Decided Efforts Must Be Made Against Sin

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray. Proverbs 10:17, NRSV.

Many apologize for their spiritual weakness, for their outbursts of passion, for the lack of love they show their brethren and sisters. They feel a sense of estrangement from God, a realization of their bondage to self and sin; but their desire to do God's will is based upon their own inclination, not upon the deep, inward conviction of the Holy Spirit. They believe that the law of God is binding; but they do not, with the eager interest of judgment-bound souls, compare their actions with that law. They admit that God should be worshiped and loved supremely, but God is not in all their thoughts. They believe that the precepts which enjoin love to others should be observed; but they treat their associates with cold indifference, and sometimes with injustice. Thus they walk away from the path of willing obedience. They do not carry the work of repentance far enough. The sense of their wrong should lead them to seek God most earnestly for power to reveal Christ by kindness and forbearance.

Many spasmodic efforts to reform are made, but those who make these efforts do not crucify self. They do not give themselves entirely into the hands of Christ, seeking for divine power to do His will. They are not willing to be molded after the divine similitude. In a general way they acknowledge their imperfections, but the particular sins are not given up. "We have done the things we ought not to have done," they say, "and have left undone the things we ought to have done." But their acts of selfishness, so offensive to God, are not seen in the light of His law. Full contrition is not expressed for the victories that self has gained.

The enemy is willing that these spasmodic efforts should be made; for those who make them engage in no decided warfare against evil. A soothing plaster, as it were, is placed over their minds, and in self-sufficiency they make a fresh start to do the will of God.

But a general conviction of sin is not reformative. We may have a vague, disagreeable sense of imperfection, but this will avail us nothing unless we make a decided effort to obtain the victory over sin. If we wish to cooperate with Christ, to overcome as He overcame, we must, in His strength, make the most determined resistance against self and selfishness.--The Signs of the Times, March 11, 1897.