

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the First Half Year 2015

Receiving the Holy Spirit

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INTRODUCTION

All living beings—men and women, young and old, rich and poor—are beneficiaries of heaven’s abundance. From the day of our birth, we are showered with gifts and blessings from the Lord every day. It is written that “His compassions fail not. They are new every morning:...” Lamentations 3:22, 23. It is not only the gift of life that we receive, but also His grace, sustenance, assistance, and guidance. Truly we are constantly the recipients of a “multitude of ... mercies.” Psalm 106:7.

In times past, there were patriarchs and leaders, priests and prophets who testified of God’s promises and love to mankind. In the fullness of time, God “gave His only begotten Son” for man’s salvation. He was the greatest gift that heaven could give. “The Prince of heaven was among His people. The greatest gift of God had been given to the world.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 277.

Yet this is not all. The Lord gives another great gift—the Holy Spirit—to continue the work of Jesus in guidance, instruction, conversion, and sanctification. “But the Comforter,” says Jesus, “which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” This was not to be for just a short time but “for ever;... for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” John 14:26, 16, 17.

The same truth is stated in the Spirit of prophecy. “Christ promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs as much to us as to the first disciples.... This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.

“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. Those only who are thus taught of God, those only who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, can stand as true representatives of the Saviour.” —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 284, 285.

“Christ, the Great Teacher, had an infinite variety of subjects from which to choose, but the one upon which He dwelt most largely was the endowment of the Holy Spirit. What great things He predicted for the church because of this endowment. Yet what subject is less dwelt upon now? What promise is less fulfilled? An occasional discourse is given upon the Holy Spirit, and then the subject is left for after consideration.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 156, 157.

Always remember—"The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for [the Spirit]. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 304.

The Lord is willing to give this gift in abundance—more willing than a father is to give bread to his children. The only thing He requires is the open heart to receive it, which includes repentance, consecration, and the request for Him to accomplish His work of purification.

"All your self-crucifixion will not do any good then. It must be [done] before the destiny of souls is decided. It is now that self is to be crucified—when there is work to do; when there is some use to be made of every entrusted capability. It is now that we are to empty and thoroughly cleanse the vessel of its impurity. It is now that we are to be made holy unto God. This is our work, this very moment. You are not to wait for any special period for a wonderful work to be done; it is today. I give myself to God today..." —*The Upward Look*, p. 283.

"The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God." —(*Review and Herald*, July 21, 1896) *Christian Service*, p. 253.

Time is passing quickly, and world conditions show that the final events are upon us. God's people must now come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Judges 5:23. This important subject is especially needed now. Please note that in these lessons some verses and testimonies are repeated, and this has at least two purposes—first, to help each student keep the concepts of his or her great need in mind and, second, to show God's willingness to endow His faithful children with His great power. Let every student be filled with the Holy Spirit and be an instrument in the Master's hand for the accomplishment of His final work on earth.

—*The brethren of the Ministerial Department*

Special Sabbath School Offering for SIERRA LEONE

Let your offerings reflect God's love and mercy!

1

Sabbath, January 3, 2015

Promise of the Holy Spirit

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer’s love and of His saving grace.”
—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

PROPHETS SPEAK

1. What great promise was made to God’s people centuries before the Christian era?

EZEKIEL 39:29 *Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.*

ISAIAH 44:3 *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.*

“There was no excuse for the blindness of Israel in regard to the work of regeneration.... Through Ezekiel the promise had been given, ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes.’... Ezekiel 36:26, 27.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 174.

2. What did prophecy tell about the effects of this great outpouring of blessings?

JOEL 2:28, 29 *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: ²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.*

ISAIAH 44:4 *And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.*

“If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness; and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people.”—(Manuscript 49, 1908) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1175.

PROMISE REPEATED BY JESUS

3. What did Jesus declare concerning all who believe in Him? How did He strengthen the promise of this wonderful gift to His disciples?

JOHN 7:38, 39; 14:16, 17 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)... ^{14:16} And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

“When Christ gave His disciples the promise of the Spirit, He was nearing the close of His earthly ministry. He was standing in the shadow of the cross, with a full realization of the load of guilt that was to rest upon Him as the Sin Bearer. Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, He instructed His disciples regarding a most essential and complete gift which He was to bestow upon His followers—the gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of His grace. ‘I will pray the Father,’ He said, ‘and He shall give you another Comforter....’ John 14:16.... The Saviour was pointing forward to the time when the Holy Spirit should come to do a mighty work as His representative. The evil that had been accumulating for centuries was to be resisted by the divine power of the Holy Spirit.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 47.

4. What did He give them at His first appearance right after His resurrection? Before giving them the Holy Spirit, with what commission did He entrust them?

JOHN 20:21-23 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: ²³ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

“God wants you to stand in position where He can breathe upon you the Holy Spirit, where Christ can abide in the heart. He wants you at the beginning of this meeting to lay off whatever of controversy, of strife, of dissension, of murmuring, you have been carrying. What we need is

a great deal more of Christ and none of self. The Saviour says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.'..." –*Selected Message*, book 3, p. 337.

PREPARATION THROUGH PRAYER AND UNITY

5. What instructions did they receive so they would experience the Father's promise? How did they carry out these directions?

LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

ACTS 1:4, 14 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me....¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

"Before He left His disciples, Christ 'breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' John 20:22. Again He said, 'Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you.' Luke 24:49. But not until after the ascension was the gift received in its fullness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working was the outpouring of the Spirit received. Then in a special sense the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ. 'When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' Ephesians 4:8. 'Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ,' the Spirit 'dividing to every man severally as He will.' Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:11. The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327.

PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND POWER OF THE MESSAGE

6. What would the disciples receive when the Holy Spirit came upon them? What effect would His presence have on their preaching?

ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

"Christ's visible presence was about to be withdrawn from the disciples, but a new endowment of power was to be theirs. The Holy Spirit was to be given them in its fullness, sealing them for their work. 'Behold,' the Saviour said, 'I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.' Luke 24:49. 'For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.' 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' Acts 1:5, 8." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 30, 31.

7. When and how was the wonderful promise of the Holy Spirit fulfilled? Did the disciples experience this power when they preached the message?

ACTS 2:1-4, 43, LAST PART; 4:33 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.... ⁴³ And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.... ^{4:33} And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

“What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. The prophecy was fulfilled, ‘He that is feeble ... shall be as David; and the house of David ... as the angel of the Lord.’ Zechariah 12:8. Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.

“... Under their labors were added to the church chosen men, who, receiving the word of truth, consecrated their lives to the work of giving to others the hope that filled their hearts with peace and joy. They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. The Lord spoke through them, and as they went from place to place, the poor had the gospel preached to them, and miracles of divine grace were wrought.”
—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 48.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train.” —*My Life Today*, p. 47.

* * *

Receiving the Divine Comforter

“At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

A COMFORTER FOR GOD’S CHILDREN

1. **What prophecies were given to God’s people in ancient times? What wonderful name would the future Messiah be called?**

ISAIAH 40:1; 51:12; 7:14 *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God....^{51:12} I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;...^{7:14} Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

“‘Emmanuel, God with us.’ This means everything to us. What a broad foundation does it lay for our faith! What a hope big with immortality does it place before the believing soul! God with us in Christ Jesus to accompany us every step of the journey to heaven! The Holy Spirit with us as a Comforter, a Guide in our perplexities, to soothe our sorrows, and shield us in temptation!” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 201.

2. **What is the privilege of God’s children everywhere in the world?**

ACTS 9:31 *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16, 17 *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,¹⁷ Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

“The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone—these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51.

3. Where does one find help and consolation in affliction?

PSALM 121:1, 2 *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ² My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.*

ISAIAH 41:10 *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

“There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart. Circumstances may separate us from our friends; the broad, restless ocean may roll between us and them. Though their sincere friendship may still exist, they may be unable to demonstrate it.... But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always there, one given in Christ’s place, to act in His stead. He is always at our right hand, to speak soothing, gentle words; to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. This Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 195.

4. Why is Jesus Christ able to help everyone in a very special way in weakness and affliction?

HEBREWS 2:18; 4:15 *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.... ^{4:15} For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

“Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity....

“Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. ‘I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore.’ Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. ‘The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.’ Isaiah 54:10.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 480, 483.

5. What do we experience when we turn to Christ for comfort after we have been misunderstood or disappointed by people?

MATTHEW 11:28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

PSALM 94:19 *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.*

“Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

6. What will be the result when we learn to find help in Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work?

HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

TITUS 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.

“It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 246.

7. What does the presence of the Holy Spirit produce in us? Describe how great that change is.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17, 18 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

“Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us bold-

ness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being....

"It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord." —*God's Amazing Grace*, pp. 96, 246.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

PSALM 94:17; 119:76 *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence....* ^{119:76} *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.*

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-5 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁴ Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. ⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

"Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. 'I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore.' Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 483.

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Sabbath, January 17, 2015

The Spirit of Truth

"God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. Truth is there revealed, and words and sentences are made bright and appropriate for the occasion, as the voice of God speaking to them.

"We need to recognize the Holy Spirit as our enlightener." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 171, 172; *My Life Today*, p. 44.

THE HOLY SPIRIT EDUCATES

- 1. What other name is given to the Comforter? What is His ministry?**

JOHN 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.*

1 JOHN 5:6 *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.’ No more will you say, I cannot comprehend. No longer will you see through a glass, darkly. You shall ‘be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.’ Ephesians 3:18, 19.

“The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is His office to present Christ, the purity of His righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through Him. Jesus says, ‘He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.’ John 16:14. The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God esteem the human race, since He gave His Son to die for them, and appoints His Spirit to be man’s Teacher and continual Guide.” – *Christian Education*, p. 59.

2. Why was it so important for Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples?

JOHN 14:26; 16:12-15 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you....^{16:12} I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

“... Jesus had opened before His disciples a vast tract of truth. But it was most difficult for them to keep His lessons distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees.... Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. They did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them. Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words. He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds. And He had left unsaid many things that could not be comprehended by the disciples. These also would be opened to them by the Spirit. The Spirit was to quicken their understanding, that they might have an appreciation of heavenly things. ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,’ said Jesus, ‘He will guide you into all truth.’” – *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 670, 671.

3. When the Spirit of truth enlightens one's mind to be able to discern truth from error, what happens in sincere hearts?

PSALMS 51:6; 40:8; 143:10 *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom....* ^{40:8} *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart....* ^{143:10} *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*

"The Comforter is called 'the Spirit of truth.' His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

"Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 408-411.

4. What effect does God's Spirit produce in one's understanding? What truth is confirmed by the Holy Spirit?

DANIEL 5:11, 14 *There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;... ¹⁴ I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.*

JOHN 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

PSALM 119:160 *Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*

"In bringing men to repentance, it is not the office work of the Holy Spirit to reveal new truths, but to present to the mind and urge upon the conscience the precious lessons which Christ has given in the Old and New Testaments." —(Manuscript 32, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1068.

“The Holy Spirit has been given us as an aid in the study of the Bible.... When the Bible is made the study book, with earnest supplication for the Spirit’s guidance, and with a full surrender of the heart to be sanctified through the truth, all that Christ has promised will be accomplished. The result of such Bible study will be well-balanced minds. The understanding will be quickened, the sensibilities aroused. The conscience will become sensitive; the sympathies and sentiments will be purified; a better moral atmosphere will be created; and new power to resist temptation will be imparted.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 357.

THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS ONE INTO TRUTH

5. How should the truth of the holy Scriptures be studied to receive benefit? For what should we ask the Lord as we study His word?

PSALMS 25:4, 5; 139:23, 24; 51:10, 12 *Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. ⁵ Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.... ^{139:23} Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.... ^{51:10} Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.... ¹² Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

“Those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be connected with heaven and will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 112 (1882).

“The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God’s word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises.... Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God’s promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed....

“But the teachings of Christ must previously have been stored in the mind in order for the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance in the time of peril. ‘Thy word have I hid in mine heart,’ said David, ‘that I might not sin against Thee.’ Psalm 119:11.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 599, 600.

6. Is a simple knowledge of God’s word sufficient to benefit one’s life? What is necessary to receive the Comforter, the Spirit of truth?

JOHN 14:15-17 *If ye love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

“A mere intellectual understanding of the word of God will not be sufficient to influence the habits of the life, for the life is regulated by the condition of the heart. When Sabbath school teachers have taught the lessons of external revelation, their work is but just begun, and they should not cease their labor until they have evidence that the precepts of heaven are not only accepted by the understanding of the pupil, but written upon the heart.” —(*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 57, 58) *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 37.

“Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word.

“The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

7. What promises given by Jesus to His disciples are given to everyone to illuminate his mind and open his heart to the truths of His word?

MATTHEW 28:20, LAST PART ... *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

JOHN 14:16; 17:19, 20 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.... ^{17:19} And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. ²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*

“Jesus promised His disciples, ‘The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’ ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth:... and He will show you things to come.’ John 14:26; 16:13. Scripture plainly teaches that these promises, so far from being limited to apostolic days, extend to the church of Christ in all ages. The Saviour assures His followers, ‘I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ Matthew 28:20. And Paul declares that the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit were set in the church ‘for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’ Ephesians 4:12, 13.” — *The Great Controversy*, pp. viii, ix.

“Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

“God calls upon those who know His will to be doers of His word. Weakness, halfheartedness, and indecision provoke the assaults of Satan; and those who permit these traits to grow will be borne helplessly down by the surging waves of temptation. Everyone who professes the name of Christ is required to grow up to the full stature of Christ, the Christian’s living head.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 263, 264.

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Sabbath, January 24, 2015

Convincing of Sin and Righteousness

“It is through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued and subjected. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces of sin and expels it from the soul by the consent of the human agent.... Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being and expel sin from his soul.”—*My Life Today*, p. 43.

THE CONVICTING AGENT

1. According to Jesus’ promise, when the Spirit of truth comes, of what would people be convicted?

JOHN 16:8-11 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

“The office of the Holy Spirit is distinctly specified in the words of Christ: ‘When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.’ John 16:8. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. If the sinner responds to the quickening influence of the Spirit, he will be brought to repentance and aroused to the importance of obeying the divine requirements.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.

“The Holy Spirit brings power that enables man to overcome. It is through the agency of the Spirit that the government of Satan is to be

subdued. It is the Spirit that convinces of sin, and, with the consent of the human being, expels sin from the heart. The mind is then brought under a new law—the royal law of liberty.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 152.

2. Through what wonderful work are the eyes of one's understanding enlightened?

EPHESIANS 1:17, 18 *The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*

“As the Comforter shall come, and reprove you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, be careful lest you resist the Spirit of God.... Be willing to discern what It shall reveal to you. Yield up your self-will, the long idolized habits peculiar to yourself, that you may receive the principles of truth.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 152.

“The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating Agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

REPENTANCE

3. What is the first result produced by the Holy Spirit's action?

ZECHARIAH 12:10, FIRST PART *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son,...*

“Repentance for sin is the first fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life. It is the only process by which infinite purity reflects the image of Christ in His redeemed subjects. In Christ all fullness dwells. Science that is not in harmony with Him is of no value. He teaches us to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is the highest science that any man can reach.” —(Manuscript 28, 1905) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1068.

“By the manifestation of His love, by the entreating of His Spirit, He woos men to repentance; for repentance is the gift of God, and whom He pardons He first makes penitent. The sweetest joy comes to man through his sincere repentance toward God for the transgression of His

law, and through faith in Christ as the sinner's Redeemer and Advocate." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 324.

4. What is the Lord doing constantly to bring man to repentance?

HOSEA 11:4, FIRST PART *I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love:...*

JOHN 12:32 *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

"It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance.... We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 26.

"Every soul who responds to this drawing will turn from iniquity. Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. He who comes to Jesus is setting his feet upon a ladder that reaches from earth to heaven.... Those who believe in Christ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 181, 182.

5. How does God consider everyone who is drawn and led by the Spirit of truth?

ROMANS 8:13-16 *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

GALATIANS 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

"It is the Spirit that causes to shine into darkened minds the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness; that makes men's hearts burn within them with an awakened realization of the truths of eternity; that presents before the mind the great standard of righteousness, and convinces of sin; that inspires faith in Him who alone can save from sin; that works to transform character by withdrawing the affections of men from those things which are temporal and perishable, and fixing them upon the eternal inheritance. The Spirit recreates, refines, and sanctifies human beings, fitting them to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 286, 287.

"The work of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The world can only be warned by seeing those who believe the truth sanctified through the truth, acting upon high and holy principles, showing in a high, elevated sense, the line of demarcation between those who keep the commandments of God and those who trample them under their feet." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

6. What other great work does the Holy Spirit do in the human heart when permitted? What example of regeneration by the Holy Spirit is given in the Bible?

JOHN 3:5, 6 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

TITUS 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

“As Saul yielded himself fully to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, he saw the mistakes of his life and recognized the far-reaching claims of the law of God. He who had been a proud Pharisee, confident that he was justified by his good works, now bowed before God with the humility and simplicity of a little child, confessing his own unworthiness and pleading the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Saul longed to come into full harmony and communion with the Father and the Son; and in the intensity of his desire for pardon and acceptance he offered up fervent supplications to the throne of grace. The prayers of the penitent Pharisee were not in vain. The inmost thoughts and emotions of his heart were transformed by divine grace; and his nobler faculties were brought into harmony with the eternal purposes of God. Christ and His righteousness became to Saul more than the whole world. The conversion of Saul is a striking evidence of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to convict men of sin.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 119, 120.

7. How does the enemy of souls react when one is transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit? How should this spiritual battle be viewed?

1 PETER 5:8-10 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹ Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. ¹⁰ But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

“It is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal to the mind the character of the consecration that God will accept. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the soul is enlightened, and the character is renewed, sanctified, and uplifted.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 134.

“The greater the efforts of Satan to accomplish our destruction, the greater is the victory achieved in overcoming them. The world’s Redeem-

er presents the plan of the battle, with all the difficulties, and bids us count the cost. He does not wish His followers to be ignorant of Satan's devices. They must know what they will have to meet, and the preparation they must make in order to counteract his devices. He shows them the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against Himself and His followers, but He makes it plain to them that they shall have the help of the Holy Spirit in the battle. Angels of God, unseen by mortal sight, will mingle in their ranks. As soldiers of Jesus they must put on the armor, for they 'wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' They could do nothing against such formidable foes without Christ to direct the warfare." —*Signs of the Times*, December 21, 1891.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the cooperation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, 'Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.' Acts 5:28." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 671, 672.

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Time of the Holy Spirit's Outpouring

“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as Priest and King, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

PLAN OF REDEMPTION

1. **What tactics and arguments did Satan use after leading Adam and Eve into sin? What place does he seek to occupy with sinners?**

JOHN 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

ZECHARIAH 3:1 *And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.*

“In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God’s favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

2. **While Satan rejoiced at being able to lead Adam and Eve into sin, what had God and Jesus already done?**

GENESIS 3:15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

1 JOHN 3:8 *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

“The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. The world that God had made was blighted with the curse of sin and inhabited by beings doomed to misery and death. There appeared no escape for those who had transgressed the law....

“The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’ (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16. Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which ‘passeth knowledge’? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

3. How did Jesus live on earth to accomplish the plan of redemption and thus refute Satan’s accusations?

JOHN 15:10; 4:34; 6:38 *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love....* ^{4:34} *Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work....* ^{6:38} *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

“God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan’s purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God’s law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God’s plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. ‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Psalm 85:10.

“By His life and His death, Christ proved that God’s justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan’s charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

“And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 503.

4. Knowing beforehand His sufferings and death, as well as His resurrection, what could Jesus promise His disciples?

JOHN 14:30; 16:8, MIDDLE PART, 11; 12:31 *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me....*
^{16:8} *He will reprove the world ...* ¹¹ *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged....* ^{12:31} *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

“When the last steps of Christ’s humiliation were to be taken, when the deepest sorrow was closing about His soul, He said to His disciples, ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.’ ‘The prince of this world is judged.’ Now shall he be cast out. John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31. With prophetic eye Christ traced the scenes to take place in His last great conflict. He knew that when He should exclaim, ‘It is finished,’ all heaven would triumph. His ear caught the distant music and the shouts of victory in the heavenly courts. He knew that the knell of Satan’s empire would then be sounded, and the name of Christ would be heralded from world to world throughout the universe.... He knew that truth, armed with the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, would conquer in the contest with evil; and that the bloodstained banner would wave triumphantly over His followers....

“Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. ‘And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.’ Revelation 12:10.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 679, 761.

RIGHTEOUSNESS PROVIDED

5. What did Jesus become for sinners who would accept His blood for the forgiveness of their sins?

JEREMIAH 23:6 *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

“God had manifested His abhorrence of the principles of rebellion. All heaven saw His justice revealed, both in the condemnation of Satan and in the redemption of man. Lucifer had declared that if the law of God was changeless, and its penalty could not be remitted, every transgressor must be forever debarred from the Creator’s favor. He had claimed that the sinful race were placed beyond redemption and were therefore his rightful prey. But the death of Christ was an argument in man’s behalf that could not be overthrown. The penalty of the law

fell upon Him who was equal with God, and man was free to accept the righteousness of Christ and by a life of penitence and humiliation to triumph, as the Son of God had triumphed, over the power of Satan. Thus God is just and yet the justifier of all who believe in Jesus.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 502, 503.

TIME OF THE SPIRIT’S OUTPOURING

6. What happened as soon as Jesus obtained the victory?

REVELATION 12:9-11 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

ROMANS 8:33, 34 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴ Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

“The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour’s expiring cry, ‘It is finished,’ the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that ‘through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ Hebrews 2:14....

“In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists. When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, ‘Why hast thou rebelled against Me, and robbed Me of the subjects of My kingdom?’ the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped, and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 503.

“Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch (Malachi 4:1)—Satan the root, and his followers the branches.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 763.

7. According to the words of Jesus, was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be given to the early church?

JOHN 7:38, 39; 16:7 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)... ^{16:7} Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 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.*

“When Christ gave His disciples the promise of the Spirit, He was nearing the close of His earthly ministry. He was standing in the shadow of the cross, with a full realization of the load of guilt that was to rest upon Him as the Sin Bearer. Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, He instructed His disciples regarding a most essential and complete gift which He was to bestow upon His followers—the gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of His grace. ‘I will pray the Father,’ He said, ‘and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.’ John 14:16, 17. The Saviour was pointing forward to the time when the Holy Spirit should come to do a mighty work as His representative.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 47.

“Faithful to His promise, the Divine One, exalted in the heavenly courts, imparted of His fullness to His followers on earth. His enthronement at God’s right hand was signalized by the outpouring of the Spirit upon His disciples.” —*Education*, p. 95.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“But after Christ’s ascension His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom was signalized by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit was given. Christ’s witnesses proclaimed the power of the risen Saviour. The light of heaven penetrated the darkened minds of those who had been deceived by the enemies of Christ. They now saw Him exalted to be ‘a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ Acts 5:31. They saw Him encircled with the glory of heaven, with infinite treasures in His hands to bestow upon all who would turn from their rebellion. As the apostles set forth the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, three thousand souls were convicted. They were made to see themselves as they were, sinful and polluted, and Christ as their Friend and Redeemer. Christ was lifted up, Christ was glorified, through the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon men. By faith these believers saw Him as the One who had borne humiliation, suffering, and death that they might not perish but have everlasting life. The revelation of Christ by the Spirit brought to them a realizing sense of His power and majesty, and they stretched forth their hands to Him by faith, saying, ‘I believe.’” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 120.

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Transforming Character

“The Spirit of God works in the believer’s soul, enabling him to advance from one line of obedience to another, reaching on from strength to greater strength, from grace to grace in Jesus Christ.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 375.

REPENTANCE

1. What knowledge is essential for one’s heart to be transformed?

PSALM 19:12; 40:12; 139:24 *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults....^{40:12} For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me....^{139:24} And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

PSALM 19:12, AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION *Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.*

PSALM 19:12, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION *But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*

ROMANS 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

“... When the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God’s holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The ‘Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,’ illumines the secret chambers of the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. John 1:9. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 24.

“So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

2. How did King David react when he understood his condition as a sinner?

PSALM 51:1-4, 9-12 *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.... ⁹ Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. ¹² Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

“The Spirit of God will answer the cry of every penitent heart; for repentance is the gift of God, and an evidence that Christ is drawing the soul to Himself. We can no more repent of sin without Christ, than we can be pardoned without Christ....

“Repentance is thought to be a work the sinner must do for himself in order that he may come to Christ. They think that the sinner must procure for himself a fitness in order to obtain the blessing of God’s grace. But while it is true that repentance must precede forgiveness, for it is only the broken and contrite heart that is acceptable to God, yet the sinner cannot bring himself to repentance, or prepare himself to come to Christ. Except the sinner repent, he cannot be forgiven; but the question to be decided is as to whether repentance is the work of the sinner or the gift of Christ. Must the sinner wait until he is filled with remorse for his sin before he can come to Christ? The very first step to Christ is taken through the drawing of the Spirit of God; as man responds to this drawing, he advances toward Christ in order that he may repent.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 381, 390.

DOING GOD’S WILL

3. What does a soul seek after forgiveness and justification have been granted to him?

PSALM 119:33-37 *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. ³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. ³⁵ Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. ³⁶ Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. ³⁷ Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.*

1 JOHN 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

“The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 28.

4. What change occurs in the heart that receives the Holy Spirit?

2 PETER 1:3, 4 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

“It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil and to impress His own character on His church.

“When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God.” —*My Life Today*, p. 46.

MEDITATING ON JESUS AND ABIDING IN HIM

5. How can man be transformed into God’s image?

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

“The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ.

“The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit’s working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them and to make them His sons and daughters.” —*My Life Today*, p. 46.

6. With whom do all need to be constantly connected for the work of reformation, changing life and character, to be realized?

JOHN 15:5 *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.*

ROMANS 8:26, 27 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

“God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 19.

“O that all might realize that without Christ they can do nothing! Those who do not gather with Him scatter abroad. Their thoughts and actions will not bear the right character, and their influence will be destructive of good. Our actions have a twofold influence; for they affect others as well as ourselves. This influence will either be a blessing or a curse to those with whom we associate. How little we appreciate this fact. Actions make habits, and habits, character, and if we do not guard our habits, we shall not be qualified to unite with heavenly agencies in the work of salvation, nor be prepared to enter the heavenly mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare; for no one will be there except those who have surrendered their will and way to God’s will and way. He whose character is proved, who has stood the test of trial, who is a partaker of the divine nature, will be among those whom Christ pronounces blessed.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 194.

7. What will the soul who is led by the Holy Spirit attain?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13, 14 *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“To those that ask Him, Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit; for it is necessary that every believer should be delivered from pollution, as well as from the curse and condemnation of the law. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the truth, the believer becomes fitted for the courts of heaven; for Christ works within us, and His righteousness is upon us. Without this no soul will be entitled to heaven. We would not enjoy heaven unless qualified for its holy atmosphere by the influence of the Spirit and the righteousness of Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 394.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

PSALM 130:3 *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*

PROVERBS 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

“Those who are adopted into the family of God are transformed by His Spirit. Self-indulgence and supreme love for self are changed for self-denial and supreme love for God. No man inherits holiness as a birthright, nor can he, by any methods that he can devise, become loyal to God. ‘Without Me,’ Christ says, ‘ye can do nothing.’ John 15:5. Human righteousness is as ‘filthy rags.’ But with God all things are possible. In the strength of the Redeemer, weak, erring man can become more than conqueror over the evil that besets him.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 310.

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7

Sabbath, February 14, 2015

Regenerating Influence of the Holy Spirit

“The Holy Spirit seeks to abide in each soul. If it is welcomed as an honored guest, those who receive it will be made complete in Christ. The good work begun will be finished; the holy thoughts, heavenly affections, and Christlike actions will take the place of impure thoughts, perverse sentiments, and rebellious acts.” —(*Counsels on Health*, p. 561 [1896]) *Latter Day Events*, p. 187.

SUBMISSION TO GOD’S WILL

1. What is critically necessary so the Holy Spirit can work in a person’s heart and mind?

HEBREWS 12:9 *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*

“Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God’s word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth....

“If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in the heart, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God. The sanctified heart is in harmony with the precepts of God’s law.... The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Through the exercise of faith the believer comes into possession of these blessings. Through faith, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 532, 563, 564.

2. What example in the holy Scriptures illustrates how man’s heart is molded by God’s Spirit?

JEREMIAH 18:6 *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*

“The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing it from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom. Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ ‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him.’ Colossians 2:9, 10. Never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God. The Spirit conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ. Through the influence of the Spirit, enmity against God is changed into faith and love, and pride into humility. The soul perceives the beauty of truth, and Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break out in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 196.

3. What changes happen in a person’s life when he yields to Him?

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

“You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him....

“Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 47, 48.

4. How does the influence of the Holy Spirit work in a converted soul?

PSALM 139:23, 24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

“Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 26.

“Those who walk and talk with God practice the gentleness of Christ. In their lives, forbearance, meekness, and self-restraint are united with holy earnestness and diligence. As they advance heavenward, the sharp, rough edges of character are worn off, and godliness is seen. The Holy Spirit, full of grace and power, works upon mind and heart. The heart in which Jesus makes His abode will be quickened, purified, guided, and ruled by the Holy Spirit, and the human agent will make strenuous efforts to bring his character into harmony with God. He will avoid everything that is contrary to the revealed will and mind of God.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 206.

5. What desire fills one who desires to be progressively transformed?

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

1 PETER 1:13-16 *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: ¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

“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; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour 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 they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 532.

“The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. Our souls are to be aroused to cooperate. The Holy Spirit works in us, that we may work out our own salvation. This is the practical lesson the Holy Spirit is striving to teach us. ‘It is God

which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.’” —(*The Youth’s Instructor*, August 20, 1903) *Messages to Young People*, p. 147.

A TRANSFORMED CHARACTER

6. What great privilege do those who are living with God have? What example of a heart changed by the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit is found in the Scriptures?

1 JOHN 4:13; 3:24 *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit....* ^{3:24} *And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

“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.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 73.

7. How can one’s character be transformed? How does the apostle John encourage the believers?

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

1 JOHN 2:28, 29 *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* ²⁹ *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

“Do you ask, ‘How am I to abide in Christ?’ In the same way as you received Him at first. ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’ ‘The just shall live by faith.’ Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ’s sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ’s, and by faith you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to give all—your heart, your will, your service—give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all—

Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper—to give you power to obey.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 69, 70.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“He who lives the principles of Bible religion, will not be found weak in moral power. Under the ennobling influence of the Holy Spirit, the tastes and inclinations become pure and holy. Nothing takes so strong a hold upon the affections, nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of action, nothing exerts so potent an influence upon the life, and gives so great firmness and stability to the character, as the religion of Christ. It leads its possessor ever upward, inspiring him with noble purposes, teaching him propriety of deportment, and imparting a becoming dignity to every action.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 206.

“Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Through faith the Holy Spirit works in the heart to create holiness therein; but this cannot be done unless the human agent will work with Christ. We can be fitted for heaven only through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart; for we must have Christ’s righteousness as our credentials if we would find access to the Father. In order that we may have the righteousness of Christ, we need daily to be transformed by the influence of the Spirit, to be a partaker of the divine nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to ennoble the whole man.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 374.

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8

Sabbath, February 21, 2015

Our Bodies, Temples of the Holy Spirit

“Man is God’s workmanship, His masterpiece, created for a high and holy purpose; and on every part of the human tabernacle God desires to write His law. Every nerve and muscle, every mental and physical endowment, is to be kept pure.

“God designs that the body shall be a temple for His Spirit. How solemn then is the responsibility resting on every soul.” —*Temperance*, p. 142.

A DWELLING FOR GOD

1. What does the apostle Paul write about our bodies?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:15, FIRST PART, 19, 20 *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?...¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*

“Our bodies are Christ’s purchased property, and we are not at liberty to do with them as we please. Man has done this. He has treated his body as if its laws had no penalty. Through perverted appetite its organs and powers have become enfeebled, diseased, and crippled. And these results which Satan has brought about by his own specious temptations, he uses to taunt God with. He presents before God the human body that Christ has purchased as His property; and what an unsightly representation of his Maker man is! Because man has sinned against his body, and has corrupted his ways, God is dishonored.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 18.

2. What counsel does the apostle John write about glorifying God in our bodies and emotions?

1 JOHN 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

“When men and women are truly converted, they will conscientiously regard the laws of life that God has established in their being, thus seeking to avoid physical, mental, and moral feebleness. Obedience to these laws must be made a matter of personal duty. We ourselves must suffer the ills of violated law. We must answer to God for our habits and practices. Therefore, the question for us is not, ‘What will the world say?’ but, ‘How shall I, claiming to be a Christian, treat the habitation God has given me? Shall I work for my highest temporal and spiritual good by keeping my body as a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or shall I sacrifice myself to the world’s ideas and practices?’” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 18, 19.

3. What does the apostle Paul beseech God’s children to do in Romans 12:1, 2?

ROMANS 12:1, 2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

“God requires the body to be rendered a living sacrifice to Him, not a dead or a dying sacrifice. The offerings of the ancient Hebrews were to be without blemish, and will it be pleasing to God to accept a human offering that is filled with disease and corruption? He tells us that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and He requires us to take care of this temple, that it may be a fit habitation for His Spirit. The apostle Paul gives us this admonition: ‘Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ All should be very careful to preserve the body in the best condition of health, that they may render to God perfect service, and do their duty in the family and in society.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 21.

“The flesh, in which the soul tabernacles, belongs to God. Every sinew, every muscle, is His. In no case are we by neglect or abuse to weaken a single organ. We are to cooperate with God by keeping the body in the very best possible condition of health, that it may be a temple where the Holy Ghost may abide, molding, according to the will of God, every physical and spiritual power.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 69.

OUR CONDUCT

4. When we eat, drink, or do anything, what should be our objective?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

COLOSSIANS 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

“The people whom God is leading will be peculiar. They will not be like the world. But if they follow the leadings of God, they will accomplish His purposes, and will yield their will to His will. Christ will dwell in the heart. The temple of God will be holy. Your body, says the apostle, is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

“God does not require His children to deny themselves to the injury of physical strength. He requires them to obey natural law, to preserve physical health. Nature’s path is the road He marks out, and it is broad enough for any Christian. God has, with a lavish hand, provided us with rich and varied bounties for our sustenance and enjoyment. But in order for us to enjoy the natural appetite, which will preserve health and prolong life, He restricts the appetite. He says, Beware; restrain, deny, unnatural appetite. If we create a perverted appetite, we violate the laws of our being, and assume the responsibility of abusing our bodies and of bringing disease upon ourselves.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 72.

5. What demonstrates that many people do not consider the negative consequences of their chosen lifestyles? What will happen to those who do not respect the temple of the Holy Spirit?

ISAIAH 56:12; 22:13 *Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant....* ^{22:13} *And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.*

1 CORINTHIANS 3:17, FIRST PART *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy;...*

“The physical penalty of disregarding the laws of nature will appear in the form of sickness, ruined constitutions, and even death itself. But a settlement is also to be made, by and by, with God. He keeps an account of every work, whether it is good or evil, and in the day of judgment every man will receive according to his work. Every transgression of the laws of physical life is a transgression of the laws of God; and punishment must and will follow every such transgression.”—*Temperance*, p. 143.

6. What exhortation of the apostle Paul is as applicable to-day as ever?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:33, 34 *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. ³⁴Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.*

“When men take any course which needlessly expends their vitality or beclouds their intellect, they sin against God; they do not glorify Him in their body and spirit, which are His.

“Yet despite the insult which man has offered Him, God’s love is still extended to the race; and He permits light to shine, enabling man to see that in order to live a perfect life he must obey the natural laws which govern his being. How important, then, that man should walk in this light, exercising all his powers, both of body and mind, to the glory of God!” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 118.

ETERNAL LIFE IN VIEW

7. If one maintains his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, what will be the result in both this life and eternity?

COLOSSIANS 3:23, 24 *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; ²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

PHILIPPIANS 3:20, 21 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

“The sacred temple of the body must be kept pure and uncontaminated, that God’s Holy Spirit may dwell therein. We need to guard faithfully the Lord’s property, for any abuse of our powers shortens the time that our lives could be used for the glory of God. Bear in mind that we must consecrate all—soul, body, and spirit—to God. All is His purchased possession, and must be used intelligently, to the end that we may preserve the talent of life. By properly using our powers to their fullest extent in the most useful employment, by keeping every organ in health, by so preserving every organ that mind, sinew, and muscle shall work harmoniously, we may do the most precious service for God.

“When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow, and we can ask God in faith to bless our efforts for the preservation of health.” —*My Life Today*, p. 134.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The human house, God’s building, requires close, watchful guardianship.... The physical life is to be carefully educated, cultivated, and developed, that through men and women the divine nature may be revealed in its fullness. God expects men to use the intellect He has given them. He expects them to use every reasoning power for Him. They are to give the conscience the place of supremacy that has been assigned to it. The mental and physical powers, with the affections, are to be so cultivated that they can reach the highest efficiency.” —(*Review and Herald*, November 6, 1900) *Temperance*, p. 143.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from Malta on page 46***

9

Sabbath, February 28, 2015

Fruit of the Spirit, *Part 1*

“The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.” —(Manuscript 41, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1112.

THE CHRISTIAN TREE AND ITS FRUIT

1. To what is the Christian compared in the holy Scriptures? Who is the tree of life whose branches reach down to our world?

PSALM 1:1-3 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

“The man who loves God meditates on the law of God day and night. He is instant in season and out of season. He bears the fruit of a branch vitally connected with the Vine. As he has opportunity, he does good; and everywhere, at all times and in all places, he finds opportunity to work for God. He is one of the Lord’s evergreen trees; and he carries fragrance with him wherever he goes. A wholesome atmosphere surrounds his soul. The beauty of his well-ordered life and godly conversation inspires faith and hope and courage in others. This is Christianity in practice. Seek to be an evergreen tree. Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Cherish the grace of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness. This is the fruit of the Christian tree. Planted by the rivers of water, it always brings forth its fruit in due season....

“To all who believe, He [Christ] is as the tree of life in the Paradise of God. His branches reach to this world, that the blessings which He has purchased for us may be brought within our reach.... He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the tree of life. From this tree we may pluck and eat, and we may then guide others to it, that they also may eat.” —*My Life Today*, p. 50.

2. List the fruit of the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:22, 23, FIRST PART *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ Meekness, temperance:...*

“When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has the faith that purifies the soul from defilement. He is conformed to the Spirit, and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self. Christ is all and in all. He receives with meekness the truth that is constantly being unfolded, and gives the Lord all the glory, saying, ‘God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.’ ‘Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.’ 1 Corinthians 2:10, 12.

“The Spirit that reveals, also works in him the fruits of righteousness. Christ is in him, ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’ John 4:14. He is a branch of the True Vine, and bears rich clusters of fruit to the glory of God. What is the character of the fruit borne? The fruit of the Spirit is ‘love,’ not hatred; ‘joy,’ not discontent and mourning; ‘peace,’ not irritation, anxiety, and manufactured trials. It is ‘long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.’ Galatians 5:22, 23.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 287.

BEARING FRUIT IN ABUNDANCE

3. What makes it possible for the sinner to be able to produce the fruit of the Spirit?

PSALM 143:10 *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*

JEREMIAH 17:7, 8 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. ⁸ For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

“Man, fallen man, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that he can ‘prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.’ How does he prove this? By the Holy Spirit taking possession of his mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in? ‘We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.’ A real work is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen.

“Just as a good tree will bear good fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord’s garden produce good fruit unto eternal life. Besetting sins are overcome; evil thoughts are not allowed in the mind; evil habits are purged from the soul temple. The tendencies which have been biased in a wrong direction are turned in a right direction. Wrong dispositions and feelings are changed, new principles of action supplied, and there is a new standard of character. Holy tempers and sanctified

emotions are now the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. An entire transformation has taken place. This is the work to be wrought.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1080.

4. What is essential to bear the fruit of the Spirit and thus glorify God?

JOHN 15:5, 7, 8 *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....⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

“Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character.

“The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches....

“When we live by faith in the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

“Those who have this union with Christ will declare it in spirit and word and work. Profession is nothing unless in word and work good fruit is manifest. Unity, fellowship with one another and with Christ—this is the fruit borne on every branch of the living vine. The cleansed soul, born again, has a clear, distinct testimony to bear.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 295.

5. How can one bear abundant fruit?

COLOSSIANS 1:10, 11 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.*

“God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 251.

6. What is revealed by the fruit a person produces?

MATTHEW 7:16, 17 *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*

“Christ hungers to receive from His vineyard the fruit of holiness and unselfishness. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ’s representatives. It is the atmosphere of grace which surrounds the soul of the believer, the Holy Spirit working upon mind and heart, that makes him a savor of life unto life, and enables God to bless his work.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 298.

“All the true followers of Christ bear fruit to His glory. Their lives testify that a good work has been wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and their fruit is unto holiness. Their lives are elevated and pure. Right actions are the unmistakable fruit of true godliness, and those who bear no fruit of this kind reveal that they have no experience in the things of God. They are not in the Vine.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 377.

“Let us so speak and so labor that our fruit may be unto righteousness and we letting our light shine forth in good works. Profession is nothing. A godly life alone will God approve....” —*The Upward Look*, p. 154.

7. For how long will the Christian tree bear fruit?

PSALM 92:12-15 *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; ¹⁵ To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

“Your experience should not be ten, twenty, or thirty years old, but you should have a daily, living experience, that you may be able to give to each his portion of meat in due season. Look forward, not backward. Never be obliged to tug at your memory in order to relate some past experience. What does that amount to today to you or to others? While you treasure all that is good in your past experience, you want a brighter, fresher experience as you pass along. Do not boast of what you have done in the past, but show what you can do now. Let your works and not your words praise you. Prove the promise of God that ‘those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.’ Psalm 92:13-15. Keep your heart and mind young by continuous exercise.” —(*Review and Herald*, April 6, 1886) *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 221, 222.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“If you draw close to Jesus and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from stray-

ing into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God; and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. If Christ be within us, we shall crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 338.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM MALTA

To be read on Sabbath, February 28, 2015

***The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, March 7, 2015***

“And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.” Acts 28:1, 2.

Malta, officially the Republic of Malta (old name Melita), is an island country comprising an archipelago of three main islands in the Mediterranean Sea. It lies 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Sicily, 284 kilometers (176 miles) east of Tunisia, and 333 kilometers (207 miles) north of Libya. The country covers just over 316 square kilometers (122 square miles), making it one of the world’s smallest and most densely populated countries in the world with a population of 450,000. The capital is Valletta, which is also, at 0.8 square kilometers, the smallest capital city in the European Union.

Although it is just a tiny dot on the map, Malta had the greatest privilege to be visited personally by the apostle Paul, who, along with two hundred seventy-six people, survived a shipwreck there. This shipwreck is described in the Bible, and in 2001 the expedition of archaeologist Robert Cornuke managed to find the four anchors that were let out to try to help the ship withstand the tempest. Acts 27:29. Two of those Roman anchors can be seen in the Malta Maritime Museum today. Also, the geographical place described in the Bible corresponds to St. Thomas Bay where even today two seas meet, leaving a sad history of numerous shipwrecks in the area. Today, the place where the ship ran aground is still a massive reef located next to the steep rocks on which the waves were breaking during the storm. Acts 27:41. The Biblical description is absolutely exact and, in fact, again, could not be more exact!

Malta’s location as a naval base has given it great strategic importance throughout history. A succession of powers, including the Phoenicians, Romans, Moors, Normans, Catalans, Habsburg Spanish, Knights of St. John, French, and British, have ruled the islands. Independence from the United Kingdom was gained in 1964, and the country became a republic in 1974. It was admitted to the United Nations in 1964; and, to the European Union in 2004.

Although there are two official languages—Maltese and English—the majority of the population speaks Italian due to the island's proximity to Italy. The Maltese language has a Semitic origin and is believed to be the extinct Phoenician (ancient Canaanite) language. It is the only Semitic language written in Latin script. It is believed that prior to Paul's visit the barbarous people worshipped Baal, and even today the name Baal appears in some colloquial expressions.

The country is a popular tourist destination with its warm climate, numerous recreational areas, architectural and historical monuments, and seven Megalithic Temples, which are some of the oldest free-standing structures in the world (older than the Egyptian pyramids).

Malta has a long Christian legacy. Today it is considered Europe's most religious country with over 98 percent of the population being Roman Catholic and more than 70 percent attendance at mass on Sunday. On the main gate of the ancient capital, Medina, it is depicted how the apostle Paul survived the bite of the poisonous snake. The Maltese population is very proud of the fact that the apostle Paul spent three months there, according to oral tradition.

The first Adventists in Malta were Charles Malia and his family, who came from Australia. For fifteen years, he remained faithful to the Adventist doctrines all alone without having a congregation. Now there are thirty members in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which was officially opened five years ago.

The first Reformer to visit the island was Sister Elena Taneva, who introduced the concept of the Reform Movement to the newly formed church there. The believers all studied the subject and requested to know more. They all have pacifist convictions and are mostly vegetarian. Last year the island was visited by some Italian IMS members.

It is very difficult to work among the population, for most people believe that everyone who does not belong to the Catholic Church is damned. However, as the barbarous people were won to Christianity through the labors of the apostle Paul, there is no doubt that right before His second coming God also wants to open the eyes of those living in the most religious country in Europe.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, be generous with your offerings and pray for the opportunity to expand the Reform Movement among the Maltese population. We need to establish a place of worship and to send a missionary worker who can work in harmony with Jesus' declaration in John 4:35: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to har-

vest.” The offering will also cover the cost of holding evangelistic and health meetings.

Dear members and friends, “Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.” Matthew 9:37, 38. God once used a storm to bring Malta to the knowledge of the Almighty One. Today He wants to use you and your generosity to let His light shine in places that have not been fully illuminated by His truth.

*—Elena Taneva
for the brethren of the General Conference*



St. Thomas Bay

Special Sabbath School Offering for MALTA

Your sacrificial offerings will be blessed of Heaven!

10

Sabbath, March 7, 2015

Fruit of the Spirit, *Part 2*

“If we have the love of Christ in our souls, it will be a natural consequence for us to have all the other graces—joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance....

“When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart,... His presence will be felt.” —*My Life Today*, p. 50.

THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE

1. **What rich description of love does the apostle Paul give? What does Jesus command all of His disciples concerning this virtue?**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

MATTHEW 22:37-40 *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

“Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. ‘We love Him, because He first loved us.’ In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.

“We need not begin by trying to love one another. The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 497.

THE VIRTUE OF JOY

2. What gift will Jesus give His children, and under what conditions? How should trials be considered?

JOHN 15:9-11 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. ¹⁰ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

JAMES 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

“You have a duty to perform, which is to make yourself cheerful and to cultivate unselfishness in your feelings until it will be your greatest pleasure to make all around you happy....

“Cheerfulness without levity is one of the Christian graces.

“Do not allow the perplexities and worries of everyday life to fret your mind and cloud your brow. If you do, you will always have something to vex and annoy. Life is what we make it, and we shall find what we look for. If we look for sadness and trouble, if we are in a frame of mind to magnify little difficulties, we shall find plenty of them to engross our thoughts and our conversation. But if we look on the bright side of things, we shall find enough to make us cheerful and happy. If we give smiles, they will be returned to us; if we speak pleasant, cheerful words, they will be spoken to us again.” —*My Life Today*, p. 195.

“The purest joy springs from the deepest humiliation. The strongest and noblest characters are built on the foundation of patience, love, and submission to God’s will.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 319.

THE GIFT OF PEACE

3. How may one obtain the precious gift that the Lord has promised? What will a peacemaker do?

JOHN 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

1 PETER 3:10, 11 *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: ¹¹ Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

JAMES 3:17, 18 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

“Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace. There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.... And ‘blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.’ The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.

LONGSUFFERING AND MEEKNESS

4. What will demonstrate that one is longsuffering and meek?

JAMES 3:13 *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

EPHESIANS 4:1-3 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; ³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

“Love is the law of Christ’s kingdom. The Lord calls upon every one to reach a high standard. The lives of His people are to reveal love, meekness, longsuffering. Longsuffering bears something, yea, many things, without seeking to be avenged by word or act. ‘Longsuffering’ is patience with offense; long endurance. If you are longsuffering, you will not impart to others your supposed knowledge of your brother’s mistakes and errors. You will seek to help and save him, because he has been purchased with the blood of Christ. ‘Tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.’ ‘Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.’ To be longsuffering is not to be gloomy and sad, sour and hardhearted; it is to be exactly the opposite.” —*My Life Today*, p. 52.

“Meekness is a precious grace, willing to suffer silently, willing to endure trials. Meekness is patient and labors to be happy under all circumstances. Meekness is always thankful and makes its own songs of happiness, making melody in the heart to God. Meekness will suffer disappointment and wrong, and will not retaliate. Meekness is not to be silent and sulky. A morose temper is the opposite of meekness; for this only wounds and gives pain to others, and takes no pleasure to itself.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 335.

5. How are gentleness and goodness manifested?

EPHESIANS 5:8-11 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: ⁹ (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) ¹⁰ Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

PROVERBS 14:9 *Fools make a mock at sin; but among the righteous there is favour.*

“It is your duty to be Christians in the highest sense of the word—‘Christlike.’ It is through the unseen lines that attract you to other minds with which you are brought in contact that may, if you are in constant connection with God, leave impressions that will make you a savor of life unto life. Otherwise, if you are selfish, if you are self-exalted, if you are worldly-minded, no matter what your position, no matter what your experience has been, or how much you know, if you are not having the law of kindness on your lips, sweet fragrance of love springing from your heart, you can do nothing as it ought to be done. Kindness and love and courtesy are the marks of the Christian....” —*My Life Today*, p. 178.

“The religion of Jesus softens whatever is hard and rough in the temper, and smooths whatever is rugged and sharp in the manners. It makes the words gentle and the demeanor winning. Let us learn from Christ how to combine a high sense of purity and integrity with sunniness of disposition. A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 122.

FAITHFULNESS

6. Where can honesty and faithfulness be readily seen?

LUKE 16:10 *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.*

“It is conscientious attention to what the world terms ‘little things’ that makes life a success. Little deeds of charity, little acts of self-denial, speaking simple words of helpfulness, watching against little sins—this is Christianity. A grateful acknowledgment of daily blessings, a wise improvement of daily opportunities, a diligent cultivation of intrusted talents—this is what the Master calls for.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 143.

“Great truths must be brought into little things. Practical religion is to be carried into the lowly duties of daily life. The greatest qualification for any man is to obey implicitly the word of the Lord....

“Let a living faith run like threads of gold through the performance of even the smallest duties. Then all the daily work will promote Christian growth. There will be a continual looking unto Jesus. Love for Him will give vital force to everything that is undertaken. Thus through the right use of our talents, we may link ourselves by a golden chain to the higher world. This is true sanctification; for sanctification consists in the

cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 359, 360.

TEMPERANCE

7. Why is temperance so important that the apostle Peter considers it a Christian virtue?

2 PETER 1:5-7 *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

“The observance of temperance and regularity in all things has a wonderful power. It will do more than circumstances or natural endowments in promoting that sweetness and serenity of disposition which count so much in smoothing life’s pathway. At the same time the power of self-control thus acquired will be found one of the most valuable equipments for grappling successfully with the stern duties and realities that await every human being.” —*My Life Today*, p. 82.

“The government of self is the best government in the world. By putting on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, ninety-nine out of a hundred of the troubles which so terribly embitter life might be saved.... The natural man must die, and the new man, Christ Jesus, take possession of the soul, so that the follower of Jesus may say in verity and truth: ‘I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ Galatians 2:20.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 39.

FOR PERSONAL MEDITATION

“The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

“Without Christ we can do nothing. The pure principles of uprightness, virtue, and goodness are all from God. A conscientious discharge of duty, Christlike sympathy, love for souls and love for your own soul, because you belong to God, and have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, will make you a laborer together with God, and endow you with persuasive, drawing power.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 194.

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Grieving the Holy Spirit

“It is not necessary that anyone should yield to the temptations of Satan and thus violate his conscience and grieve the Holy Spirit. Every provision has been made in the word of God whereby all may have divine help in their endeavors to overcome.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 574.

DOUBT AND DISOBEDIENCE

1. When God clearly reveals His will for our salvation, what will happen if we compromise with sin or indulge even one sin?

DEUTERONOMY 30:15-18 *See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; ¹⁶ In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. ¹⁷ But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; ¹⁸ I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.*

“Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. They may be obedient through the name and grace of our Redeemer, or they may be disobedient, and realize the consequences. Man is responsible for receiving or rejecting sacred and eternal truth. The Spirit of God is continually convicting, and souls are deciding for or against the truth. How important, then, that every act of life be such that it need not be repented of, especially among the ambassadors of Christ, who are acting in His stead!” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 174.

“God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 458.

2. What are people practically doing when they distrust God’s promises and doubt His love?

JOHN 3:16, 18, 19 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.... ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that*

believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

ROMANS 8:32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

“When we seem to doubt God’s love and distrust His promises, we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit.... How can our heavenly Father regard us when we distrust His love, which has led Him to give His only-begotten Son that we might have life? The apostle writes, ‘He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?’ Romans 8:32. And yet how many, by their actions, if not in word, are saying, ‘The Lord does not mean this for me. Perhaps He loves others, but He does not love me.’”
—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 216.

FEAR, COMPLAINING, AND REFUSAL TO SERVE THE LORD

3. How is the Holy Spirit grieved by our fears and discontent?

LAMENTATIONS 3:37-40 *Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? ³⁸ Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? ³⁹ Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? ⁴⁰ Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.*

EXODUS 16:2, 7 *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:... ⁷ And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?*

1 JOHN 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

“Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. When brought into strait places, they murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them. Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. The obstacles they encounter, instead of leading them to seek help from God, the only Source of strength, separate them from Him, because they awaken unrest and repining.

“Do we well to be thus unbelieving? Why should we be ungrateful and distrustful? Jesus is our friend; all heaven is interested in our welfare; and our anxiety and fear grieve the Holy Spirit of God.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 293, 294.

4. How did the rich young man grieve the Holy Spirit? How can we apply his story to our own cross bearing and walk with Jesus?

MATTHEW 19:20-22 *The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? ²¹ Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*

LUKE 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

“It is a serious thing to grieve the Holy Spirit; and it is grieved when the human agent seeks to work himself, and refuses to enter the service of the Lord because the cross is too heavy, or the self-denial too great. The Holy Spirit seeks to abide in each soul. If it is welcomed as an honored guest, those who receive it will be made complete in Christ.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 216.

“The Holy Spirit is a divine teacher. If we heed its lessons we shall become wise unto salvation. But we need to guard well our hearts, for too often we forget the heavenly instruction we have received and seek to act out the natural inclinations of our unconsecrated minds. Each one must fight his own battle against self. Heed the teachings of the Holy Spirit. If this is done, they will be repeated again and again until the impressions are as it were ‘laid in the rock forever.’...” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 561.

5. How can our conduct grieve the Holy Spirit?

EPHESIANS 4:29-32 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. ³⁰ And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*

“When trials arise that seem unexplainable, we should not allow our peace to be spoiled. However unjustly we may be treated, let not passion arise. By indulging a spirit of retaliation we injure ourselves. We destroy our own confidence in God, and grieve the Holy Spirit. There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 171, 172.

BAD INFLUENCE AND NEGLECT

6. How does the Holy Spirit react when we have received Jesus’ commission and then remain indifferent, negligent, and lethargic concerning it?

MATTHEW 28:19, 20 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

“Those who know the truth are responsible for those who know it not. As a part of God’s great firm, we have a work to do in building up the interests of that firm. As instruments of righteousness, we are to build up the kingdom of God, according to the plans He has laid before us. All who are connected with God will be imbued with His Spirit. The light that has been given them they will communicate to those who are in darkness. They will never cease their efforts to win souls to Christ. This is the work before all who claim to believe in Jesus. And in this work they will give themselves to God, soul, body, and spirit. They will bear their burden of soul in prayer to God, that those who know Him not may be convicted and converted. To neglect this work is to insult Jehovah, to grieve the Holy Spirit, and to prove disloyal to Christ.” —*Review and Herald*, July 18, 1899.

“The work is before us; will we engage in it? We must work fast, we must go steadily forward. We must be preparing for the great day of the Lord. We have no time to lose, no time to be engaged in selfish purposes. The world is to be warned. What are we doing as individuals to bring the light before others? God has left to every man his work; everyone has a part to act, and we cannot neglect this work except at the peril of our souls. O my brethren, will you grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause It to depart? Will you shut out the blessed Saviour, because you are unprepared for His presence? Will you leave souls to perish without the knowledge of the truth, because you love your ease too well to bear the burden that Jesus bore for you?” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 126.

7. What happens when someone knows God’s will but does not respect it in every aspect of life?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:9, 10 *In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; ¹⁰ But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*

ROMANS 14:13 *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.*

“To grieve the Holy Spirit which would make you a witness of Christ is a terrible thing. You know not when you may grieve the Spirit for the last time. The Holy Spirit does not work upon the human heart to compel you to give yourself to Christ, to force you to yield your conscience; but [the Spirit] shines into the chambers of the mind in a way to convict of sin, and to entice you unto righteousness. If you do not confess Christ now, the time will come when, overwhelmed with a sense of the great things that you have lost, you will make confession. But why not confess

Christ now while mercy's voice invites you?" —(*The Youth's Instructor*, August 1, 1895) *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 300.

"Any habit or practice that would lead into sin, and bring dishonor upon Christ, would better be put away, whatever the sacrifice. That which dishonors God cannot benefit the soul. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. And one sin cherished is sufficient to work the degradation of the character, and to mislead others." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 439.

FOR MEDITATION

"The True Witness says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.' Revelation 3:20. Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the word of God or through His messengers is a knock at the door of the heart. It is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, the disposition to open becomes weaker. The impressions of the Holy Spirit if disregarded today, will not be as strong tomorrow. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of life, and of the great eternity beyond. Our condemnation in the judgment will not result from the fact that we have been in error, but from the fact that we have neglected heaven-sent opportunities for learning what is truth." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 489, 490.

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12

Sabbath, March 21, 2015

Resisting the Holy Spirit

"It is a dangerous thing for men to resist the Spirit of truth and grace and righteousness, because its manifestations are not according to their ideas, and have not come in the line of their methodical plans. The Lord works in His own way, and according to His own devising. Let men pray that they may be divested of self, and may be in harmony with heaven. Let them pray, 'Not my will, but Thine, O God, be done.'" —(*Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1004.

WHEN THE HEART BECOMES HARD

- 1. In what serious condition were some people in the past? If one does not study the Bible with a sincere heart, putting its lessons into practice, in what danger is he?**

ACTS 7:51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

HEBREWS 3:7, 8 *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*

“Beware how you neglect secret prayer and a study of God’s word. These are your weapons against him who is striving to hinder your progress heavenward. The first neglect of prayer and Bible study makes easier the second neglect. The first resistance to the Spirit’s pleading prepares the way for the second resistance. Thus the heart is hardened, and the conscience seared.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 96.

“Whoever will prayerfully study the Bible, desiring to know the truth, that he may obey it, will receive divine enlightenment. He will understand the Scriptures.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 459.

2. What happened in the times of Noah and Jesus? What happens in our days when men resist the wooing of the Holy Spirit?

GENESIS 6:5, 3 *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually....* ³ *And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

JOHN 3:19, 20 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* ²⁰ *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*

“Many at first appeared to receive the warning; yet they did not turn to God with true repentance. They were unwilling to renounce their sins. During the time that elapsed before the coming of the Flood, their faith was tested, and they failed to endure the trial. Overcome by the prevailing unbelief, they finally joined their former associates in rejecting the solemn message. Some were deeply convicted, and would have heeded the words of warning; but there were so many to jest and ridicule, that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are so reckless and go to such lengths in sin as do those who have once had light, but have resisted the convicting Spirit of God.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95.

3. What will happen to those who refuse to hear the Holy Spirit’s voice and place themselves far from His influence?

PROVERBS 1:24-28 *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ²⁵ But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: ²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; ²⁷ When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. ²⁸ Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.*

“The wrath of God is not declared against unrepentant sinners merely because of the sins they have committed, but because, when called to repent, they choose to continue in resistance, repeating the sins of the past in defiance of the light given them. If the Jewish leaders had sub-

mitted to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, they would have been pardoned; but they were determined not to yield. In the same way, the sinner, by continued resistance, places himself where the Holy Spirit cannot influence him.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 62.

CONSEQUENCES OF RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT

4. If continued, where will resistance against the Holy Spirit lead?

JOHN 3:17, 18 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

TITUS 1:16 *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:12 *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.*

“The Redeemer of the world declares that there are greater sins than that for which Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Those who hear the gospel invitation calling sinners to repentance, and heed it not, are more guilty before God than were the dwellers in the vale of Siddim. And still greater sin is theirs who profess to know God and to keep His commandments, yet who deny Christ in their character and their daily life. In the light of the Saviour’s warning, the fate of Sodom is a solemn admonition, not merely to those who are guilty of outbreking sin, but to all who are trifling with Heaven-sent light and privileges.

“... The heart that has long slighted God’s mercy, becomes hardened in sin, and is no longer susceptible to the influence of the grace of God. Fearful will be the doom of that soul of whom the pleading Saviour shall finally declare, he ‘is joined to idols: let him alone.’ Hosea 4:17. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the cities of the plain than for those who have known the love of Christ, and yet have turned away to choose the pleasures of a world of sin.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 165.

5. In what danger are those who reject the light leading to heaven?

JOB 33:29, 30; 36:9-12 *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, ³⁰ To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.... ^{36:9} Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. ¹⁰ He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. ¹¹ If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. ¹² But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.*

“Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the

Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul.... It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul...." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 215.

6. What will be the end of those who had great light but turned against God?

HEBREWS 6:4-6 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵ And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶ If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

"I saw that all heaven is interested in our salvation; and shall we be indifferent? Shall we be careless, as though it were a small matter whether we are saved or lost? Shall we slight the sacrifice that has been made for us? Some have done this. They have trifled with offered mercy, and the frown of God is upon them. God's Spirit will not always be grieved. It will depart if grieved a little longer. After all has been done that God could do to save men, if they show by their lives that they slight Jesus' offered mercy, death will be their portion, and it will be dearly purchased. It will be a dreadful death; for they will have to feel the agony that Christ felt upon the cross to purchase for them the redemption which they have refused. And they will then realize what they have lost—eternal life and the immortal inheritance. The great sacrifice that has been made to save souls shows us their worth. When the precious soul is once lost, it is lost forever." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 124.

THE EXAMPLE OF KING SAUL

7. What example do we have in the Bible of a man who resisted the Holy Spirit and did as he pleased? What were the consequences for him?

1 SAMUEL 28:6, 7 *And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. ⁷ Then said Saul to his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor.*

1 CHRONICLES 10:13, 14 *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;¹⁴ And inquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.*

“What path so dark for human feet to tread as that chosen by one who has persisted in having his own way, resisting the holy influences of the Spirit of God! What bondage so terrible as that of him who is given over to the control of the worst of tyrants—himself! Trust in God and obedience to His will were the only conditions upon which Saul could be king of Israel. Had he complied with these conditions throughout his reign, his kingdom would have been secure; God would have been his guide, the Omnipotent his shield. God had borne long with Saul; and although his rebellion and obstinacy had well-nigh silenced the divine voice in the soul, there was still opportunity for repentance. But when in his peril he turned from God to obtain light from a confederate of Satan, he had cut the last tie that bound him to his Maker; he had placed himself fully under the control of that demoniac power which for years had been exercised upon him, and which had brought him to the verge of destruction.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 676, 679.

FOR MEDITATION

“When men’s hearts are softened and subdued by the constraining influence of the Holy Spirit, they will give heed to counsel; but when they turn from admonition until their hearts become hardened, the Lord permits them to be led by other influences. Refusing the truth, they accept falsehood, which becomes a snare to their own destruction.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 425.

“In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 587.

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Sin against the Holy Spirit

“We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness.... Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

SINS THAT WILL BE FORGIVEN

1. How far does God’s forgiveness of sins and even blasphemies reach? What do some examples from the Old Testament show?

MARK 3:28 *Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.*

“The Hebrews had an opportunity to reflect upon the scene that they had witnessed in the visitation of God’s wrath upon the most prominent ones in this great rebellion. The goodness and mercy of God were displayed in not completely exterminating this ungrateful people when His wrath was kindled against the most responsible ones. He gave the congregation who had permitted themselves to be deceived, space for repentance. The fact that the Lord, their invisible Leader, showed so much longsuffering and mercy in this instance is distinctly recorded as evidence of His willingness to forgive the most grievous offenders when they have a sense of their sin and return unto Him with repentance and humiliation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 355.

2. Even what sin can forgiven? What examples of this are in the Scriptures?

MATTHEW 12:32, FIRST PART *And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him.*

LUKE 23:34 *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

1 TIMOTHY 1:13 *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

“Heaven beheld the Victim betrayed into the hands of the murderous mob, and with mockery and violence hurried from one tribunal to another. It heard the sneers of His persecutors because of His lowly birth.... It saw the frenzied work of Satan, and his power over the hearts of men. Oh, fearful scene! ... Dragged to and fro from palace to judgment hall, arraigned twice before the priests, twice before the Sanhedrin, twice before Pilate, and once before Herod, mocked, scourged, condemned, and led out to be crucified, bearing the heavy burden of the cross, amid the wailing of the daughters of Jerusalem and the jeering of the rabble.... All heaven was filled with wonder when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of His terrible suffering—‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’ Luke 23:34. Yet there stood men, formed in the image of God, joining to crush out the life of His only-begotten Son. What a sight for the heavenly universe!” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 760.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

3. What did Jesus say about the sin against the Holy Spirit? What does this sin imply?

MATTHEW 12:31, 32 *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. ³² And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*

MARK 3:29 *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.*

“It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634.

“No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent.” —*Review and Herald*, June 29, 1897.

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

4. What example in the Old Testament shows this kind of sin?

NUMBERS 16:3, 41 *And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you,*

seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?...⁴¹ But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.

“Korah would not have taken the course he did had he known that all the directions and reproofs communicated to Israel were from God. But he might have known this. God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘Ye have killed the people of the Lord.’ Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God’s displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man’s heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 404, 405.

5. What examples of this are shown in the New Testament?

MATTHEW 9:32-34; 12:22-24 *As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.³³ And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.³⁴ But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils....^{12:22} Then was brought to him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, so that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw.²³ And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*

“It was just before this that Jesus had a second time performed the miracle of healing a man possessed, blind and dumb, and the Pharisees had reiterated the charge, ‘He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.’ Matthew 9:34. Christ told them plainly that in attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, they were cutting themselves off from the fountain of blessing. Those who had spoken against Jesus Himself, not discerning His divine character, might receive forgiveness; for through the Holy Spirit they might be brought to see their error and repent. Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 321, 322.

“In rejecting Christ, the Pharisees placed themselves where darkness and superstition closed around them.... They placed themselves where no power, human or divine, could reach them; they sinned against the Holy Spirit, and God had no reserve power to meet their case.” —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 374.

6. What lays the groundwork for the sin against the Holy Spirit?

JOHN 9:28-30 *Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. ³⁰ The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

HEBREWS 12:25 *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.*

“There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven’s invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.

“In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error.... So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 324, 325.

7. What does the sin against the Holy Spirit lead to?

1 JOHN 5:16, LAST PART *There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*

HEBREWS 10:26 *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*

“Sanctification is a daily work. Let none deceive themselves with the belief that God will pardon and bless them while they are trampling upon one of His requirements. The willful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit, and separates the soul from God. Whatever may be the ecstasies of religious feeling, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honor those only who honor Him.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 114.

FOR MEDITATION

“Christ ... tells His hearers that all manner of sin and blasphemy may be forgiven if done in ignorance. In their great blindness they might speak words of insult and derision against the Son of man, and yet be within the boundary of mercy. But when the power and Spirit of God rested upon His messengers, they were on holy ground. To ignore the Spirit of God, to charge it with being

the spirit of the devil, placed them in a position where God had no power to reach their souls. No power in any of God's provisions to correct the erring can reach them...." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1092.

"In this our day men have placed themselves where they are wholly unable to fulfill the conditions of repentance and confession: therefore they cannot find mercy and pardon. The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence." —(Manuscript 30, 1890) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1093.

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14

Sabbath, April 4, 2015

Serving the Holy Spirit

"Those who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God, purifying their thoughts by obedience to the law of God, will continually receive a new endowment of physical and mental power. There will be heart yearnings after God and earnest prayer for clear perception to discern the office and work of the Holy Spirit. It is not for us to use it, but for the Holy Spirit to use us, molding, fashioning every power." —*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 106; *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 40.

HUMAN INSTRUMENTS

1. From ancient times, whom has God used to reveal His will and plan of salvation? 2 Peter 1:21; Hebrews 1:1.

2 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

HEBREWS 1:1 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.*

"From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His 'good Spirit to instruct them.' Nehemiah 9:20. And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs ... and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions....

"Today the heralds of the cross are ... preparing the way for the second advent of Christ.... And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptized with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 190.

2. To what can God's servants who preach the truth be compared?

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

ROMANS 15:16 *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was intrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 198.

"Those only who are constantly receiving fresh supplies of grace, will have power proportionate to their daily need and their ability to use that power. Instead of looking forward to some future time when, through a special endowment of spiritual power, they will receive a miraculous fitting up for soul winning, they are yielding themselves daily to God, that He may make them vessels meet for His use. Daily they are improving the opportunities for service that lie within their reach. Daily they are witnessing for the Master wherever they may be, whether in some humble sphere of labor in the home, or in a public field of usefulness." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

JOYFUL SERVICE

3. What type of service pleases the Lord?

ROMANS 12:11 *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*

PSALMS 2:11; 100:2 *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling....* ^{100:2} *Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

"The greatest praise that men can bring to God is to become consecrated channels through whom He can work. Time is rapidly passing into eternity. Let us not keep back from God that which is His own. Let us not refuse Him that which, though it cannot be given with merit, cannot be denied without ruin. He asks for a whole heart; give it to Him; it is His, both by creation and by redemption. He asks for your intellect; give it to Him; it is His. He asks for your money; give it to Him; it is His. 'Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.' 1 Corinthians 6:19,

20. God requires the homage of a sanctified soul, which has prepared itself, by the exercise of the faith that works by love, to serve Him. He holds up before us the highest ideal, even perfection. He asks us to be absolutely and completely for Him in this world as He is for us in the presence of God.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 566.

4. What results will those who are sanctified by the truth and walk in faith in God’s service experience?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

EPHESIANS 3:20 *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*

“There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories that because of our own erroneous and preconceived opinions, our defects of character, our smallness of faith, have seemed impossible. To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 208.

SPONTANEOUS, ACTIVE WITNESSES

5. Is it absolutely necessary to receive special instruction before we can testify for the Lord? What two examples in the gospels provide the answer to this?

ECCLESIASTES 11:1 *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.*

JOHN 4:28, 29, 42 *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ²⁹ Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?... ⁴² And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

MARK 5:19, 20 *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. ²⁰ And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.*

“As the Holy Spirit opens to you the truth, you will treasure up the most precious experiences and will long to speak to others of the comforting things that have been revealed to you. When brought into associ-

ation with them, you will communicate some fresh thought in regard to the character or the work of Christ. You will have some fresh revelation of His pitying love to impart to those who love Him and to those who love Him not....

“The heart that has once tasted the love of Christ, cries out continually for a deeper draft, and as you impart you will receive in richer and more abundant measure. Every revelation of God to the soul increases the capacity to know and to love. The continual cry of the heart is, ‘More of Thee,’ and ever the Spirit’s answer is, ‘Much more.’... To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, ‘Be filled with the Spirit’ (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 213.

6. Is it sufficient to speak about Christ and hope to receive the Holy Spirit? Who are Christ’s true representatives?

ACTS 5:32 *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

JOHN 15:26, 27 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: ²⁷ And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

“There are many who profess to believe and claim the Lord’s promises; they talk about Christ and the Holy Spirit; yet they receive no benefit, because they do not surrender their souls to the guidance and control of divine agencies.

“We cannot use the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit, God works in His people ‘to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ Philippians 2:13. But many will not submit to be led. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given.” —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 284, 285.

7. What is God’s intention for everyone? Are we ready to answer the Lord’s call, as did Isaiah?

1 PETER 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

MARK 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

ISAIAH 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

“Every soul is to minister. He is to use every physical, moral and mental power—through sanctification of the Spirit—that he may be a laborer together with God. All are bound to devote themselves actively and

unreservedly to God's service. They are to cooperate with Jesus Christ in the great work of helping others. Christ died for every man. He has ransomed every man by giving His life on the cross. This He did that man might no longer live an aimless, selfish life but that he might live unto Jesus Christ, who died for his salvation. All are not called upon to enter the ministry, but nevertheless, they are to minister. It is an insult to the Holy Spirit of God for any man to choose a life of self-serving." —(Letter 10, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1159.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God." —(*Review and Herald*, July 21, 1896) *Christian Service*, p. 253.

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15

Sabbath, April 11, 2015

The Holy Spirit in the Proclamation of the Gospel

"The influence of the Holy Spirit is needed that the work may be properly balanced and that it may move forward solidly in every line." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 291.

THE HELPER

1. Who is the Helper for all who earnestly proclaim the truth for this time?

HEBREWS 1:14; 2:4 *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?...^{2:4} God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

"The Lord desires us to proclaim the third angel's message with power in these cities.... As we work with all the strength that God grants us, and in humility of heart, putting our entire trust in Him, our labors will not be without fruit. Our determined efforts to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth for this time will be seconded by holy angels, and many souls will be saved. The Lord never forsakes His faithful messengers. He

sends to their aid heavenly agencies and accompanies their labors with the power of His Holy Spirit to convince and to convert. All heaven will endorse your appeals." —*Evangelism*, p. 38.

"If you will seek the Lord, putting away all evil speaking and all selfishness, and continuing instant in prayer, the Lord will draw nigh to you. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that gives efficacy to your efforts and your appeals. Humble yourselves before God, that in His strength you may rise to a higher standard." —(Manuscript 20, 1905) *Evangelism*, p. 285.

2. What examples in the Old Testament show that God's word must be carefully studied before one is able to teach it?

EZRA 7:10 *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.*

NEHEMIAH 8:8 *So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*

"No one is able to explain the Scriptures without the aid of the Holy Spirit. But when you take up the Word of God with a humble, teachable heart, the angels of God will be by your side to impress you with evidences of the truth. When the Spirit of God rests upon you, there will be no feeling of envy or jealousy in examining another's position; there will be no spirit of accusation and criticism, such as Satan inspired in the hearts of the Jewish leaders against Christ. As Christ said to Nicodemus, so I say to you, 'Ye must be born again.' 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' John 3:7, 3. You must have the divine mold before you can discern the sacred claims of the truth. Unless the teacher is a learner in the school of Christ, he is not fitted to teach others." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 411, 412.

3. What experience of the apostles can be ours?

1 CORINTHIANS 2:12, 13 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

"In his ministry the apostle Paul had taught the people 'not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' The truths that he proclaimed had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, 'for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.... Which things,' declared Paul, 'we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' 1 Corinthians 2:4, 10-13." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 402.

"Their teaching was a second edition of the teachings of Christ, the utterance of simple, grand truths that flashed light into darkened minds, and converted thousands in a day. The disciples began to understand that Christ was their Advocate in the heavenly courts, and that

He was glorified. They could speak because the Holy Spirit gave them utterance.” —(Manuscript 32, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1056.

PREPARING HEARTS FOR THE MESSAGE

4. How does the Holy Spirit work with newly instructed souls so they receive the truth?

ACTS 16:14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5, 6 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

“It is the efficiency of the Holy Spirit that makes the ministry of the word effective. When Christ speaks through the minister, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of the listeners to receive the word. The Holy Spirit is not a servant, but a controlling power. He causes the truth to shine into minds, and speaks through every discourse where the minister surrenders himself to the divine working. It is the Spirit that surrounds the soul with a holy atmosphere, and speaks to the impenitent through words of warning, pointing them to Him who takes away the sin of the world.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 155.

ZEAL IS ESSENTIAL

5. What did the Christians do every day? Knowing that we are laboring with God's assistance for eternal goals, how diligent should we be in missionary readiness and activity?

ACTS 2:46, 47 *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

ISAIAH 52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

“Zeal for the glory of God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a longing to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified?

Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles?" —(*Signs of the Times*, February 17, 1914) *Evangelism*, p. 698.

"The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to exalt the Lord alone, and guided the pens of the sacred historians, that the record of the words and works of Christ might be given to the world. Today this Spirit is constantly at work, seeking to draw the attention of men to the great sacrifice made upon the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God to man, and to open to the convicted soul the promises of the Scriptures." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 286.

6. How did God prepare each of His disciples for evangelical work? How grateful to God are we that we can use the talent He has given us for His supreme service?

JAMES 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

1 PETER 4:10 *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

"Before He left His disciples, Christ 'breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' John 20:22. Again He said, 'Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you.' Luke 24:49. But not until after the ascension was the gift received in its fullness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working was the outpouring of the Spirit received. Then in a special sense the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ....

"The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit.... All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327.

7. What will be the fruit of the Lord's servants' labor? How will this benefit His church?

JAMES 5:20 *Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

DANIEL 12:3 *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

"As God's children devote themselves to this work, many will lay hold of the hand stretched out to save them. They are constrained to turn from their evil ways. Some of the rescued ones may, through faith

in Christ, rise to high places of service and be entrusted with responsibilities in the work of saving souls. They know by experience the necessities of those for whom they labor, and they know how to help them; they know what means can best be used to recover the perishing. They are filled with gratitude to God for the blessings they have received; their hearts are quickened by love, and their energies are strengthened to lift up others who can never rise without help. Taking the Bible as their guide and the Holy Spirit as their Helper and Comforter, they find a new career opening before them. Every one of these souls that is added to the force of workers, provided with facilities and instruction as to how to save souls for Christ, becomes a co-laborer with those who brought him the light of truth. Thus God is honored and His truth advanced.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 260.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The promise of the Spirit is not appreciated as it should be. Its fulfillment is not realized as it might be. It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless. Learning, talents, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner be won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them the channel for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 328.

“We are to cooperate with the three highest powers in heaven—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.” —(*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 51 [1905]) *Evangelism*, p. 617.

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Continual Communication of the Holy Spirit

“The capacity for receiving the holy oil from the two olive trees which empty themselves, is by the receiver emptying that holy oil out of himself in word and in action to supply the necessities of other souls. Work, precious, satisfying work—to be constantly receiving and constantly imparting! The capacity for receiving is only kept up by imparting.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1180.

A SYMBOLIC VISION

1. What vision did the Lord give the prophet Zechariah? What do the candlesticks represent at the beginning of the vision in Revelation?

ZECHARIAH 4:1, 2 *And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, ² And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof.*

REVELATION 1:20, LAST PART ... *The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

“It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour’s love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 419.

2. What were on the right and left sides of the candlestick?

ZECHARIAH 4:3 *And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.*

“In this vision the two olive trees which stand before God are represented as emptying the golden oil out of themselves through golden tubes into the bowl of the candlestick. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a bright, continuous light. So from the anointed ones that stand in God’s presence the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His people, that they may impart to

others light and joy and refreshing. Those who are thus enriched are to enrich others with the treasure of God's love." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 594.

MEANING OF THE VISION

3. What do the two olive trees standing on the right and the left of the candlestick represent?

ZECHARIAH 4:11 *Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?*

"By the holy beings surrounding His throne, the Lord keeps up a constant communication with the inhabitants of the earth." —(*Review and Herald*, February 3, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1179.

"From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God's people that heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' Zechariah 4:6." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 406, 408.

4. And what is the meaning of the golden oil that constantly flows from the two olive branches through the golden pipes so the lamps can burn and give light?

ZECHARIAH 4:12-14 *And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? ¹³ And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. ¹⁴ Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*

"The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Spirit is represented in the prophecy of Zechariah." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 407.

"The two olive trees empty the golden oil out of themselves through the golden pipes into the golden bowl from which the lamps of the sanctuary are fed. The golden oil represents the Holy Spirit. With this oil God's ministers are to be constantly supplied, that they, in turn, may impart it to the church. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' God's servants can obtain victories only by inward purity, by cleanness of heart, by holiness. It is of the utmost importance that ministers set a right example. If they follow lax, loose principles, their example is quoted by those who are doing wrong as a vindication of their course. The whole synagogue of Satan is watching for defects in the lives of God's representatives, and the most is made of every defect." —(*Review and Herald*, December 22, 1904) *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 188.

5. What was the prophet told at a very difficult moment in regard to the progress and conclusion of God's work? Will this occur through masses of people or human power?

ZECHARIAH 4:4-6 *So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? ⁵ Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. ⁶ Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*

"The Lord has told us whence comes our strength.... As the Lord sees fit He imparts, to those who keep His way, power that enables them to exert a strong influence for good." —*Counsels on Health*, p. 274.

"How could one of little courage and experience withstand the tempest before which the strongest and bravest had been forced to flee? 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.' Zechariah 4:6. 'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.' 'Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.' 1 Corinthians 1:27, 25." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 232.

"Let us not try to work ourselves or others, but let us depend upon the Holy Spirit. Deal gently with human beings. With hearts full of spiritual tenderness, melt your way into convicted hearts. Let your words be dipped in the heavenly oil from the two olive branches. We need the golden oil emptied into prepared vessels, that it may be communicated to those who are seeking for the truth. Ever remember that it is 'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'" —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 440.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND POWER IN PREACHING

6. With what is the Holy Spirit often associated in the Scriptures?

ACTS 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

LUKE 4:14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.*

"Will not the church awake to her responsibility? God is waiting to impart the Spirit of the greatest Missionary the world has ever known to those who will work with self-denying, self-sacrificing consecration. When God's people receive this Spirit, power will go forth from them." —(Manuscript 59, 1898) *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 117.

"Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the cooperation of angels of heaven. With the help of these divine agencies they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messen-

gers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ. So long as they remained united, the church would go forth 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' Song of Solomon 6:10. Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 90, 91.

7. What glorious promise is given to all who preach the message of salvation?

ACTS 1:8; 2:39 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth....* ^{2:39} *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

"In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit....

"But no man can impart that which he himself has not received. In the work of God, humanity can originate nothing. No man can by his own effort make himself a light bearer for God. It was the golden oil emptied by the heavenly messengers into the golden tubes, to be conducted from the golden bowl into the lamps of the sanctuary, that produced a continuous bright and shining light. It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 419, 418.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"It is not by the might or power of the human agent that truth is to be impressed upon minds, 'but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' Zechariah 4:6. It is not the temperament or the eloquence of the one who preaches the word that makes his work successful. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God gives the increase. It is a minister's familiarity with God's word and his submission to the divine will, that give success to his efforts." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 251, 252.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from the Caribbean Islands on page 85***

17

Sabbath, April 25, 2015

Work of the Holy Spirit Compared with Wind

“Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 55.

THE NEW BIRTH

1. What birth is crucial for every soul who desires to enter the kingdom of heaven?

JOHN 3:3-6; 1:12, 13 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.... ^{1:12} But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

“Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

2. What illustration did Jesus use to describe the action of the Holy Spirit?

JOHN 3:7, 8 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus was still perplexed, and Jesus used the wind to illustrate His meaning: ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.’ John 3:7.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

3. How does God work so a soul can attain heart conversion through the Holy Spirit?

EZEKIEL 36:26, 27 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

“The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God—a patient, protracted process.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

A TRANSFORMED LIFE

4. What can be seen in the soul who is renewed into God’s image by the Holy Spirit?

COLOSSIANS 3:5, 9, 10 *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:... ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

GALATIANS 5:16, 17 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

“While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put

away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

“It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them. An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 27.

5. What invitation is frequently addressed to sinners?

ISAIAH 55:6-8 *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.*

“Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike. When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners. As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God.” —*Evangelism*, p. 288.

IMMEDIATE OR DELAYED RESULTS

6. What examples in the Bible show the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit?

JOHN 4:23-26, 29, 39 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴ God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. ²⁵ The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. ²⁶ Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.... ²⁹ Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?... ³⁹ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

"The Spirit of God is manifested in different ways upon different men. One under the movings of this power will tremble before the Word of God. His convictions will be so deep that a hurricane and tumult of feeling seem to rage in his heart, and his whole being is prostrate under the convicting power of the truth. When the Lord speaks forgiveness to the repenting soul, he is full of ardor, full of love to God, full of earnestness and energy, and the life-giving spirit which he has received cannot be repressed. Christ is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. His feelings of love are as deep and ardent as was his distress and agony. His soul is like the fountain of the great deep, broken up, and he pours forth his thanksgiving and praise, his gratitude and joy, until the heavenly harps are tuned to notes of rejoicing. He has a story to tell, but not in any precise, common, methodical way. He is a soul ransomed through the merits of Jesus Christ, and his whole being is thrilled with the realization of the salvation of God." —*Evangelism*, p. 289.

7. Did Nicodemus respond immediately to Jesus' words? How do we know that the Holy Spirit made a deep impression on him?

JOHN 3:9-12; 7:50, 51; 19:39, 40 *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?* ¹⁰ *Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?* ¹¹ *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.* ¹² *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?...^{7:50} Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them.)⁵¹ Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?...^{19:39} And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.* ⁴⁰ *Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

"Others are brought to Christ in a more gentle way.... A teacher in Israel, a man among wise men, a man who supposed that he was able to comprehend the science of religion, and yet stumbling at the doctrine of conversion! He was not willing to admit truth, because he could not understand all that was connected with the operation of the power of God, and yet he accepted the facts of nature although he could not explain or even comprehend them. Like others of all ages, he was looking to forms and precise ceremonies as more essential to religion than the deep movements of the Spirit of God." —(*Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896) *Evangelism*, p. 289.

"If you have the Holy Spirit molding and fashioning your heart daily, then you will have divine insight to perceive the character of the kingdom of God. Nicodemus received the lesson of Christ and became a true believer. His voice was heard in the Sanhedrin council in opposition to their measures for compassing the death of Christ. 'Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him?' he said. The scornful answer was returned: 'Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.'" —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 369, 370.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The Lord will greatly bless His tried and chosen ones. If they will cooperate with Him. When the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost, it was like a rushing, mighty wind. It was given in no stinted measure, for it filled all the place where the disciples were sitting. So will it be given to us when our hearts are prepared to receive it....” —*The Upward Look*, p. 38.

“We all need to come into a self-sacrificing position before God if our work is to be accepted by Him. Let us remember that profession is nothing unless we have the truth in the heart. We need the converting power of God to take hold of us, that we may understand the needs of a perishing world.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 106.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

To be read on Sabbath, April 25, 2015

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, May 2, 2015*

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people ... from the islands of the sea.” Isaiah 11:11.

TERRITORY

“**T**here is but a little time in which to work; for the Lord is soon coming, and we must work diligently **to do all in our power to prepare a people to meet Him.**” —*Review and Herald*, December 9, 1909.

The Caribbean Sea encompasses about 7,000 islands comprising 28 island nations. Many of these islands are tiny uninhabited outcroppings that remain unnamed. For example, the Bahamas has 700 islands, but only 37 are inhabited. The U.S. Virgin Islands consists of 62 islands under the U.S. flag, but only St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, Water Island, and a few others are inhabited.

The International Missionary Society is currently active in Aruba, Cuba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica. Puerto Rico, a United States territory and part of the American Union, is also located in the region and has a solid work. While more than 90 percent of the approximately 42 million population of the Caribbean countries lives in these seven island states, the message has reached only 25 percent of the area. A great deal more needs to be done, and included in that effort will be the establishment of a Caribbean Union to organize the work in the islands. The Special Sabbath School Offering for May 2, 2015, will be used for this purpose.

There are a number of challenges that need to be overcome in making a plan for this region, including the many different languages, difficulties of entry and travel, varied cultures, and economic disparities.

The fact that the English, French, Spanish, Dutch, and other colonial and native cultures, with their different languages, have influence in the region adds to the missionary challenge.

Since these are all islands, visits from one to another must be done either by sea or air, which makes travel expensive. In

addition, each island state has its own unique entrance requirements, which also adds to the cost of missionary outreach.

Each archipelago (island group or chain) is, in a real sense, an “island unto itself.” To reach souls, one needs not only to cross broad stretches of sea and to plow through consular red tape but also to deal with cultural thought patterns in reaching interested souls. This last one is sometimes the most difficult.

Along with the above is each country’s economic situation. Some countries are well off and rank with the most affluent in the world, while others, such as Haiti, have one of the very lowest Gross Domestic Product rates in the world.

Pushing God’s work forward in these territories will require creative thinking under the Holy Spirit’s guidance to reach even some of the many souls who have not yet received divine light.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

In the last few years, God’s work has expanded into new areas of Cuba, where there are now more than 100 new souls, as well as in Haiti, where there are about half that number of members as this report is being written. Many more souls are preparing for baptism.

Beyond organizing the region into a working unit and analyzing the financial and human resources currently available, visits will need to be made and seminars will need to be conducted to train laborers in the various countries how to be self-sustaining wherever churches have already been established as well as in new areas. This will involve finding and training church leaders and spiritual young people, some of whom can be supported in obtaining a missionary school education.

In addition to scholarships, books, pamphlets, CDs, DVDs, correspondence courses, and educational materials for internal use, materials will also need to be provided for students attending seminars as well as for missionary outreach. This requires the development and establishment of the publishing work and educational centers.

A great work needs to be done in the Caribbean islands, and your prayers and financial support are urgently requested. It is no wonder that Jesus said, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Matthew 10:23. As we help others find their places in the heavenly kingdom, we secure our own. “The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” Proverbs 11:25.

Your generous gift for the Caribbean islands next Sabbath will give important impetus to the work in the region. After that, for the necessary ongoing support, the North American Foreign Missions

Fund is a standing fund to which gifts may be given at any time to further missionary outreach in this region of the world. Your systematic contributions to this fund and also your larger special gifts will directly impact God's cause. God bless His people everywhere.

In His service, Larry Watts

DEMOGRAPHIC CHART REVEALING MISSIONARY CHALLENGES

Rank	Country or Territory	Population July 1, 2013	Per capita GDP	Rank
	Total	41,937,000		
1	 Cuba	11,163,000	\$6,051	25
2	 Haiti	10,671,000	\$739	28
3	 Dominican Republic	9,745,000	\$5,745	26
4	 Puerto Rico (U.S. territory)	3,641,000	\$27,451	4
5	 Jamaica	2,715,000	\$5,376	27
6	 Trinidad and Tobago	1,344,000	\$16,693	13
7	 Guadeloupe (France)	409,000	\$25,479	5
8	 Martinique (France)	398,000	\$24,118	8
9	 Bahamas	368,000	\$23,175	9
10	 Barbados	276,000	\$15,799	14
11	 St. Lucia	170,000	\$7,913	21
12	 Curaçao (Holland)	155,000	\$20,500	10
13	 Virgin Islands (U.S. territory)	106,000	\$15,050	17
14	 Aruba (Holland)	105,000	\$25,354	6
15	 Granada	103,000	\$7,687	22
16	 St. Vincent and the Grenadines	97,000	\$6,447	24
17	 Antigua and Barbuda	88,000	\$17,500	12
18	 Dominica	71,000	\$6,833	23
19	 Cayman Islands (UK)	60,000	\$43,800	1
20	 St. Kitts and Nevis	55,000	\$15,573	15
21	 St. Maarten (Holland)	41,000	\$11,400	18
22	 St. Martin (France)	39,000	\$15,400	16
23	 Turks and Caicos Islands (UK)	33,000	\$24,273	7
24	 British Virgin Islands (UK)	32,000	\$43,366	2
25	 Dutch Caribbean (Holland)	23,000	\$19,000	11
26	 Anguilla (UK)	14,000	\$8,800	19
27	 St. Barthélemy (France)	10,000	\$37,000	3
28	 Montserrat (UK)	5,000	\$8,500	20

Special Sabbath School Offering for the CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

God bless your loving, generous offerings!

18

Sabbath, May 2, 2015

The Holy Spirit Associated with Fire

“The Lord knows the thought and purposes of man, and how easily He can melt us! How His Spirit, like a fire, can subdue the flinty heart! How He can fill the soul with love and tenderness! How He can give us the graces of His Holy Spirit, and fit us to go in and out, in laboring for souls!” —*Christian Service*, p. 169.

“The Holy Spirit must be received and brought into your character; then it will be as holy fire, giving forth incense which will rise up to God, not from lips that condemn, but as a healer of the souls of men.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 299.

FIRE IN GOD’S PRESENCE

1. With what is the manifestation of God’s presence sometimes associated?

EXODUS 3:2, 3; 19:18 *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.... ^{19:18} And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

“Forty years was Moses in this training school in the mountains. At Mount Horeb the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.... How many today see evidences of God’s work, but their attention is not arrested!” —*Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891.

“It will baffle the keenest intellect to interpret the divine manifestation of the burning bush. It was not a dream; it was not a vision; it was a living reality—something that Moses saw with his eyes. He heard the voice of God calling to him out of the bush, and he covered his face, realizing that he stood in the immediate presence of God. God was conversing with humanity. Never could Moses describe the impression made upon his mind by the sight he then saw, and by the sound of the

voice that spoke to him; but this impression was never effaced. Heaven came very near to him as, with reverent awe, he listened to the words, 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' What wondrous condescension for God to leave the heavenly courts, and manifest Himself to Moses, talking with him face to face, 'as a man speaketh unto his friend.'" —(*The Youth's Instructor*, December 20, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1099.

2. As the people were traveling on foot under the Lord's guidance, what protected them and helped them to keep moving, even at night?

EXODUS 13:21, 22; 14:24 *And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: ²² He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.... ^{14:24} And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.*

"'And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light.'... The standard of their invisible Leader was ever with them. By day the cloud directed their journeyings or spread as a canopy above the host. It served as a protection from the burning heat, and by its coolness and moisture afforded grateful refreshment in the parched, thirsty desert. By night it became a pillar of fire, illuminating their encampment and constantly assuring them of the divine presence." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 91.

ORIGIN OF SACRED FIRE

3. Who lit the fire on the altar when Aaron and his sons were ordained? What is said about the burning fire on the altar of sacrifice?

LEVITICUS 9:24; 6:12, 13 *And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.... ^{6:12} And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. ¹³ The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.*

"After the dedication of the tabernacle, the priests were consecrated to their sacred office. These services occupied seven days, each marked by special ceremonies. On the eighth day they entered upon their ministration. Assisted by his sons, Aaron offered the sacrifices that God required, and he lifted up his hands and blessed the people. All had been done as God commanded, and He accepted the sacrifice, and revealed His glory in a remarkable manner; fire came from the Lord and consumed the offering upon the altar. The people looked upon this wonder-

ful manifestation of divine power with awe and intense interest. They saw in it a token of God's glory and favor, and they raised a universal shout of praise and adoration and fell on their faces as if in the immediate presence of Jehovah." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 359.

FIRE AND PURIFICATION

4. How were Isaiah's lips purified when he was called to the holy ministry of a prophet? What should be the similar experience of both ministers and laypersons?

ISAIAH 6:5-7 *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. ⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷ And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*

"The live coal is symbolical of purification. If it touches the lips, no impure word will fall from them. The live coal also symbolizes the potency of the efforts of the servants of the Lord. God hates all coldness, all commonness, all cheap efforts. Those who labor acceptably in His cause, must be men who pray fervently, and whose works are wrought in God; and they will never have cause to be ashamed of their record. They will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and their reward will be given them—even eternal life." —*Review and Herald*, October 16, 1888.

"A true minister does the work of the Master. He feels the importance of his work, realizing that he sustains to the church and to the world a relation similar to that which Christ sustained. He works untiringly to lead sinners to a nobler, higher life, that they may obtain the reward of the overcomer. His lips are touched with a live coal from the altar, and he uplifts Jesus as the sinner's only hope. Those who hear him know that he has drawn near to God in fervent, effectual prayer. The Holy Spirit has rested upon him, his soul has felt the vital, heavenly fire, and he is able to compare spiritual things with spiritual." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 328.

5. With what is fire associated in the prophecy of Malachi?

MALACHI 3:2, 3 *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: ³ And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.*

"Meditation upon heavenly things is profitable, and will ever be accompanied with the peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Our calling is holy, our profession exalted. God is purifying unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He is sitting as a refiner and purifier of silver. When the dross and tin are removed, then His image will be perfectly reflected in us. Then the prayer of Christ for His disciples will be

answered in us: 'Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.' When the truth has a sanctifying influence upon our hearts and lives, we can render to God acceptable service and can glorify Him upon the earth, being partakers of the divine nature and having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 317.

THE BAPTISM OF SPIRIT AND FIRE

6. While John baptized with water, what is said about Jesus' baptism?

MATTHEW 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

LUKE 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

"The prophet Isaiah had declared that the Lord would cleanse His people from their iniquities 'by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.' The word of the Lord to Israel was, 'I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.' Isaiah 4:4; 1:25. To sin, wherever found, 'our God is a consuming fire.' Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them. Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the Angel, exclaimed, 'I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.' Genesis 32:30. Jacob had been guilty of a great sin in his conduct toward Esau; but he had repented. His transgression had been forgiven, and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the revelation of God's presence." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 107.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND TONGUES OF FIRE

7. What sat on each of the assembled disciples when they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?

ACTS 2:1-4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

"The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven's communication that the Redeemer's inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people....

“The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The Holy Spirit must be received and brought into your character; then it will be as holy fire, giving forth incense which will rise up to God, not from lips that condemn, but as a healer of the souls of men. Your countenance will express the image of the divine.... By beholding the character of Christ you will become changed into His likeness. The grace of Christ alone can change your heart, and then you will reflect the image of the Lord Jesus. God calls upon us to be like Him—pure, holy, and undefiled. We are to bear the divine image...”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 299.

“The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We, also, may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. If we do not have His power, it is because of our spiritual lethargy, our indifference, our indolence. Let us come out of this formality and deadness.”—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 23.

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19

Sabbath, May 9, 2015

Oil as a Symbol of the Holy Spirit

“By the lamps is represented the word of God. The psalmist says, ‘Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.’ Psalm 119:105. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Spirit is represented in the prophecy of Zechariah....

“So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom’s home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 406, 407, 414.

ALL WAITING BUT NOT ALL PREPARED

1. What parable did Jesus present to illustrate the constant necessity of the Holy Spirit?

MATTHEW 25:1, 2 *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ² And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*

“Very many follow on in their own ways and indulge their sinful desires and yet profess to be disciples of Christ. They have never submitted their hearts to God. Like the foolish virgins they have neglected to obtain the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps. I tell you, my brethren, that a large number who profess to believe and even to teach the truth are under the bondage of sin. Base passions defile the mind and corrupt the soul. Some who are in the vilest iniquity have borrowed the livery of heaven, that they may serve Satan more effectively....

“Those who are destitute of heavenly wisdom, destitute of living power with God, are not competent to steer the gospel ship amid icebergs and tempests. The church is passing through severe conflicts, but in her peril many would trust her to hands that will surely wreck her. We need a pilot on board now, for we are nearing the harbor. As a people we should be the light of the world. But how many are foolish virgins, having no oil in their vessels with their lamps. May the Lord of all grace, abundant in mercy, full of forgiveness, pity and save us, that we perish not with the wicked!” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 219, 104, 105.

2. What was different about the ways the virgins prepared for the bridegroom’s coming?

MATTHEW 25:3, 4 *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ⁴ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*

“Such enthusiasm and inspiration have not a heavenly origin. They are entirely of this earth. Sadly the angels of heaven look upon the forgetfulness of those for whom Christ has done so much. When sickness and death come to those who have lived merely for self-pleasing, too late they find that they have no oil in their lamps, and that they are utterly unfit to close their life’s history.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 387; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 85.

“A genuine religious experience unfolds and intensifies. Continual advancement, increasing knowledge and power in the word of God, is the natural result of a vital connection with God. The light of holy love will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. It was Brother P’s privilege to have such an experience as this; but he has not had the oil of grace in his vessel with his lamp, and his light has been growing dim. If he does not make a decided change soon, he will be where no warnings or entreaties will ever reach him. His light will go out in darkness, and he will be left in despair.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 413.

TAKEN BY SURPRISE

3. What did all the virgins do when they heard the cry at midnight that the bridegroom was coming?

MATTHEW 25:5-7 *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ⁷ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*

“No soul can prosper without time to pray, to search the Scriptures; and all should, as far as possible, have the privilege of attending public worship. All need to keep the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps. Above all others, the workers who are thrown into the society of worldlings need to have Jesus held up before them, that they may behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The godless element to which they are exposed makes it essential that personal labor should be bestowed upon them.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 422.

“The members of the church of Christ should gather up the divine rays of light from Jesus, and reflect them to others, leaving a bright track heavenward in the world. They are to be as the wise virgins, having their lamps trimmed and burning, representing the character of Christ to the world. We are not to be satisfied with anything short of this. We are not to be satisfied with our own righteousness, and content without the deep movings of the Spirit of God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 326.

4. What terrible surprise confronted the virgins who did not have a reserve supply of oil? What did they ask from their companions?

MATTHEW 25:8 *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.*

“Lingering near the bride’s house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. At midnight the cry is heard, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’ The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. They see the procession moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The ten maidens seize their lamps and begin to trim them, in haste to go forth. But five have neglected to fill their flasks with oil. They did not anticipate so long a delay, and they have not prepared for the emergency. In distress they appeal to their wiser companions saying, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.’ Matthew 25:8, margin.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 405, 406.

“They had all been convicted that they must prepare for the coming of the bridegroom, and all had gained a knowledge of the truth. There was no apparent difference between the wise and the foolish ... but the foolish had not provided for this emergency.... They had neglected to prepare themselves to meet the bridegroom....” —*Review and Herald*, September 17, 1895.

SECURE RESERVES WHILE THERE IS TIME

5. Did the wise virgins have enough reserves so they could share some of their oil? If we do not have the Holy Spirit in fullness, can we expect to receive more at the last moment?

MATTHEW 25:9 *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

“But the waiting five, with their freshly trimmed lamps, have emptied their flacons. They have no oil to spare, and they answer, ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’ Matthew 25:9.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 406.

“In reading this parable one cannot but pity the foolish virgins, and ask the question, Why is it that the wise did not divide their supply of oil? But as we make the spiritual application of the parable, we can see the reason. It is not possible for those who have faith and grace to divide their supply with those who have not. It is not possible for those who have made a thorough heart work, to impart the benefit of this to those who have done but surface work. The parable is designed to point out the peril of doing a surface work.... Are we building on the rock?... We should not soothe our consciences in expectation of heaven, when we are not bearing the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian life. Paul says, ‘Examine yourselves....’” —*Review and Herald*, September 17, 1895.

6. What happened while the unprepared virgins went to buy oil? What did they find out when they returned?

MATTHEW 25:10, 11 *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*

“The Laodicean message applies to all who profess to keep the law of God, and yet are not doers of it. We are not to be selfish in anything. Every phase of the Christian life is to be a representation of the life of Christ. If it is not, we shall hear the terrible words, ‘I know you not.’” —(*Review and Herald*, October 17, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 962.

“There are those in the ministry who have had light and a knowledge of the truth, who will not be overcomers. They do not restrict their appetites and passions or deny themselves for Christ’s sake. Many poor outcasts, even publicans and sinners, will grasp the hope set before them in the gospel and will go into the kingdom of heaven before the ones who have had great opportunities and great light, but who have walked in darkness. In the last great day many will say: ‘Lord, Lord, open unto us.’ But the door will be shut, and their knock will be in vain.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 75.

7. What answer was given to their pleading? How important is the lesson concerning the need of the Holy Spirit that we learn from this illustration?

MATTHEW 25:12, 13 *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

“Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, ‘I know you not.’ The fellowship of the Spirit, which you have slighted, could alone make you one with the joyous throng at the marriage feast. In that scene you cannot participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its melody upon deaf ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of gladness in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 413.

“God graciously grants a day of probation, a time of test and trial. He gives the invitation: ‘Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.’...” —*Maranatha*, p. 55.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“Why has the Lord so long delayed His coming? The whole host of heaven is waiting to fulfill the last work for this lost world, and yet the work waits. It is because the few who profess to have the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps, have not become burning and shining lights in the world. It is because missionaries are few....” —*Maranatha*, p. 55.

“The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

“Today the voice of mercy is calling, and Jesus is drawing men by the cords of His love; but the day will come when Jesus will put on the garments of vengeance.... The wickedness of the world is increasing every day, and when a certain line is reached, the register will be closed, and the account settled. There will be no more a sacrifice for sin. The Lord cometh. Long has mercy extended a hand of love, of patience and forbearance, toward a guilty world.” —*Maranatha*, p. 55.

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20

Sabbath, May 16, 2015

The Holy Spirit Likened to Rain and Dew

“At that time there was faith that brought answers to prayer—faith that had respect to the recompense of reward. Like showers of rain upon the thirsty earth, the Spirit of grace descended upon the earnest seekers. Those who expected soon to stand face to face with their Redeemer felt a solemn joy that was unutterable. The softening, subduing power of the Holy Spirit melted the heart as His blessing was bestowed in rich measure upon the faithful, believing ones.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 402, 403.

GERMINATION, GROWTH, AND RIPENING

- 1. What parable explains how God’s power brings about germination, growth, and fruit bearing?**

MARK 4:26-29 *And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; ²⁷ And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. ²⁸ For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. ²⁹ But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.*

1 CORINTHIANS 3:6. *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

“The parable of the seed reveals that God is at work in nature. The seed has in itself a germinating principle, a principle that God Himself has implanted; yet if left to itself the seed would have no power to spring up. Man has his part to act in promoting the growth of the grain. He must prepare and enrich the soil and cast in the seed. He must till the fields. But there is a point beyond which he can accomplish nothing. No strength or wisdom of man can bring forth from the seed the living plant. Let man put forth his efforts to the utmost limit, he must still depend upon One who has connected the sowing and the reaping by wonderful links of His own omnipotent power.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 63.

2. What element is absolutely essential for a plant’s growth and for its fruit to ripen? What power is essential also for us to grow in Christ?

DEUTERONOMY 11:14 *That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.*

JOHN 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

“The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a figure of the development of character. There can be no life without growth.

“The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the growth of character. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be constant advancement.

“The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. So spiritual growth is attained through cooperation with divine agencies. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, so we are to receive the Holy Spirit.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 197.

3. What does the Lord constantly provide in the natural world for life? How do the early rain for germination and the latter for ripening provide essential elements for life?

ISAIAH 55:10, 11 *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: ¹¹ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

JOEL 2:23 *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

“In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit.

“As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God’s grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 183.

THE HOLY SPIRIT DEPICTED AS RAIN

4. What do we need to ask the Lord for constantly? What events are represented by the former and the latter rains?

ZECHARIAH 10:1 *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*

“Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God’s church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

“But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

5. Like the farmer who pleads to the Lord for rain to make his plants grow and the fruit ripen, what do we have to do to receive the Holy Spirit?

JAMES 5:7 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

EPHESIANS 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

“‘Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain.’ Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man’s cooperation is required. God’s work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst.’ The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 508.

EXPECTING THE BLESSED SHOWERS OF THE SPIRIT

6. In what power do we need to pray? Is our participation in church gatherings all that is necessary for the Lord to give us His Holy Spirit?

JUDE 20, 21 *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, ²¹ Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

PSALM 119:1-3 *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. ² Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. ³ They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.*

“But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul.... Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 508.

7. Is the promise of the Holy Spirit for all believers in general? Who will be privileged to receive the fulfillment of the promise?

AMOS 4:7 *And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.*

“Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it....

“We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 507, 399.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“There is life in the seed, there is power in the soil; but unless an infinite power is exercised day and night, the seed will yield no returns. The showers of rain must be sent to give moisture to the thirsty fields, the sun must impart heat, electricity must be conveyed to the buried seed. The life which the Creator has implanted, He alone can call forth. Every seed grows, every plant develops, by the power of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 63; *Education*, p. 104.

“When the churches become living, working churches, the Holy Spirit will be given in answer to their sincere request.... Then the windows of heaven will be open for the showers of the latter rain.” —(*Review and Herald*, February 25, 1890) *Last Day Events*, p. 193.

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21

Sabbath, May 23, 2015

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

“In Christ’s day many heard the gospel, but their minds were darkened by false teaching, and they did not recognize in the humble Teacher of Galilee the Sent of God. But after Christ’s ascension His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom was signalized by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit was given. Christ’s witnesses proclaimed the power of the risen Saviour. The light of heaven penetrated the darkened minds of those who had been deceived by the enemies of Christ.... As the apostles set forth the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, three thousand souls were convicted.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 119, 120.

WAITING FOR THE PROMISE

1. What instruction did Jesus give to His disciples just before His ascension?

LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

ACTS 1:4, 5 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

“After the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the Jews, the priests, and the rulers of this world expected to see the disciples of Christ cast down and discouraged, because their Lord had been put to death. The disciples might have reasoned that they were in danger, and that they would better go out of Jerusalem; some might have said, ‘Do not stay there, but if you do stay, do not mention the name of Christ; for He is regarded as an impostor.’ But Christ had said, ‘Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye are endued with power from on high.’ After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they were to begin their work in Jerusalem, and let it extend from this city to the uttermost parts of the earth.” —*Review and Herald*, April 22, 1890.

“In obedience to Christ’s command, they waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Spirit. They did not wait in idleness. The record says that they were ‘continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.’ Luke 24:53. They also met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an Advocate at the throne of God.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 35.

2. In what manner did the disciples wait for the accomplishment of the promise?

ACTS 1:12-14 *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. ¹³ And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

“As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death, they understood more fully their meaning. Truths which had passed from their memory were again brought to their minds, and these they repeated to one another.... The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this they realized what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36, 37.

3. Recalling the commission given to them by their Master, what thought occupied the disciples' minds?

LUKE 24:46-48 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And ye are witnesses of these things.*

ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

“During the patriarchal age the influence of the Holy Spirit had often been revealed in a marked manner, but never in its fullness. Now, in obedience to the word of the Saviour, the disciples offered their supplications for this gift, and in heaven Christ added His intercession. He claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it upon His people.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.

“Jesus says, ‘Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me.’ It is the union of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the living witness that is to warn the world. The worker for God is the agent through which the heavenly communication is given, and the Holy Spirit gives divine authority to the word of truth.” —*Review and Herald*, April 4, 1893.

FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE

4. How long did they have to wait for the promise to be fulfilled? In what wonderful manner did Jesus' promise come on the day of Pentecost?

ACTS 1:5; 2:1-3 *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.... ^{2,1} And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

“The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, ‘Herein is love.’ They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 38.

5. What happened to the disciples after they received the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit? How many people were converted on that glorious day?

ACTS 2:4-8, 41 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. ⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? ⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?... ⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

“Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit’s teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of ‘one accord,’ ‘of one heart and of one soul.’ Acts 2:46; 4:32. Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men ‘took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.’ Acts 4:13....

“Under the influence of this heavenly illumination the scriptures that Christ had explained to the disciples stood out before them with the luster of perfect truth. The veil that had prevented them from seeing to the end of that which had been abolished, was now removed, and they comprehended with perfect clearness the object of Christ’s mission and the nature of His kingdom. They could speak with power of the Saviour; and as they unfolded to their hearers the plan of salvation, many were convicted and convinced. The traditions and superstitions inculcated by the priests were swept away from their minds, and the teachings of the Saviour were accepted.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 45, 44.

6. What assurance did the disciples have? What responsibility did they feel?

ACTS 2:32, 36; 4:20, 29-31 *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.... ³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.... ^{4:20} For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.... ²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ³⁰ By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

“Pentecost brought them the heavenly illumination. The truths they could not understand while Christ was with them were now unfolded. With a faith and assurance that they had never before known, they accepted the teachings of the Sacred Word. No longer was it a matter of faith with them that Christ was the Son of God. They knew that, although clothed with humanity, He was indeed the Messiah, and they told their experience to the world with a confidence which carried with it the conviction that God was with them.... Their hearts were surcharged with a benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying to the power of Christ. They were filled with an intense longing to carry forward the work He had begun. They realized the greatness of their debt to heaven and the responsibility of their work. Strengthened by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, they went forth filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 45, 46.

7. **Converted by the mighty power of the Spirit, how did the members of the church live and grow in those amazing days?**

ACTS 2:42-47; 4:32 *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all that believed were together, and had all things common; ⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. ⁴⁶ And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.... ^{4:32} And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*

“Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 48.

“When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. ‘They ... did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people: and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.’ Those primitive Christians were few in numbers, without wealth or honor, yet they exerted a mighty influence. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and their doctrines were known. For this cause they were hated by the wicked and persecuted even unto death.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 239, 240.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the Day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power

than on that occasion. John says, 'I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory' Revelation 18:1. Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1055 (1886); *Last Day Events*, p. 202.

"The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55 (1911); *Last Day Events*, p. 184.

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22

Sabbath, May 30, 2015

Promise for Today

"God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts....

"To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciples, and He will be with us 'even unto the end.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 19, 17.

ALWAYS WITH HIS DISCIPLES

1. What promise did Jesus give His disciples before leaving them?

JOHN 14:18 *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

MATTHEW 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

"This is Jesus, the life of every grace, the life of every promise, the life of every ordinance, the life of every blessing. Jesus is the substance, the glory and fragrance, the very life itself. 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' John 8:12. Then the royal path cast up for the ransomed to walk in is not discouraging darkness. Our pilgrimage would indeed be lonely and painful were it not for Jesus. 'I will not,' He says, 'leave you comfortless.' John 14:18. Then let us gather every registered promise. Let us repeat them by day and meditate upon them in the night season, and be happy." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 244.

“Just before His crucifixion the Saviour said to His disciples: ‘I will not leave you comfortless.’ ‘I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.’ ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.’ ‘He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’ John 14:18, 16; 16:13; 14:26.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 19.

THE PROMISE IS FOR ALL WHO HEAR GOD’S CALL

2. What did the apostle Peter affirm concerning the far-reaching extent of the promise of the Holy Spirit?

ACTS 2:38, 39 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

“God’s field is the world. Jesus said to His disciples: ‘Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.’ ‘And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47. Peter said to the believers: ‘The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.’ Acts 2:39.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 56, 57.

“God has promised us all power; for the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 118.

3. How long was the Holy Spirit to remain with the disciples? Therefore, what is confirmed in the Testimonies?

JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer’s love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 42.

“This promise belongs to us now as surely as it belonged to the disciples.... Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, ‘Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand Thy word; for the entrance of Thy word giveth light. Refresh me by Thy presence. Fill my heart with Thy Spirit.’” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 191.

EXPERIENCES IN THE APOSTOLIC TIME

4. How was the apostle Peter empowered as he fearlessly presented the message to the rulers of the people? What great effect did the Holy Spirit produce in the apostles despite the threat of the Jewish authorities?

ACTS 4:8, 31 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,... ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

“This assuring testimony could not have been given before the crucifixion of Christ, but He had promised, ‘Greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto My Father.’ Christ had ascended to His Father. ‘And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.’ The scenes of the rejection and crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, were a living reality to them. They laid hold on the promise of Christ to some purpose. He had said, ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.’” —*Review and Herald*, June 18, 1895.

“We are to find our strength just where the early disciples found their strength: ‘These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.’ ‘And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.’ Acts 1:14; 4:31, 32.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 140.

5. What similarly powerful testimony did Stephen give under the influence of the Holy Spirit? How did he complete his ministry?

ACTS 6:5, FIRST PART, 8, 10, 7:55, 56 *And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost... ⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.... ¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.... ^{7:55} But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

6. When a problem threatened to disrupt the unity and harmony in the apostolic church, what great blessing made a solution possible? What may we learn from this experience?

ACTS 15:28 *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.*

“Jesus promised His disciples, ‘The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’ ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth:... and He will show you things to come.’ John 14:26; 16:13.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. viii.

“The only hope of our churches is to keep wide awake. Those who are well grounded in the truths of the Word, those who test everything by a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ are safe. The Holy Spirit will guide those who prize the wisdom of God above the deceptive sophistries of satanic agencies.” —*Southern Union Worker*, October 30, 1913.

GOD’S WILLINGNESS TO GIVE HIS SPIRIT

7. Why do we not receive a larger measure of the Holy Spirit today? How willing is the Lord to give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

REVELATION 3:17 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

LUKE 11:9-13 *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. ¹⁰ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? ¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

“The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ’s parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

“The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it.... We can be assured that we shall receive the Holy Spirit if we individually try the experiment of testing God’s word.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 207.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high, were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. As they witnessed for truth and righteousness they were repeatedly assailed by the enemy of all truth, who sought to rob them of their Christian experience. They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection. Under the Holy Spirit’s working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. As in humility they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received of the fullness of the Godhead and were fashioned in the likeness of the divine.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 49, 50.

“At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 191.

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23

Sabbath, June 6, 2015

Preparation for the Latter Rain, *Part 1*

“We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the Day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 158 (1882); *Last Day Events*, p. 188.

GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. What desire should every believer have?

PSALM 143:10, LAST PART *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*

Other versions translate this verse in the following way: “Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.” —*New American Standard Bible* (1995).

“Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: let Thy good Spirit lead me in a plain country.” —*Darby Bible*.

“Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land.” —*Douay-Rheims Bible*.

2 KINGS 2:9 *And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*

“I beseech the members of every church to seek now for the greatest blessing Heaven can bestow—the Holy Spirit. If in faith you seek for a greater measure of God’s Spirit, you will be constantly taking it in and breathing it out. Daily you will receive a fresh supply. Your everyday experience will be enriched by the rich current of God’s love. Before you lie vast fields of truth, vast sources of power. Let the daily prayer be, ‘Take from us what Thou dost choose to take, but withhold not Thy Holy Spirit from us.’ We must have the gift of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 143.

2. What is the Lord willing to give to those who ask Him with all their hearts? For whom did Jesus ask the daily baptism of His Spirit?

MATTHEW 7:11 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

“Christ was continually receiving from the Father that He might communicate to us.... Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 139.

“Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it?... For the daily baptism of the Spirit, every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 219.

PERFECT UNITY

3. What condition made it possible for the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit? What did they do while they requested the power that Christ had promised?

ACTS 2:1; 5:42; 8:25 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place....^{5:42} And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ....^{8:25} And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10; 12:12 *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment....^{12:12} For as the body is one, and*

hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

“Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away. And the testimony borne of them after the Spirit had been given is the same. Mark the word: ‘The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.’ Acts 4:32. The Spirit of Him who died that sinners might live animated the entire congregation of believers.

“The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 20, 21.

4. What should the church especially strive for?

ROMANS 15:6 *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

EPHESIANS 4:1-6 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; ³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

“The answer may come with sudden velocity and overpowering might, or it may be delayed for days and weeks, and our faith receive a trial. But God knows how and when to answer our prayer. It is *our* part of the work to put ourselves in connection with the divine channel. God is responsible for *His* part of the work. He is faithful who hath promised. The great and important matter with us is to be of one heart and mind, putting aside all envy and malice and, as humble supplicants, to watch and wait. Jesus, our Representative and Head, is ready to do for us what He did for the praying, watching ones on the day of Pentecost.” —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 272 (1878); *Last Day Events*, p. 194.

“So it may be now. Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 21.

CONSECRATION, FAITH, AND SINCERITY

5. What other conditions need to be in place for the Lord to grant His people's petitions?

ROMANS 12:11 *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

“When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.” —(*Review and Herald*, July 21, 1896) *Evangelism*, p. 699.

“Every individual is under obligation to give to others the truth he possesses. Nothing should be allowed to keep the servant of Christ from letting his light shine forth to his fellow men.... We should be daily increasing in ability to do the precious work of winning souls to Christ. This is such a precious work, such a satisfying work! And all heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the heavenly oil to refresh and strengthen needy souls. The Lord will protect and guide those who will let His divine fullness flow from their lips in grateful praise, and who labor, through deeds of charity and love, to bless mankind. Such workers will become consecrated agents for God.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 102.

6. What other factor is essential to receive the gift of the Spirit? In what measure will the Holy Spirit be received?

MATTHEW 21:22 *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:5 *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

“The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it, and the use we shall make of the light and knowledge that shall be given to us. We are not willing enough to trouble the Lord with our petitions, and to ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Lord wants us to trouble Him in this matter. He wants us to press our petitions to the throne.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 188.

“Let Christians ... ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the former rain, and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant.” —(*Signs of the Times*, February 17, 1914) *Evangelism*, p. 701.

7. What may we expect if we call on the Lord in truth with the desire to receive the Holy Spirit?

PSALM 145:18 *The Lord is near to all them that call on him, to all that call on him in truth.*

PROVERBS 15:29 *The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.*

“To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, ‘Be filled with the Spirit’

(Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should ‘all the fullness dwell,’ and ‘in Him ye are made full.’ Colossians 1:19, R.V.; 2:10, R.V.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 20.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it.” —(*Review and Herald*, March 19, 1895) *Evangelism*, p. 701.

“I was shown that if God’s people make no efforts on their part, but wait for the refreshing to come upon them and remove their wrongs and correct their errors; if they depend upon that to cleanse them from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, they will be found wanting. The refreshing or power of God comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 619.

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24

Sabbath, June 13, 2015

Preparation for the Latter Rain, *Part 2*

“It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 214.

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should therefore be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.” —*Early Writings*, p. 71 (1851); *Last Day Events*, p. 192.

CRUCIFYING SIN

1. What preparation is absolutely necessary for the reception of the latter rain?

GALATIANS 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

“All we have to do is to keep the vessel clean and right side up and prepared for the reception of the heavenly rain....

“You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified. The time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified; and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God’s people in earnest, the everlasting arms are around you. The angels of God make a wall of fire around about and deliver you....

“It is now that self is to be crucified—when there is work to do; when there is some use to be made of every entrusted capability. It is now that we are to empty and thoroughly cleanse the vessel of its impurity. It is now that we are to be made holy unto God. This is our work, this very moment. You are not to wait for any special period for a wonderful work to be done; it is today. I give myself to God today....” —*The Upward Look*, p. 283.

2. What instruction is given by the inspired writings concerning sin and its power over the soul?

ROMANS 6:11-14 *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³ Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

“You are to put away your sin right now when you see it.... Do not make leeway that you are going to overcome by degrees; you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation and harden not your hearts....

“Sin crucified my Lord. Why not turn from it with loathing? Why not love the things that Christ loved, and hate the things that Christ hated? He has made provision ample enough for you that you can, through Him, be more, yea, more than overcomers.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 283.

“Will ye go to glory and enjoy all that God has prepared for those who love Him and are willing to suffer for His sake? If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory....” —*Early Writings*, pp. 66, 67.

3. What earnest invitation is extended to everyone in view of the second coming of the Son of man?

AMOS 4:12, LAST PART ... *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

MATTHEW 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

“But unless the members of God’s church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need....

“But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’ In response, ‘the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ ‘He will cause to come down ... the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.’ Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

READY FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD

4. Why is preparation for the latter rain indispensable?

HEBREWS 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:9, 10 *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; ¹⁰ That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.*

“Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building.... I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” –*Early Writings*, p. 71.

5. What powerful help will all who fight against sin receive?

COLOSSIANS 1:11 *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.*

EPHESIANS 3:20 *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*

"We have great victories to gain, and a heaven to lose if we do not gain them. The carnal heart must be crucified; for its tendency is to moral corruption, and the end thereof is death. Nothing but the life-giving influences of the gospel can help the soul. Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 267.

BE READY NOW!

6. Will there ever be a time more opportune than now to get ready for the latter rain? When do we need to prepare?

HEBREWS 3:12-15 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;¹⁵ While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

"The third angel's message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that He may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for His service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit."—(*Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892) *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 190, 191.

7. What should be our conduct every moment?

MATTHEW 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

ACTS 3:19, 20 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.*

1 PETER 1:13 *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

"I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning. Christ has told us to watch; 'for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.' 'Watch and pray' is the charge that is given us by our Redeemer. Day by day we are to seek the enlightenment of the Spirit of God, that it may do its office work upon the soul and character. O, how much time has been wasted through giving attention to trifling things. Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."—(*Review and Herald*, March 29, 1892) *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 192.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God's people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth. Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God, or shut out His presence from the assemblies of His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, 'not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'" Zechariah 4:6."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 124.

LUKE 21:36 *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

* * *

The Latter Rain

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

RIPENING OF THE HARVEST

1. What did the Lord give His people in due time? What will the latter rain accomplish?

JEREMIAH 5:24 *Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.*

“The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 506.

2. What will happen during the latter rain?

JOEL 2:23 *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

Other versions translate this verse as: “So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the Lord your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.” —*New American Standard Bible*, 1995.

“Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in Yahweh, your God; for He gives you the former rain in just measure, and He causes the rain to come down for you, the former rain and the latter rain, as before.” —*World English Bible*.

“The work will be similar to that of the Day of Pentecost. As the ‘former rain’ was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the ‘latter rain’ will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest. ‘Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.’ Hosea 6:3. ‘Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former

rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.' Joel 2:23. 'In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.' 'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Acts 2:17, 21." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 611.

3. What did the prophet Joel prophesy concerning the latter rain?

JOEL 2:28, 29 *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: ²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.*

ACTS 2:17, 18 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸ And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

"In the closing scenes of this earth's history, many ... children and youth [who receive a true Christian education] will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power. They have been taught the fear of the Lord, and their hearts have been softened by a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God, and will do a work proclaiming the truth to the world.... They will do a work in the world that not all the powers of evil can counteract." —*My Life Today*, p. 62.

"He will raise up from among the common people men and women to do His work, even as of old He called fishermen to be His disciples. There will soon be an awakening that will surprise many. Those who do not realize the necessity of what is to be done will be passed by, and the heavenly messengers will work with those who are called the common people, fitting them to carry the truth to many places." —*Last Day Events*, p. 204.

IN THE WHOLE WORLD

4. How far will the proclamation of the gospel spread under the latter rain?

MATTHEW 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

LUKE 24:47 *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

"During the loud cry the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town." —*Evangelism*, p. 694 (1904); *Last Day Events*, p. 208.

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were

fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are 'the times of refreshing' to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.' Acts 3:19, 20."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

5. If we have sown the seeds of truth and have not seen them germinate immediately, what can we hope for during the latter rain?

ECCLESIASTES 11:1, 6 *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.... "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

"The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

THE DATE IS NOT KNOWN

6. Do human beings know the hour when the Son of man will come in glory? Do they know exactly when the latter rain will fall?

MATTHEW 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

"Again and again have I been warned in regard to time setting. There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ."—*Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892.

"I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning."—*Review and Herald*, March 29, 1892.

"We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the

sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled.... The whole earth is to be filled with the glory of God.” –(Letter 151, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

7. What spiritual condition should we seek if we desire to be channels for the Holy Spirit and be ready for translation?

2 PETER 3:14 *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

“The proclamation of the gospel is the only means in which God can employ human beings as His instrumentalities for the salvation of souls. As men, women, and children proclaim the gospel, the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see His statutes, and will write upon the hearts of the truly penitent His law. The animating Spirit of God, working through human agencies, leads the believers to be of one mind, one soul, unitedly loving God and keeping His commandments—preparing here below for translation.” –*Review and Herald*, October 13, 1904.

“Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 375.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“The Lord Jesus will give the disciples a tongue and wisdom that their adversaries can neither gainsay nor resist. Those who could not, by reasoning, overcome satanic delusions will bear an affirmative testimony that will baffle supposedly learned men. Words will come from the lips of the unlearned with such convincing power and wisdom that conversions will be made to the truth. Thousands will be converted under their testimony.

“Why should the illiterate man have this power, which the learned man has not? The illiterate one, through faith in Christ, has come into the atmosphere of pure, clear truth, while the learned man has turned away from the truth. The poor man is Christ’s witness. He cannot appeal to histories or to so-called high science, but he gathers from the Word of God powerful evidence. The truth that he speaks under the inspiration of the Spirit is so pure and remarkable and carries with it a power so indisputable that his testimony cannot be gainsaid.” –*Last Day Events*, pp. 205, 206.

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***Please read the Missionary Report from the
General Conference Broadcasting and Website
on page 127***

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Sabbath, June 27, 2015

The Latter Rain and the Loud Cry

“As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble.”—(*Review and Herald*, May 27, 1862) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

WITH A STRONG VOICE

- 1. What is closely connected with the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit? How did the Lord’s messenger portray the time of the latter rain?**

JOEL 2:28 *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*

ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

“It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, ‘I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.’ Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God’s word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help His people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with Him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.”—*Review and Herald*, July 20, 1886.

2. What difficult time will God's people have to go through before His work can be finished? How will they be able to pass through this?

DANIEL 12:1 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

“As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble,’ they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.” —(*Review and Herald*, May 27, 1862) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

“... And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.

“‘The commencement of that time of trouble,’ here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 85, 86.

THE THIRD ANGEL AND THE OTHER ANGEL

3. What message will then be proclaimed through the great power of the Holy Spirit?

REVELATION 14:9-12 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. ¹² Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

“This message embraces the two preceding messages. It is represented as being given with a loud voice; that is, with the power of the Holy Spirit.

“As foretold in the eighteenth [chapter] of Revelation, the third angel’s message is to be proclaimed with great power by those who give the final warning against the beast and his image.” —*Last Day Events*, pp. 201, 202.

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

4. What will happen when the truth goes forth with great power? How will all sincere souls respond?

REVELATION 18:1-5 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. ³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. ⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

“Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven. Souls that were scattered all through the religious bodies answered to the call, and the precious were hurried out of the doomed churches, as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before her destruction. God’s people were strengthened by the excellent glory which rested upon them in rich abundance and prepared them to endure the hour of temptation. I heard everywhere a multitude of voices saying, ‘Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’” —*Early Writings*, pp. 278, 279.

5. What bonds that have been hindrances to the gospel in the past will then be broken?

MATTHEW 10:35-39 *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. ³⁶ And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. ³⁷ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. ³⁹ He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

ISAIAH 61:1, LAST PART ... *To bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

"I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, 'It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.'...

"A compelling power moved the honest, while the manifestation of the power of God brought a fear and restraint upon their unbelieving relatives and friends so that they dared not, neither had they the power to, hinder those who felt the work of the Spirit of God upon them. The last call was carried even to the poor slaves, and the pious among them poured forth their songs of rapturous joy at the prospect of their happy deliverance. Their masters could not check them; fear and astonishment kept them silent. Mighty miracles were wrought, the sick were healed, and signs and wonders followed the believers. God was in the work, and every saint, fearless of consequences, followed the convictions of his own conscience and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message."—*Early Writings*, pp. 271, 278.

STEADFAST IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

6. What evil work will advance while God's power is wonderfully manifested?

REVELATION 13:15, 16 *And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. ¹⁶ And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.*

"I was pointed down to the time when the third angel's message was closing. The power of God had rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They had received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony had been revived. The last great warning

had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.” —*Early Writings*, p. 279.

“I was shown the heresies which are to arise, the delusions that will prevail, the miracle-working power of Satan—the false christs that will appear—that will deceive the greater part even of the religious world, and that would, if it were possible, draw away even the elect.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 352.

7. Knowing the measures that will be taken against God’s people, is there any reason to fear or tremble?

HEBREWS 13:6 *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

JOHN 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

1 JOHN 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

“The Lord desires to see the work of proclaiming the third angel’s message carried forward with increasing efficiency. As He has worked in all ages to give victories to His people, so in this age He longs to carry to a triumphant fulfillment His purposes for His church. He bids His believing saints to advance unitedly, going from strength to greater strength, from faith to increased assurance and confidence in the truth and righteousness of His cause.

“We ... are to cherish as very precious the work that the Lord has been carrying forward through His commandment-keeping people, and which, through the power of His grace, will grow stronger and more efficient as time advances. The enemy is seeking to becloud the discernment of God’s people, and to weaken their efficiency, but if they will labor as the Spirit of God shall direct, He will open doors of opportunity before them for the work of building up the old waste places. Their experience will be one of constant growth, until the Lord shall descend from heaven with power and great glory to set His seal of final triumph upon His faithful ones.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 407.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“There will be thousands converted to the truth in a day who at the eleventh hour see and acknowledge the truth and the movements of the Spirit of God.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 212.

“Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses’ did when he came down from Mount Sinai.” —*Early Writings*, p. 14.

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MISSIONARY REPORT
FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
BROADCASTING AND WEBSITE

To be read on Sabbath, June 27, 2015

***The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, July 4, 2015***

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,...” 2 Peter 3:11, 12.

In 2014, a commemoration was held marking one hundred years since the Reform Movement was propelled into existence. One of the presenters was asked, “Why do we mark the centennial of the Reformation? Should we not be celebrating in heaven? How many more years have to pass before Jesus comes?” These questions and more can be asked by the faithful believer, but the answer was already written many years ago, as we can read in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 633: “By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God.” “It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69.

According to a count done in 2012, there were about 7.046 billion people in the world. And according to reports presented at the World Assembly that same year, the membership in the Reform Movement was approximately 37,469 people. That being the case, we have to ask ourselves, How are the three angels’ messages going to be preached? How much time do we have before Jesus returns? These and other questions can overwhelm our hopes of seeing that great day. But, turning to the Bible, we read what the Lord said through the prophet Daniel: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Daniel 12:4.

It is true that various sciences have increased with many scientific inventions. Technology has invaded and engulfed human beings to the point where they cannot live without having some electronic apparatus in their hands. Among the billions of people is a virtual

world where they interact by doing something simple like reading a message all the way up to conducting business on a corporate scale. The Internet has revolutionized not only the content of multimedia, business, and education but also the expression of faith.

Because technology has made such great advances in various aspects of life, God's people need to take advantage of these means to witness for the truth, to proclaim the three angels' messages, and to declare the truth to the world. The systems developed by technology make it possible to reach millions of people with a relatively small outlay of funds, especially in the areas of broadcasting and dispensing of information through a powerful website. The Multimedia Department needs to carry out various projects in these two areas of its plan. Your donations are needed for up-to-date equipment (hardware and software), tech fees, personnel, and travel expenses to broadcast from the headquarters and abroad.

The General Conference is also working to create websites in various languages; this will make it possible to reach souls more quickly and economically and to provide necessary education. Furthermore, it is possible to conduct meetings online, and perhaps in the not-too-distant future even delegates' meetings can be conducted online with some delegates attending via the Internet.

Through our Livestream virtual television channel, we reached seventy-five countries in just one month in 2014, such as China, Japan, New Zealand, Yemen, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Belgium, and others. Our plan is to have a daily broadcast schedule; but to move forward, we need people who are available and capable in more languages. In our social networks in both English and Spanish, we reach five thousand people per week, and we want to continue with this arduous task. We need to create more apps for cell phones with the little that we have carried out so far. We have people interested in studying the Bible course, and so we want to advance our missionary outreach.

Dear brothers and sisters throughout the world, we want to continue to work; but we want to do it with your help, with a generous offering from your heart, remembering the Lord's promise, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matthew 6:19, 20. Invest in the bank of heaven where everything is safe, and the Lord will prosper His work.

—Noe Chappa Cruz, Multimedia Department Leader