

LETTER TO AN ARTIST

"For God is perfection, and whoever strives for perfection, strives for something that is God-like" (Michael Angelo). (See Deut. 32:4; II Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30; Matt. 5:48; Eph. 4:3; Col. 4:12).

5 Dear —,

When you are painting you are pictorially expressing a material representation of the thoughts that have come to you, and you try to make the painting as vivid a reproduction as possible of these thoughts.

10 You are always able to perceive that there are thoughts of which you cannot make a material representation.

You must always feel that there are thoughts which you cannot quite grasp, but which are on a higher level than those you do reach and endeavour to portray.

15 Now what is the effect of the pigment that you put on the canvas? It merely brings the people who see it, in touch with the group of thoughts that you were ethereally in touch with when you were endeavouring to express them on the canvas.

When the person looking at the picture sees it, what it conveys to him depends upon the condition of his human consciousness.

20 (1) One man will either be struck with the excessive colouring in one place, a mistake that you have made, or possibly something that he thinks is wrong, and he obtains no pleasure at all.

(2) Another man, seeing nothing but what is nice, will simply be pleased with the general effect.

25 (3) Another man will pick out beauties in your work, and see all the best of it.

(4) Sometimes a man will even see it just in the same way as that in which the thoughts presented themselves to you.

30 (5) Another will see all the thoughts that you felt were there, but were unable to get at, and they will lift him away altogether from the picture and material surroundings, and he will be in touch with a lovely picture, and beautiful thoughts of many kinds.

35 (6) Every now and then there will come one who will get in touch with thoughts that you did not even feel, but which were there all the same. This man will rise in thought and lose himself and his material surroundings in the realisation of God, his heavenly Father, and those around will feel an angel's presence.

Now why this difference? It is simply a question of the stage of the individual's advancement out of seeming human limitations; in other 40 words, the condition of the man's "consciousness."

The first is one deadened to all artistic feeling with a depreciative spirit, a man who, while remaining in that attitude, does very little good to anyone.

45 The second has a better condition, and catches thoughts that give satisfaction.

The third catches all the better thoughts, deriving great pleasure therefrom.

The fourth has the same condition of "consciousness" as yourself.

Now the fifth has a higher ideal, and catches nothing but what are called good thoughts, even thoughts that you were only just able to feel.

The sixth is he whose advancement more nearly approaches that of Jesus the Master, and one whose presence is felt wherever he goes; the man to whom children run, before whom evil flees, the man who lives habitually in the presence of God. He gets a sense of the new heaven and the new earth, the glorious kingdom of God that is within.

Why is this? Because in every case they are God's thoughts, seen, felt, or thought as you may call it, materially. The first catches such material thoughts that there appears practically no heavenly tone about them. The second sees heaven a little more as it really is, and the last is, for the time, what we call in heaven, that is to say, the thoughts that he catches are so close upon the real thoughts that he feels as though he were in heaven.

Now how are you to enable those who see your picture to be lifted up by seeing it? You can do this in two ways. By denial and by affirmation. When you are working, that is to say, when you are ethereally in touch with the so-called thoughts that you intend to portray or are portraying, and you deny the existence of wrong thoughts, you are destroying material thoughts of a bad description that would act upon those looking at your picture, whose minds were in such a condition as otherwise to catch the higher thoughts. When you are affirming, that is to say, realising the reality, heaven, you are clearing your mind, and allowing yourself to catch and portray the higher thoughts that the fifth man was able to catch, but which you only dimly perceive. Most important of all, every time you so work you are altering the condition of your "mind," purifying it, so that it is permanently more like that of the sixth man.

The result of working in this way, that is to say, treating whilst you are doing your work, recording your ideals, is, that when people come to look at the painting, you have cleared away many of the wrong thoughts that would act upon them and prevent them getting hold of the highest thoughts they were capable of appreciating. This will enable them to enjoy the painting, and note beauties that otherwise would have been lost to them.

Work of this description is what is called the work of genius, but now we know of what genius consists, and any man can be a genius more or less if only he will think in the right way. When you are at work, try to think of yourself as you really are, a perfect being in a perfect world governed by a perfect God, and recognise that the work you (the real you) are doing is absolutely perfect, because it is due to the action of God, the Principle of good. When you work, God is at work, because the real man is the expressed activity of God, the instrument through which God works in the real world. "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:24).

You have work to do. You have to lift your fellow-men, so that they see that material things are not the aim and end of man; that real happiness is not to be gained by applying one's attentions to material ends, but only by obtaining happiness for one's fellow-men; and that the only way to do this is by the purification of one's so-called mind by constant right thinking,

true prayer. With some men this can be done better through the canvas than verbally, and in any case the canvas that tells this story is seen and appreciated by many.

Everyone has the capacity of doing this. All that is necessary is the knowledge of the detailed method of working. We must be about our Father's business. Awake and waken the world, understand your power as "equipped by God." "The power that is at work is God's law, God's power, and this is God revealing Himself through their consciousness." "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal" (John 4:35, 36). "Enter into the holiest" (Heb. 10:19). "Allow Soul to hold the control" (*Science and Health*, p. 30, Mary Baker Eddy). Look "towards the imperishable things of Spirit" (*Ibid.*, p. 21).

Yours sincerely,

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F. L. RAWSON.

THE CHRIST

"Continue in prayer. . . . Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. 4:2, 3).

The following definitions, to which Dr. Inge calls our attention, will show how the advancing thinkers in the Church are approaching the scientific conception of the Christ as the manifestation of God, the conception that will heal sin and sickness when realised. Dr. Inge says: "The realisation of this conception heals sin and sickness. St. Paul gives us a very complete and explicit Logos-Theology, though he never uses the word. . . . I will collect the chief passages which, taken together, comprise St. Paul's teaching on this subject. In relation to God the Father, Christ is the Image (eikon) of God (II Cor., Col.). . . . An eikon . . . represents its prototype, and is a visible manifestation of it. Christ is the 'eikon of the Invisible God' (Col.). In him dwells bodily the Pleroma, the totality of the Divine attributes (Col., Eph.). . . . He is 'Lord of all' and 'Lord of Glory' (Rom., I Cor.)."

"In reference to the world, Christ is the Agent in creation, 'through Him are all things, and we through Him' (I Cor. 8:6). . . . He is 'the first-born of all creation; in Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together' (Col. 1:15, 17). 'All things are to be summed up in him' (Eph. 1:10). 'Christ is all, and in all' (Col. 3:11).¹ His reign is co-extensive with the world's history. 'He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.' Only 'when all things have been subjected to him, shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all'

¹ Mr. R. L. Nettleship writes: "Suppose that all human beings felt habitually to each other as they now do occasionally to those they love best . . . it would be the consciousness of another which was also oneself—a common consciousness. Such would be the atonement of the world."