

THE GOLDEN OIL

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Foreword

"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 it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work."--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 511, 512.

Throughout this world today there are many earnest Christians, singly and in groups, praying in harmony with the above instruction for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the experience of the latter rain. Yet most of them have little idea what they are asking for, and are unprepared to receive what they so earnestly seek. Not only are most of them doomed to frustration because God seemingly does not hear and answer their prayers; there is an even greater danger that the prayers may be heard and answered, but not by God.

We are living in a time when Satan is rallying forces to make a final attempt to thwart God's plan for our redemption. Supernatural powers make themselves evident as they have not done in times past. The forces of evil are becoming bolder in their bid for world allegiance. Not only is Satan's might on display among non-Christian religions; today it is displayed in the citadel of Protestant Christianity. Ever since Pentecost, Satan has sought to counterfeit

the mighty force unleashed by Heaven in behalf of God's own. He has succeeded only too well among those whose minds are not fortified with Bible truth. How tragic were he to deceive at last the very people to whom God has entrusted the last warning message for mankind!

One church of my acquaintance still shudders at the recollection of a past experience in praying for the Holy Spirit. A group of devout women under the guidance of the pastor met to beseech God for the promised outpouring of divine power, as they had read in Scripture and the spirit of prophecy. They pledged themselves not to "let go the arm of the Lord" until they received the experience which they sought. They had an experience, all right--one which nearly frightened them out of their wits. The minister who had encouraged them hurriedly separated himself from the project and sought to disclaim any responsibility for what took place. In fact, very few people ever knew exactly what did happen, since the women steadfastly refused to talk about it. One of their group spent a number of years in a mental institution as a direct result of the occurrence. As you may well expect, the subject of the Holy Spirit was taboo in that church for years to come. You could not interest these Christians in the real thing because they had been deceived by a counterfeit--all because no one had taught them the difference between the two. Those who seek an experience of their own conception instead of what God would send them, open their minds to receive an experience from the deceiver.

Yet this is the age when the Spirit of God is dispensing God's gifts to the church. Why is there such widespread ignorance or misinformation in this vital area of Christian thinking? Why is it that the Holy Spirit is the topic of so few sermons from Christian pulpits today? Is it perhaps because ministers fear that they might invite a manifestation of this counterfeit spirit if they give publicity to the topic?

Is it not time that the Bible and the spirit of prophecy were searched for God's truth in this vital field? How can the church be fully armed with the "sword of the Spirit" when she does not rightly know what this weapon is, nor how to wield it if she had it? And all the while time is a wasting and all heaven waits for the "bride" to make herself ready. This book is dedicated to the exploration of all of God's revealed truth concerning the personality and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is an attempt to make a little clearer the who and the what of the Third Person of the Godhead, our least-understood Ally and our most important Possession.

It seeks to prove that man does not know the name of the Third Person of the Trinity. The various names that are given to Him throughout Scripture divulge nothing of His personality. They show instead His office and work, the relationship which He maintains between God and man in the plan of salvation. He is known variously as the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. All these are New Testament appellations of Him. Throughout the Old Testament He is known as either the Spirit of

God or the Spirit of the Lord. Twice only does Isaiah refer to Him as Holy Spirit.

This is no more His personal name than is the Word of God the personal name of the Second Person of the Godhead. Just as Word is used to suggest Christ's unique position as mouthpiece for the Invisible God "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy 6:16), so does Holy Spirit designate the One who supervises the implanting of God's own nature in the lives of His sons and daughters elect. Through this agency God's own character is imparted to those preparing for citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. Thus our spirits become holy as His is, and we are enabled to worship God "in spirit and in truth." John 4:24.

Because the authors of the Bible speak indiscriminately of the Person of the Holy Spirit on one hand and of His work on human lives on the other, there is confusion in those two areas of thought. Some thoughtful students reject the idea of the Trinity because they consider absurd the concept of a person's being "poured out" (Acts 2:17) or dwelling within (John 14:17) human beings. Others have concentrated on the obvious evidences of personality of the Holy Spirit, His work as teacher (John 14:26), as witness of Christ (John 15:26), as guide unto all truth and revealer of coming events (John 16:13), and have concluded that Scripture reveals only His objective work in the plan for man's redemption, entirely missing the subjective phase of His office. The purpose of this book is to explore both fields, that the church may come to an understanding

concerning her mightiest Ally in the last battle for control of men's minds and hearts.

The other angel of the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation cannot complete the work God has assigned him until the church is ready. The entire universe is waiting to witness this closing chapter of earth's history. Why must it wait longer?

Chapter 1

Oil for the Virgins' Lamps

"The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit."

"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, pages 407, 408, 411.

The parable Christ told of the wise and the foolish virgins is undoubtedly one of the best-known lessons in Scripture. There are few Bible students who do not know of the plight of the five foolish virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom, taking no extra supply of oil with their lamps; and of the lamps that dimmed out, causing them to miss joining the wedding procession while they went in frantic search of a fresh supply of oil.

Since this is one of the "kingdom of heaven" parables used by Christ in His public teaching, we will do well to comprehend the import of this object lesson of the Master. A woman in prophetic symbolism refers to a church. Jeremiah 6:2. The character of the woman described determines whether the church so designated be

true to her Lord or an apostate. Revelation 12:1; 17:3-6. The virgins of Matthew 25 depict the church awaiting the return of Christ, the antitypical Bridegroom. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:8. This is a church that espouses pure doctrine. Their avowed virginity indicates their freedom from false doctrine. Revelation 14:4. They are Adventists in that they are expecting Christ's imminent return, they are commandment keepers, and there is no defilement from human or pagan tradition. As much as it is humanly possible to separate from worldliness and man-made substitutes for Bible truths, these have done so. So far as they know, they are ready to meet Christ and are confidently awaiting His coming.

But His coming is delayed, and all of them, wise and foolish alike, go to sleep. The difference between the two classes cannot be seen up to this point. All have left the world behind, all expect the return of Christ, all publicly testify to their belief in His return by going out to meet Him. All have carried with them their lamps, and all ten lamps are lighted as they set forth.

The difference becomes apparent only after their sudden awakening at the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Because of the prolonged delay which none of them had expected, all ten lamps have burned low. Faced with the sudden call to meet the One whom they were awaiting, all arise and begin to trim their lamps. Now the difference between the two classes is evident. Only five of the number have an extra supply of oil to take care of their lamps.

These lamps have long been identified as the word of God, the Holy Bible revered by all ten as needful preparation to meet the Bridegroom. Psalm 119:105. The obvious difference between the wise and the foolish ones lies in the extra supply of oil with which the former are provided. This invaluable possession is recognized as symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

"The two classes of watchers represent the two classes who profess to be waiting for their Lord. They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith. By the lamps is represented the word of God. ... The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit."--Christ's Object Lessons, pages 406, 407.

Therefore Christians earnestly beseech God to send them the outpouring of His Holy Spirit to prepare them for the coming of Christ. But are they prepared to receive that for which they ask? Or do the majority of Christians today stand squarely in the way of God's answering such pleas?

This symbolic oil, so necessary for a readiness to go home to the Father's house with Christ (John 14:2, 3), must have reference to something more than the conviction of sin (John 16:8), for they have already come out from the world and professed a pure faith. It is more than the guidance into God's truth (verse 13) for they all carry lamps to light the pathway ahead. It goes beyond revelation of future events, because, they all expect the return of Christ as Bridegroom. All these promised functions of the Holy Spirit represent the early rain, symbolic of the needed preparation of soil for germination of

seed. All the virgins have had this experience and profited by it. Yet five of them lack a vital quality necessary to prepare them to go in to the marriage feast with the Bridegroom and His bride.

Apparently all ten of the virgins believe in the Third Person of the Godhead. The teaching of the Bible concerning the Holy Spirit has not been a stumbling block to them. Then it must be the work of the Holy Spirit in their individual lives that is lacking. They have heard, they have believed, they have acted on their convictions. They have taken a public stand for the Bible truths brought home to them by the Spirit's power, but they have not followed through with the character development needed to prepare them for entrance into eternal living.

"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, page 414.

The frightening implication is that apparently they are totally unaware of this lack in their needful preparation. They have been associating daily with those who are supplied with the oil, yet have noticed no discrepancy between themselves and their companions. Indeed, they have come to the final stage of their preparation not knowing that they are unready to meet their Lord and Master. Yet we read in Scripture that one of the first duties of the Holy Spirit is

to convict of sin. John 16:8. We are taught that no Christian need fear that he will fall short of the goal, with no remaining time for preparation, since it is the work of our Divine Guide to warn us "if in anything ye be otherwise minded." Philippians 3:15.

There must have been a factor in the lives of the five foolish virgins which dulled their perceptions so that the promised warnings of the Holy Spirit failed to reach them. Surely it leaves little room for complacency when we realize how very nearly these foolish five qualified for eternal life. They were almost there, and yet they are left standing outside the shut door. Foolish indeed! To have sacrificed so much of what the world counts dear, and still not have made room enough for a sufficient supply of oil to see them through!

"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 could not participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its melody on 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, page 413.

There is a clue to their trouble in the quotation from Christ's Object Lessons at the head of this chapter. "Unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed." This evidently refers to the higher education which the Spirit makes

available to those learning in the school of Christ, since all ten virgins give evidence that they are not beginners. The Spirit of God has long since made them Sabbath-keepers, taught them to look forward to Christ's return, and brought them out of the world. Isn't this enough to furnish a soul with eternal security? Apparently not.

The truths of the Bible have evidently been "set home" for all ten of the virgins; but the next step in their development--character transformation--has not yet taken place sufficiently to warrant recognition from the Bridegroom. And what is it that should make such recognition a foregone conclusion, but a likeness to Himself and to His Father and ours? Is not this the solution to the problem--the finishing work of the Holy Spirit on sanctified lives?

"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. 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."--*ibid.*, pp. 415, 416.

The apostle Paul, in writing his letter to the church in Galatia, describes the development of just such a character in chapter 5:22, 23. It begins with love, the pure, unselfish variety that stems only from the Fountainhead of love--God Himself. The effect of such a quality flooding the starved life creates such an out-pouring element in the life that the result is pure joy. The Christian who has awakened to this more abundant life knows the delight of just being alive, even though he can recall no special reason for such an

emotion. With pettiness, jealousy, and animosity washed from his soul he is at last at peace with himself and the world.

Because not all of his associates reach this state of blessedness at the same time he does, he learns to develop long-suffering, to hold his tongue against the sharp report or the irritating remark that seems called for on occasion. Next in line comes the gentleness with which he learns to deal with his family and friends as the Spirit teaches him to understand why they react as they so often do to his new-found faith. No longer does he need to hold back the rising temper nor bite off the caustic remark. These have melted away in the sunshine of God's revealed love upon his own unworthy life.

Goodness, which is but godliness or godlikeness, is the next stage in the development of a character like Christ's. It is the natural step to follow when the preceding ones have been taken in order. Faith, which is otherwise translated as trustworthiness or steadfastness, follows surely, with meekness or humility the next to the last stage in the fruitage of the Spirit in human lives. The last stage is temperance, or self-control. Only when self is completely surrendered to God can such control be maintained. Therefore, a perfectly well-balanced life is the life which is God-controlled.

For further commentary on the sanctified life read: "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. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." James 3:17, 18.

Yet another inspired writer counsels on the steps by which this sanctified experience is obtained: "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Peter 1:5-7. Peter adds, in verse 10, "For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

These characteristics are easily recognizable as Christlike. The Bridegroom would have recognized the five foolish virgins as being related to His Father had they come demonstrating such heavenly qualities as those outlined by Paul, James, and Peter. Can it be, then, that these represent the oil that was in too short supply to see them into the kingdom? And are not these qualities the natural result of utter surrender of the will to the guidance and molding of the Spirit of God? Righteousness which is by faith admits of none of these qualities as inherent, but makes way for their being built into the character by the Comforter who is to "teach you all things." John 14:26. Have we not been urged as a people to seek more perfect understanding of the meaning of righteousness by faith?

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour

brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance."--Christ's Object Lessons, pages 419, 420.

Evidently the Holy Spirit has more for God's people than most of them are receiving, more than they anticipate when they dutifully pray for the latter rain.

"The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth. ... They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. ... [They] have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form."--Ibid.,p.411.

It is the purpose of this book to discover more concerning the true nature of the divine oil that will keep our lamps alight, so that we may be prepared to go in with the Bridegroom when He comes.

Chapter 2

Oil From the Olive Trees

"God's people are to be channels for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe. In Zechariah's 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 sanctuary. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a continuous bright and shining 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. They are to become channels through which divine instrumentalities communicate to the world the tide of God's love."--Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 11, 12.

To God's beleaguered people, struggling against the weight of inherited and acquired traits which tend to keep them from meeting His standards, Zechariah's vision of the two olive trees affords a promise that is precious indeed.

"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: and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." "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? ... Then said

he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." Zechariah 4:2, 3,12-14.

Originally the message was sent through the prophet to Zerubbabel, who was entrusted with the task of restoring not only the city of Jerusalem and the Judean countryside, but also the morale of the chosen people. He was their governor attending to the resettlement of Israel upon their return from the Babylonian captivity. The number willing to tear up the roots they had put down into Chaldean soil for some seventy years was not large in comparison with the hordes who had been carried away into captivity. The Promised Land had lain waste during their absence. Return meant hard work with little material gain until Jerusalem could be rebuilt and the land brought back into productivity. Only those to whom the word of God meant more than personal prosperity responded to Zerubbabel's call. Undoubtedly many of those with the greatest personal wealth chose to remain in Babylon. Hence the resources of the returning pilgrims were comparatively modest and the result of their handiwork insignificant when contrasted with the ancient splendor the oldest of them could still recall. The glory which Jerusalem knew during the reigns of David and Solomon had departed.

"Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they

have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." Nehemiah 9:36, 37.

Human nature tends to reckon progress by the standards of the world. Outward appearance, material wealth, political alliances, the prestige of armed might--these all count high in man's estimate of importance and power. So it was with ancient Israel and so it still is with spiritual Israel, unless the Spirit of God leads the way.

In Zerubbabel's day the people mourned because the temple they were able to erect with the means at hand was a far cry from the glorious and world-famous structure built by Solomon some five hundred years before. They viewed the modest building with sinking hearts and wondered how God could ever fulfill His promise, under existing circumstances, to make Israel "the head, and not the tail."

"And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them." Deuteronomy 28:13.

They had forgotten that God's promises to Israel were conditional and that the fulfillment thereof depended on their obedience to their covenant obligations. They had forgotten, too, the lesson God sought to teach them in Zechariah's vision of the olive trees, that the source of the power God's people were to display to the world did not lie in worldly might, but His Spirit. The angel

stated plainly: "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.... For who hath despised the day of small things" Zechariah 4:6-10.

"Throughout the history of God's people great mountains of difficulty, apparently insurmountable, have loomed up before those who were trying to carry out the purposes of Heaven. Such obstacles are permitted by the Lord as a test of faith. When we are hedged about on every side, this is the time above all others to trust in God and in the power of His Spirit. The exercise of a living faith means an increase of spiritual strength and the development of an unfaltering trust. It is thus that the soul becomes a conquering power."--Prophets and Kings, pages 594, 595.

Spiritual Israel in the twentieth century might well ponder the lesson presented through the prophet Zechariah. Her might to accomplish God's commission lies not in intellectual prowess, important as this is; nor in material possessions, as necessary as they may be; nor yet in hardheaded common-sense planning, valuable as this undoubtedly is. God's purposes are to be divulged by His Holy Spirit, to be comprehended by men after earnest seasons of united prayer, as they leave their minds open to the mind of God. Intellectual prowess, material wealth, and hardheaded common sense all have their place--but in the carrying out of God's directives, not in the formulating of them. The work is the Lord's, and His Viceregent is among His people to make known to them

God's will. There must be more tarrying before the Lord until His will is plainly seen.

"Let the Lord's messengers go unto the mercy seat, that they may receive wisdom and grace to know God, to understand His workings. Knowledge of God will give them well-balanced minds and sound judgment, that they will not move impulsively at this critical, important time of earth's history. ...

"Our only safety will be found in constantly seeking wisdom from God, in carefully weighing every matter with much fear and trembling, lest there should be brought into the work not the light of heaven, but the weakness of man."

"Let there be more dependence upon the efficiency of the Holy Spirit, and far less upon human agencies. ...

"When human agents choose the will of God, and are conformed to the character of Christ, Jesus acts through their organs and faculties. They put aside all selfish pride, all manifestation of superiority, all arbitrary exactions, and manifest the meekness and lowliness of Christ. It is no more themselves that live and act, but it is Christ that lives and acts through them."--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 210, 211, 215.

This alone is the secret of spiritual power, symbolized by the oil which, though in short supply in the Lamps of the foolish virgins, is represented in Zechariah's vision as being continually poured out

in ample measure into the bowl from which the sanctuary lamps are fed. The constant supply of this golden oil, the prophet saw as two olive trees standing close by the throne of God, receiving and transmitting all that men need in order to become the children of God.

Centuries later, in another age, John the revelator had a similar vision. He saw "two witnesses" "clothed in sackcloth," and was informed by an angel that "these are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." Revelation 11:3, 4. In Zechariah's day there was but one candlestick, but in John's day there were two.

"Concerning the two witnesses the prophet declares further: 'These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.' 'Thy word,' said the psalmist, 'is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' Revelation 11:4; Psalm 119:105. The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament."--The Great Controversy, page 267.

In New Testament days there are two candlesticks to furnish light on the pathway of the saints, while in the Old Testament era there was but one such source of light. Yet whether before Christ's day or since, the two holy ones stand by God's throne, ready to receive His blessings and communicate them to men. These are heavenly intelligences commissioned to impart the will of God to mankind--His angels. Lucifer might still occupy this place of high rank in God's redemptive work, as covering cherub standing next to

the throne of God. No longer permitted access to the presence of God, Lucifer has been replaced by the angel Gabriel, we are told. We do not know the name of the covering cherub who stands on the other side of the throne.

The messages received directly from the throne of the universe have been poured into the receptacle whence they are made available to all mankind. In the long centuries before the advent of Christ, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21. What God needed to reveal to sinful man "He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." Luke 1:70. Gradually the bowl of the Old Testament filled with the writings of Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra, and others. The lamps of individual men and women were fed from this source and kept burning steadily through the centuries before Christ. Angels winged their way to and from this earth, bringing light and encouragement to those whose lives showed the way for others to know and follow God. The precious words in the books that slowly accumulated were watched over and made clear to men's minds by these heavenly guardians. Literal Israel, undependable as the nation proved to be, was nevertheless a depository for the golden oil of God's word, that future generations might walk in the light it kindled.

Then the Wonderful One, whose identity was clearly limned in the glow of that one candlestick, came to tabernacle among men. Never before had the golden oil afforded such a brilliant light as that which shone in Galilee and in Judea. Soon there was another

candlestick with its brimming bowl to fuel the little lamps that were increasing throughout the earth. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude each poured into it the living words that have stirred the world since the time of Christ. Still the two olive trees receive fresh supplies from God to communicate to man, so that light on man's pathway may grow increasingly brighter. God's supply is limitless, and He is willing to impart. Why, then, are there so many stumbling along dark pathways with unlighted lamps? Why are half of the virgins defeated in their quest for entrance into the kingdom because of a short supply of the precious oil?

The hindrance in the flow of the oil lies not in the golden pipes through which the oil flows from the olive trees into the bowls of the candlesticks. These are clear channels which come straight from the throne of God. But the flow is obstructed on its way into the individual lamps of our hearts. No matter how accessible the Bible may be, when men and women are clinging to self, plainest truths seem obscure and garbled.

"Each person has his own light to keep burning; and if the heavenly oil is emptied into these lamps through the golden pipes; if the vessels are emptied of self, and prepared to receive the holy oil, light will be shed on the sinner's path to some purpose. More light will be shed on the pathway of the wanderer by one such lamp than by a whole procession of torchlights gotten up for show. Personal consecration and sanctification to God will bring better results than the most imposing display... . Each consecrated vessel will daily

have the holy oil emptied into it to be emptied out into other vessels."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p.116.

What is this divine endowment so necessary to our spiritual growth, and how may it be obtained?

"There is no time now for self-pleasing. The lamps of the soul must be trimmed. They must be supplied with the oil of grace.... We should daily obtain a deep and living experience in the work of perfecting Christian character. We should daily receive the holy oil, that we may impart to others.... From the two olive trees the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us. But those who do not cultivate the spirit and habit of prayer cannot expect to receive the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love."--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 510, 511.

Here are the characteristics of the Godhead. What God is, He delights to impart to us, if we but make room to receive it. Such pure qualities can never mix with the tainted stuff of selfishness. It is God's avowed purpose that we be "filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19. Thus would men be endowed "that they might have life . . . more abundantly." John 10:10.

This precious heritage available to His adopted children is the more important since it is intended not only for their personal growth but also to enable them to further enlarge the heavenly family. Only as the individual lamps are alight will God's church

finish her task of carrying Christ to the world. It is for this twofold purpose that the elaborate system of supply direct from the throne of God has been set up. When the virgins are careless in their individual lives, they are responsible for delaying Christ's return and prolonging human misery.

"From the two olive trees, the golden oil was emptied through 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 human instrumentalities that are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God's people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God's presence. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light bearer in the world."--ibid., p. 510.

When once God's people awaken to the marvelous results to themselves and to the church resulting from this plentiful supply of "the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love," they will set store by these qualities that can come only from a daily close association with the Spirit of God. Morning by morning they will consecrate themselves to His keeping, and will see developing within themselves a sanctified spirit which will declare a kinship between themselves and their heavenly Father.

There will be a marked difference in their witnessing. Where once the words of truth spoken in human wisdom have cut and exasperated the hearts of others, now these words will be given with such love and compassion that hearts will be moved and tendered and won by the mighty power of God.

"Every sermon you preach, every article you write, may all be true; but one drop of gall in it will be poison to the hearer or the reader. Because of that drop of poison, one will discard all your good and acceptable words. Another will feed on the poison; for he loves such harsh words; he follows your example, and talks just as you talk. Thus the evil is multiplied.

"Those who present the eternal principles of truth need the holy oil emptied from the two olive branches into the heart. This will flow forth in words that will reform, but not exasperate. The truth is to be spoken in love. Then the Lord Jesus by His Spirit will supply the force and the power. That is His work."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p.123.

"Many seem to think the time lost that is devoted to seeking the Lord. But when He comes in to co-operate with human effort, and men and women co-operate with Him, a marked change will be seen in the work and in the results. Every heart that has been visited by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will reveal the working of the Spirit of God in voice, mind, and character. The machinery will move as if oiled and guided by a masterly hand. There will be less friction when the spirit of the worker receives the oil from the

two olive branches. The holy influences will be imparted to others in words of kindness, tenderness, love, and encouragement."--ibid., vol. 7, pp. 195, 196.

This then is the demonstration of God's power for which the world is waiting. Not until this experience is held aloft for all to see, can the world recognize that God's plan for man's redemption was really worth the tremendous cost. Then and then only can our earth be lightened with the glory of the "fourth angel."

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1.

Chapter 3

Possessor of the Saints

"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.

Before the cataclysm of the second world war touched off a chain reaction of world tensions and hatreds, man strove to convince himself that he was captain of his fate and master of his soul. Already he had fought a "war to end war," and by the brilliance of his statesmanship and the wizardry of scientific research he proposed to bring about peace, happiness, and prosperity.

Today, with World War III and annihilation breathing down his neck, man still talks grandiloquently about creating life and conquering space; but he does so to create a din that will drown out the frightened pounding of his overstrained heart. He knows that he is rapidly creating in the world an atmosphere unfriendly to progress. He no longer is confident of his relationship with God. Therefore he works frantically to make a way of escape from the

intolerable climate. The frightening fact is that wherever he goes he will take with him his own unregenerate heart, and thus re-create for himself the same problems with their inescapable conclusions.

Is it not tragic that man, who has discovered the means to blow the human race to bits, at the same time claims to be on the verge of discovering the secret of life itself? Thus little man completes the cycle begun millenniums ago in Paradise by Lucifer, the creature who aspired to equality with his Creator. The two alternatives which he claims to offer his race--annihilation or immortality--are alike outside his realm. These are prerogatives of God, who alone can create and who alone can permit destruction of that which He has created. The word of God assures us that shortly a large segment of the population of this earth will indeed be annihilated, while the rest will receive immortality; but it will be accomplished by the power of God and not of man.

Should man acknowledge this, he would be admitting his own impotence. This he dares not do, since he has lost his sense of the omnipotence of God. So he blunders on down the road to his own destruction, meanwhile kicking up a cloud of dust to keep himself from seeing the yawning chasm at the end.

In the midst of this floundering generation, the Spirit of God works quietly to bring peace and security and assurance into lives which He is permitted to possess. "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." "And the work

of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Isaiah 30:15; 32:17.

Since man has lost his God-given ability to direct his own steps, betrayed and beset by his heredity and his environment, it is necessary that some power outside himself come to his rescue and take over the burden of leadership. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jeremiah 10:23.

To make such an admission is an affront to one's pride. It is becoming increasingly apparent that separated from the Spirit of God, man experiences only frustration and defeat; yet it is not natural for him to yield readily to the Third Person of the Godhead. This is a paradox which man finds most difficult of comprehension--that in submitting he wins, while in resisting he loses. Ever since Lucifer first gained entrance to our planet the battle has been joined between the forces of evil and good. Since the Day of Pentecost Satan has battled relentlessly with the Spirit of God, who has come to lead to victory those willing to follow under the banner of Christ.

"They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord's host, comes down to direct the battle."--The Desire of Ages, p. 352.

"When Christ was on earth, He stood as the representative of humanity. He was on trial in behalf of man, and the test was made in His experience as to the possibility that humanity could overcome through divine power.... Jesus looked forward to the triumph and joy that man might attain through the agency of the Holy Spirit....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 with the consent of the human agent."--Review and Herald, April 25, 1893.

In these references we find that only by allowing the Holy Spirit to take complete possession of our life can we hope to win the struggle against evil in our own nature. This mighty member of the Godhead is the least known of the Three, undoubtedly because He never speaks of Himself. Yet His power is evidenced throughout Scripture since first He appears as an agent in the establishment of order on the first day of the creation. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Genesis 1:1, 2.

During the hundred and twenty years while Noah was building the ark and preaching impending doom from a flood in a land that had never known rain, it was the Spirit of God who strove with the impenitent hearts of the antediluvians. "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." Genesis 6:3. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins....being put to death in the

flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." 1 Peter 3:18-20.

The Holy Spirit took temporary possession of the ambitious, greedy prophet Balaam. When this renegade sought to curse the people of God to obtain the fame and fortune offered by the Moabitish king, it was the Spirit of God who restrained him. Speaking through Balaam's unwilling lips, He not only spoke blessing to Israel but prophesied of their coming Messiah and the downfall of their enemies. "And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable, and said: ... How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! ... He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. ... I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Numbers 24:2-17.

It was the Spirit of God who prepared the man Samson and endowed him with awe-inspiring strength that he might intimidate the Philistines and arouse the national spirit within the breast of defeated Israel. Judges 13:24, 25. Such a hero gave them a rallying point about which they might have assembled to bring victory to the cause of God, now suffering defeat at the hand of their

contemptuous enemies. How tragic that this divinely endowed man used his God-given powers only to harass the enemies of Israel, while he allowed his uncontrolled appetites to work his own undoing. And at last, in a frenzy of awareness of his own impotence as a man of God, he accomplished the downfall of the Philistines by carrying them with him to destruction. How pitiful that Samson was the best material God could find at the time of national crisis.

The glorious song-poems recorded for our inspiration in the book of Psalms were the product of the Spirit of God. The Spirit had taken possession of David's tongue, and as he neared the end of a full life, King David himself is quoted as saying: "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." 2 Samuel 23:1, 2.

From the archives of Paradise, then, issued the exalted music of the Psalms which have inspired and comforted the church in the long ages since they were composed by the shepherd boy who had been anointed by the Spirit of God.

With the coming of the long-awaited Messiah, whose miraculous descent to the level of mankind He personally supervised, the Third Person entered into a new phase of His relationship to man and to God's plan for man's redemption.

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

"Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Hebrews 2:17.

The Holy Spirit acted as go-between for Father and Son that He might demonstrate to us the perfection of God's plan for our ultimate relationship with Himself. With the Father on the throne of the universe, and the Son on earth to represent the lost human race, the Spirit of God served to maintain the needed communion between Them. Then when Jesus Christ gave the ultimate demonstration of divine love by giving up His life for the human race, it was the Spirit who restored to Him the life He had voluntarily laid down.

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Romans 8:11.

He took over the direction of the earthly phase of our redemption at Pentecost. Henceforth He works to accomplish in our lives redemption, which Christ provided for us on Calvary, and sanctification. Daily He weaves into the fiber of our yielded lives

the lovely threads of which Christ's life was woven. These precious threads are seen shining through such passages of Scripture as these:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23.

"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. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." James 3:17, 18.

"Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Peter 1:5-7.

"It is expedient for you that I go away," said Christ to His incredulous followers, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:7, 8, margin. And so day by day, even moment by moment, the battle goes on for the possession of the mind and the heart of man. "For the passion of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the passion of the Spirit against the flesh--the two are at issue, so that you are not free to do as you please." Galatians 5:17, Moffatt.

When man recognizes the forces contending to take possession of him, and voluntarily submits his will to the divine Spirit of God, then the transformation of character known as sanctification can take place.

"Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. ... The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein."--The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 52, 53.

"When one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 92.

"When the Holy Spirit controls the minds of our church members, there will be seen in our churches a much higher standard in speech, in ministry, in spirituality, than is now seen."--ibid., vol. 8, p. 211.

While it is the privilege of God's people to be wholly possessed by the Third Person of the Trinity, so that their every thought will be God's thought, they are by no means the exclusive recipients of His attentions. "Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education."--Christ's Object Lessons, p. 385.

"God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal, many who long to understand more fully in regard to Christ and the law, many who are hoping against hope that Jesus will come soon to end the reign of sin and death. And there are many who have been worshiping Baal ignorantly, but with whom the Spirit of God is still striving."--Prophets and Kings, p. 171.

"There are many who have not yet heard the testing truth for this time. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth."--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 97.

The ugly fruitage of bigotry and intolerance stems not from seeds of the Spirit's planting, whether it develops in the heart of civilized man or savage, whether in Christ's church or among atheists. The unspeakable atrocities of the Inquisition were perpetrated by Christians, so-called, and in the name of Christ. The Puritans, fleeing from the spirit of intolerance in the Old World, brought it in their own unregenerate hearts to the New World. Roger Williams, who founded the colony of Rhode Island, had been compelled by fellow church members to flee from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the dead of winter because his theology differed from theirs. He took refuge among the Indians. Later, when offered the opportunity to return, he refused, saying that he preferred the society of the Christian savages of Rhode Island to that of the savage Christians in Massachusetts.

Yet, while man seems bent on barring from the kingdom of God all who do not fit into his preconceived views of its exalted standards, the Spirit of God goes on wooing and winning all who will listen to His teaching, whether it be by formal lessons from the Scriptures for those privileged to live in lands touching Christian culture, or by the more informal book of nature, which, after all, was God's first textbook. God is bent on bringing people into His kingdom, not on keeping them out. How much more might have been accomplished by God had receptive minds and hearts in non-Christian lands had the benefit of all the light God has bestowed on Christians and commissioned them to share with their less fortunate brothers and sisters, only eternity will disclose. How much more peace and happiness might have reigned in their hearts had they

only known all we could have shared with them of God's love and protection over His own.

But the Spirit has been watching for eyes turned heavenward. If only the heart is teachable, that the divine qualities of kindness and pity and love may be impressed hereon, there will be opportunity enough throughout eternity for the study of doctrine. And the same Spirit detects when the proud and complacent heart, secure in its possession of truth, closes its ears to the revelation of its own weakness and need. For such a one, He can do no more.

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Romans 2:14, 15.

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Proverbs 28:9; Luke 12:48.

Chapter 4

Possession of the Saints

"All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental 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 heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence."--The Desire of Ages, page 827.

What is this which God designs that all His people have within themselves? How may they recognize beyond a shadow of doubt that they do possess a spirit like God's? How will its manifestations in yielded lives compare with the life of Christ?

Concerning Christ's possession of the Spirit we read: "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." John 3:34. To us also is extended the gracious offer, "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3: 19. With this assurance that God's method of dealing with His Son is but a token of His plan for the salvation of all flesh, we may go on to examine the results in Christ's life of His possession of God's Spirit.

The fact that Christ "emptied Himself" (Philippians 2:7, R.S.V.) before coming to this earth necessitated an infilling of the Spirit's power. The spotless life of Christ was designed to be a powerful encouragement and incentive to men. If Jesus could in the power of God's Spirit continue to do the deeds of Omnipotence, then His followers may hope to receive power within themselves to make their lives a blessing both to God and to each other.

The fullness which Jesus received during His earthly ministry must have depended on His capacity to receive. God's outpouring of heaven's riches could benefit Him only as He made room for it. We may be very sure that there was nothing in the character of Christ which needed displacing. It was not a weakness that led Him to make room for an infilling of God's Spirit. We read that before the creation of this earth Christ satisfied His Father completely: "Then I was beside Him, like a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the sons of men." Proverbs 8:30,31, R.S.V.

No, He "emptied Himself" of all that would give Him an advantage over humanity in its struggle against sin. Only thus could He bring hope to the hopeless and inspire in them a confidence that they, too, could overcome in the strength God held out to them. Without such a convincing demonstration as Christ afforded mankind, none would have dared reach up to lay hold of the hand of God. So cleverly had Satan worked in human minds to confuse and discourage with his insinuations of doubt.

The spectacle of God's Son, sharing with His creatures their inherent weaknesses, deliberately being cut off from such communion with His Father as was not available to them, living a blameless and power-filled life despite Satan's efforts to frustrate and defeat Him--this was Heaven's demonstration to all who could not be satisfied with words alone. Such a demonstration God had purposed to make in the experience of the nation of Israel. They failed Him, but Jesus came to show man the way.

"This experience may be yours if you, too, will accept the infilling of My Spirit," God has been saying to all mankind since that day. Surely no one in full possession of his reason, and with a knowledge of God's plan and purpose for his life, would turn his back on so wonderful a possession as a spirit like Christ's. What is it that persuades men and women to continue, year after year, so lacking in characteristics that are godlike, content to exist on so low a level, when they might breathe the very atmosphere of heaven? The only answer is SELF. This four-letter word, which is a synonym for an even shorter one, SIN, has been Satan's trump card from the very beginning. A man who is concerned with his own designs and ambitions, or frustrated by his own inability to lead a victorious life in things of the spirit, is incapable of opening up his life to be filled with the fullness of God.

God's fullness never can be contained in a vessel partially filled with human imperfection. Therefore God, in mercy, does not answer our prayers for the manifestation of the Spirit in the latter rain. He knows that such a manifestation would shatter the earthen

vessels still containing selfish designs and considerations, even as the combining of certain chemicals brings about an explosion that wrecks the test tube holding the mixture. Truly there is a solemn work of purging incumbent on every child of God before he will be ready to receive the outpouring of the latter rain.

"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. ... There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. ... All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts. ... The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 419.

"The church members need to know from experience what the Holy Spirit will do for them. It will bless the receiver, and make him a blessing. It is sad that every soul is not praying for the vital breath of the Spirit; for we are ready to die if it breathe not on us. ...

"Some have treated the Spirit as an unwelcome guest, refusing to receive the rich gift, refusing to acknowledge it, turning from it, and condemning it as fanaticism. ...

"They are not willing to be deprived of the garments of their own self-righteousness. They are not willing to exchange their own righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth."--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 64, 65.

"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 are we to receive the Holy Spirit. ... So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest. He is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts and lives of His followers, that through them He may be reproduced in other hearts and lives."--Education, page 106.

On Pentecost, when the apostles gave a great demonstration of the power of the Spirit, their personalities were so different from what they had been before that they were accused of being drunk. Peter explained that they were not drunk, but that their personality change resulted from an infilling of the Holy Spirit, quoting 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."

Contemplation of a last-day fulfillment of Joel's prophecy forces us to consider what our own reaction would be to a genuine infilling or "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit.

The very thought of being filled with a power not his own forces from man the admission that he is not adequate, that his hand alone on the controls is not sufficient to guide his life safely. This is damaging to his natural pride, and its implications are terrifying. Suppose this power to which he surrenders himself should lead into an experience which he would not choose to have. Suppose he is made to appear undignified, even ridiculous, in the eyes of his fellow men. Why was it that Peter felt it necessary to assure his audience that he and his companions were not drunk?

No, the typical twentieth-century Christian is not yet ready for the outpouring of God's Spirit. There is a humbling which must be completed first. The roughnesses and imperfections of the clay vessels must be smoothed and refined before the rich fragrance of the holy oil will be received gratefully, eagerly. Only when the vessels have placed themselves unreservedly in the hands of the Potter will they be so prepared. Only thus can they cease to be so aware of their innate unloveliness and thus to shrink from contact with purity.

"We have now only a little time in which to prepare for eternity. May the Lord open the closed eyes of His people and quicken their dulled senses, that they may realize that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. May they see the importance of giving so pure and righteous a representation of God that the world shall see Him in His beauty. May they be so filled with the Spirit that dwells in Him that the world will have no power to divert them from the work of presenting to men the

wonderful possibilities before every soul who receives Christ."--
Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 11, 12.

Thus is the human body to become "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19) when the spirit which is in man is truly a reproduction of God's Spirit. Only thus can you "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods." Verse 20. In the exact proportion that the entire self--body, soul, and spirit--is yielded to Gods possession, will this take place. This truly is the new-covenant experience when God will put His "laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Hebrews 8:10. Then only can man be called "the epistle of Christ, ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2 Corinthians 3:3.

The effect of such a work of grace in the heart of man is truly a miraculous blossoming of the fruitage of the Spirit in his everyday life.

"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, page 509.

"God can use every person just in proportion as He can put His Spirit into the soul-temple. The work that He will accept is the work that reflects His image. His followers are to bear, as their credentials

to the world, the ineffaceable characteristics of His immortal principles."

"Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving joy. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world."--Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 144, 273.

And what will be the effect upon the world of the presence of such Spirit-filled men and women? Those who have tarried in the presence of God until they receive the infilling of His Spirit will accomplish far more of the work He has set for the church to do than has been done through all the bustle and flurry of activity which occupies the church today.

"As those who have been cleansed and sanctified through a knowledge of Bible truth engage heartily in the work of soulsaving, they will become indeed a savor of life unto life. And as daily they drink of the inexhaustible fountain of grace and knowledge, they will find that their own hearts are filled to overflowing with the Spirit of their Master, and that through their unselfish ministry many are benefited physically, mentally, and spiritually. The weary are refreshed, the sick restored to health, and the sin-burdened relieved."--Prophets and Kings, page 234.

Chapter 5

Power Line

"The intellect most powerful in behalf of truth is the intellect that Christ controls, ennobling and purifying it by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit."--Testimonies, vol. 9, page 136.

That tremendous energy for which the apostles were instructed to tarry at Jerusalem, that they might be endowed to undertake the gospel commission, is the most crying need of His church today. The eleven left on earth by their risen and ascending Lord dared not venture forth on their mission without it, even in the environs of Jerusalem. Yet today many heralds of Christ's second coming attempt to give their message without the power of the Holy Spirit. The church has been so long bereft of the Spirit's power that she seems almost content without it. Strange enchantment, when she is faced with the burgeoning power of spiritistic phenomena to challenge her very truths! Truly the virgins are yet asleep when they think of pitting their own human strength against the combined forces of "spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. It is high time that the church awoke to her peril and laid claim to the mighty forces manifested at Pentecost.

Yet, if the church is to fulfill her mission of preparing the world for her returning Lord and King, she must give evidence not only of possessing this divine unction, but also of her ability to live with its "everlasting burnings." Isaiah 33:14. Possession by, and also of, the

Spirit is not an essentially comfortable experience, at least not while humanity clings to its imperfections. Perhaps this factor may enter into our reluctance to claim God's promise in its divine fullness.

"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 it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work."

"The people of God have accustomed themselves to think that they must rely upon their own efforts, that little help is to be received from heaven; and the result is that they have little light to communicate to other souls who are dying in error and darkness. The church has long been contented with little of the blessing of God; they have not felt the need of reaching up to the exalted privileges purchased for them at infinite cost. Their spiritual strength has been feeble, their experience of a dwarfed and crippled character, and they are disqualified for the work the Lord would have them to do. They are not able to present the great and glorious truths of God's Holy Word that would convict and convert souls through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. A harvest of joy will be reaped by those who sow the holy seeds of truth."--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 511, 512, 175.

In the light of these pointed statements from the pen of inspiration, how can we escape the realization that our powerlessness stems from our lack of God's divine Spirit? There is no stoppage in the flow of the golden oil from the olive trees into the bowl of the sanctuary lamps. God's revealed word is brimming with the light of His truth from which we may take an abundant supply. The feeble trickle of the golden oil which the church is experiencing in our days must be due to clogging in the pipes through which our little individual lamps feed from the bowl.

"The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the presentation of the truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the unfriendliness of relatives, the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own imperfections and mistakes. ... My brethren and sisters, plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made. ... The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word to us."--Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 22, 23.

The utter foolishness of attempting to accomplish the gospel commission without this divine assistance is at once pathetic and tragic, from the viewpoint of both the church and the world. Both are losers when man attempts to work without God's promised aid.

"It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless. Learning, talent, 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 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 channels for the out-flowing of the highest influence in the universe."--Ibid., pp. 21, 22.

The experiences of the apostles and of the infant church, following Pentecost, have been set forth for our enlightenment and encouragement. Just as the apostle Paul could say of the Old Testament writings in his day, "For whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4), even so may we in the twentieth century say this of what is written in the New Testament Scriptures. The mighty change which Pentecost made in the testimony of the little band of Christian believers could be repeated today, if the remnant church would demand it and prepare to receive it.

"Why has the history of the work of the disciples, as they labored with holy zeal, animated and vitalized by the Holy Spirit, been recorded, if it is not that from this record the Lord's people today are to gain an inspiration to work earnestly for Him? What the Lord did for His people in that time, it is just as essential, and more so, that He do for His people today. All that the apostles did, every church member today is to do. And we are to work with as much more fervor, to be accompanied by the Holy Spirit in as much

greater measure, as the increase of wickedness demands a more decided call to repentance. ... From all believers, light is to be reflected in clear, distinct rays. ... Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles?"--Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 33.

"Strengthened by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, they went forth filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross. The Spirit animated them and spoke through them. The peace of Christ shone from their faces. They had consecrated their lives to Him for service, and their very features bore evidence to the surrender they had made."--The Acts of the Apostles, page 46.

What the Spirit of God accomplished in and through the apostles and early believers in the Christian Era, God intends to accomplish in and through us in our day. To an even greater degree is such consecration to be witnessed now, even as the need in the last days will be greater than it was in the first century. Let us notice the source through which such power was made available to Gods men and women in those early days.

"The word of God--the truth--is the channel through which the Lord manifests His Spirit and power. ... When by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God. ... When, after His ascension, the Holy Spirit brought His teachings to the remembrance of the disciples, their slumbering senses awoke. The meaning of these truths flashes upon

their minds as a new revelation, and truth, pure and unadulterated, made a place for itself. Then the wonderful experience of His life became theirs."--Ibid., p. 520.

This miracle did not take place in the lives of those with whom Christ had associated most intimately until after He was no longer with them. The beautiful symmetry of His daily life, while it impressed them to the extent that they had already left all to be with Him in constant companionship, could not awaken in them a proper comprehension of its significance while it remained a thing apart from themselves. Nor could the Spirit of Christ become theirs while they were harboring ambitious longings for personal advantage, and the little jealousies of those who felt that others were seeking precedence over them unfairly. To men with such thoughts in mind, the perfection of Christ's character must always be a thing to be admired and longed for but not to possess--a museum piece, as it were, beyond the hope of personal acquisition.

After Christ's ascension and the experience of the ten days' preparation in the upper room, things changed. Personal ambitions were relinquished, that Christ, and not they, might be exalted. No longer able to bask in the protection of His perfection, the eleven took a candid look at themselves. In fact, they spent ten days in taking stock of the resources with which they must begin the conquest of the world for their risen Christ. They must have come to the conclusion that they owned pitifully little with which to attack the strongholds of unbelief. This conclusion was exactly what the

Holy Spirit wanted them to reach. Only then would they be prepared to admit their emptiness and turn to Him for the heavenly infilling.

Judas's defection and Peter's momentary weakness must have shaken them to the core. If these two stalwarts could be so sorely defeated by the enemy, what hope had any of them of holding out when pressure was applied? And well they knew that in the days ahead strong pressures would be applied to destroy the infant church. Had not their Lord warned them, 'Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service'? John 16:2.

From self-distrust developed their preparation for the mightiest infilling of God's Spirit yet witnessed by this world--Pentecost. And this, says the spirit of prophecy, is to be available to our generation in as much greater intensity as the closing crisis will demand. It is high time to seek such an upper-room experience, that we may come to a full understanding of the Lord's plan. We can never accomplish our commission by committee meetings, denominational campaigns, and Ingathering dollars alone. Our men and women are shortening their own lives and limiting their effectiveness by the tensions built up through this very busyness. When will we learn to do as did the eleven before Pentecost? They pushed aside the pressing details of campaign planning to attend to the more necessary tarrying together in prayer and in mutual confession of old grudges, irritations, and all those niggling little inconsequentials which can mar the perfection of our working together. This was work of the first importance and

had to be attended to before the Spirit of God could get on with the campaign.

"We are to come in touch with God, then we shall be imbued with His Holy Spirit, that enables us to come in touch with our fellow men. ... While you look higher than yourself, you will have a continual sense of the weakness of humanity. The less you cherish self, the more distinct and full will be your comprehension of the excellence of your Saviour. The more closely you connect yourself with the source of light and power, the greater light will be shed upon you, and the greater power will be yours to work for God."--The Desire of Ages, page 493.

"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. ... 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, page 50.

Lest we be disheartened by this clear description of our lethargy, let us turn our attention to the promises given those who avail themselves of this divine energy. The recipients of this promised power need not be only General Conference officials, nor need they be only ordained ministers, or conference employees. God

is no respecter of persons. He could make as effective use of Peter, the fisherman, as of Saul, the Pharisee.

"God will move upon men in humble positions to declare the message of present truth. Many such will be seen hastening hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to give the light to those in darkness. ... Many, even among the uneducated, will proclaim the word of the Lord. Children will be impelled by the Holy Spirit to go forth to declare the message of heaven. The Spirit will be poured out upon those who yield to His promptings. Casting off man's binding rules and cautious movements, they will join the army of the Lord."--Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 26, 27.

"Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm and steadfast, free from extravagance in thought, word, or deed. Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth, silencing every other voice but that which comes from Him who is the truth. ... When we are endowed with the Spirit, we take hold by faith of infinite power."--Gospel Workers, page 289.

In closing this chapter on the Source of that power of which God's church stands in such need in these days, let me cite three more quotations from the pen of inspiration. They turn our thoughts to encouraging results in lives possessed by this divine influence and to the impact of such lives on the world about them.

"Christ Himself calls our attention to the growth of the vegetable world as an illustration of the agency of His Spirit in sustaining spiritual life. The sap of the vine, ascending from the root, is diffused to the branches, sustaining growth and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds."--The Acts of the Apostles, page 284.

"When the Holy Spirit operates upon the mind, the human agent will understand the statement made by Christ, 'He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' Subjection to the word of God means the restoration of one's self. Let Christ work by His Holy Spirit, and awaken you as from the dead, and carry your minds along with His. Let Him employ your faculties. He has created your every capability that you may better honor and glorify His name. Consecrate yourself to Him, and all associated with you will see that your energies are inspired of God, that your noblest powers are called into exercise to do Gods service. The faculties once used to serve self and advance unworthy principles, once serving as members of unrighteous purposes, will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ, and become one with the will of God."--Testimonies to Ministers, page 396.

"Every worker who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth's harvest. Morning by morning, as

the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power. As they go forth to the day's duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be 'laborers together with God.'"--The Acts of the Apostles, page 56.

Chapter 6

Teacher

"A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 59.

God has always designed that His children be filled with the fullness of His own nature. Of the Son of God who was to become the Son of man as a pattern for man's achievement it was written: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:2.

As to the manner in which the child born into a peasant family in Judah was to receive access to those heavenly treasures, we are told by the messenger of the Lord: "With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of His powers, and beheld the impress of perfection upon His character. With delight she sought to encourage that bright, receptive mind. Through the Holy Spirit she received wisdom to cooperate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child, who could claim only God as His Father."--The Desire of Ages, page 69.

Would that more mothers would yield themselves so completely to Gods guidance that their sons and daughters might be assured of such heavenly training in their impressionable years. To them also, even as to Mary, is the promise given: "Even the babe in its mother's arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. If we will live in communion with God, we too may expect the divine Spirit to mold our little ones, even from their earliest moments."--Ibid., p. 512.

The Third Person of the Trinity had begun His teaching mission long before the Christian Era dawned. He found in God's holy Son His most perfect and receptive student, but Scripture tells of many others who had been taught thus. The first of such recorded instances goes far back in Old Testament history. "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art." Genesis 41:38, 39.

Thus we find that God had to send this lad away from home into slavery in Egypt to save him from the ruinous influence of an overindulgent parent. While there, Joseph came under the tutelage of the divine Teacher. In his more mature years, his wisdom and discretion were so noteworthy that a heathen monarch in the most sophisticated court of his day recognized that he had been taught of God.

Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah was singled out for recognition among those whose handicraft wrought the perfection of Israel's portable sanctuary. Of him God Himself gives the following recommendation: "And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship." Exodus 31: 3-5.

This man's infilling from the heavenly storehouse consisted not in political or economic acumen, but in highly specialized crafts that enabled his hands to design and fashion the lovely things with which Israel honored their God in the first house dedicated to His name here on earth.

Yet another phase of the Spirit's tutelage is evidenced in the preparation of Othniel, Caleb's nephew and son-in-law, to free Israel from the yoke of the king of Mesopotamia, under which they had come because of their idolatry. "And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim." Judges 3:9, 10.

Military strategy was strange to peace-loving Israel, but when the necessity arose to throw off the shackles of a foreign master, Othniel, who trusted in God, could be trusted by God to follow the guidance of One who has never lost a battle. It is noteworthy that of this man no unworthy deeds are recorded in his later career. This cannot be said of many of the men who judged Israel during this period of their national history. Still a different endowment of the Spirit of God was given to the youth David, called in from keeping his father's flocks to be anointed as Israel's future king by the prophet Samuel. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." 1 Samuel 16:13.

The quality of David's statesmanship has never been questioned. The dynasty which he established knew its golden age in his reign and that of his son, Solomon. To him was granted the ineffable honor not only of being an earthly ancestor of the Messiah, but of establishing the royal line under which Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords will rule for eternity. "For unto us a Child is born, ... Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." Isaiah 9:6, 7.

Since Eden was closed to the pair who had chosen to doubt their Creator, the Spirit of God has been the One to bring to fallen man the messages his God has so graciously made available to him, recorded by "His holy prophets, which have been since the world

began." Luke 1:70. First they were brought by word of mouth and later in written form so that future generations might benefit therefrom. As "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21), the heavenly messages of counsel, warning, and comfort have come. Such a gracious sharing of His omniscience with a people who could no longer stand confidently in His presence has always been a part of God's plan for man's restoration. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7.

Indeed, all that man knows of the things of the spirit has been revealed to him by his heavenly Teacher, the divine Spirit of God. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His 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." 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11.

The work of the Holy Spirit as teacher is well illustrated in the experiences of the men whom Jesus chose to head up the Christian church. Drawn to Him by the loveliness of His character, fascinated by the daily evidence of His victorious life, they were unaware, it seems, of the true source of such power, or of its accessibility to them. In the light of His presence they were content to bask in its reflected warmth, satisfied with an occasional flash of insight into a greater experience possible to them.

"Even the disciples failed of understanding all that Jesus desired to reveal to them; but from time to time, as they surrendered themselves to the Holy Spirit's power, their minds were illuminated. ... Often as He had presented the Old Testament Scriptures, and showed their application to Himself and His work of atonement, they had been awakened by His Spirit, and lifted into a heavenly atmosphere."

"It was not until after Christ's ascension to His Father, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, that the disciples fully appreciated the Saviour's character and mission. After they had received the baptism of the Spirit, they began to realize that they had been in the very presence of the Lord of glory. As the sayings of Christ were brought to their remembrance, their minds were opened to comprehend the prophecies, and to understand the miracles which He had wrought. The wonders of His life passed before them, and they were as men awakened from a dream."--The Desire of Ages, pages 494, 507.

"When on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, they understood the truths that Christ had spoken in parables. The teachings that had been mysteries to them were made clear. The understanding that came to them with the outpouring of the Spirit made them ashamed of their fanciful theories. Their suppositions and interpretations were foolishness when compared with the knowledge of heavenly things which they now received. They were led by the Spirit, and light shone into their once darkened understanding."--Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 267.

"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."--The Acts of the Apostles, page 45.

If it was true that men who had daily lived with Jesus could not, without the ministration of the Holy Spirit, comprehend His teachings nor the plan of redemption which He demonstrated, how may we, who live so many centuries later, hope to understand without that same Teacher? The very differences manifested in that little group of believers before and after Pentecost should be both an encouragement and a warning to us who live in spiritual Laodicea.

"It is as true now as in apostolic days, that without the illumination of the divine Spirit, humanity cannot discern the glory of Christ. The truth and the work of God are unappreciated by a world-loving and compromising Christianity."--The Desire of Ages, page 508.

"Only the mind and heart cleansed by the sanctification of the Spirit can discern heavenly things. ... Let your hearts be yielded to the power of the Holy Spirit, and they will be made susceptible to the teaching of the word. Then you will be able to discern the deep things of God."--Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 301.

Just what is to be the extent of the work of this Third Person of the Godhead in the twentieth century? Has His work as teacher been completed in the centuries since the Reformation started the church back to apostolic purity of belief? Is the church possessed of all the light she needs to lighten the earth with the glory of that other angel of Revelation 18:1?

"Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the Day of Pentecost, are to shine from Gods word in their native purity. To those who truly love God the Holy Spirit will reveal truths that have faded from the mind, and will also reveal truths that are entirely new. Those who eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God will bring from the books of Daniel and Revelation truth that is inspired by the Holy Spirit."--Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 473.

"A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth. The earth is to be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men."--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 40.

The pen of inspiration has given us such a graphic description of the magnificent results to human beings from this type of education that we can but stand aghast that there have been so few who have matriculated in this divine school.

"There is a science of Christianity to be mastered,--a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. ...

"The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in Gods power to save, are acquired by the experience of years."--Ibid., vol. 8, p. 314.

"Those who are under the training of the Holy Spirit will be able to teach the word intelligently. And when it is made the study book, with earnest supplication for the Spirit's guidance, and a full surrender of the heart to be sanctified through the truth, it will accomplish all that Christ has promised. The result of such Bible study will be well-balanced minds; for the physical, mental, and moral powers will be harmoniously developed. There will be no paralysis in spiritual knowledge. The understanding will be quickened; the sensibilities will be aroused; the conscience will become sensitive; the sympathies and sentiments will be purified; a better moral atmosphere will be created; and a new power to resist temptation will be imparted."--Fundamentals of Christian Education, pages 433, 434.

All these benefits may be ours if we allow the Spirit of God to complete His sealing work in our individual hearts. Indeed, they must be ours if God is to make use of us in the closing work of the

gospel. Touching our lives on every side are men and women unsatisfied in their quest for that complete expression of self to be found only when self is utterly lost in Christ. As long as we continue to be occupied in self-expression ourselves, we can never hope to impress them that what we have found is in any way superior to what they have. Only as the precious fruitage of the Spirit becomes daily more and more apparent in our lives can they perceive the true meaning of redemption as God intends it to be demonstrated in us.

We dare not wait for the pastor or some other Christian worker to give them this divine instruction. The wisest counseling along this line will prove meaningless to one who sees no evidence that God's plan is practicable. From each of us God has a right to expect continual proof that the power He offers through His Spirit is effectual in changing lives and fulfilling man's greatest longing--to be like the One in whose image he was originally created.

The most powerful instruction will fail to open blind eyes unless the individual is willing to be instructed. Each individual must rid his own life of self in all its forms before he can receive the latter rain. When once this has been accomplished, then nothing on this earth can prevent the infilling of the divine Spirit. The initiative is man's.

"Place your mind and will where the Holy Spirit can reach them, for He will not work through another man's mind and conscience to reach yours."--Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 214.

Chapter 7

Voice of Conscience

"Those who would be benefited by the tilling of the soil must go forth with the word of God in their hearts. They will then find the fallow ground of the heart broken by the softening, subduing influence of the Holy Spirit. Unless hard work is bestowed on the soil, it will not yield a harvest. So with the soil of the heart: the Spirit of God must work upon it to refine and discipline it before it can bring forth fruit to the glory of God."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 88.

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21. So said the Old Testament prophet of God's provision for His children's guidance.

The apostle Paul effectively describes his personal experience as he seeks for immortality.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14.

The apostle represents himself as putting all his abilities to the utmost stretch as he strains to reach and grasp an understanding of himself and his potentialities, viewed through the eyes of God. To do this he realizes that he must put behind him the discouraging remembrance of his past mistakes and arrogant sinning, and concentrate on making full use of all the powers with which God has endowed him, henceforth magnified and increased by the indwelling Spirit of God. This is no superman complex which Paul visualizes. It is not even the "power of positive thinking." Instead, it fully comprehends his own nothingness apart from God, while recognizing the limitless possibilities when man's inadequacies are linked up with God's graciously proffered completeness.

Even as he admits a candid viewpoint of his own slender resources, he leans heavily on God as his only means of fulfillment. He relies confidently on the assurance that "if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Verse 15. Thus does God reassure His struggling children that He will not leave them unaware of their shortcomings past the "point of no return." This is the first and most basic work of the Third Person of the Trinity as He sets about to finish in the lives of men what Jesus accomplished on the cross for the ultimate reconciliation between man and God.

In this ministry He is assisted by hosts of loyal angels who are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1:14. This shadowy ministration is

carried on outside the range of human comprehension by beings of a higher order than man. According to the psalmist, man was originally created "a little lower than the angels" (Psalm 8:5), and he has since sunk lower and lower with the weight of the inheritance from ancestors habitually disobedient to physical law. Man's senses, far duller than they were created to be, can never comprehend these compassionate heavenly messengers, who nevertheless are concerned with his redemption from his worst enemy--himself.

Jesus assured His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7. Such sentiments must have been incomprehensible to them. They were no closely knit organization ready to take over the evangelization of the world after their Leader left them. They were but eleven ordinary men who had followed Him about for some three years. They had listened to Him teach wherever He found listeners, watched Him do miraculous deeds. They had been wonderfully impressed by what they had seen and heard, and they were affectionately attached to Him in spite of the disapproval of the Jewish and Roman authorities. Inspired by Him, they had been encouraged to launch out on small forays of their own; but they were still totally unprepared, even under His divine direction, to take over or even to comprehend a work that would make great headway. No, it was impossible for them to understand His use of the word "expedient."

Only from the vantage point of succeeding years could they evaluate what He intended them to understand: that the work of the

gospel could be undertaken more comprehensively under the leadership of the Third Person of the Godhead than under Himself, with the limitations he had accepted when He joined the human family and was "in all things ... made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2:17.

In this transaction we catch a fascinating glimpse of the gracious interaction of the members of the Trinity. Each is willing to co-operate. None calls attention to His own merits or accomplishments. The Father is pleased that in His Son "should all fullness dwell," "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Colossians 1:19, 18. Jesus said simply, from the depths of His self-imposed humiliation, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28); and of Him Paul stated, "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). Yet we hear no regrets of His decision to step down to the level of this lost race whom He loves so unselfishly. For our sakes He is glad to remain forever our Elder Brother in order that we may be adopted into the family whence we should otherwise be barred by our natural unfitness for such association. Then, when the Comforter comes to accomplish the work of our sanctification, we know the least about His ministry because "He shall not speak of Himself," but, said Christ, "He shall testify of Me." John 16:13; 15:26.

Here and there in Scripture we catch glimpses of heaven's organization to come to the aid of guilty man, helpless to lift himself up to the plane which he was created to occupy. The view of God's

throne afforded us in the fifth chapter of the Revelation shows us "Him that sat on the throne," surrounded by four living creatures, a slain Lamb, four and twenty elders, and angels numbering "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." These living creatures surrounding Christ, who is here depicted as the slain Lamb, seem closely related to the cherubim seen in vision by the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 10 of his book, and to the seraphim of the vision of Isaiah 61-3. They symbolize the intricate yet wonderfully efficient organization by which the angels watch over the affairs of men and do God's bidding in our behalf.

Most interesting and provocative of further study are the "seven eyes" possessed by the "Lamb as it had been slain." John further explains that as he sees them, they are "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Revelation 5:6. In Revelation 4:5 he sees them as "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." These seven are mentioned also in Revelation 3:1 and in Revelation 1:4. Whoever they are, they stand close to the throne of God. Centuries before, when Israel returned chastened from the Babylonian captivity, God's angel brought a message of comfort to those who mourned over the diminished glory of the new temple being erected on Mount Moriah above the ruins of what had been Solomon's magnificent edifice. "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:10, 6.

God assures spiritual Israel today, which too often tends to be impressed with earthly might, that His successes are to be won on a different plane. Harking back to glories of the past and sighing for departed splendor unfit His people for going forward to the spiritual victories that He wants them to have.

Hanani, an obscure seer in the days when Asa occupied the throne of Judah, was entrusted with a similar message for the king and the nation over which he ruled. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." 2 Chronicles 16:9.

King Asa was "in a rage" because this message rebuked his reliance on Syria rather than on God, who hitherto had exerted His power in behalf of Judah. We ought to consider the facts to which Asa's petty pride had blinded him. God has an "intelligence system" to keep close watch on all parts of His universe. We thus see Him as a benevolent and efficient Monarch who has wisely surrounded Himself with beings whom He can trust. Men engaged in business now and again find themselves in need of information which they cannot gather personally. They may retain skilled individuals, commonly called "private eyes," to do some investigating for them. So God has His host of "private eyes" to look into the affairs of men and report back to Him, and also to represent Him to this fallen race.

Who are these heavenly beings who are active in Gods vast "intelligence system"? We have already noted that they are "spirits."

In Hebrews 1:7 we read that these are angels, and in verse 14 Paul asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Through their willing and efficient work God sought to accomplish the destiny of ancient Israel. This is the message with which the prophet Zechariah sought to encourage Zerubbabel and his discouraged people. Yet they preferred to lean on the arm of flesh, whether of Egypt, Assyria, Syria, or Babylon; and as a nation they were miserably defeated. And so will Gods people continue to be humiliated in the eyes of the watching world just as long as they depend on earthly might.

Still "the eyes of God" are seeking throughout this earth to find men and women, boys and girls, whose 'hearts are perfect toward Him." Upon these He waits to pour out all the resources of heaven. And what does it mean to have a perfect heart in the sight of God? Must one have perfected his life before he can have a perfect heart? The perfected life is achieved through the power of God. But the individual must set his will in the right direction. He can reach out after God with all the longing of his heart.

Of this there are examples in Scripture. One enlightening instance concerns God's own estimate of Solomon in contrast to his father, David. "His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." 1 Kings 11:4.

Viewed by any standards, there were incidents in the life of David which were not exemplary. David's sins were great, but so also were his virtues. How could this man possibly be considered by

God to have a perfect heart? By the simple fact of David's willingness to accept reproof and to humble himself before God and his people whenever a messenger of God rebuked him. Because David was willing to listen to God's agents and be guided by them, he grew steadily in grace, profiting by his mistakes, and mellowed into a man of whom God could speak with pride. These are the people God is looking for-those who love Him whole-heartedly, and are willing to work with His divine agencies to overcome inherited weaknesses and build in their place a likeness of Himself. Then they will be like those whom John saw in his vision of the saints awaiting translation, "They that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. These have profited by the promise, "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19. It is said of them: "They are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5.

As we contemplate the action and interaction of the cherubim and seraphim, we begin to understand why Christ made the statement to His disciples recorded in John 16:7. Unhampered by the limitations which Christ had deliberately taken upon Himself, the Comforter could direct in all parts of this earth while Christ could work only in that portion of the earth where He happened to be at the moment.

What the apostle Paul reveals to us concerning things to come, he has learned, as he states in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, through the revelation of the Spirit of God who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." It is the Spirit who understands the things of

God as no man can know them, because He is God--God the Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead. These things "are freely given to us of God" through the ministry of His Holy Spirit and the angelic host.

The Army in World War II developed a gadget known popularly as the "walkie-talkie." By it a soldier, on a dangerous mission and necessarily separated from headquarters, could at all times keep in contact with his superior officers to give and receive information. Surely it does not stretch our imaginations too far to suppose that God has always known how to operate such communication and that He maintains constant contact between Himself and the angels who do His bidding here on earth.

This is the mighty agency for which the apostles were instructed to wait at Jerusalem before they set out on their world-wide mission. "Wait for the promise of the Father," they were told. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts 1:4, 8. Verses 13 and 14 describe briefly their ten-day preparation for this momentous experience destined to change the whole course of their ministry. Scripture records the secret of their readiness for an experience which the modern church still awaits. "And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Acts 2:1. Henceforth the One who was to guide them "into all truth" could take over the direction of the work. Those whose lives He would direct into heaven-appointed pathways were now prepared to follow His leadership.

‘Angels are helping in this work to restore the fallen and bring them back to the One who has given His life to redeem them, and the Holy Spirit is cooperating with the ministry of human agencies to arouse the moral powers by working on the heart, reproof of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 260.

With all heaven thus enlisted to the aid of man, with its best counsel constantly available, with the full resources of God's character free at his call, why is it that man still falls short of God's expectations? The answer must lie in the condition of man's conscience, that marvelous awareness of the voice of God with which man is divinely endowed. The seat of conscience, so closely allied to reason, discrimination, judgment, and will power, is in the forefront of the brain area. It is this that makes man superior to God's lesser creatures. In this respect it is proof that man was truly created in the image of God. This truly godlike possession is the most sensitive of man's powers, the most delicately poised; therefore, it is first to be disturbed when man is subject to prolonged intemperance, tension, anxiety, fear, or fatigue.

This is the area under attack in the fiendishly clever treatment of war prisoners known as "brainwashing." Many men subjected to this subtle treatment lose their ability to discern between right and wrong. They perform acts and reveal information at which they are horrified when once more in full possession of all their faculties. Whether we like to admit it or not, modern man is prone to inflict upon himself a form of brainwashing that robs his mind of its ability to discern spiritual dangers. Those who are preparing to meet Christ

in peace need especially to be on guard lest they deaden the very means God has provided to keep them close by His side. Temperance is one of the most important stages in the development of a godlike character, according to Paul's description in Galatians 5:22, 23. For this reason God's people living in these last days have been given principles of healthful living, that all their powers, and most especially the higher powers of the brain, be kept active and alert.

"Under the influence of unhealthful food, the conscience becomes stupefied, the mind is darkened, and its susceptibility to impressions is impaired."--Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 247.

Not without reason we have been warned to follow a course of temperance in everything. Only thus will the conscience continue to receive warning, comfort, and hope from heaven.

Chapter 8

Comforter

"The Holy Spirit is a comforter as well as a reprover."--
Testimonies to Ministers, page 176.

One of the most heartening aspects of the work of the Third Person of the Trinity is His role as Comforter. This term is translated from the Greek word *parakletos*, and is sometimes referred to as "Paraclete." Literally it means "one called alongside." This title was first borne by Jesus in His capacity as advocate. 1 John 2:1. Note that He promises in John 14:16 to send "another Comforter," since He is about to leave the immediate presence of His people. Now that He can no longer be personally with those who stand in need, He makes available to us the mighty power of the Third Person.

The church is too prone to see this divine Person as merely a reprover, one who fulfills the promise of John 1&8 to keep the saints from becoming too comfortable or complacent. We tend to forget and so make it difficult for the watching world to understand that He is the One who brings joy and peace and hope to the people of God.

"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. ... There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. ... All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts. ... The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 419.

One has only to study the book of Acts to see clearly the work of this member of the Trinity. When His work is understood as it should be, and the sanctification He guarantees received as it may be, then the saints will present to the world a picture of a people whom God makes happy, holy, and on fire with godly zeal and an overwhelming love for souls. Each of the twenty-eight chapters of Luke's treatise on the progress of the early church provides fresh views of the benefits to those willing to place their lives at the disposal of Christ's Vicegerent. Through the mighty Spirit of God His church is more closely united with her Redeemer than when He walked among a few of them in Galilee and Judea. The church has every reason to be comforted and encouraged.

In chapter 1 of the book of Acts we see the angels bringing comfort and hope to the bereaved apostles after the ascension of their Lord, and the spirit of unity coming in among those who had heretofore been jealous and eager for personal advantage. Chapter 2 presents the glorious spectacle of Pentecost, with its endowment of spiritual gifts to meet every exigency, the gift of tongues being the

most needed in the first century with its task of spreading the gospel message throughout the Roman Empire with its polyglot population. Chapter 3 records the possession of healing power used to glorify God and awaken interest in the God who bestowed the gift. Chapter 4 pictures the leaders of the infant church as being triumphant over the powers that be, not in their own strength and wisdom, but secure in the possession of the power of the Spirit.

Chapter 5 reassures the church that it need fear no incursion of sin as long as it remains under the control of the Third Person who is quick to detect unrighteousness. This chapter also brings heartening assurance that no prison bars can contain a child of God when God desires him free to present the truth. Chapter 6 teaches that spiritual gifts are for the laity as well as the clergy. Chapter 7 presents the masterly sermon preached by Stephen and assures us that heaven brought comfort and strength to this faithful layman, even though he was called upon to lay down his life as the first Christian martyr at the beginning of a promising career for Christ and the church.

Chapter 8 shows another layman, Philip, doing a mighty work for God in Samaria and proves that God does not depend on the limited vision of man nor on his unpredictable impulses to bring the truth to those in darkness. The Spirit of God knew just where the treasurer of Ethiopia would be at a given time, and He undertook to bring Philip to that very spot in the desert of Gaza, to teach a seeking mind. Chapter 9 brings Gods light and truth to the darkened understanding of the Pharisee Saul, held in the bondage of prejudice and tradition. Although the church could see in him nothing but a

persecutor to be abhorred and shunned, the Spirit of God saw in him a potential evangelist to awaken the Gentile world. Chapter 10 brings further heartening evidence that the Comforter of Israel knows the circumstances and longings of individual hearts. The Roman Cornelius is brought into contact with the apostle Peter in a manner calculated to change both their lives henceforth. Chapter 11 affords us the view of the young church accepting its first lesson in the removal of traditional prejudices which was to prepare it for its world-wide mission. Only the power of God could have accomplished this change, and only the agency of the Holy Spirit could make this power available.

Chapter 12 presents the picture of Peter peacefully sleeping in prison on the night before his scheduled execution, secure in the protection of the Comforter--a far more reassuring spectacle to the church than was his deliverance by an angel of the Lord, had they but recognized it. Not all the saints were to be thus delivered from the wrath of the "dragon." James had just been executed by orders from King Herod, and Peter had no reason to expect any other fate. His calmness in the face of what appeared to be certain death should show the church all down through the ages that no matter what man can do, God's own may have power to sustain them in any emergency, available through the mighty Comforter. Chapters 13 through 20 start the church on her missionary career with ample evidence that, through the power of God, she would prevail against determined opposition from the forces of evil. Paul presents to the dominantly Jewish group at Jerusalem the problems faced by the converted Gentiles in joining a church whose members retained

some of the old customs. A decision made in favor of this minority group shows a church maturing under the leavening effect of the Spirit of God.

Chapter 21 opens a new phase in the ministry of the apostle Paul. Paul has long desired to see Rome and to conquer that citadel of Satan, but has been prevented from doing so. Now the Spirit of God takes a decided hand in the affairs of the young church and of her most illustrious apostle. Although Paul has been put in chains, the Holy Spirit used this situation for the further spread of the gospel light. In chapter 22 the Comforter provides a Roman captain to rescue Paul from the unreasoning hatred of his fanatical countrymen. In chapter 23 He discloses a plot against Paul's life to a young kinsman, who arranges with Roman authority to foil it. In chapters 24 to 26 the Comforter permits three dignitaries in the Roman government, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, to have opportunity to hear the message which could mean eternal life should they accept it.

Chapter 27 tells the story of the company en route to Rome imperiled by storm, receiving assurance of safety through the angel of the Lord who "stood by" Paul during the night. They are shipwrecked, but no life is lost. The close of the book of Acts, chapter 28, depicts the apostle as he is permitted to live "two whole years in his own hired house," free to receive "all that came in unto him," while the gospel is preached to the city of Rome, penetrating even to Caesar's household. Surely in this one book of Scripture we have encouraging and definite proof of the effectiveness of the work

of the Spirit of God as He guided the footsteps of the infant church. The recorded fact that in Paul's day the gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven," so that the opposition in Thessalonica could accuse Paul and his company as "these that have turned the world upside down," attests to the power of the gospel when delivered through the might of the Third Person. Colossians 1:23; Acts 17:6. This accomplishment by a joyous and triumphant people, in spite of the wrath of a decadent church and a pagan society, attests to the function of the Holy Spirit as Comforter of Gods people.

What the church today needs to realize and accept is this wonderfully encouraging phase of His ministry. As Comforter He stands just as ready to support Christians in the twentieth century as He did in the first. "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. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer."

"The disciples no longer had any distrust of the future. They knew that Jesus was in heaven, and that His sympathies were with them still. They knew that they had a friend at the throne of God, and they were eager to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. ... Pentecost brought them fullness of joy in the

presence of the Comforter, even as Christ had promised."--The Desire of Ages, pages 669, 670, 833.

"With the consecrated worker for God, in whatever place he may be, the Holy Spirit abides. 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, page 51.

What the world is awaiting is a living evidence in the lives of Christ's professed followers that the transformation of character promised in the word of God is a glorious reality, and not a standard to aim at with no hope of attaining.

"The church members need to know from experience what the Holy Spirit will do for them. It will bless the receiver, and make him a blessing. It is sad that every soul is not praying for the vital breath of the Spirit; for we are ready to die if it breathe not on us. ...

"Some have treated the Spirit as an unwelcome guest, refusing to receive the rich gift, refusing to acknowledge it, turning from it, and condemning it as fanaticism. ...

‘They are not willing to be deprived of the garments of their own self-righteousness. They are not willing to exchange their own righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth.’--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 64, 65.

"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, page 391.

"Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving joy. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world."

"God can use every person just in proportion as He can put His Spirit into the soul temple. The work that He will accept is the work that reflects His image. His followers are to bear, as their credentials to the world, the ineffaceable characteristics of His immortal principles."--Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 273, 144.

"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 are we to receive the Holy Spirit. ... So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest. He is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts and lives of His followers, that through them He may be reproduced in other hearts and lives."--Education, page 106.

"As those who have been cleansed and sanctified through a knowledge of Bible truth engage heartily in the work of soulsaving, they will become indeed a savor of life unto life. And as daily they drink of the inexhaustible fountain of grace and knowledge, they will find that their own hearts are filled to overflowing with the Spirit of their Master, and that through their unselfish ministry many are benefited physically, mentally, and spiritually. The weary are refreshed, the sick restored to health, and the sin-burdened relieved."--Prophets and Kings, page 234.

Chapter 9

Reservoir of Love

"The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 419.

The baptism of love has too long been waiting for the church to receive its blessings. Love alone is the unmistakable trademark of God's true church, the only characteristic which Satan cannot counterfeit, the sole impulse untainted with self. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, R.S.V.

The gifts of the Spirit may be counterfeited by Satan. Tongues and prophecies may be simulated so cleverly that all but the wholly consecrated are deceived thereby. Fanaticism may prompt to deeds that will exalt self even while they seem to deny it. Only the pure Spirit of God can impress faulty humanity to open the heart to the inflowing love of God until it flows back to Him in ever-increasing intensity, and then out to encompass the unloved and the unloving.

Through the Third Person of the Trinity man has access to this one characteristic which sums up the nature of his Creator-love. Hence, the first evidence of the developing of God's nature in His child is love, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." Galatians 5:22. The world has been told that this mark identifies Christ's followers. Small wonder then that the world has lost its way when it sees so little of this heavenly spirit as a beacon to point it to the truth. And how can the world expect the church to bestow love upon it when the church has so little to use among its own members? Yet Christ plainly taught: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35.

This divine principle was understood and practiced in the early church. The love which Christians bore for one another was noted and commented upon by pagan observers in the early centuries. John, the beloved apostle, taught his charges: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another. ... We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. ... My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." 1 John 3:11-19.

The evidence of such love in everyday living has been spelled out for us by the apostle Paul in one of the grandest yet simplest of Bible passages: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but

rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, R.S.V.

Perhaps our most encouraging evidence of the power of the Spirit in this respect lies in the fact that neither Paul nor John was an outstanding exponent of this heavenly characteristic in his early life. The unlovely qualities that made the Pharisee Saul the scourge of the early church speak for themselves in the early chapters of the book of Acts. John, and his brother, James, were early nicknamed "Boanerges" by Christ. These "sons of thunder" exhibited such an unloving spirit toward a certain Samaritan village which had denied Him shelter on a journey to Jerusalem that they sought permission from Christ to call down fire from heaven to consume the people. Luke 9:51-56; Mark 3:17. That these two firebrands could be so changed by the softening, subduing influences of the Spirit is encouraging to us who have so little natural aptitude for loving.

These evidences of divine love were most perfectly demonstrated for us in the life of Jesus. We are plainly told in Scripture that the Second Person of the Trinity "emptied Himself" (Philippians 2:7, R.S.V.) before leaving heaven to enter the human family. Though He entered the human race with no taint of sin, yet "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2:17. In this sense He as a man called to His aid in overcoming sin no power not available to His human companions. In the process of our sanctification Christ's overwhelming love for

the unlovely humanity that surrounded Him must also be available to us through the ministration of the Spirit.

This is no arbitrary education which God seeks to force upon us. Rather, love is a fundamental principle of the universe which He has created, needful for its harmony and growth. Ours is the one planet out of step in the orderly procession of creation. On our world alone is self-interest dominant. Elsewhere love for God and one's fellow creature is the ruling spirit. Without it none can fit into the plans which our Creator has for our reinstatement in the heavenly family. Lacking this love, none could appreciate His plans for our eternal happiness throughout eternity.

"Love is power. Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. ... The excellence and value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good. Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh than the amount he doeth"--Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 135.

The effects of the reception of the love of God into an individual life will demonstrate beyond the shadow of doubt the relationship between that individual and God. No protestations need be made to convince those about him that he belongs to the family of heaven.

"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."

"Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love."--The Acts of the Apostles, pages 49, 51.

"Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 92.

The cumulative effect upon the individual heart and life of this daily reception of the love of God is a growing love for God, but it does not stop there. The love which has God as its Fountainhead

must flow in two directions. When Jesus was asked by the lawyer to identify the greatest commandment in the law, He replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40.

Here we have the assurance of Christ Himself that one who has received the love of God in his life, will just as naturally respond with a similar love for his fellow men. So it was with Christians in the apostolic church.

"Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of love and benevolence. One interest prevailed. ... The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. ... So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit. ... 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."--Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 20.

And so it was in the early days of this advent movement. 'We were indeed a peculiar people. We were few in numbers, without wealth, without worldly wisdom or worldly honors; and yet we believed God and were strong and successful, a terror to evildoers. Our love for one another was steadfast; it was not easily shaken. Then the power of God was manifested among us, the sick were

healed, and there was much calm, sweet, holy joy."--Ibid., vol. 5, p. 534.

When God's people begin to lose their first love, when self begins to stop up the flow of the divine fountain, not at its source but at the point of its reception into the human heart, one of the first evidences of this loss is to be seen in human relations. The sweet, gentle influence of the Spirit of God on the heart is best manifested in the field of human relations, and its lack is soonest demonstrated there.

"The power of the Lord is magnified when the human heart is tender, sensitive to another's woe, and pitiful for his suffering. Angels of God are ready to co-operate with human instrumentalities in ministering to souls. When the Holy Spirit works upon our hearts and minds, we shall not shun duty and responsibility, and pass by on the other side, leaving the wounded, helpless soul to its misery."

"Everyone who is a partaker of Christ's pardoning love, everyone who has been enlightened by the Spirit of God and converted to the truth, will feel that for these precious blessings he owes a debt to every soul with whom he comes in contact."--Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 303, 43.

How imperfectly Christians have represented this characteristic of the divine nature is evidenced in the reluctance of heathen nations to receive the gospel. The crimes committed against mankind under the cloak of so-called Christianity speak so loudly that often men

and women cannot hear the words of gospel truth spoken by the messenger.

"The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin."--The Ministry of Healing, page 163.

"Said the angel: 'Lack of love and faith are the great sins of which God's people are now guilty. ...

"I lift my voice of warning to all who name the name of Christ to depart from all iniquity. Purify your souls by obeying the truth. Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. ...

"Simplicity of character and lowliness of heart will give happiness, while self-conceit will bring discontent, repining, and continual disappointment. It is learning to think less of ourselves and more of making others happy that will bring to us divine strength. ...

"Our Saviour's power was not in a strong array of sharp words that would pierce through the very soul; it was His gentleness and His plain, unassuming manners that made Him a conqueror of hearts."--Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 475-477.

Chapter 10

Character Builder

"There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. ... As you receive the Spirit of Christ--the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others--you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely."--Christ's Object Lessons, pages 67, 68.

The goal of the one who follows his divine Guide can be nothing less than the perfection of character which Jesus displayed. Of course, this cannot be done without God's help--such a character is a miracle. Were God's plan for man's redemption less inclusive, it would fail of restoring our world to harmony with the rest of the universe. Many devout Christians fail to accept this obvious fact because they cannot see that God is now accomplishing this miracle in lives round about them. They may even be unaware at the moment of changes being wrought in their own lives. As a result they look for an explanation of the absence of such character transformations and find it in a denial of the possibility of the miracle rather than in man's resistance to the Holy Spirit. Yet the Scripture attests the validity of God's plan to lift man back to the plane for which God created him.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:5.

This perfection of character expected of the saints who will unashamedly greet their returning Lord represents the peak of Christian living. This is righteousness by faith which has been wholly imparted. This is total sanctification. John has pictured it in his thumbnail sketch of the saints: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

The faith or steadfastness here depicted is the result of the daily infilling of the Spirit of God, completing the transformation of fallen man into the image of his Saviour. This is what marks the 144,000, above described as being "without fault" in the sight of God.

"The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity."

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the

graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour."--Christ's Object Lessons, pages 384, 419, 420.

The attainment of such a character will cost us all that we possess, even though we are assured that salvation is free. This paradox is made understandable when we realize that nothing we can do will earn for us the right to eternal life, while only our determined clinging to human frailties can prevent our receiving it. The man plowing the field which contained the buried treasure thought his discovery worth giving up all else in order to obtain it. So did the merchant feel who found the goodly pearl. Neither of these thought of sacrifice when he gave up all to obtain these riches. Just so will the earnest Christian view the availability of the heavenly treasure, and will joyfully surrender everything else to obtain title to it. Only thus may we hope to enter into Christ's experience and hence into His joy.

"For the joy of seeing souls redeemed, Christ endured the cross. He became the living sacrifice for a fallen world. Into that act of self-sacrifice was put the heart of Christ, the love of God; and through this sacrifice was given to the world the mighty influence of

the Holy Spirit. It is through sacrifice that God's work must be carried forward. Of every child of God self-sacrifice is required. Christ said: 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' Luke 9:23. To all who believe, Christ gives a new character. This character, through His infinite sacrifice, is the reproduction of His own."--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 449.

It is the failure of man to surrender his life to this process of transformation that accounts for his weakness in things of the Spirit. Satan and not Jesus is the pattern for our stubborn insistence on managing the course of our own lives rather than leaving it quietly in God's hands.

"Why are so many of us so weak and inefficient? It is because we look to self, studying our own temperaments and wondering how we can make a place for ourselves, our individuality, and our peculiarities, in the place of studying Christ and His character. ...

"We are not to seek to maintain a peculiar identity of our own, a personality, and individuality, which will separate us from our fellow laborers. We have a character to maintain, but it is the character of Christ. Having the character of Christ, we can carry on the work of God together. The Christ in us will meet the Christ in our brethren, and the Holy Spirit will give that union of heart and action which testifies to the world that we are children of God. May the Lord help us to die to self and be born again, that Christ may live

in us, a living, active principle, a power that will keep us holy."--Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 187, 188.

We have been given an abundance of instruction as to the transformation of character which God pleases to bestow on those who are willing to surrender to the working of the Spirit. None need remain in ignorance of what God has in mind, nor in doubt as to whether or not he has such a power at work in his life.

"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 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, page 173.

"The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ."--Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 143.

"As the stars tell us that there is a great light in heaven with whose glory they are made bright, so Christians are to make it manifest that there is a God on the throne of the universe whose character is worthy of praise and imitation. The graces of His Spirit, the purity and holiness of His character, will be manifest in His witnesses."--The Great Controversy, page 476.

"The Spirit of God produces a new life in the soul, bringing the thoughts and desires into obedience to the will of Christ; and the inward man is renewed in the image of God. Weak and erring men and women show to the world that the redeeming power of grace can cause the faulty character to develop into symmetry and abundant fruitfulness."--Prophets and Kings, page 233.

"His Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature. It will build man up for the glory of God in body and soul and spirit." "All who long to bear the likeness of the character of God shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness."

"Zeal for God's glory is the motive implanted by the Holy Spirit; and only the effectual working of the Spirit can implant this

motive. Only the power of God can banish self-seeking and hypocrisy. This change is the sign of His working. When the faith we accept destroys selfishness and pretense, when it leads us to seek God's glory and not our own, we may know that it is of the right order."--The Desire of Ages, pages 341, 302, 409.

"He who is a true Christian combines great tenderness of feeling with great firmness of purpose, with unswerving fidelity to God; he will in no case become the betrayer of sacred trusts. He who is endowed with the Holy Spirit has great capacities of heart and intellect, with strength of will and purpose that is unconquerable."--Testimonies to Ministers, page 176.

Not only will the sanctified Christian who lovingly follows his divine Guide receive a character that is like Christ's but he has been promised mental vigor that is beyond his inherited capabilities. Centuries ago an unnamed psalmist recorded this gracious promise of God: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments." Psalm 11:10.

"In your intellectual faculties you are in possession of Gods heavenly endowment, and you should not allow your thoughts to be cheap and low. A character formed in accordance with the precepts of God's word will reveal steadfast principles, pure, noble aspirations. When the Holy Spirit cooperates with the powers of the human mind, high, holy impulses are the sure result."--Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 65.

Old Testament prophets used the graphic illustration of the two rainy seasons in Palestine to depict the work of the Spirit of God in the preparation for and the finishing of the work of salvation in human hearts. To the Occidental mind this illustration is not as pregnant with meaning as it doubtless was to Oriental thinking. "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." "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 everyone grass in the field." Joel 2:23; Zechariah 10:1.

On this natural phenomenon with which literal Israel was so familiar, we find the following comment:

"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."--Testimonies to Ministers, page 506.

As in the field of nature, where the falling of the early rain in the time of planting presupposed the coming of the latter rain at harvest time, so did the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost indicate a later outpouring of spiritual power on a far grander scale to finish the work of the gospel. Similarly we must understand that all spiritual growth must be accomplished under the influence of the early rain. The showers of the latter rain are not to promote growth but to ripen what has already grown. God, who knew when the Palestinian crops needed the finishing touch of the latter rain, will be watching over spiritual growth in human hearts. It is unthinkable that the gospel message is to close with a lesser degree of intensity than the symbolic picture would indicate. It was the former rain, not the latter, which fell "moderately."

"It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. 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. ...

"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.

"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."--The Acts of the Apostles, pages 54, 55.

Here is both the pictured need of the church for the time of the end, and the promise that need is to be supplied by the Spirit of God. We have in this promise of the sure bestowal of the latter rain, assurance that the work of character transformation not only can, but must be brought to completion before our Lord can return for His people. This is an experience for which a wise God has planned and stands ready to provide for all who will submit to the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be realized by earnest desire nor by prayer-alone. It requires steady, constant exercise of the will to remain always at His command. Therefore, it must needs be that the latter-rain experience will be for the few and not the many, not because God has willed it so, but because the many have not made enough effort to know and trust.

"All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental 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 heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in

the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence."--The Desire of Ages, page 827.

When this work has been completed in the individual life, then the intensity of the latter rain may be borne without damage. It is useless to beseech God for such outpouring before the needful preparation has been accomplished. This special unction from God will simply be the intensification of gifts already belonging to men and women who possess a spirit like Gods. His power stems naturally from the perfection of His nature. It follows naturally then that those who have made room for such loveliness in their lives will have room for "all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19.

"Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. ... When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 340.

Chapter 11

Cure for Laodicean Blindness

"We need spiritual eyesight, that we may see the designs of the enemy, and as faithful watchmen proclaim the danger. We need power from above, that we may understand, as far as the human mind can, the great themes of Christianity and their far-reaching principles. ... Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth, silencing every other voice but that which comes from Him who is the truth."--Gospel Workers, page 289.

The spiritual lethargy which now enervates the church and limits her impact on minds and hearts, despite her promotional activity, is described in terms no one need fail to understand. Christ's message to the Laodicean church, sent through His servant John, makes plain the strange paradox of a church heralding her Lord's imminent return and seeking to prepare others for that glorious event, while she herself still falls far short of His standards.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth. 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." Revelation 3:15-17.

Very human is the church's reaction to her present state of prosperity and popular acclaim. Mission stations in most of the countries and island groups of the world, bolstered by hospitals, schools, and publishing houses in these entered fields; radio, television, Bible correspondence schools, and colporteur ministry already breaching the walls of heathen strongholds not yet opened to Christian missions--all these are surely reason for pride of achievement, from the human point of view. Rarely are mission reports about our church made by other denominations without an admiring glance at the financial results accruing from our application of the tithing principle. Frankly favorable articles lauding our achievements have appeared recently in some of the best publications.

The results of such a reaction on the spiritual condition of the church present crying evidence of the perils of remaining "human." This absorption with the "I" has cost the church incalculable spiritual gains. God has not been able to pour out His Spirit on an institution still leaning so obviously on the arm of the flesh. As long as the church depends on human devising to formulate her plans before calling upon God to bless those plans, just so long will the church present the miserable condition of Laodicea to the critical eye of the world. Man cannot help being enamored of the fruitage of his own mind and the works of his own hands. This has been the human heritage ever since Lucifer turned man's eyes away from God to man himself--his appetites, his vanities, and his ambitions. Man's only hope for salvation is in death to self, so forcibly depicted in the following poem:

The last inward enemy of the believer
to be destroyed is self.
It dies hard;
it will make any concession, if only allowed to live.

Self will permit the believer to do anything,
bear any crosses,
afflict soul or body to any degree--anything,
if only it can live.

It will allow victory over pride, poverty, and passion,
if only it is not destroyed.
It will permit any number of rivals,
so long as it has first place.

It will consent to live in a hovel, in a garret,
in the slums, in far-away heathendom--if
only it can be spared.

It will endure any garb, any fare, any menial service
rather than die.
Dying to self is a poetic expression--it
sounds romantic, chivalrous, supernatural, saintlike.

It is beautiful to read about, easy to talk about,
entertaining to theorize about.
Yet it is hard to do.

But it must be done.

There is no abiding peace,
spiritual power,
or prosperity without it.

We must die to good deeds and to bad deeds,
to successes and to failures, to superiority
and to inferiority,
to exaltation and to humiliation--to
every manifestation of self, and to self itself.

The Saviour said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men unto Me."

Self lifted up repels. Self crucified with Christ draws;
for only then is Christ lifted up in the yielded life.

Happy those who can say with Paul,
"I am crucified with Christ ...
the life which I now live
I live by the faith of the Son of God."

--Selected.

This is the first work of the Holy Spirit--to lift man's thoughts
heavenward and to break that fatal absorption with self. Not until the
apostle Paul could truthfully say, "I am crucified with Christ," could

he go on to exclaim, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13. Heretofore his experience had been expressed in that passage which so graphically presents all the frustration and despair of a soul who knows God's high standard and longs to attain to it, yet who has met only defeat in his efforts to reach it. "I cannot understand my own actions; I do not act as I desire to act; on the contrary, I do what I detest. Now, when I act against my wishes, this means I agree that the law is right. That being so, it is not I who do the deed but sin that dwells within me. For in me (that is, in my flesh) no good dwells, I know; the wish is there, but not the power of doing what is right. I cannot be good as I desire to be, and I do wrong against my wishes. ... Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" Romans 7:15-24, Moffatt.

To the apostle and to all struggling souls who have followed along the straight and narrow pathway to triumph in Christ, the True Witness bears His testimony in faithful diagnosis of spiritual danger. Yet while He first wounds, He also binds up and heals those who will heed His counsel: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:18.

It was this divine eyesalve which enabled the apostle to evaluate his condition and turn to the only source of wisdom and

power through which a man may be rescued from the thralldom of heredity and environment.

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct. ...

"As a people, we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice."--Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

This points out the preparation needful for receiving the latter rain. Until the church has made herself ready, in that she surrenders fully to the cleansing, healing influences of the early rain, she can never obtain the blessings for which she prays. In neglecting the preparation, she stands squarely in the way of God's being able to answer her prayers. Thus unready, she holds back from the waiting

world the powerful display of God's grace which He designs to demonstrate through her. The world has every right to expect such a demonstration from the church, and God is dishonored that it is long in coming. No amount of scholastic prowess or human eloquence can deliver the testimony which the world awaits. Only a sanctified people can speak for Him. ... "Without the cooperation of the Spirit of God, no amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light. ... We cannot use the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is to use us. ...

"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, pages 284, 285.

This unction, or anointing, is recommended to the church as a rightful inheritance from God by the apostle John: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. " "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." 1 John 2:20, 27.

Of this same anointing the messenger of the Lord speaks: "The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise. God has given His church eyes which He requires them to anoint

with wisdom, that they may see clearly; but many would put out the eyes of the church if they could; for they would not have their deeds come to the light, lest they should be reproved. The divine eyesalve will impart clearness to the understanding. Christ is the depositary of all graces. He says: 'Buy of Me.' "--Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 88, 89.

"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 Christian becomes like his Master in character. ... His discernment is more penetrative, his judgment better balanced."

"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."--Gospel Workers, pages 285-287.

"Those who would be benefited by the tilling of the soil must go forth with the word of God in their hearts. They will then find the fallow ground of the heart broken by the softening, subduing influence of the Holy Spirit. Unless hard work is bestowed on the soil, it will not yield a harvest. So with the soil of the heart: the Spirit of God must work upon it to refine and discipline it before it can bring forth fruit to the glory of God."--Christ's Object Lessons, page 88.

"It is not always the most learned presentation of Gods truth that convicts and converts the soul. Not by eloquence or logic are men's hearts reached, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, which operate quietly yet surely in transforming and developing character. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart."--Prophets and Kings, page 169.

"Those who drink deeply of His Spirit will not be ambitious for themselves. They will realize that they cannot go beyond the domain of God, for God reigns everywhere."--Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 140, 141.

The testimony of the True Witness has its first effect on the individual heart, and this work must be accomplished before the Spirit can use one's life. The church already has too many members still bearing the impress of the faulty Christian experience of the ones who led them into her ranks. Such individuals have been cheated out of a good start in the Christian faith; they are like prematurely born infants, who must fight to stay alive in a world where they are ill-prepared to survive. Unfortunately, the church is not as well equipped to aid them in that struggle as the modern hospital is to help premature babies. There are few spiritual incubators to provide the gently sustaining atmosphere needed until these new citizens of the kingdom gain their balance and learn to cope with the unfriendly influences surrounding them.

And so the situation remains a sort of vicious circle which perpetuates itself on a low level of Christian experience and militates against elevation to the high level where the church might hold communion with God, growing strong to go forth and do exploits to prove her right to speak for God.

"Those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit begin war with themselves, those who cling to sin war against the truth and its representatives."--The Desire of Ages, page 306.

"Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. ... If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein."--The Acts of the Apostles, pages 52, 53.

The heavenly eyesalve held out as the only cure for Laodicean blindness must needs reveal the true condition of God's church; but the Comforter does not leave God's awakened people to despair as they view their wretched, miserable state. All the graces of God's love and wisdom and power are made available under the symbolism of the "gold tried in the fire" and the "white raiment" proffered along with the eyesalve. Seventh-day Adventists have long recognized that these represent the "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), that righteousness which is of faith and not of

works, Christ's righteousness. So by the utter surrender of the emptied heart to the infilling of God's Holy Spirit, man's imperfections are exchanged for the perfection of Christ. Then, and then only, can man enjoy the close communion held out to him by the One who represents Himself as standing outside, knocking.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20.

No more pathetic scene is pictured throughout Scripture-the world's Creator and Redeemer, who brought life into being by His own word at the beginning, who gave up the glory that was His to become one with the human race that He might buy back what should have been loyally, gratefully, eternally His, still standing outside, pleading with us to accept the benefits of His pardoning love. What has captivated us that we so carelessly turn down His offer? Are we so contented with the mediocre remuneration with which the world pays off its hacks?

Such communion as heaven offers must ever unfit the heart for communion with this world. The pure, lofty, wholly satisfying relationship with the One in whose image we were brought into being must forever ruin the taste for anything impure, ignoble, or tawdry. Man, who was created to commune with his God, can never be wholly satisfied apart from the spiritual heights which he was intended to reach. Adam and Eve were not blank pages when they came from the hands of God at creation. On the healthy,

impressionable tissues of the brain must have been traced a pattern of intelligent obedience to the noble plans God had for His creatures. Such a pattern made co-operation with God a natural process, one that did not require the anxious heart searching and the grim resolution such a course often requires today. This did not make of our first parents mere puppets who had no choice but to obey. Their response to stimuli simply followed a natural pattern, just as we perform acts almost automatically once we have established a habit. Their performance of good deeds did not require a struggle of the will power.

When Eve took her first step away from God, along the pathway that Satan suggested, a subtly different pattern began to oppose itself to the life course which had seemed so simple and so satisfying. Issues became confused. The presence of right and wrong presented the necessity of choosing between them. The longer man lives in this world, the less sure he is of what is right and what is wrong. But there still are, in the depths of his heart, occasional stirrings of the desire to know the communion which it was once possible to have with God. The Spirit of God, given the freedom He seeks, will erase the paths which rebellion has traced in the brain, restoring that ancient pattern in the mind.

"The true Christian's joys and consolation must and will be in heaven. The longing souls of those who have tasted of the powers of the world to come and have feasted on heavenly joys, will not be satisfied with things of earth. Such will find enough to do in their leisure moments. Their souls will be drawn out after God. Where the

treasure is, there will the heart be, holding sweet communion with the God they love and worship. ... And while they dwell upon those things which are lofty, pure, and holy, heaven will be brought near, and they will feel the power of the Holy Spirit, and this will tend to wean them more and more from the world. ... The power of attraction to God and heaven will then be so great that nothing can draw their minds from the great object of securing the soul's salvation and honoring and glorifying God."--Early Writings, pages 112, 113.

Chapter 12

Keeper of the Seal

"Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done' in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying. Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel."--Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 267.

Only when sanctification has changed the individual entirely can God place His final seal of approval on him. No one has any Scriptural justification for the popular belief that since "God is love," He will overlook certain character deficiencies when He makes up the number of His elect. The very fact that He is a God of love ensures the care with which He will choose the citizens for His beautiful new earth. Eternal life is to be bestowed upon them, and God will not admit any who would perpetuate sin in any of its forms. Rebellion against Him and against His way of governing His universe brought about disharmony in Paradise, in His very presence. No seeds of rebellion must be brought over into the new earth. Nothing will ever enter God's Paradise which will spoil its beauty or mar the happiness and peace of its inhabitants.

The prospect of man's restoration to fellowship with the rest of the universe makes this imperative. Had it been possible for heaven to admit us with our faults and weaknesses, then Christ need never have joined the human family and offered His precious life to provide a propitiation for these sins. The perfection of His life among us, with no more assistance than God is willing to provide for each of us, turns the searchlight of hope on God's way out for fallen humanity. The Holy Spirit stands ready to aid any and all to overcome sin and prepare for eternal life.

This does not imply that the mighty power of the Third Person of the Trinity was not unleashed for mankind until after the start of the Christian Era. Beginning with the account of creation, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2. The Three have always worked in perfect harmony for the benefit of the dwellers on our planet.

Since the Fall, the gift of prophecy seems to have been the special province of the Holy Spirit. "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." "As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." 2 Peter 1:21; Luke 1:70.

Since this gift has been operative from the beginning, we can but conclude that the Third Person in the Trinity has had an active role in the reclamation of our race since rebellion first got a foothold on our planet. Following Christ's ascension to heaven, the Holy

Spirit became more real in the minds of believers, making effective in their lives the salvation Christ had purchased for them.

Heretofore the world has had but scanty proof that God's plan for our redemption is operative. It is true that millions have accepted salvation and have started out along the pathway to the kingdom. They have joyously received Christ as their Redeemer, renouncing the world, as pilgrims bound for another, better country. Yet many of these have halted along the way. They have wearied of the journey and lost sight of their destination, if indeed they have ever had it clearly in view. They persuade themselves that, after all, God wants all His children to be happy. Did not the apostle Paul write, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"? Romans 14:17. They reason that God is not interested in such trivial details as eating and drinking; one needs but to believe to be a candidate for heaven, they say.

Believing in God the Father and in Christ must necessarily indicate belief also in the Holy Spirit. Such belief must include an understanding of His role in effecting the character transformation that God has designed for human lives. All down through the ages men and women have struggled along with considerably less to aid them than they might have had. God has watched over them in loving sympathy, understanding their falling short of His standards because of their ignorance, but not able to provide them with all the marvelous resources available, because they did not comprehend. What means He will take to supply the lack of character preparation

in those who qualify for life eternal because they lived up to all the light they had, only God knows. We only know that there need not have been such a lack, if man had only understood what God has always been willing to provide.

That this situation continued to exist even after Christ's perfect demonstration is evidence both of Satan's power to deceive, and of the degenerative effects of sin on the minds of mankind. Man's heritage from ancestors who have habitually disregarded the physical laws of God has bequeathed to him a brain that seldom thinks as clearly as it might. Added to this inherited handicap, his own continued transgressions in this field have further weakened his ability to think God's thoughts. We may be sure that the Father takes into consideration the odds against which man pits his feeble resources in these decadent times. We may also be sure that God has made provision to aid man in overcoming such odds. We have His assurance that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Romans 5:20. We know also that Satan is doing his utmost to keep man from comprehending this heartening truth.

Today Satan has stepped up his campaign against Christians because he is more aware than we are of the shortness of time. Tensions, anxieties, fears, and intemperance have taken their toll ever since Satan first launched his bid for control of the human race. Today we are reaping a fearful harvest, just as he has planned, of wrong thinking and fuzzy-mindedness. In the midst of this sad harvest of the seeds of rebellion, the Spirit of God continues to sanctify those who are willing to trust their lives in His hands. This

is part of God's purpose, and He never needs to change His plans. He it is "who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Corinthians 1:22.

Here is a commentary on this text: "Paul here uses the figure of earnest money to illustrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers, as a first installment, an assurance of their full inheritance in the hereafter. ... It is the Christian's privilege to receive the settled conviction of acceptance with God as His adopted child at conversion and to retain it throughout life, to accept the gift of eternal life, and to experience the transformation of character made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But the joy that comes when the will is attuned to God's will, when the heart aspires to the stature of perfection in Christ Jesus, and when there is an uninterrupted daily walk with the Saviour--this joy is the 'earnest' of a greater and eternal joy in the earth made new."--The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, on 2 Corinthians 1:22.

How many Christians have gone through life with doubts as to their title to eternal life! How needless their tormenting doubts and fears, had they only understood that God would redeem them, not only from the eternal loss toward which Satan and all who follow him are heading, but also from their weaknesses and besetments! Countless Christians' have lived mediocre lives when they might have glorified God through continual victories had they but left the direction of their lives to their divinely appointed Guide.

The steps by which the change from doubt to victory may be accomplished are outlined in these words of Paul to the church at Ephesus: "In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13, 14.

By believing that Jesus Christ furnishes the link which connects God in heaven with man on earth, man is led to put his trust and confidence in Christ. Man is sealed as Gods property by the Holy Spirit as He works with man to develop in him a character like Christ's. This is indeed the very process of sanctification. In the eyes of God it demonstrates our fitness for His gift of eternal life. In the experience of man it provides comforting assurance of his heirship to the kingdom of heaven.

That the sealing process represents both these angles is apparent from this statement by the apostle Paul: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2: 19.

Those who call themselves by the name of Christ have no right to cling to any form of known sin, or iniquity. By continuing in deliberate sinning they advertise to the world that the "foundation of

God" is not very secure after all. And thus they show to God that they do not really belong to Him.

"We who believe the truth should be very careful to give no occasion for our good to be evil spoken of. We should know that every step we take is in accordance with the Bible; for those who hate the commandments of God will triumph over our missteps and faults. ...

"I ... saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. 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 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. ... Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence."--Early Writings, pages 70, 71.

"Courage, fortitude, faith, and implicit trust in God's power to save do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right, the children of God were sealing their destiny. ...

"Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart. ...

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. 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."

"The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God--candidates for heaven."--Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 213, 214, 216.

This is a high standard, impossibly high when looked at from a purely human viewpoint. Christians have no right to view it so. Christ purchased for us the privilege of becoming "filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:19. Then, like Paul, we should say

confidently, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. If we fall short of God's standard, we have only ourselves to blame.

The failures of those about us need not hinder our progress in sanctification. Should every other creature on earth fail God, it still is our obligation to vindicate His love and His power by standing firm to the very end, secure in the strength which He provides, reflecting the lovely characteristics of His own nature by our transformed lives.

Soon the great controversy will be finished. As the record of our lives stands on the pages of heaven's books in that day, so we shall stand or fall, acquitted or condemned, before the tribunal of the universe. What a solemn obligation and what a high privilege is ours who live on earth in its closing days!

"When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received 'the latter rain,' 'the refreshing from the presence of the Lord,' and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received 'the seal of the living God.'"--The Great Controversy, page 613.

Now, while the Comforter, whose responsibility it is to place Gods seal upon His people, is still at work shaping and hewing lives to fit the divine pattern, we are privileged to let go the idols which divide our attention. We yet have time to surrender our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, into His control, that our sharp comers and rough edges may be smoothed down by the circumstances He has appointed to accomplish this work in us.

Chapter 13

Gift Withdrawn

"The Spirit of God is departing from many among His people. Many have entered into dark, secret paths, and some will never return. They will continue to stumble to their ruin. They have tempted God, they have rejected light. All the evidence that will ever be given them they have received, and have not heeded. They have chosen darkness rather than light, and have defiled their souls."--Testimonies to Ministers, pages 90, 91.

The true significance of these statements must be grasped by each aspirant for eternal life. God's Spirit will one day leave in the possession of Satan all who have refused to allow Him to take control. The flow from the two olive trees will cease to supply the bowl of the sanctuary lamps. Too late the foolish virgins will rush out to replenish their flickering lights. The divine power which has sustained them heretofore will no longer be available after the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. The voice that once pointed out the way is no longer to be heard. There is no comforting assurance now of the divine nearness to human problems and needs. No gentle influence prompts the selfish heart to perform loving service for one's fellow man. It is too late to remedy character defects. Eyes afflicted with Laodicean blindness must remain sightless, both to their own unloveliness and to Christ's perfections. God's seal has been placed on those who have surrendered themselves to Him in love. For all others it is too late.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." Amos 8:11, 12.

God's Spirit cannot continue indefinitely to perform His services to mankind and to issue His warnings. God is too kind to leave the door of mercy forever open, and so allow millions of His suffering children to continue in the misery of their present lot. There must come a point when a righteous Judge will close the books and declare an end to probationary time. It will surely come just as soon as God is assured that the last man, woman, and child have chosen either for or against Him. God is far less anxious to prolong this maelstrom in our world than is the holiest, most compassionate of His saints. We may be sure, too, that no additional ones would choose to be saved if God should leave the door of mercy open one moment longer.

Centuries ago the psalmist penned the comforting assurances found in Psalm 87:4-6: "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know Me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest Himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." Our divine Judge takes into consideration the environment and the heredity of each individual whose case comes

before Him in the final judgment. The five localities mentioned in verse 4 are all in heathen territory. Those who have lived under the conditions there are not to be judged by the same standard as are those living in Zion, spoken of in verse 5. Zion, according to Isaiah 51:16, is a collective term referring to the people of God. Hence those born in Zion have advantages of Christian culture and training. At least they have been within reach of the teachings of the Scriptures and hence must always carry greater responsibility in the eyes of God. During the ages of eternity God can always provide further enlightenment to anyone who was willing to follow all the light available to him on this earth. But there is nothing heaven can do for a man or woman who has willfully disregarded light graciously given.

Speaking of Gods judgment concerning the pagan people who lacked the advantages enjoyed by his fellow countrymen, Paul wrote, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Romans 2:14, 15.

God is not helpless to enlighten the heathen peoples because privileged men and women are slothful or selfish and so hinder the spread of the gospel message to the world. The mighty Comforter can speak to the hearts of these other children of God even as He speaks to ours. He is not limited to our voices to bring them

salvation. True, their advancement in the knowledge of the kingdom, and their degree of usefulness in giving the message to others, might be greatly enhanced were we to do our share in enlightening them; but God will not doom willing hearts to eternal loss because we have withheld the written word from them. He has other means at His disposal for them, but we shall face irreparable loss if we fail to lay up eternal treasure by giving them God's saving truths.

Day by day each individual on earth makes decisions for or against eternal life. Moment by moment the voice of the Spirit directs our feet into the ways of peace. No traveler in unfamiliar territory can afford to disregard the advice of an experienced guide. He faces inevitable confusion and the ultimate loss of his way should he do so. Yet how often do men and women flout the voice of Him whom Christ has made available to "guide you into all truth." John 16:13. How sure and dependable is the counsel of the One who guided the footsteps of Jesus past all the pitfalls which Satan prepared to snare His feet as He walked the strange roadways of this world as Son of man. What temptation can Satan lay for any of us which he has not already tried out on the One who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"? Hebrews 4:15.

Christ has spoken plainly of the danger in disregarding the counsel of the Holy Spirit. These are awesome words from which proceed the doctrine of the unpardonable sin : "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. ... Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven

him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matthew 12:31, 32.

Blasphemy, according to Scriptural definition, is understood in the light of Christ's condemnation by the Pharisees when He claimed equality with His heavenly Father. This equality they stubbornly refused to recognize; therefore they accused Him of blasphemy. "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." John 10:33.

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, then, would be man's insistence that his own way is as right as the way pointed out to him by the Spirit of God, divinely appointed as man's Guide. Such a course, persisted in, can lead only to duller perception of the Spirit's leadings until eventually man is too far away to hear the warning voice. Thus, with all connection to heaven cut off, sinners are hopelessly lost. There can be no sense of sinfulness apart from contact with the Spirit of God. When His presence has been lost sight of, sinners are no longer conscious of wrongdoing. Hence they can never confess and forsake and receive forgiveness for their sins, of which they are no longer aware. Throughout the earth today the influence of God's Spirit is being withdrawn wherever men and women are making irrevocable decisions against obedience to God. Yet they themselves are not aware that the decision has been irrevocable. They have merely continued on in familiar pathways, unaware that they have passed the "point of no return."

"God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit's work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed."

"God speaks to men through His servants, giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin. He gives to each an opportunity to correct his errors before they become fixed in the character; but if one refuses to be corrected, divine power does not interpose to counteract the tendency of his own action. He finds it more easy to repeat the same course. He is hardening the heart against the influence of the Holy Spirit. A further rejection of light places him where a far stronger influence will be ineffectual to make an abiding impression."

"It is a perilous step to slight the reproofs and warnings of God's word or of His Spirit. Many, like Saul, yield to temptation until they become blind to the true character of sin. They flatter themselves that they have had some good object in view, and have done no wrong in departing from the Lord's requirements. Thus they do despite to the Spirit of grace, until its voice is no longer heard, and they are left to the delusions which they have chosen."-- Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 405, 268, 635.

These warnings from the past have been penned so that we will not choose the wrong pathways that the antediluvians took. God's warning Spirit was finally withdrawn at the time of the Flood, and it surely will be withdrawn in our day when men and women have

gone too far along the road of impiety. "Men cannot with impunity reject the warning which God in mercy sends them. A message was sent from heaven to the world in Noah's day and their salvation depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. Because they rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race, and they perished in the waters of the Flood. ... Looking down to the last days, the same Infinite Power declares, concerning those who 'received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.' 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. As they reject the teachings of His word, God withdraws His Spirit and leaves them to the deceptions which they love."--The Great Controversy, page 431.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27. It will be too late to begin following another leader in that day. "Now is the ... time" (2 Corinthians 6:2) to begin to listen to the Spirit's voice. The more familiar we become with His directives now, the more surely will our feet follow naturally in whatever path He indicates. Then, the withdrawal of God's Spirit from earth will but signal to the heavenly watchers the completed sanctification of the people of God. His work has been finished in their lives; they no longer need His warnings, His teaching, nor His assurance of God's continual presence with them. Nor will His departure mean the loss of their contact with heaven, for angels of God are to guard and protect them until Christ appears to take them home at last.

"Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. ... None can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul."--The Great Controversy, pages 630, 631.

Meanwhile there still remains much to be done to fit God's people to stand in that great day. He still holds open the door of probation to allow a little more time for the needed refining process. Yet all the signs announce in clarion tones that the door cannot remain ajar much longer.

"We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude.

"The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones."--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 11.

These familiar words were penned more than fifty years ago. There are many today who are asking why these words have waited so long for their fulfillment. But we should remember that God could have brought the proclamation of the last warning message to a glorious conclusion years ago, had He but received man's wholehearted cooperation. We have been reluctant to fulfill our assignment, reluctant to let the Spirit finish His work in our own lives, to make of us usable channels for His grace. This, and not Gods reluctance, has caused the delay. But now the signs in nature and in human relations, in national and international affairs, in science and in religion, have been accumulating with an intensity that leaves us no room for doubt that God will delay no longer.

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as Gods people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has already begun."--E.G. White Letter, 173.

Epilogue

"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, vol. 5, p. 574.

The standard has already been lifted, provision has already been made; none need go down in defeat. The golden oil, in bountiful supply, is daily poured out, fresh from the throne of God, into the bowls of the sanctuary lamps. There is nothing to hinder the lamps of the virgins from burning steadily through the murky atmosphere of this dying civilization.

Since the time when man could no longer hold open communion with God, Heaven has provided a bountiful supply of instructions, counsels, warnings, and comfort, flowing freely earthward. First the writings of the Old and then the New Testament have brought light to illuminate the dark pathways of man. Light has streamed earthward in ever-brighter beams. Now in our days we would be able to walk in a blaze of glory were we willing to turn our eyes toward the light. There is no need for any lamps to be extinguished for lack of the divinely supplied oil. We have the Bible, God's depository of truth, to supply all our needs. With the ancient prophet we are privileged to say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of

mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts."
Jeremiah 15:16.

This very phraseology used by Jeremiah suggests how fully we are to take unto ourselves all that God makes available. Tasting may bring momentary delight, but it can never furnish nourishment. Thorough mastication and digestion of food are needed for physical growth, and so it is with spiritual food. God has never made available to man one revelation which is superfluous. Man needs all of God's revealed truth for harmonious growth in grace. That which man has had no opportunity to receive, Christ will impute with His righteousness. The virgins, the saints, who will live to greet their returning Lord, must take full advantage of all the available oil if they would be admitted to the marriage feast.

Bible knowledge alone will not help the virgins to keep their lamps alight in these closing hours of history. Lacking the illuminating power of the Spirit of God, the word can become a snare instead of a safeguard. Whence comes His saving power but from the very perfection of Gods nature? And whence comes any loveliness in His creatures except it be a reflection of Him? He alone is all beauty and harmony and wisdom. In Him man finds his only hope of fulfillment. If Satan is not allowed to intercept that divine attraction, nothing in the universe can prevent man's ultimate restoration to the image of God.

It is the continual influence of the Holy Spirit on the reader of the simple words of Scriptural truth, which makes them truly

significant. Taken alone they have never prepared a Christian for citizenship in the kingdom. Taken out of context, or viewed through human eyes only, they too often have developed intellectually proud Pharisees, bent on flogging into submission all who dare disagree with their theology. Righteousness must be Christ's righteousness, not man's. It is of far more concern to God that His children have His love in their hearts than that they carry His truth in their heads. Heaven's gates open wide to the hand that wields the key of love; and love, given opportunity, will not fail of comprehending doctrine, illuminated by "the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love."--Testimonies to Ministers, page 511.

These are the qualities supplied by the indwelling Spirit to all who will furnish Him room. This is Gods very nature; man is but asked to reflect the nature of His heavenly Father, bequeathed to him through the agency of the Third Person of the Godhead. "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. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans 8:15-17.

The unself-conscious possession of these lovely qualities carries with it the quiet assurance of belonging. Like is attracted to like, and the more man reflects his Father's nature, the more closely he will be drawn into the circle of Gods embrace. More and more he will feel the kinship which can only be sensed in this closest of ties;

and the things of earth will diminish in attractiveness in proportion to his approach to God. What used to attract and tempt him will seem unworthy of attention to one whose eyes are becoming accustomed to the dawning light of eternal glory.

The negative side of this principle is equally true. As man progresses toward the ideal God has set for him, he becomes less and less attractive to those who are rejecting God and choosing Satan. Christians must get used to the thought that they cannot hope to remain in favor, even with nominal Christianity. The church must awaken to the realization that her very popularity today stems from her Laodicean condition. Once she recognizes this truth and is willing to receive the heavenly eye-salve, she will discover soon enough that her status will be that of the apostolic church in the days of pagan Rome, a small minority, first ridiculed, then feared and hated, by a vast majority whose complacency she threatens.

Will the church consciously seek such a status to replace her present high estate? The true Israel of God will. Five of the virgins in Christ's parable were ready to go in with the Bridegroom. Even though they had been temporarily caught off guard by His delay in coming, the supply of oil in their vessels was sufficient to see them through. So here and there today Christians are arousing and rubbing sleepy eyes. In response to the rapid development of warning signs, they are looking to the Spirit of God to complete in their hearts the preparation needed before the latter rain can do its work through them. They realize how useless it is to beseech God

for such an experience before the early rain has thoroughly prepared the soil of the heart.

They are aware, too, that Satan stands ready to furnish a wholly counterfeit experience for those who remain in ignorance of the work of the Holy Spirit--an experience such as will bewitch and enchant some, and terrify and disgust others. Depending on their spiritual atmosphere, the display of Satan's power can either turn man away from belief in all supernatural power, or else bind him irresistibly to a glamorous false god. Spiritism today possesses an incandescence calculated to dazzle the unwary, while the church still has nothing to offer by way of counterattraction. The world is only beginning to catch the glow of this counterfeit light, but those whose eyes have become accustomed to it have little taste for the tame, lifeless performance of a church with nothing new to offer. A warmed-over version of the gospel message which the church has been presenting for a century can have no charms for those who have witnessed the fascinating demonstration of Satan in his role of "prince of the power of the air." Spiritism which has taken unto itself the trappings of evangelism, masquerading as a great religious awakening, is a more formidable adversary than the church has anticipated; and she is ill-prepared to meet it.

It is high time for the church to awaken and trim the many little lamps by whose glow those who are coming late may find the way home. When she has made this necessary preparation, then those who yet await evidence of God's truth will both hear it and see it in the virgins who bear God's eternal light. Then at last the world will

witness a concerted demonstration of Isaiah's portrayal of Spirit-filled lives in action, as once it saw a lone example in Galilee: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." Isaiah 61:1-3.

With such a demonstration of holy power the church can meet the challenge of Satan's deadliest competition. Without it she will be the laughingstock of modern civilization. All the universe is awaiting the awakening of the wise virgins to vindicate the confidence of the Bridegroom in His beloved--"Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Song of Solomon 6:10.