

Our Firm Foundation

We are engaged in an effort to double our church membership in a four-year period from January 1, 1950, to December 31, 1953. Some have reckoned such a goal to be preposterous. But is it? When the first Pentecost came the church doubled its numbers in one day.

The reception of the righteousness of Christ by the church today will bring the second Pentecost. Revelation 18:1-3 will be fulfilled. Thousands will be converted in a day as the message of salvation through Christ swells to a loud and mighty cry. With such power in the message, who shall say that a four-year period is too short a time in which to double the number of those who are brought into the church of God?

This question of receiving the righteousness of Christ in its fullness is therefore the most important consideration before the church today. It is the most important consideration before each one of us. Who, then, are there among us who will without further delay reach out the hand of faith and grasp this mighty gift: It is ours for the asking and taking if we only believe.

When this takes place the very skies will pour down righteousness and the earth will open up and cause righteousness and salvation to spring up together. (See Isaiah 45:8) "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos 5:24.

There are leaders here from all our world divisions. Brethren, it is within your power to carry this message of justification and righteousness by faith back to the very ends of the earth. You can instruct every Seventh-day Adventist worker in this doctrine. You can encourage the brethren, in turn, to set it before the churches. You can sound throughout your divisions an appeal for our people everywhere to lay hold of this mighty experience.

Let us arise and shine in the glory of the righteousness of our God. "If the people receive it fully, his [Satan's] power will be broken." [43]

23. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE LATTER RAIN

LOUIS K. DICKSON

The Holy Spirit

The church has now reached the time when all uncertainty concerning the Holy Spirit and His ministry must be dissipated. This is in a very real sense the time when in the purposes of God this mighty third person of the Godhead must be known, understood, and possessed in all His fullness. Nothing less than this will measure up to the divine plan for the remnant church.

We should then move into the study of this great subject with eagerness, confidence, and perfect devotion, that we may intelligently seek with all our hearts the fulfillment of the promises God has made to us who are sincere followers of truth and righteousness.

Personality of the Holy Spirit

No attempt to understand the Holy Spirit's ministry would be logical or successful without first of all discovering the revealed truth concerning His personality and relationship to the Triune Godhead. We are forced to humbly acknowledge our inability to exhaustively understand the personality of the Holy Spirit because of the fact that we are finite and He is infinite, we are human and He is divine. Our comprehension is faulty and our understanding is darkened by sin and its degenerating results, and thus we are confined to what divine revelation has seen fit to disclose to us concerning the personality of this great person, the Holy Ghost.

Human terms are limited to human understanding and comprehension, and therefore any description of the Holy Spirit in finite terms must of necessity fall short of a perfect and conclusive description. Clear definition, however, can be given the personality of this great and holy being by remaining within the realm of what we may understand as human beings. Certain capacities constitute proof of personality, such as being vexed (Isaiah 63: 10), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), pleased (Acts 15:28), and being able to speak (Matthew 10:20; Acts 13:2; 1 Timothy 4: 1), hear (John 16:13), convict (John 16:8), impart (Romans 5:5), transform (2 Corinthians 3:18), teach (John 14:26), guide (John 16:13),

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console (Acts 9:31), testify (John 15:26), and bestow spiritual gifts severally to every man according to His own will (1 Corinthians 12:11)--all of which are mentioned in the Bible in relationship to the Holy Spirit. A person is a being who can be heard, trusted, followed, turned away from, and influenced by. These foregoing capabilities on the part of the Holy Spirit prove He is a personal being rather than merely a powerful influence, and should be conclusive evidence to our minds.

The nature of the Holy Spirit cannot be comprehended or known fully by man, yet the fact of His personality is made clear by the inspired writers, and His ministry to man is clearly made known. This ministry includes testifying of Christ (John 15:26), guiding the church (John 16:13), bringing to memory the words of Christ (John 14:26), instructing in the truth (John 14:26), giving power in prayer (Romans 8:26), revealing the future (John 16:13), and giving power for witnessing and winning souls to God (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit is spoken of under the pronoun "he" about twenty times, the pronoun "him" three times, and the pronoun "whom" three times. Most of these expressions are found in John 14, 15, 16. The name "Comforter," along with the before-mentioned pronouns, is used in connection with the Holy Spirit and is in every case in the masculine form. Again, Jesus' own words concerning Himself made plain the fact that the Holy Spirit is a real being when He said:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19.

To the disciples He said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. And again He told them, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me." John 15:26. In none of the utterances of Jesus does He imply that the Spirit is merely an influence.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is established by both the Old and the New Testament. He is called by attributes that can only refer to Deity alone. In Hebrews 9:14 He is called the "eternal Spirit"; in 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11 He is credited with the attribute of omniscience; in Acts 1:8 with omnipotence; and in Psalms 139:7, 12 with omnipresence.

The Holy Spirit is linked with acts of creation in Genesis 1:2 and Psalms 104:30; with the power to give life in Luke 1:35 and Matthew 1:18. With miracle-working power in 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; with resurrection power in Romans 8: 11; with the new birth in Titus 3:5 and John 3:5; with inspiration in 2 Peter 1:20, 21; and with the work of sanctification in 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

He is called by many different names, among which are the Spirit of adoption- (Romans 8:15); "the Spirit of life" (Romans 8:2, 9). "The Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29); "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17); the "Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1: 13); "the spirit of wisdom" (Isaiah 11:2); "the spirit of knowledge" (Isaiah 11: 2).

Other names are given to this mighty third person of the Godhead; namely, "the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14), "the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1: 18), "the Spirit of God" (Romans 8:9), "the Spirit of the living God" (2 Corinthians 3:3), the "Comforter" (John 14:16), the "Paraclete" (John 14:16, Douay), "the Spirit of Christ" (1 Peter 1:11), "the Spirit of his Son" (Galatians 4:6), "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1: 19).

Certain symbols are used to denote the Holy Spirit, such as water (John 7:37-39), wind (Acts 2:2), fire (Acts 2:3), a dove (John 1:32), oil (Acts 10:38; Hebrews 1:9), a seal (Ephesians 1:13), "the earnest of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:14), and in Testimonies, volume 4, page 319, the Spirit is likened to light, salt, and leaven.

To try by human reasoning to go further than the declarations of the Divine Word and the Spirit of prophecy is a mistake, and we shall not attempt to indulge therein. The messenger of the Lord has said:

"The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them; but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden." [1]

The Lord has revealed the fact that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. [2] This third person of the Godhead exerts His influence upon the human soul.

"The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The imparting of the Spirit is the imparting of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ." [3]

The two foregoing quotations from the Spirit of prophecy are particularly interesting because of

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the fact that the Lord reveals both the thought of personality and the thought of influence. In other words, the Holy Spirit is a divine person, a being, whose influence is mighty and enters into the very lives of Christians. We must never use our limited understanding to describe the personality of the Holy Spirit. The following from the pen of inspiration reveals all we need to know of His divine nature:

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Savior would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.” [4]

All the Biblical writers who treat upon the Holy Spirit, whether casually, partially, or fully, invariably do so by using terms and forms of expression that do not leave one in doubt that they themselves believed in the personality of the Holy Ghost. How often they spoke of Him in the same terms they used in speaking of the Father or the Son. Insofar as language can escape obscurity, the Scriptures decisively reveal the fact that the third person of the Godhead is a distinct person and that their writers definitely designed to convey that thought.

It should be noted before going further with this study that the Holy Spirit is called the “Comforter” four times in the Authorized Version of the Scriptures. The original word *paraklitos*, appears five times and is translated four times “Comforter- and once “advocate.” The various translations give either “Comforter” or “advocate,” but the Douay Bible gives “paraclete,” as does also the margin of the Revised Version. Paraclete is the Anglicized form of the Greek word *paraklitos*, meaning one called to the aid of another.

One noted writer has this to say of the word Paraclete: “This is the title of a Person. It is indeed one of the incommunicable, non translated words of Scripture. Neither Comforter nor Advocate fully expresses its meaning. Both, and even something beyond, would be required to do this. Much would have been gained if no attempt had been made at translation, the word itself becoming the most familiar name of the Spirit.” [5]

Dispensation of the Holy Spirit

Just as in the fullness of time the Savior of men appeared, so in a definite period marked out the special working of the Holy Spirit will be manifested. According to the messenger of the Lord we are now in that period. “The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.” [6] The disciples were blessed during His ministry by Christ’s own presence and guidance. Just so are we blessed, since Pentecost, by the personal presence and direction of the third person of the Godhead.

Prior to Pentecost He was present upon different occasions, but His fullness of presence was temporary and not constant. He came upon individuals upon certain occasions with great and unusual power in order that they might accomplish God’s stated purposes. Thus He blessed Samson with strength far beyond any natural development. (Judges 14:6) He caused men to become messengers of God, as, for instance, Joshua (Numbers 27:18), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Saul (1 Samuel 10:10), and David (1 Samuel 16:13). Upon this point we read from the messenger of the Lord:

“During the patriarchal age, the influence of the Holy Spirit had often been revealed in a marked manner, but never in its fullness. Now, in obedience to the word of the Savior, the disciples offered their supplications for this gift, and in heaven Christ added His intercession. He claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it upon His people.” [7]

Thus the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times worked upon men and came upon them, but it was left to later times for Him to dwell in and abide with men, as He did with the apostles and others in later than Pentecostal times. The personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an experience given to the church in what is generally called the Christian dispensation. From Pentecost on to the Second Advent of Christ this precious gift of the Spirit is available to the whole church rather than to a few chosen individuals designated for a definite and single act for God. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 3:11) is a promise that was given for a specific dispensation and has never been withdrawn.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was definitely withheld during the three and a half years of Christ’s earthly ministry. “The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:39.

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This baptism was foretold by John the Baptist, but was not received until the specified time, when the disciples, according to Christ's own direction, tarried in Jerusalem following His resurrection, waiting for the fulfillment of His word. Therefore, we see that there was a specified time, or dispensation, of the Holy Spirit, and that period is still with the church today. Not all have received this baptism, but all have the privilege of receiving it by faith through prayer. Paul makes this clear when he says:

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:13, 14.

The Promise of the Spirit

When the apostle Paul spoke of “the promise of the Spirit through faith” he doubtless was referring specifically to those promises Jesus gave to His disciples just prior to His humiliation. He was fully convinced that the promises made to Abraham could never be fully realized except by and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Christ promised His disciples that He would pray to the Father, and He would send “another Comforter,- who would remain with them forever. (John 14:16; see also John 15:26; 16:13, 14) In verses seventeen and eighteen of chapter 14 it is made plain that His promise to be with them “even unto the end of the world” was to be fulfilled by the presence of the Comforter, who would come to the world as the representative of Christ. It was because of this that Paul prayed in behalf of every believer “that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Ephesians 3:16, 17.

“Pentecost brought them the presence of the Comforter. Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of His children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them.” [8]

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,” says Paul in Ephesians 3:17.

“The Holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul.” [9]

“On the day of Pentecost the promised Comforter descended, and the power from on high was given, and the souls of the believers thrilled with the conscious presence of their ascended Lord.” [10]

It is significant that although the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is the personal representative of Christ, yet He acts with full authority of the Father and the Son, He exercises the fullness of the power of the Trinity. Note the following words from the messenger of the Lord concerning the spiritual battle in which His earthly servants are engaged:

“They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligence 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.” [11]

Again we read: “The Comforter is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead.” [12]

“Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.” [13]

The need for the coming of the Spirit to the church can best be seen by noticing some of the results that followed this great outpouring in the days of the apostles. First of all, the descent of the Holy Spirit gave great effectiveness to the witnessing of the apostles (Acts 1: 7, 8); it gave a holy boldness to the believers, such as had never before been seen among men (Acts 2:14; 4:13,31). It converted many souls - at one time three thousand (Acts 2:41), and at another time about five thousand (Acts 4:4). It drew multitudes (Acts 5:14; 6:7) according to Acts 14:1 “a great multitude,” according to Acts 11:21 “a great number” - churches increased rapidly (Acts 16:5). The word of God grew mightily (Acts 19:20); a great company of priests came to Christ (Acts 6:7).

The Ministry of the Spirit

The ministry of the Spirit is many fold; in fact, it would be impossible to exhaust the subject by any human effort. Perhaps the simplest analysis of the Spirit's ministry for man is stated by three words; namely, regenerating (Titus 3:5), indwelling (Ephesians 3:17), equipping (Acts 1:8). All that is revealed of the mission and ministry of the third person of the Godhead will naturally fall somewhere under these three

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classifications. Thus Paul's statement is made plain when he says:

"Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:26, 27.

Through the ministry of the Spirit redemption is efficacious to man. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." John 16:7-11.

While Christ was here among men He could only by an external presence and verbal counsel communicate with them. This could be done only to a comparative few at any one time and in any one territory or city for a few years, until He was offered up as an offering for sin. But God's presence by the Spirit could dwell in and remain with His followers. Through the Spirit He could abide with them forever, have sweet communion and fellowship with them; through them do mighty deeds and spread forth the gospel in all lands and to all peoples. Through the Holy Spirit He could be infinitely nearer than even when He walked and talked with men.

"Pentecost brought them the presence of the Comforter, of whom Christ had said, He 'shall be in you.' And He had further said, '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.' Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of His children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, 'Marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.'" [14]

By the indwelling Spirit, God comes into full possession of the human soul. His power is received by the believer as fully as though he were the only individual in God's universe who has access to that power. Thus it is made possible for a greater Power to dominate the heart and life of man; he is made partaker of the divine nature, and abides in Christ, with sweet communion unbroken.

"The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the Holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul." [15]

The expression "in Christ," which occurs frequently in the New Testament, is significant, for it not only signifies an experience of a normal Christian life but involves an indwelling Christ.

"The Holy Spirit seeks to abide in each soul. If it is welcomed as an honored guest, those who receive it will be made complete in Christ. The good work begun will be finished; the holy thoughts, heavenly affections, and Christ like actions will take the place of impure thoughts, perverse sentiments, and rebellious acts." [16]

A Regenerating Agent

The Holy Spirit ministers to the human heart as a regenerating agent and helps our infirmities and weaknesses, which have caused us to sin. (Romans 8:26, 27)

"The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this Satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." [17]

The first work of the Holy Spirit on the human heart is that of a convincer of sin. "And when he is come, he will reprove ["convince," margin] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. But His work does not end when He has convinced the soul of these things.

"God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to

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comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like his Master in character. He has clearer, broader views. His discernment is more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. So quickened is he by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness, that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.” [18]

Thus are fulfilled the words of the apostle: “But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Titus 3:4, 5.

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

Through the Spirit’s ministry the very attributes of the character of Christ come into the life of the believer. “Hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5. On this point Ellen G. White has stated:

“God’s law is fulfilled only as men love Him with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. It is the manifestation of this love that brings glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men. The Lord is glorified when the great end of His law is attained. It is the work of the Holy Spirit from age to age to impart love to human hearts, for love is the living principle of brotherhood.” [19]

The servant of the Lord has spoken again on this point as follows: “Unless you receive the Holy Spirit, you cannot have the love of God in the soul; but through a living connection with Christ, we are inspired with love and zeal and earnestness.” [20]

The advancement so needful in a successful Christian life is all worked out through this wonderful agency of the third person of the Godhead. By His power alone can the individual grow in grace and rise from one spiritual elevation to another. Through the loving ministry of the Holy Spirit upon the life of the true believer the character is made holy, created by the power of God.

“Through faith the Holy Spirit works in the heart to create holiness therein; but this cannot be done unless the human agent will work with Christ. We can be fitted for heaven only through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to ennoble the whole man.” [21] We read further upon this point:

“It is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal to the mind the character of the consecration that God will accept. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the soul is enlightened, and the character is renewed, sanctified, and uplifted.” [22]

Enlightens the Mind

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: and he will show you things to come. He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” John 16:13, 14. (See also 1 Corinthians 2:9,10,13) The Holy Spirit, then, is our great Teacher, not only enlightening our minds but enabling us to teach and preach the truth to others. “The truth that has not been clearly discerned, will be opened before those who search for it as for hid treasure. The Holy Spirit will descend in power upon his people, explaining many mysteries.” [23]

How important it is for us to seek for the reception of the Holy Spirit and have no uncertainty at that point in our relationship to this mighty regenerating and enlightening power in our lives. “No one is prepared to educate and strengthen the church unless he has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. No minister is prepared to labor intelligently for the salvation of souls, unless he is endowed by the Holy Spirit, unless he is feeding on Christ, and has an intense hatred of sin.” [24]

Again we read: “The time has come when we must seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, a power that shall give force to the warnings that are to be given to the world. The words we speak are to be an evidence that the Holy Spirit is speaking through us as His messengers.” [25]

“We should have a realization that unless taught by the Holy Spirit, we shall not rightly comprehend the Bible; for it is a scaled book even to the learned, who are wise in their own conceit.” [26]

Over and over has the Spirit of prophecy amplified the promise made by Christ concerning the light which the Holy Spirit would shed upon the truth by those who would receive this Divine Guest. We dare not deprive ourselves of the enabling power of the Spirit as we search the Scriptures. We are assured that “the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven by the benevolence of infinite love, takes the things of God, and

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reveals them to every soul that has an implicit faith in Christ. As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God's Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures." [27]

"Christ promised that the Holy Spirit should abide with those who wrestle for victory over sin, to demonstrate the power of divine might by endowing the human agent with supernatural strength and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God." [28]

There needs to come over each one of us as believers the realizing sense of how much we must have the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit with us day by day and hour by hour. Never should we forget that we are wrestling "not against flesh and blood" but against "spiritual wickedness in high places."

"Realize every moment that you must have the presence of the Holy Spirit; for it can do a work that you can not do of yourself." [29]

To those who teach and preach the Word this realization is of vast importance, for "the preaching of the word is of no avail without the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit: for this Spirit is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. A minister may be able to present the letter of the word of God: he may be familiar with all its commands and promises; but his sowing of the gospel seed will not be successful unless this seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Without the co-operation of the Spirit of God, no amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light. Before one book of the New Testament had been written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying disciples. Then the testimony of their enemies was, 'You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.'" [30]

We are not to seek to be important, but to be worthy and to possess the capacity to receive the fullness of the Holy Ghost in our lives. There will be only one standard when the time comes for us to be invited to sit down with Christ in heavenly places.

"In my dream a sentinel stood at the door of an important building, and asked every one who came for entrance, 'Have you received the Holy Ghost?' A measuring-line was in his hand, and only very, very few were admitted into the building. 'Your size as a human being is nothing,' said he, 'but if you have reached the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, according to the knowledge you have had, you will receive an appointment to sit with Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb. And through the eternal ages you will never cease to learn of the blessings granted in the banquet prepared for you.'" [31]

What a marvelous work of grace is wrought out in the life of the one who, laying self aside, makes room for the Holy Spirit! What transformations take place, what joy and rejoicing fill the heart!

"Never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God. The Spirit conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ. Through its influence, enmity against God is changed into faith and love, and pride into humility. The soul perceives the beauty of truth, and Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break out in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude." [32]

Again comes the revelation of the great work of transformation which by the Holy Spirit is carried out in the life of the Spirit-filled disciples of Christ:

"When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, and 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." [32]

"In all who submit to His power, the Spirit of God will consume sin." [34]

"He came to destroy the works of the devil, and he has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning." [35]

Here are other matchless statements for our encouragement:

"He who is endowed with the Holy Spirit has great capacities of heart and intellect, with strength of will and purpose that is unconquerable." [36]

"Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory-His character-is to shine forth in His followers." [37]

"The choicest productions of art possess no beauty that can compare with the beauty of character which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's working in the soul." [38]

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“In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in their hearts and in their homes. The Lord has given me light that when the Israel of today humble themselves before Him, and cleanse the soul temple from all defilement, He will hear their prayers in behalf of the sick and will bless in the use of His remedies for disease.” [39]

“Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” [40] The new covenant becomes effective in the human heart only through the working of Christ therein. This is made possible through the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, who is the agent whereby the blessings of the new covenant come into the life of the one who enters into that redemptive relationship. We read:

“God is the mighty, all-powerful agency in the work of transformation. By His Spirit He writes His law in the heart. Thus divine relationship is renewed between God and man. The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ.” [41]

Bestowing of Spiritual Gifts

According to the apostle Paul, when Christ ascended to heaven, there went with Him a multitude of captives and He “gave gifts unto men.” (Ephesians 4:8) We find a list of the gifts that are referred to here in the writings of this same apostle; namely, in Ephesians 4:11-15 and 1 Corinthians 12. These gifts of the Spirit were to be permanently in the church to the end of the gospel work in the earth, and were to be distributed to the church “severally as He will.”

“All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised. The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God. The promise of the Spirit is not appreciated as it should be. Its fulfillment is not realized at it might be. None need lament that they have not received larger gifts; for He who has apportioned to every man, is equally honored by the improvement of each trust, whether it be great or small.” [42]

The office work of the Holy Spirit will bring out in the life the fruits of the Spirit, which are these: “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Galatians 5:22, 23. “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.” Ephesians 5:9.

“Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing, the reproduction of Christ’s character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in 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 is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” [43]

This wonderful fruitage of the Christian life is not something to be struggled after or labored for. “The Savior does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.” [44]

Seals the Saints

The last act in the preparation of the saints of God to meet the Savior is the sealing work of the Holy Spirit. Paul enjoins us: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30. The sealing involves all for which the acceptable keeping of the true Sabbath signifies, for the Sabbath is to be kept as a sign not only of God’s creating power in making a world but also of His re-creating power, which is found in the life that is truly sanctified. This involves victory over every sin and besetment in the life of the one whom God accepts as His own, which experience is wrought out by the Holy Spirit alone. The sealing work is performed by the third person of

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the Godhead.

The seal of God cannot be placed upon sin, but upon holiness alone. So it will be in the last days, when the saints are finally sealed by the Holy Spirit under the latter rain experience.

“Those who receive the seal of the living God, and are protected in the time of trouble, must reflect the image of Jesus fully. I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful, and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord, and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation, therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. 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.” [45]

Thus we see that the solemn work of sealing the saints of God is a part of the office work of the Holy Spirit and calls for the sanctifying of the human soul. This is the work that is now going on, and only in the life of the one who with all his heart is searching and seeking for the gift of the Holy Spirit in all earnestness can this work be completed. How diligently, then, should the people of God make room for the Holy Spirit in their lives and allow Him to take His rightful place in all that they do and say. This is the time of heart searching which precedes the mighty outpouring of the latter rain, to prepare a people for the courts of heaven.

Grieving the Holy Spirit

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:30) is the injunction the apostle Paul writes to the church. To follow out this good counsel means that our heart’s door will be opened wide for the indwelling Spirit of Christ. (Revelation 3:20) It means that we will receive the Spirit, as was Christ’s intention for the disciples when He breathed on them. (John 20:22) It means that we must turn away from every sin, from “bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking. . . . malice” (Ephesians 4:30, 31), cleansing the soul temple from every defilement and entering into the work of sanctification with all that it means.

The kind of life that grieves the Holy Spirit is plainly seen by the words of the messenger of the Lord as she describes those upon whom the seal of God will never be placed:

“Now is the time to prepare. 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. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” [46]

Grieving the Holy Spirit is to quench the Spirit’s working in our hearts and lives. How serious it is, then, to disregard the plain counsel the Lord has sent us to pray and see and search for the Holy Spirit. How it must grieve Him when we turn to naught His loving counsel in this regard and go entirely upon our own in the work we strive to do for Him.

“There is not an impulse of our nature, not a faculty of the mind or an inclination of the heart, but needs to be, moment by moment, under the control of the Spirit of God.” [47]

It is by constantly resisting the Holy Ghost that we grieve Him and cause Him to turn from us and leave us in our sins and weakness. Darkness covers us and obscures the light of heaven in our lives as we quench the pleadings of His Spirit:

“Precious light is to shine forth from the word of God, and let no one presume to dictate what shall or what shall not be brought before the people in the messages of enlightenment that He shall send, and so quench the Spirit of God. It was from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them.” [48]

Resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit consists in a determined hostility toward the Spirit’s purposes, His counsel, and His work. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is grieved through blindness. He takes into account that which causes the blindness and where the cause is of our own creation, He holds us responsible. Many times human blindness is due to disobedience to the heavenly vision at some earlier point in the experience, and for that disobedience we are responsible and guilty. Therefore, we need to perpetually examine ourselves as to whether we are in the faith. There are many who would vehemently

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deny that they are at cross-purposes with the Spirit, but whose lives are out of touch with His divine leading and deeper moves.

Whenever the Spirit of God is thwarted, whenever He is disobeyed, whenever He opens up our minds and hearts to some new aspect of the character of Christ, and there is no response in our hearts, the Holy Spirit is grieved. The heart of Christ is made sad when His tender touches of grace by His Spirit are hindered or go unheeded by His professed children. Oh, how often has He been grieved in our lives when the Master has made some gentle demands for truer devotion and piety and He has been spurned and His ministry looked upon as a light thing. Every day's postponement of the perfecting work of the saints has grieved Him, for thereby His coming has been postponed and His great purposes have been thwarted. In solemn quietness and contemplation let us then ponder in our hearts where and how we have grieved the Holy Spirit, and let us cause the heart of Christ sorrow and sadness no longer.

Have we not quenched the Spirit too often by rushing into His service instead of waiting upon Him for the unction from on high? Have we not been lighting false fires upon the altars of God instead of waiting for the burnings of the Pentecostal flame? "Quench not the Spirit" longer by the use of worldly means of advancing the work of God, for God will not allow the fire of the Holy Spirit to be mingled with strange fires upon His altars. Man perpetually quenches the Spirit by attempting to work in his own strength, hoping that God will step in and make up what he lacks so desperately. God wants man to give himself up to Him for the doing of His own work. Has He not warned, "Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled. This shall you have of mine hand; you shall lie down in sorrow"? Isaiah 50: 11.

Let us hear His precious promise to those who will wait upon Him for His Divine Spirit and power: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31.

Much more might be said of the precious ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life and in the church—how He brings to our remembrance the things we have learned, how He reproves and corrects and restrains evil in our lives. We might well ponder how the Holy Spirit ministers to us by helping us to surmount great difficulties, by controlling all spiritual exercise, by inditing prayer, by molding the life, and by pleading with the heart.

We might also well spend time in pondering what other hindrances there may be in our lives to the powerful working of this heavenly Guest; how we hinder His loving ministry by being devoid of brotherly love and by disbelieving and working contrary to His plain revelations. We might well study how His ministry is barred from our lives by our holding fast to misconceived opinions and principles and being set in our own ideas. How self-sufficiency and sullenly pursuing our own way and worshiping the human, will obstruct His wooing upon our hearts; how faithlessness and a sharp and critical censorious spirit, with evil imaginings, quench His gracious work for our salvation. How frivolous talk and taking personal credit, gossiping, sowing discord, following too precise a program, and pleasing self alone, seeking only our interests rather than the interests of others, will wither the spiritual life He seeks to foster in our lives.

Those who vex the Spirit by following after carnal things, by indulging a fleshly disposition, by manifesting an unholy temper, or by compromising with iniquity in any way, cannot enjoy the peace and presence of the Holy Spirit. He is preeminently the Holy Spirit; and in order to enjoy His ministry in the life, we must put away forever from our lives whatsoever is known or believed to be unholy. He can have nothing in common with that which is unspiritual; therefore, whatsoever is known to be unspiritual in our lives must be abandoned, if we would have full fellowship with Him. "For you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." Romans 8:13. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Verse 6.

Perhaps one of the greatest and most prominent ministries of the Spirit is the work of unifying the church. He it is who brings the church to the ultimate idea of unity to be attained by the body of Christ as described in the Biblical expression, "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Ephesians 4:13. The complete realization of this unity will be seen at the Second Coming of our Lord, when He will be manifested in glory among the children of men as His people reflect His image perfectly. Then will be seen a unity of faith and knowledge among His disciples that is impossible while we are compelled to "see through a glass, darkly" and to "know in part" only. Until that great hour it is the privilege of the church to come into the "unity of the Spirit" and walk in the Spirit through the uncertainties of the last days with complete triumph of faith. "I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:1-3. "The unity of the Spirit" is that unity of

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fellowship which is begotten of the Spirit. “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” says the apostle John. (1 John 1:3) This is the great objective of the Holy Spirit as He works within the hearts of the believers in order to bring them into the same fellowship with the Father and the Son and thereby into blessed and sweet fellowship with one another.

The Former Rain

The promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Scriptures under the figure of rain. Two rains are mentioned, the former and the latter rain. Since Palestine was a land watered by rain and not by irrigation, these figures were easily understood by God’s people. In Deuteronomy 11:10 and onward we find the Lord speaking with His people regarding their land which the Lord cares for.” He said He would watch over it “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” God promised them that He would give rain “in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou may gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and your oil.” Verse 14.

There were conditions under which all these promises were to be fulfilled to Israel. “If you shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him” (Deuteronomy 11:22), were the conditions upon which God would work to give them rich fruitage in their fields and in their struggles with other nations. “There shall no man be able to stand before you,” God declared: “for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread upon.” Verse 25. Not only would their land be fruitful and their crops bountiful, but because of God’s mighty power working in their midst their enemies would be powerless in their antagonisms.

No one can read the history of Israel in the days of David and his son Solomon without recognizing that God kept His promise to His people in a most glorious fashion. Israel became so successful and prosperous that she was able to support her own millions of inhabitants and to help other nations to support their people besides.

It is interesting, in connection with the falling of the former and the latter rain, to note that the first rain fell in the fall of the year, before the plowing time began. The land was such that no plowing or seed sowing could be done before the soil had received the early rain. The latter rain fell in the spring of the year, in order to bring the grain to complete maturity, ready for the harvesting. The prosperity of the nation depended upon these two rains, the falling of which depended upon the spiritual relationship of the people of God and their obedience to His commandments. If for any reason the rain did not fall in its scheduled period, the people sought the Lord most earnestly and searched their hearts and lives that they might find the reason. So dependent were they upon the two rains falling regularly and on time that everything was put aside to make way for seeking after God, that they might receive the fulfillment of His promises concerning them.

Ever since the establishment of the church in apostolic times, down to the present day, it has been of the utmost importance that the people of God see and understand the true significance of the early and the latter rain. Because of the dimness of understanding relating to this great truth, the church has been weak and impoverished far below the plans and purposes of God. And so, today, it is of first importance that we understand the true meaning of all that God has revealed concerning both the former and the latter rain.

“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 seed-time and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God’s church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time, the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.” [49]

Because of the fact that “the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church” to the end of time, some have supposed that merely believing that fact and accepting the truthfulness of it is all that is necessary in order to benefit by the gift of the Holy Spirit in this time of the latter rain. Because of this danger of misunderstanding, it is important that we study carefully the teaching of God upon this point. Although it is true that we are living in what might be termed the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, this fact diminishes naught from the necessity of the Christian to seek earnestly through much prayer and thorough

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cleansing and perfect faith the outpouring of both the former and the latter rain upon his heart and life.

This is the very truth that was discovered by the disciples, who were in possession of the promise of Christ, that if they would tarry in Jerusalem they would be endued with power from on high. They had already witnessed the powerful work of God in connection with their going forth in obedience to the command of Christ. The sick had been healed and wonderful things had been wrought by and through them prior to Pentecost. (Matthew 10:8; Luke 9:2) But in spite of all this, they discovered that in order to be clothed with the promised power and in order that the Spirit might be “in them” as promised by Christ, they had some most diligent heart searching to do prior to the day of Pentecost.

Very significant is the fact that in a number of places in the Scriptures where the work of God for these last days is mentioned, the former rain and the latter rain are placed very near together, (Joel 2:23; Hosea 6:1-3) Indeed, the messenger of the Lord seems to have had this in mind when she wrote:

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close.” [50]

Relationship of the Holy Spirit to Soul Winning

In the great commission Christ declared, “Lo, I am with you always, I even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. By His Spirit Christ promised to always be with him “that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed.” This was true even before Pentecost and was fulfilled to the disciples as they were sent forth in His name. By the presence of His Spirit these men went forth, and the sick were healed, miracles were wrought, and the dead were raised. (See Matthew 10: 8; Luke 9:2) Great wonders followed in the wake of their ministry long before the promised outpouring on the day of Pentecost brought a baptism of power such as had never before been seen.

The Holy Spirit is given only to those whose lives are given to the service of Christ. “The Holy Spirit will come to all who are begging for the bread of life to give to their neighbors.” [51]

The basis of the Holy Spirit’s coming to the individual has always been that it is sought for the purpose of carrying out God’s work. But the condition of receiving the Holy Spirit is not alone activity, but also earnest seeking for this matchless gift through faith and importunate prayer. No one should sit in idleness, waiting for an impelling power to lay hold upon him for service for others’ for it is given only to those who ask; and the former and the latter rain power must be sought exactly as the apostles sought that power prior to Pentecost.

Ellen G. White has said: “We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today. Without the Spirit’s aid, our efforts to present divine truth will be in vain.” [52]

Again we read: “I beseech the members of every church to seek now for the greatest blessing heaven can bestow—the Holy Spirit. If in faith you seek for a greater measure of God’s Spirit, you will be constantly taking it in and breathing it out.” [53]

It is enlightening in this regard to note the following: “Christ has left His work in our hands, and we are to wrestle with God, supplicating day and night for the power that is unseen.” [54]

Again we have this Word, showing that this great power will not come to us through any casual attitude on our part, but only as we have experienced a complete revival and reformation of life. “The refreshing or power of God comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” [55]

It is made clear in many places that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit takes place to give power for witnessing, the ability to win precious souls. The time and the place of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, after it has been sought for in God’s own way, are the time and the place most suitable for personal labor for souls.

We are told: “All occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.” [56]

This surely does not mean that whenever one is laboring for souls the Holy Spirit is bestowed, but it does mean that to the one who is seeking in God’s way for that priceless gift, the Holy Spirit is bestowed as he labors for others. That is God’s opportunity to fulfill His promise and to answer the earnest prayers of the believer for this marvelous gift. It is this that we must keep in our minds as we read such statements as

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the following:

“Satan is now seeking to hold God’s people in a state of inactivity to keep them from acting their part in spreading the truth, that they may at last be weighed in the balance and found wanting. I was shown God’s people waiting for some change to take place, a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act, they must take hold of the work themselves and earnestly cry to God for a true knowledge of themselves.” [57]

“Those who make no decided effort, but simply wait for the Holy Spirit to compel them to action, will perish in darkness. You are not to sit still and do nothing in the work of God.” [58]

There are two mistakes some make that are pointed out by the servant of the Lord in relationship to soul winning, or activity, and the receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit. One may make the mistake of filling his life with great activity, mere “busyness,” in God’s service, without seeking that experience in God which would make him able to pray the effectual prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a one may make service records and even stir many minds, but his work without the Spirit will not be effective. Another one may make the mistake of idly waiting for the outpouring of some great power to impel him into activity for God. Both of these are failing to follow the plan of God in soul-winning service. We read:

“There are some who, instead of wisely improving present opportunities, are idly waiting for some special season of spiritual refreshing by which their ability to enlighten others will be greatly increased. They neglect present duties and privileges, and allow their light to burn dim, while they look forward to a time when, without any effort on their part, they will be made the recipients of special blessing, by which they will be transformed and fitted for service.” [59]

“With the consecrated worker for God, in whatever place he may be, the Holy Spirit abides.” [60]

“When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested. Divine power will be revealed. The church will see the providential working of the Lord of hosts. The light of truth will shine forth in clear, strong rays, and, as in the time of the apostles, many souls will turn from error to truth. The earth will be lighted with the glory of the Lord.” [61]

“When the churches become living, working churches, the Holy Spirit will be given in answer to their sincere requests. Then the windows of heaven will be open for the showers of the latter rain.” [62]

“The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, whole-hearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.” [63]

If the foregoing statements were set apart and isolated, it would seem that mere activity in God’s service ensures the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in great measure. But as with other subjects treated in Testimonies for the Church, we must take a balanced view, based upon a more exhaustive study of these helpful writings. Let us not forget the earnest counsel of the Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy, that we earnestly seek through prayer the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There must be repentance, confession, and importunate prayer, waiting upon God for the fulfillment of His great and precious promises, if we would enjoy the fullness of His divine favor in relationship to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. At the same time we must give ourselves to personally carrying out the great commission of Christ, for this also is part of the conditions laid down. The Holy Spirit is not given simply that the individual may possess power, but only that he may possess power for witnessing. The individual who receives the full blessing of His promised Spirit seeks for it because he feels his desperate need of power to fulfill the divine commission to which his all is dedicated.

“Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was ‘the former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant.” [64]

We should at this point recognize that the former rain dispensation speaking, came at Pentecost. From another viewpoint there was an early rain experience which came to the church in the 1844 movement. Personally, the early rain comes at conversion. The same threefold application may be made concerning the latter rain. The church receives it at the close of the work of God in the earth. Just so this movement passes through that same experience, and also the individual.

“The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was ‘the former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant.” [65]

The early rain experience of the great Second Advent movement in 1844 and immediately

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preceding that year, probably was the greatest demonstration of power the church has seen since the days of Pentecost. But there is again to be an early rain experience:

“The power which stirred the people so mightily in the 1844 movement will again be revealed.”

[66] A great spiritual awakening of the church is yet to be seen, an awakening that will compare in proportions and power with the days of the midnight cry and the second angel’s message.

This is all alluded to in the writings of the minor prophets concerning the closing tip of the gospel work in the earth.

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Hosea 6:1-3.

Note how this prophet indicates that these two rains will come close together. In the second chapter of the prophecy of Joel a great spiritual awakening, a revival and reformation, is called for in which a trumpet is to be blown in Zion to arouse the people and a fast and solemn assembly are to be called in order to gather the people and even the little children. Greater earnestness is called for on the part of the ministry, and their prayers are to be heard supplicating God to spare His people. In response to this consecration and seeking after God on the part of the remnant people, the sure promise is given:

“Then will the Lord ... pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and you shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.... Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.... Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he has 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. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, my great army which I sent among you. . . . And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. 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; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel.” Joel 2:18 to 3:2.

In explanation of what happened on the day of Pentecost we read a quotation from this passage in Joel. (Acts 2:16-21) This same experience is to be repeated in these last days. [67] Let its then examine the experience of the disciples under the early rain, that we may learn lessons concerning the same experience in this our day.

When Jesus gave to His disciples the great commission, prominent among the points He emphasized was the power they would need with which to carry it out.

“Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:18-20. To implement this great commission Jesus gave that wonderful promise and counsel that we find in Luke 24:45-53:

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it became Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”

How overwhelmed the disciples must have been in the face of such a commission, when in their ignorance they could not understand the working out of the promised power that would accompany them as they sought to carry out the divine command of their Master. But in the midst of their disappointment at His death and in the light of His repeated statement of promised power as He ascended, they did not

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understand the meaning of being endued with power from on high as they tarried in Jerusalem. They still were asking according to Acts 1:6-8:

“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father bath put in his own power. But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

A mighty work of grace was required to bring these men, who were utterly unfitted for the task that had been given them, to the place where they would finally be willing to be what was necessary for them to be in order for Christ to do with them what He had planned. They were to be made men through whom the Holy Spirit could manifest His power, men devoid of selfishness and sin, men with hearts and minds prepared for the in filling of the Holy Ghost in Pentecostal degree.

They had heard Him say “Go you” now they hear Him say “Tarry you”; “Tarry you . . . until you be endued with power from on high.” What consternation must have filled their minds! Here was a world task to perform, and they had heard Him say that when it was performed, “then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14. Now, would He have them wait, tarry? Ah! it was not altogether clear to them yet that without that promised power they were incapable of performing the commission no matter how fast or far they might “go.” Indeed the Lord has revealed to His servant that in our day the very same necessity exists:

“What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord. Jesus knew their destitution, and told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high.” [68]

“The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life.” [69]

“If divine power does not combine with human effort, I would not give a straw for all that the greatest man could do. The Holy Spirit is wanting in our work.” [70]

As the disciples came back to Jerusalem from Olivet, where they had witnessed the ascension of the Lord, they were no longer filled with sorrow, confusion, or defeat. Truly their hopes were disappointed, but they somehow no longer found their hearts filled with sadness. They had been with their risen Lord, had seen Him “go away”; and echoing and re-echoing in their hearts were the two words of counsel to them, “I will come again” and “Tarry you in Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high.”

Not in full understanding but in obedience to what Christ had commanded them, they waited in Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They did not merely sit in silence, waiting in idleness, but they went “continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” Luke 24:53. They were undoubtedly going over among themselves the final counsels of the Master and the rich promises that now came readily to their memory, and “in solemn awe they bowed in prayer,” repeating the assurance, “Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:23, 24. Higher and still higher they extended the hand of faith, with the mighty argument, “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Romans 8:34.

They continued to pray with intense earnestness not only for power but for a fitness to meet the world and to declare the gospel and lead sinners to repentance. They humbled their hearts by putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, and all unbelief, and they found growing up within their hearts a deep sorrow that they had ever grieved their Lord by any word or act. Comfort filled their hearts as they came closer and still closer to God and to one another and as they consecrated themselves with courage to go forth and face an unbelieving and hostile world, to confess Jesus as the Christ.

“They did not ask a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised. In obedience to the word of the Savior, the disciples offered their supplications for this gift, and in heaven Christ added His intercession. He claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it upon His people.” [71]

Their hearts were filled with reproach toward themselves and “like a procession, scene after scene of His wonderful life passed before them. As they meditated upon His pure, holy life, they felt that no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ’s character. . . .

“ ‘And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And

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suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.’

“The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit’s grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All Heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, ‘Herein is love.’ They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightning of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day.” [72]

The importance and true significance of the Pentecostal visitation of the Holy Spirit is not comprehended until we realize that this visitation marked an event of surpassing magnitude and tremendous and far-reaching results. We read: “The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished.” [73] Jesus, the Lamb of Calvary, had paid the price of sin, had passed through death, and had come forth in resurrection power and ascended to the right hand of God. The atonement had been accomplished and accepted by the Father, and now Christ desired to mark the event by the bestowal of heaven’s most priceless gift.

“Christ determined to bestow a gift on those who had been with Him and on those who should believe on Him, because this was the occasion of His ascension and inauguration, a jubilee in heaven. What gift could Christ bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. Christ gave His representative, the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. This gift could not be excelled. The divine Spirit, converting, enlightening, sanctifying, would be His donation, because He would give all gifts in one. On the day of Pentecost Christ gave His disciples the Holy Spirit as their Comforter.” [74]

“As the divine endowment—the power of the Holy Spirit—was given to the disciples, so it will today be given to all who seek aright. This power alone is able to make us wise unto salvation, and to fit us for the courts above.” [75]

Results

By reading the second chapter of the book of Acts we learn of the marvelous results of the outpouring, or baptism, of the Holy Spirit, upon the disciples. The event could not be kept secret, and we are told that when it was noised abroad, “the multitudes came together,” and when they saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears what power was being displayed in the lives of the early believers, particularly because each one heard the gospel in his own tongue, they greatly marveled and were amazed and confounded. The church doubled its membership, yes, trebled it, and still souls came and were baptized and joined themselves to the believers in Christ, the risen Lord. Wonderful miracles were performed, great “wonders and signs were done.” They “sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need,” and God gave them “favor with all the people.” Acts 2:43-47.

Their prayers were no more powerless and listless, but when they prayed even “the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they spoke the word with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one “heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” Acts 4:31, 32. God gave such favor with the people that they—“magnified them [the apostles]. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” Acts 5:13-16. “And the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7.

It is of primary importance that in analyzing the results of Pentecost and the outpouring of the former rain, we remember that power was bestowed for witnessing. The disciples received power that they might become witnesses for Christ, in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. This wonderful power of Pentecost made great preachers and very successful laymen for the service

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of Christ. It cast out devils and caused the dumb to speak out of fullness of heart what God had done through Christ for their souls.

This great power took all backwardness away from men and yet did not make them boastful or forward. It impelled men to speak boldly yet humbly in spite of all uprising opposition, to call sin by its right name, and to rebuke religionists and non religionists because of their blindness and wickedness. The sermons of apostolic preachers were not noted so much for their logic and homiletical arrangement or their ornate rhetoric, as for their dynamic witnessing power. The apostles talked out of their own experiences, and the Spirit of God took their mere declaration of truth and drove it home to the hearts of their listeners with a convincing force that made men tremble and earnestly ask, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

When the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples He appeared like "cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them," symbolic of the consuming power of the Holy Ghost against sin and unrighteousness. It may have had other points of significance and also signified the flaming tongues for speaking forth the truth as did the apostles following that great outpouring. If ever there was a time that called for fiery tongues with which to speak the message of God, this is such an hour. The church today needs men and women, young men and young women, with tongues loosened by the power of the Holy Spirit and set aflame for God to go forth and proclaim the truth in all of its purity and completeness. That message must be a Christ-centered message, but it must be a message suitable for this hour, unadulterated and not muffled.

Significantly the messenger of the Lord has this to say on this important point of muffling the message or hiding it and cringing in compromise with those who demand that the whole truth be not preached. God is against that strange so-called strategy that hides the truth and delivers it in a corner rather than before the multitudes, as did the early apostles. We read:

"Unless you watch, and keep your garments unspotted from the world, Satan will stand as your captain. It is no time now to hide your colors, no time to turn traitor, when the battle presses sore. . . .

"When the days come, as they surely will, in which the law of God is made void, the zeal of the true and loyal should rise with the emergency, and should be the more warm and decided, and their testimony should be the more positive and unflinching. But we are to do nothing in a defiant spirit, and we shall not if our hearts are fully surrendered to God."

"God has no place in His work for half-hearted men and women, those who are neither cold nor hot. Christ says, 'I will spew thee out of my mouth.' God calls for men who are wholehearted. Let His truth be received into the heart, that you may be spiritualized by its living, sanctifying power. Then let the distinct message for this time he sent from watchman to watchman on the walls of Zion."

"As the end approaches, the testimonies of God's people will become more decided and more powerful, flashing the light of truth upon the systems of error and oppression that have so long held the supremacy." [76]

Under the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples did not forbear to declare the whole truth. They did it in love, but they did not hide from the multitudes that came to hear them the whole truth regarding who was responsible for the death of their Lord. Perhaps they might have held some of the people longer if they had simply talked on the smooth things of the gospel story, but under the impelling power of the Holy Ghost they withdrew the veil and allowed the whole truth to shine forth, and many, yes, multitudes, believed. Could it be that if we would spend less time in deploying around what we consider, at times, the cutting truths of our message, and more time seeking for that power that will enable us to know how to tell the truth in love and yet not cringe before the multitudes, our evangelism would be more telling and more lasting?

We do not mean to infer that we should ruthlessly tear the hearts and ears of the multitude by cruel and sharp expressions and personal thrusts, but rather that we should faithfully and in love, with judicious words, reveal to men the warning message that is ours to give and for which we have been called into being. There is a vast difference between giving the message in love and in the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ and hiding the truth away from the multitudes who must hear it.

Great care must be taken in the presentation of the message for this hour. Christ said to His disciples: "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Matthew 10: 16.

In giving words of caution relative to the presentation of the truth for this time, Ellen G. White says:

"What course shall the advocates of truth pursue? They have the unchangeable, eternal word of God, and they should reveal the fact that they have the truth as it is in Jesus. Their words must not be

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rugged and sharp. In their presentation of truth they must manifest the love and meekness and gentleness of Christ. Let the truth do the cutting; the word of God is as a sharp, two-edged sword and will cut its way to the heart. Those who know that they have the truth should not, by the use of harsh and severe expressions, give Satan one chance to misinterpret their spirit.

“As a people we must stand as did the world’s Redeemer. The course of Christ in dealing even with the adversary of souls should be an example to us in all our intercourse with others never to bring a railing accusation against any. Precious truth must be presented in its native force. The deceptive errors that are widespread, and that are leading the world captive, are to be unveiled. This message must be given; but while it must be given, we should be careful not to thrust and crowd and condemn those who have not the light that we have.” [77]

All of this requires great wisdom, tact, and skill. Such ability can come to us only by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—this outpouring we may have if we will earnestly seek for it. Hear the words of the messenger of the Lord further on these things:

“The message we have to bear is not a message that men need cringe to declare. They are not to seek to cover it, to conceal its origin and purpose. Its advocates must be men who will not hold their peace day nor night. God has given us light in regard to the things that are now taking place in the last remnant of time, and with pen and voice we are to proclaim the truth to the world, not in a tame, spiritless way, but in demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God.” [78]

Again we read:

“The people of the world will try to induce us to soften down our message, to suppress some of its more distinctive features. ‘We would harmonize with you if you would not say so much on this point.’ This is their invitation to compromise, and there has been a disposition on the part of some of our workers to adopt this policy. But those who favor this action entertain deceptive sentiments, are bound by false modesty and caution, and manifest a disposition to withhold the confession of our faith. But shall we permit the world to shape the messages that God has given us to bear to them? Shall we entertain the proposal of Satan, and thereby entangle our souls, and the souls of others, for the sake of policy? Shall we betray sacred trusts? If the world are in error and delusion is it not our duty to show them their sin and danger? We must proclaim the third angel’s message.”

“We should cry aloud, and spare not, and show the people their transgressions. We are not to cringe, and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth. We should scorn concealment. Unfurl your true colors to the gaze of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh day Adventists can make no compromise. In our opinions and faith there must not be the least appearance of wavering. The world has a right to expect something of us, and will look upon us as dishonest, as hiding our real sentiments and principles out of policy, if we present even the semblance of being uncommitted.” [79]

We read further: “We should be alarmed at the least manifestation of a disposition to hush the voices that proclaim the third-angel’ message. That angel represents the people of God, who give the last warning to the world. Let not the fear of man, the desire for patronage, be allowed to obscure a ray of heaven’s light. Should the sentinels of truth now fail to sound the warning, they would be unworthy of their position as light-bearers to the world; but should the standard fall from their hands, the Lord would raise up others who would be faithful and loyal.” [80]

It would be well for us all who are called to proclaim the truth for this hour to reread the accounts of the preaching of the apostles after the falling of the former rain. (See Acts 2:22, 23; 4:8-12) One cannot detect any compromising here or cringing for the sake of gaining patronage and escaping certain natural results. May God give His ministry “cloven tongues like as of fire,” flaming tongues, for witnessing and declaring in the power and love of the Spirit of God the whole truth as it is in Jesus. When these new fires, these celestial fires, are rekindled in our hearts, the Lord will again bring us matchless results in souls, similar to those that were seen in apostolic times.

We must always remember that the apostolic church under the former rain was normal Christianity. These people, clothed with power from on high, coming, down from the hidden chamber to present to the multitudes clear to the far corners of the earth the great message of God for the present hour, were the church in all its pristine beauty and glory. Here we catch a glimpse of what the church of Christ was meant to be, uncontaminated, each witnessing out of his heart what God had done through Christ for his soul. It has not yet been touched by heresy or marred by compromise or deflected in any way from its original purpose. What a glorious sight is the church that the Holy Spirit founded.

That church must now appear again in its purity. Paul said: “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without

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blemish.” Ephesians 5:27. It was soon to fall away from this experience, and as it did, the power of the Holy Ghost waned, but the apostolic church was still to be the pattern for the church of Jesus Christ in all the centuries to follow. As men became exalted and took upon themselves the glory and authority that belonged to God alone, the Holy Spirit was grieved away. Miracles became a thing of the past. Powerful prayer was no longer heard. Perfunctory worship was introduced. Compromise with paganism about them brought damnable heresies and vain and wicked counterfeits into the ritual and worship of Christ. True men and women suffered while holding up the banner of truth. They were thrown to the wild beasts and were consumed by the flaming stakes that lighted up the orgies of those who opposed the truth. Prisons were filled with the righteous. The commandments of God were obscured, and men sought to change them to meet their own sinful ways; the manifestation of the Spirit waned and was lost.

All of this came about because men forgot to continue to enter fully into the benefits of the former rain and allowed self and selfish motives to rule their hearts. Pentecost had not been perpetuated, and all the defects ‘ deflections, imperfections, and failures that history records and that we see today in the modern churches emanate from that fact. Every blemish in the church today grows out of the fact that the experience of the former rain was not perpetuated in the life of the church and in the lives of the believers.

Christ’s prayer that His people might be one as He and the Father are one, was answered at the establishment of the church at Pentecost. This prayer of Christ reaches down to our day and must be answered again in the experience of the remnant church. Said Jesus:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. And that the world may know that thou has sent me, and has loved them, as thou has loved me.” John 17:20-23.

Such love among the brethren must come back to the church. It means a oneness in love, purpose, and sympathy, an intimacy of love analogous to that which exists between the Son and the Father. This can only be brought about in the way it came to the Pentecostal church: by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in former rain measure and by the appropriating of all the benefits promised under such a heavenly gift.

What kind of church must it be? It must be a church filled with men and women who are rid of all half warmness. Its ministry must be a witnessing ministry, preaching out of a fresh experience in the Holy Ghost. It must have local church officers whose lives witness to the fact that the business of the church comes first. It must have a laity whose hearts are warmed and aflame with the love of God and an overwhelming, impelling urge to witness for the truth that cannot be smothered by the world, by fear, or by self-seeking. It must have the original apostolic attitude toward the unsaved multitudes at home and abroad. It must adopt the program of Jesus, the only program that He ever gave to the church, that of declaring the message to the world in such power that men would believe and be baptized. It must have the standards of Christ held highly aloft and glorified in the lives of its members.

The faith of Pentecost must be revived. The prayers of Pentecost must be restored. The earnestness, the oneness, the sacrifice, of Pentecost must return. The love of the upper room at Pentecost must again cement the lives of the believers. A repetition of the former-rain experience is indispensable for the world program of the remnant church. The sobering question is, Are the people of God willing and ready, or ready to be made willing and ready, to pay the price of such an experience? Upon the answer to this question rests the destiny of the church in our day.

Baptism of the Spirit

For a good understanding of what the baptism of the Holy Spirit means in the life of the believer we must study closely what the Scriptures say regarding this experience. The New Testament passages which refer to this baptism are as follows:

“When he [John] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” Matthew 3:7-11.

“John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there stands one among you, whom you know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latches I am not worthy to unloose.” “And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode

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upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizes with the Holy Ghost." John 1:26, 27, 32, 33.

Strange it is that the four Gospels do not speak of Christ's being baptized with the Holy Spirit, but speak only of His anointing. We understand that the anointing was the baptism of the Spirit in the life of Jesus. John speaks of it as something beyond, which would come with the advent of Christ and which would be administered by Christ.

We may gather more concerning this baptism of the Spirit from Jesus' word to Nicodemus: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5. The converse, then, of course would be true, that if a man be born of water and of the Spirit he would be a candidate for eternal life. But let us follow on with the Master's words:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again ["from above," margin]. The wind blows where it lists, and thou hears the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it comes, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Verses 6-8.

Years passed by, and Jesus stood in the midst of His disciples just before His ascension and said to them: "For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1:5. There can be no doubt that He was directing their attention to the experience that was about to come to them at Pentecost. This baptism was necessary in order that the disciples might be able to fulfill the divine commission. Baptism, in this sense, means to be filled with the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, and clothed with the Spirit. It means to be in full possession by the Spirit. We read: "The disciples felt their spiritual need, and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul-saving." [81]

It is plain that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came as the disciples were lifted to higher planes of spirituality. Their whole beings, mind, soul, and spirit, were focused upon that one great objective of receiving from God the precious gift of His Spirit. Until the spiritual energies of God's people are no longer torpid and a resurrection from apparent spiritual death occurs, the church will not enjoy all the benefits of the early rain and will not be prepared for the great task that is set before her.

There can be no intelligent seeking of God for the latter rain until there is a true understanding of the experience under the early rain. Indeed, we must sense that the former rain is "a teacher of righteousness" as described in the margin of Joel 2:23. Here also the falling of the early rain "moderately" is spoken of as "according to righteousness." It is by our entering into the great truths of righteousness that our hearts are made ready for the former rain. This is just as true regarding the reception of the latter rain. The messenger of the Lord says: "We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain." [82]

What, therefore, the church needs, and each one of us needs, at this time is to enter fully into the baptism of the Holy Spirit, just as did the early disciples under the former rain, for we are told, "All that the disciples did every church is to do." This calls for a definite experience of seeking and finding beyond that of merely having the Spirit with us, as in conversion. There must be an in filling that is real and that is lasting and that comes in answer to the prayer of faith. This experience is one that brings the individual into closer and more conscious relationship with the Holy Spirit than he was able to enter into immediately upon water baptism. This is an experience that calls for us to become partakers with Christ in a much fuller sense than is possible during the first steps of the Christian life.

"As you empty the heart of self, you must accept the righteousness of Christ. If you open the door of the heart, Jesus will supply the vacuum by the gift of His Spirit." [83] This heavenly Guest only comes in where He is invited; He never intrudes Himself where self is yet upon the throne.

For this baptism we must now seek, plan, and pray. We need now all the results of such a baptism in our lives and in our work for God. Let us no longer delay, but let us in unity join in seeking and finding this needed preparation for the greater power which God is waiting to bestow.

The Latter Rain

"Ask you of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zechariah 10:1. (See Joel 2:23; Hosea 6:1-3)

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This passage, as well as others, reveals the fact that before the Second Coming of Christ there will be a manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit similar to but greater than that seen on the day of Pentecost. As a result of this outpouring without measure, the loud cry of the third angel will be heard, coupled with the voice of that other angel, spoken of in Revelation 18. The messenger of the Lord writes as follows concerning this great experience yet to come to the remnant church: "At that time the 'latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out." [84]

Again we read:

"Near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' In response, 'the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.' 'He will cause to come down. The rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.'" [85]

This marvelous outpouring of God's Spirit adds power to the church for the finishing of the work and prepares the church for that great event. There can be no doubt but that the church has long delayed the Second Coming of her Lord by her attitude on this question. The spiritual life of the church has been low, and her urgent need of the Spirit has been taken as a light thing. God has been left waiting to bestow "heaven's most priceless gift" while men have been following their own ways and seeking to finish the work in their own strength.

Says the Spirit of prophecy: "If God's people had the love of Christ in the heart. If every church member was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice; if all manifested thorough earnestness, there would be no lack of funds for home and foreign missions; our resources would be multiplied; a thousand doors of usefulness would be opened, and we should be invited to enter.

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving the message of mercy to the world, Christ would have come to the earth, and the saints would ere this have received their welcome into the city of God." [86]

Great neglect has been seen in the lives of church members. The work of God has been postponed because of indifference and self-seeking. "If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory." [87]

Our attention is called to the experience of Israel that we may learn a lesson of how we need to follow closely the counsel of the Lord in the carrying on of His work.

"The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the Advent Movement, even as He led the Children of Israel from Egypt. In the disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen of the salvation of God. If all who had labored uniting in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

"It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness. He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But 'they could not enter in because of unbelief.' Because of their backsliding and apostasy, they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the promised land. In like manner it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed, and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message." [88]

Thus it is made plain that we are living on borrowed time. God intended that we should now be in the kingdom. just what has caused the delay has been made perfectly plain. Listen to the message God has sent to this people:

"Brethren and sisters, from the light given me, I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His word, they would to-day be in the heavenly Canaan." [89]

"It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years." [90]

Let us allow this solemn statement from the Lord to sink deep into our minds. It should bring to us

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a clear realization of the need of a mighty awakening among us. The fact that Jesus desired to come, and would have come so many years ago, and we were not ready to receive the power that would have enabled us to finish His work so He could come, should startle us into a soberness we have never known before.

It is of the utmost importance that we realize the seriousness of our indifference in this “time of the latter rain.”

“To those who are indifferent at this time Christ’s warning is: ‘Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.’ Revelation 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you.

“Could the curtain be rolled back, could you discern the purposes of God and the judgments that are about to fall upon a doomed world, could you see your own attitude, you would fear and tremble for your own souls and for the souls of your fellow men. Earnest prayers of heart-rending anguish would go up to heaven. You would weep between the porch and the altar, confessing your spiritual blindness and backsliding.” [91]

Over and over again does the messenger of the Lord call our attention to the fact that in this time, when God is waiting to bestow His choicest gift upon the remnant, He finds them in a state of unpreparedness. Now, when we should be receiving this added power, we must spend our time in preparing to ask for it.

“Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. But the promise is not appreciated as it should be; and therefore its fulfillment is not seen as it might be. The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and 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 its infinite plenitude.” [92]

In many ways has the church neglected to make ready for the pouring out of the Spirit with great measure. Particularly have God’s people been slow to answer the great commission of the Master to every believing soul. The winning of souls has to a large extent been relegated to secondary place in the life of the majority of the members of the church. We are told that until this is changed the rich outpouring will be delayed. We read:

“Every truly converted soul will be intensely desirous to bring others from the darkness of error into the marvelous light of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The great out pouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole Earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, whole hearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.” [93]

To be occupied with other things than the Lord’s work now is dangerous. Everything in our lives must now be directed toward the finishing of the work in all the earth. We must be living missionaries for God wherever we are. We read:

“Isaiah says, ‘Thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward!’ This is the righteousness of Christ which goes before us, and the glory of the Lord is to be our reward. You churches of the living God, study this promise, and consider how our lack of faith, of spirituality, of divine power, is hindering the coming of the kingdom of God. Were every one of you a living missionary, the gospel would be speedily proclaimed in all countries, to all peoples, nations, and tongues.” [94]

Let no one understand by this that mere busyness or activity will assure one of the power of the latter rain. No amount of mere activity will bring to the church this great gift. What is here disclosed is that one of the conditions whereby our prayers for the Holy Spirit in latter rain proportions will be answered is that our lives are given for the salvation of our fellow men. However, there are many other conditions, and we must not become confused in our thinking, so that we forget that the latter rain comes only in answer to the importunate prayer of faith. A Christ like character is the prerequisite to the added power of the latter rain. The preparation is not only action but seeking, and seeking in prayer.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” said the Master. No casual expectancy that under some ordinary experience of life the Holy Spirit will come in latter rain proportions is sufficient.

“Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The

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growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man's cooperation is required. God's work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early -and the latter rain."

"But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favorable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore, we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend that at this very time, God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised!" [95]

Results of the Falling of the Latter Rain

The entire figure of rain falling upon seed and causing it to grow and to ripen into a beautiful harvest is given to show that the moisture falling on the newly planted grain causes it to germinate and have life, so that it might grow as well as ripen into a harvest. There is no life without the rain. This is the lesson we are to learn under both the former and the latter rain.

"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. . . . 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. . . . 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.

"The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection." [96]

As these showers of both the former and the latter rain fall upon our hearts and lives, our experience becomes a living experience, our service is not lifeless, but we become living missionaries and a power that cannot be misunderstood or denied accompanies our labor. In that precious book *Early Writings*, as the messenger of the Lord comments upon the fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 18, she gives us a picture of what may be expected under the falling of the latter rain.

"The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon, and calling upon God's people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom.

"The light that was shed upon the waiting ones penetrated everywhere, and those in the churches who had any light, who had not heard and rejected the three messages, obeyed the call, and left the fallen churches. . . . A compelling power moved the honest, while the manifestation of the power of God brought a fear and restraint upon their unbelieving relatives and friends, so that they dared not, neither had they the power to hinder those who felt the work of the Spirit of God upon them. . . . Mighty miracles were wrought, the sick were healed, and signs and wonders followed the believers. God was in the work, and every saint; fearless of consequences, followed the convictions of his own conscience, and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message. I saw that this message will close with power and strength far exceeding the midnight cry.

"Servants of God, endowed with power from on high, with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven. . . . I heard everywhere a multitude of

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voices saying, 'Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'" [97]

In others of the writings of the Spirit of prophecy the Lord has given us glimpses of what will happen when the latter rain falls upon the church.

"In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844." [98]

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are 'the times of refreshing' to which the apostle Peter looked forward. . . . Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

"The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience.

"Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in all its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side." [99]

We read further of the results of God's mightiest outpouring of His Spirit:

"Almost unconsciously barriers have been erected in the strait and narrow way; stones of stumbling have been placed in the path; these will be rolled away. The safeguards which false shepherds have thrown around their flocks will become as naught; thousands will step out into the light, and work to spread the light. Heavenly intelligence will combine with the human agencies." [100]

Again we read of the wonderful evangelistic results that will follow the falling of the latter rain:

"Notwithstanding the wide-spread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord's Second Coming." [101]

Marvelous will be the results of the preaching and teaching of the message under the fullness of the power of the Holy Ghost. Many who have been unapproachable and hard to reach will be found and will give their hearts to God and obey His blessed truth.

"Many of the rulers are those whom Satan controls; but I saw that God has His agents, even among the rulers. And some of them will yet be converted to the truth. They are now acting the part that God would have them. . . . Thus the work will go on until the third message has done its work, and at the loud cry of the third angel, these agents will have an opportunity to receive the truth, and some of them will be converted, and endure with the saints through the time of trouble." [102]

As the message under the ministration of the Holy Spirit in latter rain proportions speeds its way around the world and swells to the loud cry, the work of God will be finished in a mighty blaze of glory.

"Those who have held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be wide-awake during the time that the third angel's message is proclaimed with great power. During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere." [103]

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One never tires of reading the descriptions the messenger of the Lord gives in her writings concerning the evangelistic results of the loud cry and the outpouring of the latter rain. Many of them must of necessity be left out of this study, but let us look at these:

“God rebukes His people for their sins, that He may humble them, and lead them to seek His face. As they reform, and His love revives in their hearts, His loving answers will come to their requests. He will strengthen them in reformatory action, lifting up for them a standard against the enemy. His rich blessing will rest upon them, and in bright rays they will reflect the light of heaven. Then a multitude not of their faith, seeing that God is with His people, will unite with them in serving the Redeemer.” [104]

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world’s insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God.” [105]

Preparation for the Latter Rain

The preparation to receive the latter rain is identical with the preparation to meet the Lord, so far as the individual is concerned. This preparation must not be neglected now, for only those who have fulfilled the conditions will receive this special outpouring.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful, and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord, and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation, therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets, and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father.” [106]

Wherein lies the great lack among God’s people? Why are we not now ready for the refreshing from God? The answer is given very directly through the Spirit of prophecy:

“Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. . . . At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us till the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain.”

“If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.” [107]

To obtain “all the benefits” under the former rain calls for an experience in the Lord that few have reached. The real experience of seeking and finding God and His power is entered into under the former rain. In this experience the believer enters into a life of prevailing prayer. It is a life of walking by faith and not by sight. It brings one to the place where he abides in Christ and gains the victory in His strength over every besetment. Under the former rain we enter into the very life of Christ and His life dwells in us continually. We follow Him in service and in sacrifice and find access to the same piety and devotion that the apostles had at Pentecost. Under the benefits of the former rain the apostles were enabled to believe, powerfully believe, and because of their faith they were able to cope with the assaults of the enemy with boldness, yet in humility.

To enter into such an experience, we must all take our religious life much more seriously than we have yet done. There must come into our midst a great revival and reformation of life if we would enter into all the benefits under the former rain and be prepared for the latter rain. There must come a great awakening and a return to primitive godliness among us.

“I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message. My accompanying angel cried out with awful solemnity, ‘Get ready! get ready! get ready! for the fierce anger of the Lord is soon to come. His wrath is to be poured out, unmixed with mercy, and you are

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not ready. Rend the heart, and not the garment. A great work must be done for the remnant.” [108]

“We are upon the enchanted ground, and Satan is continually at work to rock our people to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There is an indifference, a lack of zeal, that paralyzes all our efforts.” [109]

“We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan’s enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God.” [110]

“If we have any regard for our souls’ salvation we must make a decided change. We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins that they may be blotted out. We must no longer remain upon the enchanted ground.” [111]

By a close study of Joel, chapters one and two, we may learn what God has to say to His people in preparation for the latter rain. Words could not be more explicit to tell us that a great reformation must come to the church and to each one of our lives. There must come upon us a realization of our true condition before God. We must not wait to feel it or to sense it according to our own understanding, but we must take the counsel of the True Witness and come out of our lukewarm condition. The saddest statement to the Laodiceans is, “Because thou says, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17. Let us then acknowledge our mistakes, and believe God when He describes us, the best of us, as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” This is our only hope. Unless we believe this to the point where we are driven to seek the Lord for gold tried in the fire and white raiment, the righteousness of Christ, we shall remain unprepared for the great and final refreshing from the Lord.

We face a mighty foe. The times to Which we have come are dangerous times.

“The time in which we live is a time of intense excitement. Ambition and war, pleasure and money-making, absorb the minds of men. Satan sees that his time is short, and he has set all his energies at work, that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied, and entranced, until probation shall be ended and the door of mercy be forever shut.” [112]

As ministers and leaders we need to lead our people into this rich experience now called for.

“Meetings should be held in every church for solemn prayer and earnest searching of the word to know what is truth. Take the promises of God, and ask God in living faith for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is shed upon us, marrow and fatness will be drawn from the word of God. When the churches become living, working churches, the Holy Spirit will be given in answer to their sincere request. Then the truth of God’s word will be regarded with new interest, and will be explored as if it were a revelation just from the courts above. The Bible will be regarded as a charter from heaven. Its study will absorb the mind, and its truth will feast the soul. The promises of God now repeated as if the soul had never tasted of His love, will then glow upon the altar of the heart, and fall in burning words from the lips of the messengers of God. They will then plead with souls with an earnestness that cannot be repulsed. Then the windows of heaven will be open for the showers of the latter rain.” [113]

As we go further into the needed preparation for the outpouring of the latter rain and search the writings of the Spirit of prophecy for the messages God has sent to this people bearing upon this very experience, our hearts are stirred to a new understanding of the deep spiritual life that is now called for. We read:

“Leaving the first love is represented as a spiritual fall. Many have fallen thus. In every church in our land, there is needed confession repentance, and re conversion. The disappointment of Christ is beyond description. Unless those who have sinned speedily repent, the deceptions of the last days will overtake them. Some, though they do not realize it---are preparing to be overtaken. God calls for repentance without delay. So long have many trifled with salvation that their spiritual eyesight is dimmed, and they can not discern between light and darkness. Christ is humiliated in His people. The first love is gone, the faith is weak, there is need of a thorough transformation.

“My brethren and sisters, humble your hearts before the Lord. Seek Him earnestly. I have an intense desire to see you walking in the light as Christ is in the light. . . . You have left your first love. Self-righteous ness is not the wedding-garment. A failure to follow the clear light of truth is our fearful danger. The message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people.” [114]

“It is not because of any restriction on God’s part that the riches of His grace do not flow to men. His gift is godlike. He gave with a liberality that men do not appreciate because they do not love to receive. If all were willing to receive, all would be filled with the Spirit by resting content with small blessings, we disqualify ourselves for receiving the Spirit in its unlimited fullness. We are too easily satisfied with a ripple on the surface, when it is our privilege to expect the deep moving of the Spirit of God. Expecting

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little, we receive little. . . . When the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost, it was like a rushing, mighty wind. It was given in no stinted measure; for it filled all the place where the disciples were sitting. So will it be given to us when our hearts are prepared to receive it.” [115]

How precious are the messages from God that take the veil from our eyes, that we may know and see our true condition in a time so important as this. How we should thank God that He in His great love has revealed just what we should do and be in order to receive this choice gift from His hand. Says Mrs. E. G. White:

“I also 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 obtained the victor over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love-of the world and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord, and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy, and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” [116]

“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.” [117]

This is the time of testing. We are all on trial in this hour of preparation. I quote:

“Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits not subdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.” [118]

Again, let us note this statement:

“To-day you are to give yourself to God, that He may make you vessels unto honor, and meet for His service. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil-surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work to-day to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord-fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” [119]

Of the supplications of God’s people who will be pleading for the final outpouring in the latter rain we read: “The answer may come with sudden velocity and overpowering might; or it may be delayed for days and weeks, and our faith receive a trial. But God knows how and when to answer our prayer. It is our part of the work to put ourselves in connection with the divine channel. God is responsible for His part of the work. He is faithful who hath promised. The great and important matter with us is to be of one heart and mind, putting aside all envy and malice, and, as humble supplicants, to watch and wait. Jesus, our Representative and Head, is ready to do for us what He did for the praying, watching ones on the day of Pentecost.” [120]

We must pray most earnestly, as did the early disciples. No casual praying will suffice for the bestowal of this precious gift to the church.

“All who were fully identified as disciples of Christ and associated with the apostles as evangelists, assembled together at Jerusalem. They put away all differences. Then, continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, that they might receive the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit; for they were to preach the gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit and in the power of God. . . . They were waiting in expectation of the fulfillment of His promise, and were praying with special fervency.

“This is the very course that should be pursued by those who act a part in the work of proclaiming the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven: for a people are to be prepared to stand in the great day of God. Although Christ had given the promise to His disciples that they should receive the Holy Spirit, this did not remove the necessity of prayer. They prayed all the more earnestly; they continued in prayer with one accord.

“Those who are now engaged in the solemn work of preparing a people for the coming of the Lord,

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should also continue in prayer.” [121]

New emphasis needs now to be placed upon all the light the Lord has given to His people. There must be no neglected places in our lives. The full light of heaven will be revealed to the remnant people, and it is highly important that we be found living up to that full light.

“Only those who are living up to the light they have, will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” [122]

In seeking the preparation for the falling of the latter rain we must never forget that we shall also be tested in our service for Christ. The true Christian will labor for the Master at every opportunity. We read on this point:

“The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, whole-hearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.” [123]

“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.” [124]

The laymen of the church have their responsibility also in this final preparation for the outpouring of the latter rain.

“If the lay members of the church will arouse to do the work that they can do, going on a warfare at their own charges, each seeking how much he can accomplish in winning souls to Jesus, we shall see many leaving the ranks of Satan to stand under the banner of Christ. If our people will act upon the light that is given in these few words of instruction, we shall surely see of the salvation of God. Wonderful revivals will follow. Sinners will be converted, and many souls will be added to the church. When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost will fall on us.” [125]

There is much more that might be said and gathered from the messages that have come to this people on the gift of the Holy Spirit. Time will not permit us to develop this subject further. Finally, then, let us note the assurances found in the Spirit of prophecy writings regarding the kind of life that will meet the standard in preparation for the latter rain and the coming of the Lord. We read:

“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Savior be brought to yield, the power of temptation. . . . Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ.” [126]

“It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity. Death brings is destruction to the body, but makes no change in the character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters: it only fixes them forever beyond all change.” [127]

“Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. . . . Satan did not gain the victory, over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. Christ, by His own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them.” [128]

24. SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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27. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, Page 277.
28. Ellen G. White in Review and Herald, September 3, 1889, Page 545.
29. Steps to Christ, Page 30.
30. Ibid., Page 20.
31. Ibid., Page 49.
32. The Desire of Ages, Page 762.
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