



John 15.⁴⁻⁵

Supernatural aid

I recently read the following well-known passage from the Gospel of John.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”¹

As I read, one of my favorite quotes from Lorenzo Snow came to mind.

“The character of the religion that we have espoused demands a certain course of conduct that no other religion that we know of requires of its adherents...”

We might all stop at this point and nod our heads in agreement. A great deal is asked of us. And we make many demands upon ourselves. As we nod in agreement, we might either smile or frown, depending upon how we feel about our ability to measure up to the expectations. In our spiritual immaturity and arrogance, we might also look down our noses at those of other faiths, who, we claim, rightly or wrongly, do not have the expectations that we do.

Let’s read it again and then read on.

“The character of the religion that we have espoused demands a certain course of conduct

¹ John 15:4-5

that no other religion that we know of requires of its adherents; and the nature of those demands upon us are such that no person can comply with them...”

Anyone surprised by this startling claim? So much is asked of us that, in fact, no one can measure up? Maybe we should read again and read on once more.

“The character of the religion that we have espoused demands a certain course of conduct that no other religion that we know of requires of its adherents; and the nature of those demands upon us are such that no person can comply with them unless by assistance from the Almighty... the sacrifices that are required of us are of that nature that no man nor woman could make them, unless aided by a supernatural power; and the Lord, in proposing these conditions, never intended that his people should ever be required to comply with them unless by supernatural aid... He has promised this aid.”²

We were not sent here to feel, and in fact be “self-sufficient.” In forming His plan of salvation, it never entered the mind of God that we achieve salvation on our own and through our own abilities, skills, and gifts. We were always meant to humbly accept our weaknesses, our inabilities, our inadequacies, and our limitations. We were always meant to acknowledge that, in and of ourselves, we are faint, grow weary, and lack “might.”

But neither was it ever intended that we would focus on this reality. It was never intended that we become stymied or discouraged by such truths. Rather, we were to remember always that HE is never faint. HE is never weary. HE is never put off or weakened by our inadequacies. HE gives no thought whatsoever to our weakness and lack of might, except to be prepared to lend us his inexhaustible strength—to provide us the much needed “supernatural aid.” He only asks that we wait, or hope and trust in His ability and His earnest desire to strengthen us and bring us good success. As we do so, we feel our faintness, our weariness, our lack of might melt away. We feel our weaknesses become strengths. Indeed

² *JD*. Vol. 20, p. 362

We mount up with wings as eagles;
We run, and are not weary;
We walk, and are not faint.

With Paul we faithfully acknowledge one of the surest truths of life:

“[We] can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”³

This reality of our need, our dependence upon God is one of the lessons we were sent to earth to learn. The acknowledgement of this truth is one of the tests of life. The understanding that all beings, mortal and immortal depend upon others, depend upon each other is one required of those who would live in peace and power with others in time and in eternity. The fact is, God is God, not because He is an independent Being, but because He acknowledges the need and acts upon the need to be connected to others. He isn't God because He is “separate,” but because He is ONE—linked to others for the good and happiness of all, including Himself.

Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!

³ Phil. 4:¹³