

Study for the Month of August, 2008

Biblical Perfection

Part II

By Nathaniel Fajardo

All Perfection is Centered in Christ

“Christ is ready to impart all heavenly influences. He knows every temptation that comes to man, and the capabilities of every human agent. He weighs his strength. He sees the present and the future, and presents before the mind the obligations that should be met, and urges that common, earthly things shall not be permitted to be so absorbing that eternal things shall be lost out of reckoning.

“The gifts of His grace are free to all. There is no election but one’s own by which any may perish. God set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has *elected a character* in harmony with His law, and any one who will reach the standard of His requirement, will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. Christ Himself said, ‘He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life.’

“*What an exalted position to be identified with one in whom is all perfection centered*, who is indeed the Majesty of heaven, but who loved us although fallen, so much that language cannot express it! He for our sakes laid aside His royal robe, stepped down from the throne of heaven, and condescended to clothe His divinity with humility, and became like one of us *except in sin*, that His life and character should be a pattern for all to copy, that they might have the precious gift of eternal life.” SD 23.

Sinless Living in Sinful Flesh is Possible!

“Everyone who by faith obeys God’s commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression.”-ST July 23, 1902/Maranatha 224.

Jesus Our Perfect Example and Pattern

See John 2: 6. “We have before us the highest, holiest example. In thought, word, and deed Jesus was sinless. Perfection marked all that He did. He points us to the path He trod, saying, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’ Luke 9:23, NKJV (Matt. 6: 24).” RH Apr. 26, 1906.

“*Christ unites in His person the fullness and perfection of the Godhead, and the fullness and perfection of sinless humanity*. He met all the temptations by which Adam

was assailed, and overcame these temptations because in His humanity He relied on divine power. *This subject demands far more contemplation than it receives. Christians strike too low.* They are content with a *superficial* experience, and therefore they have only the *glimmerings* of the light, when. . . they might discern more clearly the wonderful perfection of Christ's humanity, which rises far above all human greatness, all human power. *Christ's life is a revelation is what fallen human beings may become through union and fellowship with the divine nature.*

“Men and women frame many excuses for their proneness to sin. Sin is represented as a necessity—an evil that cannot be overcome. But sin is not a necessity. Christ lived in this world from infancy to manhood, and during that time He met and resisted all temptations by which man is beset. *He is a perfect pattern of childhood, of youth, of manhood.*” MS 31, 1911.

“The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised. Let the glorious conceptions of Christ possess your mind. Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is willing to shine in your heart, and to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us.” COL 149.

Christian Perfection Attainable by Searching the Word

“No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the Word of God. By carefully and closely searching His Word we shall obey the injunction of Christ, ‘Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.’ John 5:39. This search enables the student to observe closely the Model. . . . The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed.” CSW 17.

“All the philosophies of human nature have led confusion and shame when God has not been recognized as all in all. But the precious faith inspired by God imparts strength and nobility of character. *As His goodness, His mercy, His love are dwelt upon, clearer and still clearer will be the perceptions of truth; higher, holier, the desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought.* The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of thought is transformed by intercourse with God through the study of His Word. Truth is so large, so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of. The heart is softened and subdued into humility, kindness and love.” MH 465-6.

“The Bible trains the mind to grapple with the deepest problems and to pursue the broadest explorations. It exalts the intellect. It saves the soul. . . . Take it as your mirror. It will be a faithful monitor, detecting the faults and errors of your character. It will strengthen every good trait.” Ms 4, 1880.

“The Word which reveals the guilt of sin, has a power upon the human heart to make man right and keep him so.” TM 80-4.

High Spiritual State Perfectly Attainable

See Jude 24. “By His perfect obedience He has made it *possible* for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we *submit* ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; *we live His life*. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.” COL 312.

The four elements of the human nature that are involved in the work of achieving the perfect obedience of Christ and receiving the garment of His righteousness are the (1) heart, (2) will (3) mind, and (4) thoughts. But it all begins with willing submission to Him.

“Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for *subduing* every sinful trait, and *resisting* every temptation, however strong.” 1SM 82. “

“The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion cannot overbear reason, nor iniquity triumph righteousness.” ST April 18, 1913.

“If you will stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel, faithfully doing His service, you need *never* yield to temptation; for One standeth by your side who is able to keep you from falling [Jude 24].” OHC 19.

“We need *not* retain one sinful propensity [Eph. 2: 1-6 quoted]. As we partake of the divine nature, *hereditary and cultivated* tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. *Ever learning* of the divine Teacher, *daily partaking* of His nature, we cooperate with God in *overcoming* Satan’s temptations. *God works and man works*, that man may be *one* with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus.” 7BC 943.

How to Reach the Height of Christian Perfection

See Eph. 3:20. “If you make God your strength [Phil. 4:13], you may, under the most discouraging circumstances, attain a height and breadth of Christian perfection which you hardly think it possible to reach. Your thoughts may be elevated, you may have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, and purposes of action which shall raise you above sordid motives.

“Both *thought and action* will be necessary if you would attain to perfection of character. While brought in contact with the world, you should be on your guard that you do not seek to ardently for the applause of men and live for their opinion. . . . Cultivate the grace of humility, and hang your helpless souls upon Christ. . . . In the midst of confusion and temptation in the worldly crowd you may, with perfect sweetness, keep the independence of the soul.

“If you are in *daily communion* with God you will learn to place His estimate upon men, and the obligations resting upon you to bless suffering humanity will meet with a willing response. You are not your own; your Lord has sacred claims upon your affections and the very highest services of your life. *He has a right to use you, in your body, and in your spirit, to the fullest extent of your capabilities*, for His own honor and glory. Whatever crosses you may be required to bear. . . . you are to accept without a murmur.” 5T 567/ Maranatha, 226.

By being faithful first in that which is least

Some are trying to do the big things right away, as in trying to “evangelize souls a continent away” when the work in the little things of life, and the souls in the home and in the neighborhood are neglected. But as Jesus said, he who is unfaithful and unjust in that which is least will be unfaithful and unjust in much. Luke 16:10.

“Little thoughts.” See Phil. 4:8; cf. Matt. 12: 34, 35. “As a man thinks, so is he.” Prov. 23:7. Many *thoughts* make up the unwritten history of a single day; and these thoughts have much to do with the formation of character. Our thoughts are to be strictly guarded; for one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul. An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind. If the thoughts are pure and holy, the man is better for having cherished them. By them the *spiritual pulse* is quickened, and the *power for doing good* is increased. And as one drop of rain prepares the way for another in moistening the earth, so one good thought prepares the way for another.

A succession of steps: “The longest journey is performed by taking one step at a time. A succession of steps brings us to the end of the road. The longest chain is composed of separate links. If one of these links is faulty, the chain is worthless. *Thus it is with character. A well-balanced character is formed by single acts well performed. One defect cultivated instead of being overcome, makes the man imperfect, and closes against him the gate of the Holy City.* He who enters heaven must have a character that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing [Eph. 5:27]. Nothing that defiles can ever enter there. In all the redeemed host not one defect will be seen.

The whole is perfect because every little part is. “*God’s work is perfect as a whole because it is perfect in every part, however minute.* He fashions the tiny spear of grass with as much care as He would exercise in making a world. *If we desire to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect, we must be faithful in doing little things.* That which is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Whatever your work may be, do it faithfully. Speak the truth in regard to the smallest matters. . . . As you work in this way, God will place His approval on you, and Christ will one day say to you, ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant. [Matt. 25:23].’

Faithful in every day life: “At the day of judgment, those who have been *faithful in their everyday life*, who have been quick to see their work and do it, *not thinking of praise or profit*, will hear the words, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Christ does not comment them for the eloquent orations they have made, the intellectual power they have displayed, or the liberal donations they have given. *It is for doing little things which are generally overlooked that they are rewarded.* ‘I was hungry and you gave me food.’ [Matt. 25: 35]. He says, ‘Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did to Me.’ [Matt. 25: 49].” –MYP 144-5.

“Success in this life, success in gaining the future life, depends upon a faithful, conscientious attention to the little things. *Perfection is seen in the least*, no less than in the greatest, of the works of God. The hand that hung the worlds in space is the hand that wrought with delicate skill the lilies of the field. And as God is perfect in His sphere, so we are to be perfect in ours. The symmetrical structure of a strong, beautiful character is built up by individual acts of duty. *And faithfulness should characterize our life in the least as well as in the greatest of its details. Integrity in little things, the performance of little acts of fidelity and little deeds of kindness*, will gladden the pathway of life; and when our work on earth is ended, it will be found that *every one of the little duties faithfully performed* has exerted an influence for good,— and influence that can never perish.”- PP 574.

Christ, the Human Carpenter was the Divine Architect

A brother-in-law of mine made a dramatic change in religion and occupation, turning into an evangelical Christian from a life-long Roman Catholic, and from being a medical doctor to a minister. He is currently the pastor a 1,000-member Sunday-keeping Christian Fellowship in the Philippines.

He sent me a dark blue T-shirt as a gift sometime ago. Emblazoned in bright white in front of the shirt are the Jewish insignia and the words, “My Boss is a Jewish Carpenter.” I have worn it a couple of times and every time I do, I see inquisitive eyes staring either at me or on the shirt. I really don’t know what’s on their mind because no one as yet has ever struck up a conversation on it; but one of these days I know someone will. I can tell them at least two things: No, I am not a Jew but a Seventh-day Adventist, and yes, the lowly occupation and trade that the Creator chose in His incarnation, a carpenter, was very much part of the divine plan of redemption.

“The life of Christ from His earliest years was a life of earnest activity. He lived not to please Himself. He was the Son of the infinite God, yet He worked at the carpenter’s trade with His father Joseph. *His trade was significant. He had come to the world as the character-builder, and as such all His work was perfect. Into all His secular labor he brought the same perfection as into the characters He was transforming by His divine power. He is our pattern.*” COL 345.

“It was Christ who planned. . . every specification in regard to the building of Solomon’s temple. The One who in His earthly life worked as a *carpenter* in the village of Nazareth was the *heavenly architect* who marked out the plan for the sacred building [the sanctuary] where His name would be honored. . . .” MLT 117.

“The leaders of Israel were offended, ‘and they said,’ Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is then that He says, I came down from heaven?’ They tried to arouse prejudice by referring scornfully to the lowly origin of Jesus. They contemptuously alluded to His life as a Galilean laborer, and to His family as being poor and lowly. *The claims of this uneducated carpenter, they said, were unworthy of their attention. And on account of His mysterious birth they insinuated that He was of doubtful parentage, thus representing the human circumstances of His birth as a blot upon His history.*” DA 387.

Perfection in little things marked all Christ did on earth

“Study the life that Christ lived while on earth. He did not neglect *the smallest, simplest duty. Perfection marked all that He did.* Look to Him for help, and you will be

enabled to perform your daily duties with the grace and dignity of one who is seeking for the crown of immortal life.” – RH Apr. 7, 1904/WM 154.

“My brethren and sisters, do not pass by the little things to look for larger work. You might do successfully the small work but fail utterly in attempting a larger work, and fall into discouragement. Take hold wherever you see that there is a work to be done. It is by doing with your might what your hands find to do that you will develop talent and aptitude for large work. It is by slighting the daily opportunities, neglecting the little things, that so many become fruitless and withered.” – RH Aug. 26, 1902/Ibid.

“We dwell much in the grandeur of Christ’s life. We speak of the great things He accomplished, of the miracles He wrought, of how He spoke peace to the tempestuous waters, restored sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and raised the dead to life. *But His attention to small things is even higher proof of His greatness.* Listen to Him speaking to Martha she comes to Him with the request that He bid her sister help her with the serving. He tells her not to allow the cares of the household to disturb the peace of her soul. ‘Martha, Martha,’ He says, ‘you worried and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’ [Luke 10: 41, NKJV].” –RH Apr.7, 1904/Ibid.

Perfection in Human Sphere

“Our Savior understood all about human nature, and He says to every human being, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ As God is perfect in His sphere, so man is to be perfect in his sphere. Those who receive Christ are among the number to whom the words so full of hope are spoken, ‘As many as *received* Him, to them gave He *power* to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ [John 1:12]. *These words declare to us that we should be content with nothing less than the best and highest character, a character formed according to the divine similitude.* When such a character is possessed, the life, the faith, the purity of the religion, is an instructive example to others.” – MM 112, 113.

Holy in our sphere as God is holy in His sphere

“But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed. We have no reason to fear while looking to Jesus, no reason to doubt but that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to Him [Heb. 7:25]; but we may constantly fear lest our old nature will again obtain the supremacy, that the enemy shall devise some snare whereby we shall again become his captives. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do His good pleasure []. *With our limited powers we are to be as holy in our sphere, as God is holy in His sphere. To the extent of our ability, we are to make manifest the truth and love and excellence of the divine character. As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.* – Maranatha, 227.

Christ’s life on earth was perfect expression of God’s law

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ John 1:12. This power is not in the human agent. It is the power of God. *When a soul receives Christ, he receives the power to live the life of Christ.* [Therefore] God requires perfection of His [true] children. His law is a

transcript of His own character, and is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind people whom God will have to compose His kingdom. The life of Christ on earth was perfect expression of God's law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christ-like in character, they will be obedient to God's commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven. Clothed in the glorious apparel of Christ's righteousness, they have a place in the King's feast. They have a right to join the blood-washed throng." COL 3:14, 3:15.

Christ presents to the Father the prayers of His people with the incense of own perfection.

"The Savior's promise to His disciples is a promise to *His church* to end of time. God did not design that His wonderful plan to redeem men should achieve only insignificant results. All who will go to work, trusting not in what they themselves can do, but in what God can do for and through them, will certainly realize the fulfillment of His promise. 'Greater works than these shall he do,' He declares; 'because I go unto My Father.' John 14:12.

"As yet the disciples were *unacquainted with the Savior's unlimited resources and power*. He said to them, 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name.' John 16:24. He explained that the secret of their success would be in *asking for strength and grace* in His name. He would be present with the Father to make request for them. The prayer of the humble suppliant He presents as His own desire in that soul's behalf. *Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.*" DA 667.

The "incense of Christ's own perfection." -- How little we know about the true science of effective prayer! Few ever realize and thus do not appreciate the truth that the only reason why "the effectual," or effective "fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5: 16) is not because of the prayer efforts of that righteous man! If it were so then we may turn to men whom we think are righteous, or who represent themselves as such, and entrust our soul's salvation to them—asking them to pray for us instead of us praying directly to God. It is because of this gross ignorance perpetrated by the "mother of harlots," a carry-over from pagan religions, that countless credulous souls turn to their priests, bishops, the pope, and to dead Mary and the canonized saints as their prayer intercessors to God the Father!

The prayers of the true saints of the Bible to God the Father in heaven are only effective because they are by the intercessory work of the *two Persons* of the Godhead! First, their prayers, made *from earth*, according to Paul, are by the work of the *Holy Spirit* who does two things: (a) most often, we do not know what we should pray for as we should; most of our prayers are selfish by nature. He convicts us about that and guides our mind into the right channel of prayer and what to pray for (b) because of our haste to pray and presumption on the goodness and mercy of God, the Holy Spirit assists in the lack of intensity of our prayers and presents them to Jesus with divine groanings that cannot be uttered by us. Then these Holy Spirit-prepared prayers are presented to Jesus *in heaven*, who in turn, presents it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His perfection, that is, the

perfection of His humanity! That is why the *humanity* of Christ is the golden link that unites us to Him, and to Him to the Father!

Notice: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses (infirmities, *KJV*). For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, *but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered* [by finite man]. Now He [Christ] who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He [the Holy Spirit] makes intercession for the saints *according to the will of God.*” Rom. 8: 26, 27, NKJV. The heavenly Trio, the Godhead, work in perfect harmony; they have one mind; all work according to the will of God for the salvation of man. Thank and praise God! This is why true prayer does not bring God down to us; it brings us up to Him because such intelligently informed prayers are actually a combined work with the Holy Spirit and Christ Himself! Thus, many in ignorance ask, “What has Christ been doing in the heavenly sanctuary since His ascension?” If they only knew!

God expects Christ’s perfection in His redeemed family.

“Christ was once a little child. For His sake, honor the children. Look upon them as a sacred charge, not to be petted and idolized, but to be taught to live pure, noble lives. They are God’s property. He loves them, and He calls upon you [parents] to cooperate with Him in teaching them to form perfect characters. *The Lord requires perfection from His redeemed family. He expects from us the perfection which Christ revealed in His humanity.* Fathers and mothers need to especially understand the best methods of training children that they may cooperate with God.”- CG 477.

While it is true that the terribly impenitent and rapidly deteriorating condition of society today lies at the doors of the fallen churches (GC 389), they can ultimately be traced back to the family—the basic unit of society. In the beginning God designed that the family on earth would be a symbol of the family in heaven.

Established and conducted according to God’s plan, they were to be one of His most effective agencies for the formation of Christ’s character and for the advancement of His work (6T 430). Satan well knew this and immediately set to work to destroy the family. He caused men and women with no knowledge of the sacred and accountable roles of parenthood to plunge into unsanctified marriages and produce ungodly homes filled with violence and deceit.

He destroyed the sacred privileges of sexual relationship limited between husband and wife by introducing the worst possible evils through perverted heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual practices even with animals (bestiality) and rape and murder of precious, innocent children and even babies! Like Sodom and Gomorrah, earth’s cup of iniquity is almost filled to the brim. But it is also at this dark, dark period of mankind that the light of truth will shine in the few Christian homes scattered all over the earth of the truly redeemed families of God. They will be “as cities set on a hill,” as “lights and salt of the earth,” preserving the knowledge that God is alive and is coming soon to “avenge His elect who cry to Him day and night,” and who “sigh and cry for all the abominations that are being done in the churches and in the world.” Matt. 5:13, 14; Luke 18:7, 8; Eze. 9: 4; 5T 211.

Church members must be perfect as Christ was perfect in His life.

By beholding one becomes changed: “Earnest workers have no time to dwell upon the defects of others. They behold the Savior, and by beholding become changed into His

likeness. He is the One whose example we must follow in our character building. In His life upon the earth He plainly revealed the divine nature. *We should strive to be perfect in our sphere, as He was perfect in His sphere.* No longer are the members of the church to remain unconcerned in regard to the formation of right characters. *Placing themselves under the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they are to form characters that are a reflection of the divine character.*" 8T 86.

"God pours out His blessings upon all. 'He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.' 'He is 'kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.' Luke 6:35. He bids us to be like Him. 'Bless them that curse you,' said Jesus; 'do good to them that hate you. . . . that ye may be the children on your heavenly Father which is in heaven. These are the principles of the law, and they are the wellsprings of life.

"God's ideal for His children is higher than the human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Matt. 5:48. This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

"The tempter's agency is not to be accounted as an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for the deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.

"The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh [Matt. 1:23]. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Cor. 6:16.

"Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder [Christ] had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh.' (Rom. 8:3) , He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him to attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore we are to be perfect, even as our 'Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

"Jesus had shown in what righteousness consists, and has pointed to God as its source. Now He turned to practical duties. In almsgiving, in prayers, in fastings, He said, let nothing be done to attract attention or win praise to self. Give in sincerity, for the benefit of the suffering poor. In prayer, let the soul commune with God. In fasting, God not with the head bowed down, and heart filled with thoughts of self. The heart of the Pharisee is a barren and profitless soil, in which no seeds of divine life can flourish. It is he who yields himself unreservedly to God that will render Him the most acceptable service. For through fellowship with God men become workers together with Him in presenting His character in humanity." DA 311, 312.

“Success in this life, success in gaining the future life, depends upon a faithful, conscientious attention to the *little things*. *Perfection is seen in the least, no less than in the greatest, of the works of God.* The hand that hung the worlds in space is the hand the wrought with delicate skill the lilies of the field. And as God is perfect in His sphere, so are we to be perfect in ours. The symmetrical structure of a strong, beautiful character is built up by *individual* acts of duty. And faithfulness should characterize our life in the least as well as in the greatest of its details. Integrity in little things, the performance of little acts fidelity and the little acts of kindness, will gladden the path of life; and when our work on earth is ended, it will be found that every one of the little duties faithfully performed has exerted an influence for good, ---and influence that can never perish. “ PP 574.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the church is for the perfecting of the saints. Grace received obligates us to work for Him.

See 1 Cor. 12: 1-28; Eph. 4:11-13. Some do not have the slightest idea of what the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church are. Others use it for their own self-serving interests. The apostles (the highest of positions and gifts), prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc., are given of God to the church (1) “for the perfecting of the saints” (2) “the work of the ministry” (3) “for the edifying of the body of Christ”—**for what final goal?** “Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, *to a perfect man*, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, *may grow up in all things* into Him who is the head---Christ.” Eph. 4: 11-15.

“All these gifts are to be in exercise. Every faithful worker will minister for the perfecting of the saints. . . . There is something for everyone to do. Every soul that believes the truth is to stand in his lot and place, saying: ‘Here am I; send me.’ . . . Give each one something to do for others. *Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation work for Him.* And let all be taught *how* to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God. If set to work, the despondent will soon forget their despondency; the weak will become strong, the ignorant intelligent, and all will be prepared to present the truth as it is in Jesus. They will find and unfailing Helper in Him who has promised to save all that come unto Him. . . .

“God tells us to be perfect as He is---in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. We may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His.” MLT 38.

God’s people must attain nothing short of the perfection of the purity and holiness of Christ in His humanity—

“We have increased light. We have a solemn, weighty message to bear to the world, and *God designs that His chosen disciples shall have a deep experience, and be endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit.* ‘The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart.’ [1 Sam. 16: 7, KJV]. This was a lesson that David never forgot, and in his dying testimony to Solomon he said, ‘And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him

with a *perfect heart* and with a willing mind: for the Lord *searcheth all hearts*, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him He will be found in thee, but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever.' [1 Chron. 28: 9, KJV].

"We are living in an important period of this earth's history; and with the light of truth shining upon us, we cannot now be excused for a moment in meeting a low standard. As co-workers with Christ, we are privileged to share with Chris in His suffering. *We are to look at His life, study His character, and copy the Pattern. What Christ was in His perfect humanity, we must be; for we must form characters for eternity.*" TM 173.

1 John 3:8: "Christ would elevate and refine man's mind, purifying it from all dross, that he may appreciate the love that is without parallel. *Through repentance, faith, and good works he may perfect a righteous character*, and claim, through the merits of Christ, the privileges of the son of God. The principles of divine truth, received and cherished in the heart, *will carry us to a height of moral excellence that we had not deemed it possible.* [1 John 3:3 quoted].

"*Holiness of heart and purity of life were the great subjects of the teachings of Christ.* In His sermon on the mount, after specifying what must be done in order to be blessed, and what must not be done, He says, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' *Perfection, holiness---nothing short of this would give them success in carrying out the principles He had given them.* Without this holiness, the human heart is selfish, sinful, and vicious. Holiness will lead its possessor to be fruitful, and abound in all good works. He will never become weary in well-doing; neither look for promotion in this world; but he will look forward to be promoted by the Majesty of heaven when He shall exalt His sanctified and holy ones to His throne. . . . Holiness of heart will produce right actions.

"The princely dignity of Christian character will shine forth as the sun, and the beams of light from the face of Christ will be reflected upon those who have purified themselves even as He is pure. *Purity of heart will lead to purity of life.*" SD 10.

Christians must advance by faith towards heights of Christian perfection

Advancing in faith is growing in the graces of piety, purity, and the love of Christ. - "God requires that every human agent shall improve all the means of grace Heaven has provided, and become more and more efficient in the work of God. Every provision *has been made that the piety, purity, and love of the Christian shall ever increase* in the service of His divine Master. But though this provision has been made, many who profess to believe in Jesus do not make it manifest *by growth* that testifies to the sanctifying power of the truth upon the life and character.

"When we first receive Jesus into our hearts, *we are as babes in religion; but we are not to remain babes in experience.* We are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [2 Pet. 3:18]; we are to attain to the full measure and stature of men and women in Him [Eph. 4: 13]. We are to make advances, gain new and rich experiences through faith, growing in trust and confidence and love, knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." MLT 101.

We work on the plan of addition, God works on the plan of multiplication

“The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a *continuous* one. Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth *persevering efforts* in the cultivation of right habits. *He is to add grace to grace; as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication.* Our Savior is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings the need *in their struggle* against the evils that beset them. *Glorious is the hope of the believer as he advances by faith toward the heights of Christian perfection!*”
–Ibid.

Privilege and duty to be perfect overcomers in Christ

“The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God and being clothed with humility, possessing that love that is pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of gentleness and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy [James 3:17] is not an easy attainment. *And yet is our privilege and duty to be a perfect overcomer here. The soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in knowledge and true holiness.* The holy life and character of Christ is a faithful example. His confidence in His heavenly Father was unlimited. His obedience and submission were unreserved and perfect. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others [Mark 10:45, KJV]. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. [John 6:38]. In all things He submitted Himself to Him that judges righteously [1 Pet. 2: 23]. From the lips of the Savior of the world were heard these words: ‘I can of Mine own self do nothing.’ [John 5:30].

“He became poor and made Himself of no reputation. [Phil. 2:7]. He was hungry and frequently thirsty, and many times weary in His labors; but He had not where to lay His head. [Luke 9:58]. When the cold, damp shade of night gathered about Him, the earth frequently was His bed. Yet He blessed those who hated Him. What a life! What an experience! Can we, the professed followers of Christ, cheerfully endure privation and suffering as our Lord? without murmuring? Can we drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism [of fire]? If so, we may share with Him His glory in His heavenly kingdom, *if not, we shall have no part with Him.* [2 Tim. 2:12].” 3T 107.

Perfect righteousness, condition of eternal life, under grace

“The word ‘therefore’ implies a conclusion, an inference from what has gone before. Jesus had been describing to His hearers the unfailing mercy and love of God, and He bids them therefore to be perfect. Because your heavenly Father ‘is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil’ (Luke 6:35), because He has stooped to lift you up, therefore, said Jesus, you may become like Him in character, and stand without fault in the presence of men and of angels.

“The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden—*perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law.* The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. *This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command.* God has made provision that we may become *like* unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.” MB 76.

Transformed by Searching the Word

See 1 Pet. 2:2. “No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the Word of God. By *carefully and closely* searching His Word we shall obey the injunction of Christ, ‘Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.’ John 5: 39, NKJV. This search *enables* the student to observe closely the divine Model. . . . *The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it.* As one becomes acquainted with the *history* of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself *defects of character*; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees that he *cannot* be a follower without a *great change* in his life. *Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed.*” CSW 17.

“All the *philosophies* of human nature have led to confusion and shame when God has not been recognized as all in all. But the precious faith inspired by God imparts strength and nobility of character. As His goodness, His mercy, and His love are dwelt upon, *clearer and still clearer* will be the perception of truth; *higher, holier* the desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. *The soul dwelling in the atmosphere of holy thought is transformed by intercourse with God through the study of His Word. Truth is so large, so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of.* The heart is softened and subdued into humility, kindness, and love.” MH 465-6.

“The Bible trains the mind to grapple with the deepest problems and to pursue the broadest explorations. It exalts the intellect. It saves the soul. . . . Take it as your mirror. It will be a faithful monitor, detecting the faults and errors of your character. It will strengthen every good trait.” Ms 4, 1880.

“That Word which reveals the guilt of sin, has power upon the human heart to make man right and keep him so.” TM 80.

The foregoing reveals the *real reason* why those who question how and why we should be perfect in order to be saved, do so, in spite of God’s clear command. Why? they do not really study the Word as God says they should, and that is, in order to “show themselves approved to God by rightly dividing the word of truth,” and, they fail to constantly look at the Perfect Pattern---*Christ’s life, works, and words*. Instead, they look to their finite, sinful selves or turn to the “broken cisterns” of the world that can never hold the water of life. It is by beholding that one becomes changed, even to the image that he beholds in his mind. If he beholds the *infinite perfection* of Christ, he will become transformed into that same image. But if he looks to finite, sinful, fallen self and to the antinomian doctrinal standards, interpretations, and methods of the fallen churches, and the boasted secular wisdom of the world, he will be correspondingly transformed into the same image of Laodicean pride, self-sufficiency, ceremonialism, hypocrisy, and compromise,—in contrast to the omnipotent power and infinite perfection of God in Christ Jesus! As Jesus Himself says to all, “Look to Me and live!”

The Power of the Holy Spirit Awaits Our Demand and Reception!

Just like the Jews in Jesus’ time, many Christians treat and value Christ in this manner:—they come to Him “merely for the fishes and loaves” (John 6: 24-26), seeking Him in prayer and even in their Bible studies for His blessings and gifts, mostly temporal in nature—but never Himself, the Giver! And so do we treat the Holy Spirit! We desire the *gifts* of the Spirit—which are not the same as the “*fruits*” of the Spirit—but never of

the Holy Spirit Himself! It reveals how temporally-minded we really still as the early disciples were, though we do not realize or refuse to acknowledge it. Hence, many vainly try to cover up or supplement this spiritual destitution and want with self-manufactured ideas and methods which all fail to produce results in God's order. We desire and ask for every spiritual blessing except Him--the most important One! And then we wonder why it is taking so long for the Sunday Law to be declared or for Jesus to return! Notice:

“Just prior to His leaving His disciples for the heavenly court, Jesus encouraged them with the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs to us as much as it did to them, and yet *how rarely* it is presented before the people, and its reception spoken of in the church. *In consequence of silence upon this most important theme*, what promise do we know less about by its practical fulfillment than this rich promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby efficiency is to be given to all our spiritual labor? *The promise of the Holy Spirit is casually brought into our discourses, is incidentally touched upon, and that is all.* Prophecies have been dwelt upon, doctrines have been expounded; but that which is essential to the church in order that they may grow in spiritual strength and efficiency, in order that the preaching may carry conviction with it, and souls be converted to God [not to the church], has been *largely left out* of ministerial effort. The subject has been set aside, as if some time in the future would be given to its consideration. Other blessings and privileges have been presented before the people until a desire has been awakened in the church for the attainment of the blessing promised of God; but the *impression concerning the Holy Spirit has been that this gift is not for the church now, but that at some time in the future it would be necessary for the church to receive it.*

“*This promised blessing, if claimed by faith, would bring all other blessings in its train, and it is to be given liberally to the people of God. Through the cunning devices of the enemy the minds of God's people seem to be incapable of comprehending and appropriating the promises of God.* They seem to think that the scantiest showers of grace are to fall upon the thirsty soul. *The people of God have accustomed themselves to think that they must rely upon their own efforts, that little help is to be received from heaven; and the results is that they have little light to communicate to other souls who are dying in error and darkness.* The church has long been contented with little of the blessings of God; they have not felt the need for reaching up to the exalted privileges purchased for them at an infinite cost [the Laodicean attitude]. Their spiritual strength has been *feeble*, their experience of a *dwarfed and crippled character*, and they are *disqualified* for the work of the Lord would have them to do. *They are not able to present the great and glorious truths of God's Holy Word that would convict and convert souls through the agency of the Holy Spirit.* [Hence they resort to worldly methods, “religious entertainment,” and even gimmickry!]. . . .

“The Christian must build all the foundation if he must build a strong, symmetrical character, if he would be well balanced in his religious experience. It is in this way that the man will be prepared to meet the demands of truth and righteousness as they are represented in the Bible; for he will be sustained and energized by the Holy Spirit of God. He who is a true Christian combines great tenderness of feeling with great firmness of purpose, with unswerving fidelity to God; he will in no case become a betrayer of sacred trusts. *He who is endowed with the Holy Spirit has great capacities of heart and intellect, with strength of will and purpose that is unconquerable.*” TM 174-176.

To be continued next month as Part IV.