

Christ the Model: The Character of Christ—Gleanings from EGW

If we meet obstacles in our path, and faithfully overcome them; if we encounter opposition and reproach, and in Christ's name gain the victory; if we bear responsibilities and discharge our duties in the spirit of our Master--then, indeed, we gain a precious knowledge of His faithfulness and power. We no longer depend upon the experience of others, for we have the witness in ourselves. Like the Samaritans of old, we can say, "We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42). {SL 83.1}

The more we contemplate the character of Christ, and the more we experience of His saving power, the more keenly shall we realize our own weakness and imperfection, and the more earnestly shall we look to Him as our strength and our Redeemer. We have no power in ourselves to cleanse the soul temple from its defilement; but as we repent of our sins against God, and seek pardon through the merits of Christ, He will impart that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God we may be sanctified, and thus obtain a fitness for the society of holy angels and the white-robed redeemed ones in the kingdom of glory. {SL 83.2}

The crowning glory of Christ's attributes is His holiness. The angels bow before Him in adoration, exclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Revelation 4:8. He is declared to be glorious in His holiness. Study the character of God. By beholding Christ, by seeking Him in faith and prayer, you may become like Him. {CT 402.2}

The standard of education in our schools is lowered as soon as Christ ceases to be the pattern of teachers and students. {CT 403}

1. Study carefully the divine-human character, and constantly inquire, "What would Jesus do were He in my place?" This should be the measurement of our duty. ...
2. Do nothing among strangers, in the street, on the cars, in the home, that would have the least appearance of evil.
3. Do something every day to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with His own blood. {MH 491.1}

Always act from principle, never from impulse. Temper the natural impetuosity of your nature with meekness and gentleness. Indulge in no lightness or trifling. Let no low witticism escape your lips. Even the thoughts are not to be allowed to run riot. They must be restrained, brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Let them be placed upon holy things. Then, through the grace of Christ, they will be pure and true. {MH 491.2}

We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts. The only security for any soul is right thinking. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise. That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition grows easy, until right thoughts and actions become habitual. If we

will we may turn away from all that is cheap and inferior, and rise to a high standard; we may be respected by men and beloved of God. {MH 491.3}

As we meditate upon the perfections of the Saviour, we shall desire to be wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like Him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of Him to others and represent Him to the world. {SC 89.1}

If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times. {SC 90.1}

In all our institutions there is too much of self, and too little of Christ. All eyes should turn to our Redeemer, all characters should become like His. He is the model to copy...He was the creator of all things, sustaining worlds by His infinite power. Angels were ready to do Him homage and to obey His will. Yet He could listen to the prattle of the infant and accept its lisping praise. He took little children in His arms and pressed them to His great heart of love. They felt perfectly at home in His presence and reluctant to leave His arms. He did not look upon the disappointments and woes of the race as a mere trifle, but His heart was ever touched by the sufferings of those He came to save. {5T 421.1}

As collaborators with Christ, ... our teachers should labor as if inspired from above. The hearts of the youth are not hardened, nor their ideas and opinions stereotyped, as are those of older persons. They may be won to Christ by your holy demeanor, your devotion, your Christlike walk. {5T 33.1}

The workers in our college should manifest a zeal and earnestness proportionate to the value of the prize at stake--the souls of their students, the approval of God, eternal life, and the joys of the redeemed. {5T 32.2}

There is no example in the life of Christ for this self-righteous bigotry; His character was genial and beneficent. ... In every religious denomination, and in almost every church, are to be found erratics who would have blamed Him for His liberal mercies. They would have found fault with Him because He ate with publicans and sinners; they would have accused Him of worldly conformity in attending a wedding feast, and would have censured Him unmercifully for permitting His friends to make a supper in honor of Him and His disciples. {GW 334.4}

But on these very occasions, by His teachings, as well as by His generous conduct, He was enshrining Himself in the hearts of those whom He honored with His presence. He was giving them an opportunity to become acquainted with Him, and to see the marked contrast between His life and teachings and those of the Pharisees. {GW 335.1}

Those with whom God has entrusted His truth, must possess the same beneficent spirit that Christ manifested. They must adopt the same broad plans of action. They should have a kind, generous spirit toward the poor, and in a special sense feel that they are God's stewards. They must hold all they have --property, mental powers, spiritual strength--as not their own, but only lent them to advance the cause of Christ in the earth. Like Christ, they should not shun the society of their fellow-men, but should seek it with the purpose of bestowing upon others the heavenly benefits they have received from God. {GW 335.2}

Do not be exclusive. Do not seek out a few with whom you delight to associate, and leave others to take care of themselves. Suppose you do see weakness in one and folly in another; do not stand aloof from them, and associate with those only who you think are about perfect. {GW 335.3}

The very souls you despise need your love and sympathy. Do not leave a weak soul to struggle alone, to wrestle with the passions of his own heart without your help and prayers, but consider yourself, lest you also be tempted. If you do this, God will not leave you to your own weakness. You may have sins greater in His sight than the sins of those you condemn. Do not stand off and say, "I am holier than thou." {GW 336.1}

Christ has thrown His divine arm around the human race. *He has brought His divine power to man*, that He might encourage the poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul to reach up for a higher life. O, we need more of Christ's spirit, and much less of self! We need the converting power of God upon our hearts daily. We need the mellowing spirit of Christ, to subdue and soften our souls. The only way for those to do who feel that they are whole, is to fall upon the Rock and be broken. Christ can change you into His likeness, if you will submit yourself to Him. {GW 336.2}

All that can satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul, for this world and for the world to come, is found in Christ. {COL 115.1}

The Pharisees sought distinction by their scrupulous ceremonialism and the ostentation of their worship and their charities... In marked contrast to all this was the life of Jesus. In that life no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed. Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son. To this revelation Jesus desired the minds of the people to be directed. {MH 32.2}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. ... Quietly and gently ...did the Sun of Righteousness arise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {MH 32}

If we are following Christ, His merits, imputed to us, come up before the Father as sweet odor. And the graces of our Saviour's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance. The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearance pervading our life will have power to soften and subdue hard hearts and win to Christ bitter opposers of the faith. {5T 174.1}

Vainglory, selfish ambition, is the rock upon which many souls have been wrecked and many churches rendered powerless. Those who know least of devotion, who are least connected with God, are the ones who will most eagerly seek the highest place. They have no sense of their weakness and their deficiencies of character. Unless many of our young ministers shall feel the converting power of God, their labors will be a hindrance rather than a help to the church. They may have learned the doctrines of Christ, but they have not learned Christ. The soul that is constantly looking unto Jesus will see His self-denying love and deep humility, and will copy His example. Pride, ambition, deceit, hatred, selfishness, must be cleansed from the heart. With many these evil traits are partially subdued, but not thoroughly uprooted from the heart. Under favorable circumstances they spring up anew and ripen into rebellion against God. Here lies a terrible danger. To spare any sin is to cherish a foe that only awaits an unguarded moment to cause our ruin. {5T 174.3}

To gain the higher education means to become a partaker of the divine nature. It means to copy the life and character of Christ so that we shall stand on vantage ground as we fight the battles of life. It means to gain daily victories over sin. As we seek for this education, angels of God are our companions; when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard for us against him. {CT 388.4}

Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, therefore they go away empty. Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed. {MB 7.1}

Whom Christ pardons, He first makes penitent, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince of sin. Those whose hearts have been moved by the convicting Spirit of God see that there is nothing good in themselves. They see that all they have ever done is mingled with self and sin. Like the poor publican, they stand afar off, not daring to lift up so much as their eyes to heaven, and cry, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Luke 18:13, R. V., margin. And they are blessed. There is forgiveness for the penitent; for Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. God's promise is: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "A new heart also will I give you. . . . And I will put My Spirit within you." Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 36:26, 27. {MB 7.2}

It is he who yields himself most 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 312.1}

The service rendered in sincerity of heart has great recompense. "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." {DA 312}

Note: My part is to respond to God's leadings in private. His part is to reward my actions publicly when He knows it will strengthen my walk with Him and not harm it by leading me to focus on me and how good I am.

By the life we live through the grace of Christ the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity. They have the honor of being accepted for the Master's use; they are trusted to do His work in His name. {DA 312.2}

Note: "To be trusted to do His work," means that I have come to the place where I understand that I was not placed on earth to do my will; but the will of my Father. He intends to use me as a tool in His hands to bring glory to His name.

The likeness of Christ stands out as distinct from that of Satan as midday in contrast with midnight. And only those who live the life of Christ are His co-workers. If one sin is cherished in the soul, or one wrong practice retained in the life, the whole being is contaminated. The man becomes an instrument of unrighteousness. All who have chosen God's service are to rest in His care. {DA 313}

Even John, the beloved disciple, the one who most fully reflected the likeness of the Saviour, did not naturally possess that loveliness of character. He was not only self-assertive and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injuries. But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love. Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious temper was yielded to the molding power of Christ. The regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit renewed his heart. The power of the love of Christ wrought a transformation of character. This is the sure result of union with Jesus. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ's Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven. {SC 73.1}

Note: John was changed as he spent day after day in the presence of Jesus and was drawn to Him. For me to be changed into His image requires the same of me. Only as I spend hours each day with Jesus will my character be changed. Satan knows this and will do all in His power to make sure that I am doing anything other than spending quality and quantity time alone with Christ.

Note: It is Christ' Spirit in me that raises my thoughts and my desire (passion) for more of Him.

When Christ ascended to heaven, the sense of His presence was still with His followers. It was a personal presence, full of love and light. Jesus, the Saviour, who had walked and talked and prayed with them, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, had, while the message of peace was still upon His lips, been taken up from them into heaven, and the tones of His voice had come back to them, as the cloud of angels received Him-- "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. {SC 73}

Note: The closer I get to Christ, the more I will sense His "personal presence" with me.

And He had further said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 14:17; 16:7. Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of His children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, "marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13. {SC 74.1}

All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today; for in that last prayer, with the little band of disciples gathered about Him, He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." John 17:20. {SC 75.1}

Jesus prayed for us, and He asked that we might be one with Him, even as He is one with the Father. What a union is this! The Saviour has said of Himself, "The Son can do nothing of Himself;" "the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." John 5:19; 14:10. Then if Christ is dwelling in our hearts, He will work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. We shall work as He worked; we shall manifest the same spirit. And thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall "grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 4:15. {SC 75.2}

His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save. Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. {SC 12}

Note: Like Son, Like Father. What I see in the character of Christ is a reflection of the Father's character.

It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became "a Man of Sorrows," that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer

shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. Behold Him in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, upon the cross! The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God--it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God. {SC 13.1}

Note: When I get as close to Christ as He was to His Father, I will also know "the terrible enormity" of sin and separation from Him.

Note: Christ knew what His mission was ("to redeem us") and He remained faithful to that mission moment by moment of every day, not allowing anything to side track Him from doing what He came to do. I need to be that intentional about: 1) spending time alone with Christ each day, and, 2) doing His will for my life rather than doing what I like to do. Everything I do should, in some way, strengthen my relationship to Him.

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Isa. 1:17 {ML 242.1}

Jesus, the precious Saviour, the pattern man, was firm as a rock where truth and duty were concerned. And His life was a perfect illustration of true courtesy. Kindness and gentleness gave fragrance to His character. He had ever a kind look and a word of comfort and consolation for the needy and oppressed. . . . {ML 242.2}

Christ was just what every minister should strive to be. We should learn to imitate His character and combine strict justice, purity, integrity, love, and noble generosity. {3T 422}

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love --this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness. {SC 70.2}

Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted. Yet He was earnest, rather than vehement. He spoke as one who had a definite purpose to fulfill. He was bringing to view the realities of the eternal world. In every theme God was revealed. {DA 253}

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The character of Christ is the one perfect pattern which we are to copy. Repentance and faith, the surrender of the will, and the consecration of the affections to God are the means appointed for the accomplishment of this work. To obtain a knowledge of this divinely ordained plan should be our first study; to comply with its requirements, our first effort. {CT 50.1}

A good character must be built up brick by brick, every day growing in proportion to the effort put forth. Those characteristics which they will take to heaven with them must be obtained by the diligent exercise of their own faculties, by improving every advantage Providence gives them, and by connecting with the Source of all wisdom. Aim for no low standard. Let not your minds be cast in an inferior mold. The characters of Joseph and Daniel are good models for you to follow, but Christ is the perfect pattern. {5T 129.1}

Then the redeemed will be welcomed to the home that Jesus is preparing for them. ... Every sinful tendency, every imperfection, that afflicts them here has been removed by the blood of Christ, and the excellence and brightness of His glory, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, is imparted to them. And the moral beauty, the perfection of His character, shines through them, in worth far exceeding this outward splendor. They are without fault before the great white throne, sharing the dignity and the privileges of the angels. {SC 126.1}

Notwithstanding the defects of the people of God, Christ does not turn away from the objects of His care. He has the power to change their raiment. He removes the filthy garments, He places upon the repenting, believing ones His own robe of righteousness, and writes pardon against their names on the records of heaven. He confesses them as His before the heavenly universe. Satan their adversary is shown to be an accuser and deceiver. God will do justice for His own elect. {COL 169.3}

Note: Christ is into name dropping. But, unlike people who try to lift themselves by dropping names of special people, Christ does just the opposite. He drops our names, the names of weak, defective people before the heavenly universe. Now how impressive can that be!

Our only safety is in constant watchfulness and prayer. The nearer we live to Jesus, the more will we partake of His pure and holy character; and the more offensive sin appears to us, the more exalted and desirable will appear the purity and brightness of Christ. {5T 141.2}

It was His Spirit that inspired their efforts, and He can abundantly bestow upon His workers today the same courage, zeal, earnestness, and devotion. It was Jesus who gave these men grace, power, fortitude, and perseverance, and He is willing to do the same for every one who would be a true missionary. {FE 211.1}

Let every one seek to draw in even cords with Christ. Let us hide our ways in God's ways, that all variance may cease, that Christ's character may be represented in kindness, forbearance, self-denial, meekness, humility, and love. ... Who will be on the Lord's side? Who will now see the work to be done, and do it?--Supplement to The Bible Echo, Sept. 1, 1892. {FE 211.2}

Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world. {COL 340.2}

We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned. {SC 62.2}

Note: Everything good that comes out of my life is not because of me, it is because of Christ dwelling in me. That being the case, why should I seek ways to highlight and glorify good things that I do? When others notice any good that I have done, I must be on guard to not allow self to bask in the praise of men; but rather whisper a prayer of thanksgiving to Christ who chose to reveal Himself through me.

By studying the character of Christ revealed in the Bible, by practicing His virtues, the believer will be changed into the same likeness of goodness and mercy. Christ's work of self-denial and sacrifice brought into the daily life will develop the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. There are many who wish to evade the cross-bearing part, but the Lord speaks to all when He says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16:24. {CT 249.1}

Christ does not ask from men the glorification of their fellow men. He does not ask of men that they shall praise His beauty of countenance. He did not plan that the attention of men should be centered upon His beauty of form or feature. His design was to draw the attention of men to His virtue of character, His perfect obedience, that by beholding, His

people may become changed into the same glorious image, and represent His goodness, His mercy, and His love to the world.--Letter 85, 1899. {CW 122.3}

The Son of God came down to this earth that in Him men and women might have a representation of the perfect characters which alone God could accept. Through the grace of Christ every provision has been made for the salvation of the human family. It is possible for every transaction entered into by those who claim to be Christians to be as pure as the deeds of Christ. And the soul who accepts the virtues of Christ's character and appropriates the merits of His life is as precious in the sight of God as is His own beloved Son. {CT 60}

Note: I am as precious to God the Father as is Jesus. His love for me is just as great and He longs to whisper in my ear, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."