But Christ...was to bear the penalty of the transgression of the law of God, **not** to give men liberty to continue in sin, but to **take away their inclination to sin**, that they might **not desire to transgress**. Those who receive Christ **are obedient** to his commands; for his **mind** is given to them. He imbues them with his **spirit of obedience**, and they return to their loyalty. -- **YI April 6, 1899, par. 3.**

6. The entire tripartite nature is transformed in daily sanctification:

Yield yourself to Christ without delay; He alone, by the power of His grace, can redeem you from ruin. He alone can bring your **moral** and **mental powers** into a state of health. Your **heart** may be warm with the love of God; your **understanding**, clear and mature; your **conscience**, illuminated, quick, and pure; your **will**, upright and sanctified, subject to the control of the Spirit of God. You can make yourself what you choose. If you will now face rightabout, cease to do evil and learn to do well, then you will be happy indeed; you will be successful in the battles of life, and rise to glory and honor in the better life than this. **FLB 133.**

7. Since the atonement made by daily in the sanctuary was partial however, the benefits obtained were partial, incomplete and temporary;(PP 355, 356)
- a. Sin still dwells in me; it is not totally stamped out of the life
 - b. Inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil are not totally and fully eradicated from the character
 - c. The Christian who is forgiven and sanctified is still crying out “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me. . .,” “the good I want to do I cannot do and the evil I do not want to do, that I do. . .”
 - d. Sins remain in the books; they are not blotted out; there is still memory of sins
 - e. The forgiven sinner is not entirely released from the condemnation of the Law (PP 355-357)

Character Perfection in the Final Atonement

8. Not until Jesus began His final day of atonement ministrations in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, that all defects of character, i.e., sinful traits of character, inherited and cultivated tendencies and propensities to sin and indwelling sin are permanently and totally removed from the character;
9. This is the final cleansing of the soul from sin accomplished before Jesus leaves the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary;
- a. **Lev 16:30-33**—the high priest entered the second apartment of the sanctuary to make atonement for the final cleansing of God’s people;
 - b. **Heb 9:7**—the high priest made atonement for the “**errors**” of the people—the unknown/hidden sinfulness of character; the heart which is desperately wicked who can know it?
10. The focus of the final cleansing is the character or the heart, the **subconscious** mind or soul, the “most holy place” of the tripartite nature of man;
11. The command to take away the filthy garments i.e., the defective character, entirely and fully removes all sinful traits of character lodged hidden in the deepest recesses of the soul-temple;

- a. The timing and the mechanics of the final atonement and cleansing is illustrated in the vision of Joshua and the angel (**Zech 3:1-5, 9; PK 587-591**)
- b. The closing scenes of the great day of atonement is when Jesus makes His final atonement for the living

12. As a result of the final cleansing, God's people will reflect the image (character) of Jesus fully (**EW 71**); they will possess Christ-like character while retaining their sinful, fleshly nature:

"Just what you may be (future), He was in human nature." –**Letter 106, 1896**

13. When the sinful traits of character indwelling sin, tendencies and propensities to evil) are removed in the final atonement, they are prepared to stand in the time of trouble:

"...**Not even by a thought** could our Saviour be brought **to yield** to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful **desire is cherished**, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was **no sin in Him** that Satan could use to his advantage. **This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.**" **GC 623.**

- a. They will no longer **yield** to the power of temptation
- b. They will no longer **cherish any sinful desire** through which temptations assert their power
- c. There will be no more **sin in them** (indwelling sin or sin dwelling in me; sinful traits of character, evil tendencies) that Satan could use to his advantage

Avoiding the Trap of Perfectionism

14. **QUESTION:** Does EGW statement "*Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble,*" (**GC 623**) mean the saints whose characters have been cleansed of every sinful trait of character in the final atonement no longer possess any sinful thought? Will the saints no longer be assailed by sinful thoughts, suggestions and feelings after their defective characters are purified in the final atonement?

15. **ANSWER:** To say that the saints will no longer have sinful thoughts and feelings as a result of the final atonement is to fall into the trap of what Ellen White termed "**perfectionism**," a heresy promoted by the Holy Flesh movement in 1901 and re-introduced in Adventism in the 1960's by Robert Brinsmead (The Awakening movement);

- a. **The Holy Flesh Movement of 1901—**

- i. taught that just having sinful thoughts was of itself sin, whether or not they are acted upon through the consent of the will;
- ii. believed that the sinful nature human beings inherit at birth is the same as sin itself—to possess sinful nature is itself sinful; hence, all are born sinners just by possessing sinful flesh;
- iii. believed that Christ must have taken Adam’s sinless nature **before** he fell, because taking man’s fallen humanity would automatically make Him a sinner;
- iv. held that to be ready for translation, the Christian must experience the removal of his inherited sinful nature before the second coming; in other words, holy flesh attained; hence, to reflect the image of Jesus fully during the time of trouble is to no longer possess sinful desires and sinful thoughts

b. Robert Brinsmead’s Awakening movement of 1960—

- i. Brinsmead taught that when the Christian is cleansed in the final atonement and sealed, “because of imparted and imputed righteousness God performs a miracle and **erases all sinful thoughts and emotions** within us”;
- ii. Brinsmead taught that without the eradication of sinful thoughts and emotions within the believer, one was not ready to meet Christ in peace at His coming;

16. John 12:27; Matt 26:42—Jesus was assailed by sinful thoughts all His life, but never yielded to them;

The human will of Christ would not have led him to the wilderness of temptation, to fast, and to be tempted of the devil. It would not have led him to endure humiliation, scorn, reproach, suffering, and death. His human nature shrank from all these things as decidedly as ours shrinks from them. He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. The contrast between the life and character of Christ and our life and character is painful to contemplate. What did Christ live to do? It was the will of his heavenly Father. Christ left us an example, that we should follow in his steps. Are we doing it? **ST October 29, 1894, par. 9.**

17. As long as the sinful fleshly nature remains intact, the people of God will be assailed by sinful thoughts and feelings (and even sinful physical cravings) which they have to guard against:

So, long as life shall last, there will be need of guarding the affections and the passions with a firm purpose. Not one moment can we be secure except as we rely upon God, the life hidden with Christ. Watchfulness and prayer are the safeguards of purity. **—PK 84.**

Appetite and passion must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. There is no end to the warfare this side of eternity. **—CT 20.**

18. **Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:51-52**--Sinful thoughts and cravings will be removed when sinful nature is taken away in the twinkling of an eye at the second coming of Jesus—when corruption is replaced with incorruption in the twinkling of an eye.
19. As long as sinful flesh is retained, men are not placed beyond the reach of temptation even though they may have perfected their characters;

Conclusion

20. The study of the Incarnation helps us to better understand the length, the breadth, the height of the love of Jesus for fallen man;
21. We study the Incarnation to understand what it meant for Jesus to be made in all things like unto His brethren; He made no accommodations for Himself, He exempted Himself from nothing, except participate in our sinning; He risked all by partaking of our fallen, dilapidated nature and the depended on the Father to overcome sin in His humanity to set an Example of a sinless life;
22. We take comfort in the fact that the Holy Spirit consumes sin wherever it is found and rejoice in the hope of going over the same ground Jesus walked, so that sin can be removed from our lives and characters. . .