THE STRUGGLE FOR PERFECTION

“Let us be growing Christians. We are not to stand still. We are to be in advance today of what we were yesterday; every day learning to be more trustful, more fully relying upon Jesus. Thus we are to grow up. You do not at one bound reach perfection; sanctification is the work of a lifetime....” 3SM 193.

“Man through sin has been severed from the life of God. His soul is palsied through the machinations of Satan, the author of sin. Of himself he is incapable of sensing sin, incapable of appreciating and appropriating the divine nature. Were it brought within his reach there is nothing in it that his natural heart would desire it. The bewitching power of Satan is upon him. All the ingenious subterfuges the devil can suggest are presented to his mind to prevent every good impulse. Every faculty and power given him of God has been used as a weapon against the divine Benefactor. So, although He loves him, God cannot safely impart to him the gifts and blessings He desires to bestow.

But God will not be defeated by Satan. He sent His Son into the world, that through His taking the human form and nature, humanity and divinity combined in Him would elevate man in the scale of moral value with God. There is no other way for man’s salvation. “Without me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Through Christ, and Christ alone, the springs of life can vitalize man’s nature, transform his tastes, and set his affections flowing toward heaven. Through the union of the divine with the human nature Christ could enlighten the understanding and infuse His life-giving properties through the soul dead in trespasses and sins “ 1SM 340-341.

“No one who believes in Jesus Christ is under bondage to the law of God; for His law is a law of life, not of death, to those who obey its precepts. All who comprehend the spirituality of the law, all who realize its power as a detector of sin, are in just as helpless a condition as is Satan himself, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement—at-one-ment with God. Through faith in Christ obedience to every principle of the law is made possible.” 8MR 98.

“Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God’s law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use. The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency “ Manuscript 89, 1903.

“The Holy Spirit has been prevented from coming in to mold and fashion heart and mind, because men suppose that they understand best how to form their own characters. And they think that they may safely form their characters after their own model. But there is only one model after which human character is to be formed—the character of Christ. Those who behold the Saviour are changed from glory to greater glory.

When men will consent to submit to Christ’s will, to be partakers of the divine nature, their crooked, human peculiarities will disappear. When they decide that they will retain their own peculiarities and disagreeable traits of character, Satan takes them and places his yoke on them, using them to do his service. He uses their talents for selfish purposes, causing them to set an example so disagreeable, so un-Christlike, that they become a reproach to the cause of God “ Manuscript 102, 1903.
“By searching the written word we are enabled closely to observe the divine Model. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to become like his great Exemplar. He catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding, - “by looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” - he becomes changed into the same image. Even unconsciously we imitate that with which we are familiar. By having a knowledge of Christ, - His words, His habits, and His lessons of instruction, -we instinctively copy the virtues of the character we have so closely studied, and become imbued with the spirit which we have so much admired. Jesus becomes to us “chiefest among ten thousand,” the one “altogether lovely.”

When the soul is brought into close relationship with the great Author of light and truth, impressions are made upon it revealing its true position before God. Then self will die, pride will be laid low, and Christ will draw His own image in deeper lines upon the soul.”

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