

DAYBREAK SERIES



JULY-SEPT. 1979

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

BE READY!





Don't overlook the facts

The fact is—some child may never find Jesus unless someone introduces him to the Saviour.

The Branch Sabbath School offers the opportunity to cooperate in this rewarding venture.

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Dear Sabbath School Members:

Church growth in Southern Asia has been extraordinary during the past decade and a half, with a membership increase of 400%.

Of the new members, over 30% are youth. Obviously, these youth will one day constitute the "backbone" of the church.

For years our Division has had only one training center (Spicer Memorial College). Now, with church growth and international travel restrictions, the need for regional training centers is imperative. Consequently, it has been voted that this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering support the following projects:

- Burma Seminary: additional classrooms and staff housing
- Bangladesh Seminary and Academy: administration building
- Lowry Memorial and Roorkee Training Schools: Library facilities
- Narsapur Secondary School: Girls' dormitory

We request you especially to remember Southern Asia in prayer; secondly, to give liberally, as God has blessed you, that our youth may be equipped for the future.

Very sincerely yours,

R. S. Lowry, Chairman
Southern Asia Division Advisory Council
Poona

mb

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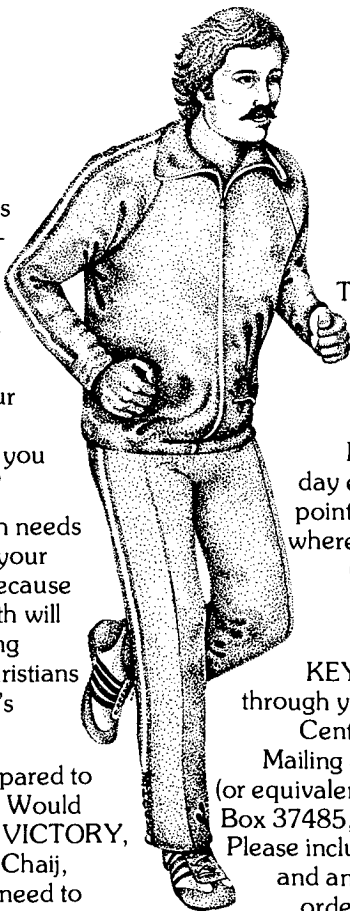
YOU EXERCISE YOUR BODY. HOW ABOUT YOUR FAITH?

You're concerned about your health. That's why you've taken up jogging or bicycling, you've dropped a few pounds, and you watch your diet. No heart attacks for you!

But how healthy is your faith? Does it get the exercise it needs to keep you in close touch with God?

That's right. Your faith needs exercise just as much as your body... maybe more. Because Christians with flabby faith will have lots of trouble getting through the tests true Christians will have to face as earth's history draws to a close.

Are you spiritually prepared to face the time of trouble? Would you like to be? **KEY TO VICTORY**, written by Dr. Fernando Chaij, points out just what you need to know and do in order to be spiritually prepared for the great time of testing that is before God's people.



Chaij, noted authority on last-day events and author of **PREPARATION FOR THE FINAL CRISIS** and **THE IMPENDING DRAMA**, wrote **KEY TO VICTORY** to accompany the Sabbath School lessons for the 3rd quarter.

More than a timeline of last-day events, **KEY TO VICTORY** points out how Christians everywhere can be spiritually ready for Christ's return... something everyone who is waiting for that event needs to know.

KEY TO VICTORY is available through your nearest Adventist Book Center or by mail from the ABC Mailing Service. Send U.S. \$3.50 (or equivalent in local currency) to P.O. Box 37485, Omaha, Nebraska 68137. Please include any applicable sales tax and an additional 7 percent of the order for shipping and handling (minimum 50¢). In Canada send your order to ABC Mailing Service, Box 398, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7L5. Prices higher in Canada.





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Fill My Cup, Lord



We must drink daily from the eternal well of God's Word.

The Adult Sabbath School Lessons will help the spiritually thirsty to fill their cup and keep it full.

BE READY!

Introduction

Last quarter, under the general title of "The Last Hour," we reviewed in some detail the dramatic events that, according to Bible prophecy, are about to take place in our world and in our church. We saw the tremendous social, political, and religious impact that they are going to make on society as a whole as well as on the people of God. In fact, some of these climactic happenings are in process right now, and we are beginning to feel their effects.

The lessons of last quarter emphasized the thought that the greatest crisis ever to confront the church of God need not bring it desperation or confusion.

On the contrary, God has made provision for every member of His family on earth to be shielded by the power of heaven. They will be accompanied by Jesus, the angels, and the Holy Spirit. They will march safely through deception, temptation, and persecution, reaching at last, by the grace of God, the final victory.

The rapid unfolding of events in the fields of science, politics, economics, morality, and religion, portrayed daily by press, radio, and television, gives evidence that we are living in earth's last hours. The sun of grace and mercy is about to set forever; the short night that precedes the glorious morning will soon commence.

But along with the approaching end comes a responsibility to do the work of preaching the gospel to all the world. God will give to us an extraordinary measure of divine power to accomplish this task. This stimulates us to redouble our efforts, multiply our enthusiasm, and rededicate our talents, to the finishing of the work.

But what if the hour of the end catches us unready? What if the final hour of the world—or of our own lives—should overtake us as a thief in the night? What if we have not made the necessary spiritual preparation? Of what value, then, would be the knowledge of what will happen?

This is why, during this quarter, we plan to study about our personal preparation for the final crisis. We need to make our readiness sure for this time of crisis.

In these lessons we shall note the message to Laodicea. We shall analyze the counsel of the True Witness. We consider the shaking of God's people. The revival and reformation through which God wants to take His church collectively—and every one of us individually—shall be another important subject of our study, followed by the all-important promise and entering into the experience of righteousness by faith.

Then we discuss the sealing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the latter rain. We examine their importance in finishing God's work. We study the conditions necessary to receive the showers of the Holy Spirit, and the need for a consecrated witnessing activity. It is our hope that this will strengthen us spiritually, will make us alive, and will motivate us to spread the light of God in a fast and miraculous way.

Finally, we consider the specific ways of getting ready for the day of the Lord, giving attention to the steps we must take in our own life to make our readiness sure.

The Lord longs for us to overcome our lukewarmness and indifference, and to seek higher spiritual ground. He wants us to dedicate the necessary time to the study of His Word, and also to devote time to secret prayer and to the examination of our spiritual needs. He desires that every one of us may understand practically and experientially what the righteousness of Christ is. He wants us to claim the mighty work of His grace in conquering sin in our lives. He would have us make a full surrender and a total commitment. He would have us overcome our defects of character and reflect in our lives, always more perfectly, the image of Christ.

May these lessons help us to acquire this experience and to be fully prepared to meet our Lord in peace and joy.



And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the great he was counted: because he had done no violence, neither was there guile in his mouth.

As he was thought to have done violence, and to have spoken guile in his mouth, so he was counted among the wicked: because he had done no violence, neither was there guile in his mouth.

For he was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

He was despised, and we esteemed him not: yet he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we were healed.

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The Present Condition of the Church

“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

We may consider ourselves very favored and fortunate to have in the Word of God a clear message of Christ directly addressed to the church. In eight short verses (Rev. 3:14-21) we find a description of our spiritual condition and of our deep needs. In these verses our Saviour graciously offers the remedies to solve our spiritual problems. Through Jesus we can acquire what we need to pass through the last and worst crisis of history, to meet our Lord, and to inherit His eternal kingdom of happiness and glory.

But we should remember that “the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded.”—*Early Writings*, p. 270.

Further, the way in which each of us either accepts or rejects the message will be a main factor in the shaking movement through which the whole church—and every one of us individually—will pass. Whether we

remain in the church loyal to God, as whole grain, or whether we are sifted away as chaff, depends to a great extent upon our response to the message to Laodicea.

The blessing written by John in Revelation 1:3 is for those who both hear and keep the message of the book of Revelation. Part of the book is the message to Laodicea. If Revelation is to be a blessing to us, we must “hear” and “keep” the message for Laodicea that we shall study this week and the next.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **A Message of Love**
(Rev. 3:14, 15)
2. **Lukewarmness**
(Rev. 3:15, 16)
3. **Inspid Christians**
(Rev. 3:16)
4. **Spiritual Self-satisfaction**
(Rev. 3:17-19)
5. **Christ at the Door**
(Rev. 3:20)
6. **Our Response**
(Rev. 3:22)

Part 1
A MESSAGE
OF LOVE

What message is given to the church in the last days?

“Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works” (Rev. 3:14, 15).

The apostle John sent these messages to seven churches in Asia Minor. These local congregations had the characteristics depicted in their respective messages. At the same time, these letters have a wider significance. These local churches represent the church of God at large during seven periods of time. Laodicea is the last epoch, the one in which we live.

“The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 252.

How is the author of the message described? Rev. 3:14.

All the titles given here belong to Christ. “Amen” is a Hebrew word meaning “surely,” from a root meaning “to be firm, steady, trustworthy.” Jesus used the word frequently to indicate his authority. When He makes a promise, it will undoubtedly be fulfilled. As a witness He is faithful and true, so that we can always depend on Him. Indeed He is the beginning or source of the creation of God, that is, the one through whom all things were made. (See John 1:3.)

When we receive a letter from a dear friend, we eagerly read it to know what it says. Since Jesus Himself is the Author of this letter, how much more important it is for us to study it!

What does Christ say that He knows about us? Rev. 3:15.

He knows all about us, our feelings—our intentions, our thoughts, our behavioral patterns. He knows even the things we count trivial, such as the number of hairs on our head. (See Matt. 10:30.)

Unfortunately we human beings do not know our inner selves as well as we ought. This is why a true witness, a faithful friend, who knows us intimately and who can read our hearts as an open book, is especially helpful and His message should be particularly welcome.

THINK IT THROUGH

In view of the fact that Jesus knows so much about us, how should we relate to Him?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 185-188.

Part 2
LUKEWARMNESS**How vividly does Jesus describe the condition of the Laodicean church?**

"Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15, 16).

"The greater part [of the people of God who profess present truth] are lukewarm professors, having a name but no zeal. . . . The term 'lukewarm' is applicable to this class. They profess to love the truth, yet are deficient in Christian fervor and devotion. They dare not give up wholly and run the risk of the unbeliever, yet they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith. . . .

"... They do not engage thoroughly and heartily in the work of God, identifying themselves with its interests; but they hold aloof and are ready to leave their posts when their worldly personal interests demand it. The internal work of grace is wanting in their hearts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 87, 88.

Note the elements that make up this lukewarmness:

1. *Deficiency in "Christian fervor and devotion."* We need to live a life of daily communion with God, a life of study of the Word and of prayer. In this way we can satisfy our spiritual needs through the power of God—an urgent need.

2. *Unwillingness to "die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith."* "Turn ye even to me with all your heart" (Joel 2:12), says the Lord. A divided heart will not give us victory. "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Luke 11:23). The warfare in which we are engaged has no neutral position. Christ requires complete possession. Self must die in order for Christ to reign on the throne of the heart.

3. *Not engaging "thoroughly and heartily in the work of God, identifying themselves with its interests."* Many do not dedicate sufficient time or interest, work or means in order to finish the work of God.

4. *"The internal work of grace [sanctification] is wanting in their hearts."* God desires to perform a miracle of grace in every heart. "He which hath begun a good work in you," says Paul, "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Thank God He is able to do it. But our consent is necessary. We must give Him our hearty cooperation.

THINK IT THROUGH

If lukewarmness is a description that fits my life, how should I go about changing my relationship with Christ?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 188-190.

Part 3
INSIPID
CHRISTIANS

How does Jesus feel about lukewarm people?

"I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

Modern English versions have the word "spit" for "spue." It indicates an action used when something is distasteful. We should read here a mere prophecy or a promise that Christ will spit His church out of His mouth. We see how Jesus presently feels about those who are lukewarm and what action is inevitable if they reject His counsel to change. Those who are lukewarm cannot expect any other kind of treatment.

Warm water is very distasteful. It can sometimes be used as an emetic. Administered to some people, it can make them vomit. If this does not happen spontaneously, the warm water may still assist in inducing vomiting.

By contrast, nothing can be more acceptable than a cold drink on a hot day or a hot drink on a cold day.

"It would be more pleasing to the Lord if lukewarm professors of religion had never named His name. They are a continual weight to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are a stumbling block to unbelievers."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 188.

Jesus sorrows over lukewarmness and spiritual mediocrity. He expresses His fervent desire that the situation might change. The severity of the divine denunciation is intended to arouse us to a reformation of life, to cause a change so marked that it will reveal the deep and converting work of the grace of Christ.

None of us needs to remain lukewarm. None need be spit out of the mouth of Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

What happens to individuals who persist in their lukewarmness?

"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 unsubdued, to the control of evil angels."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 187.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 175-178.

Part 4
SPIRITUAL
SELF-
SATISFACTION

How do some Christians feel about their spiritual condition?

"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. . . . Be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:17-19).

It will be profitable to take each one of the conditions in verse 17 and try to understand its meaning in the context:

Rich: Does this refer to a bank balance? Where is the only bank where riches can be safe? How does one make deposits in the bank of heaven? (See Matt. 6:19-21.)

Increased with goods: Is it wrong to have plenty of this world's goods? What attitude should we have toward wealth? (See Luke 12:22.) Or what is the problem with being spiritually self-satisfied?

Have need of nothing: What kind of people feel that they do not need anything? For what element are we constantly dependent upon God? (See Acts 17:28; Phil. 1:21.)

Now look at the words which describe the actual condition of those who are self-satisfied with their condition:

Wretched: How would you describe a wretched person? How can a person be rich and wretched at the same time? (See James 5:1-6; Rom. 7:25.)

Miserable: This word really means "an object of pity."—Marvin R. Vincent. *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 2, p. 471. The self-satisfied person is not aware of his own condition and therefore is "pitiable."

Poor-blind-naked: Here is a string of descriptive words that emphasizes the real condition of the self-satisfied person. He thinks he is rich when he is poor; he thinks he can see, but he is blind; and he thinks he is beautifully adorned when he is actually naked.

"The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be spewed out of His mouth unless they repent."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 66.

Here are some of the ways in which I may be self-deceived and full of self-contentment and self-righteousness: (1) trusting in my fulfillment of the external acts of worship and in my participation in the activities of the church; (2) trusting in my condition as a member of the church—a united, well-organized, strong, and growing church; (3) trusting in my knowledge and understanding of the wonderful system of biblical doctrines.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does it mean to be "zealous and repent"?

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 392, 393.

**Part 5
CHRIST
AT THE DODR**

What is the beautiful epilogue of the message to the Laodiceans?

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

Read also verses 21, 22.

In the whole Bible probably there is not a more beautiful picture painted than this of Christ standing at the door of the human heart, knocking and waiting to enter in and to bless the life with His wonderful and abiding presence.

But the crux of the matter is that regardless of Christ's willingness and eagerness to enter our lives, He will not do it if we do not decide to open the door and invite Him in.

Our will, the power of choice, will finally decide what the outcome is going to be. He will not force us. He will not save us against our desire and choice.

After Jesus walked with the two disciples who were going toward Emmaus, what did they do and with what results? Luke 24:28, 29.

“Had the disciples failed to press their invitation, they would not have known that their traveling companion was the risen Lord. Christ never forces His company upon anyone. He interests Himself in those who need Him. Gladly will He enter the humblest home, and cheer the lowliest heart. But if men are too indifferent to think of the heavenly Guest, or ask Him to abide with them, He passes on. Thus many meet with great loss.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 800.

In what tender words does God present His loving invitation to surrender all our life to Him? Prov. 23:26.

“It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; and as you do this, God will immediately take possession and work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, and even your thoughts will be subject to Him. . . . By yielding up your will to Christ, your life will be hid with Christ in God and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from God that will hold you fast to His strength; and a new light, even the light of living faith, will be possible to you.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 514.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does it mean that Jesus will “sup” with us when we open our hearts' doors to Him?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 513-516.

Part 6
OUR RESPONSE

How does Christ insist on the fact that unless there is a willingness on our part, the message will not accomplish any good?

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 3:22).

No one is so deaf as the one who will not hear. The apostle Paul prophesied about people who will “turn away their ears from the truth” (2 Tim. 4:4). This has always been a very common human experience, and it continues to be so.

This stresses once more the need of our interest, of our answer to the voice of God, of our cooperation with the plan and the will of God for our salvation.

Procrastination, the postponement of our response, is always dangerous because it hardens our heart and our ears to the sweet voice of the Spirit, who is pleading with us.

How does Christ stress the fact that knowledge only is not enough? Matt. 7:24-27.

“A mere profession of discipleship is of no value. The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. ‘Believe, believe,’ they say, ‘and you need not keep the law.’ But a belief [or a knowledge] that does not lead to obedience is presumption. The apostle John says, ‘He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’ 1 John 2:4.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 146.

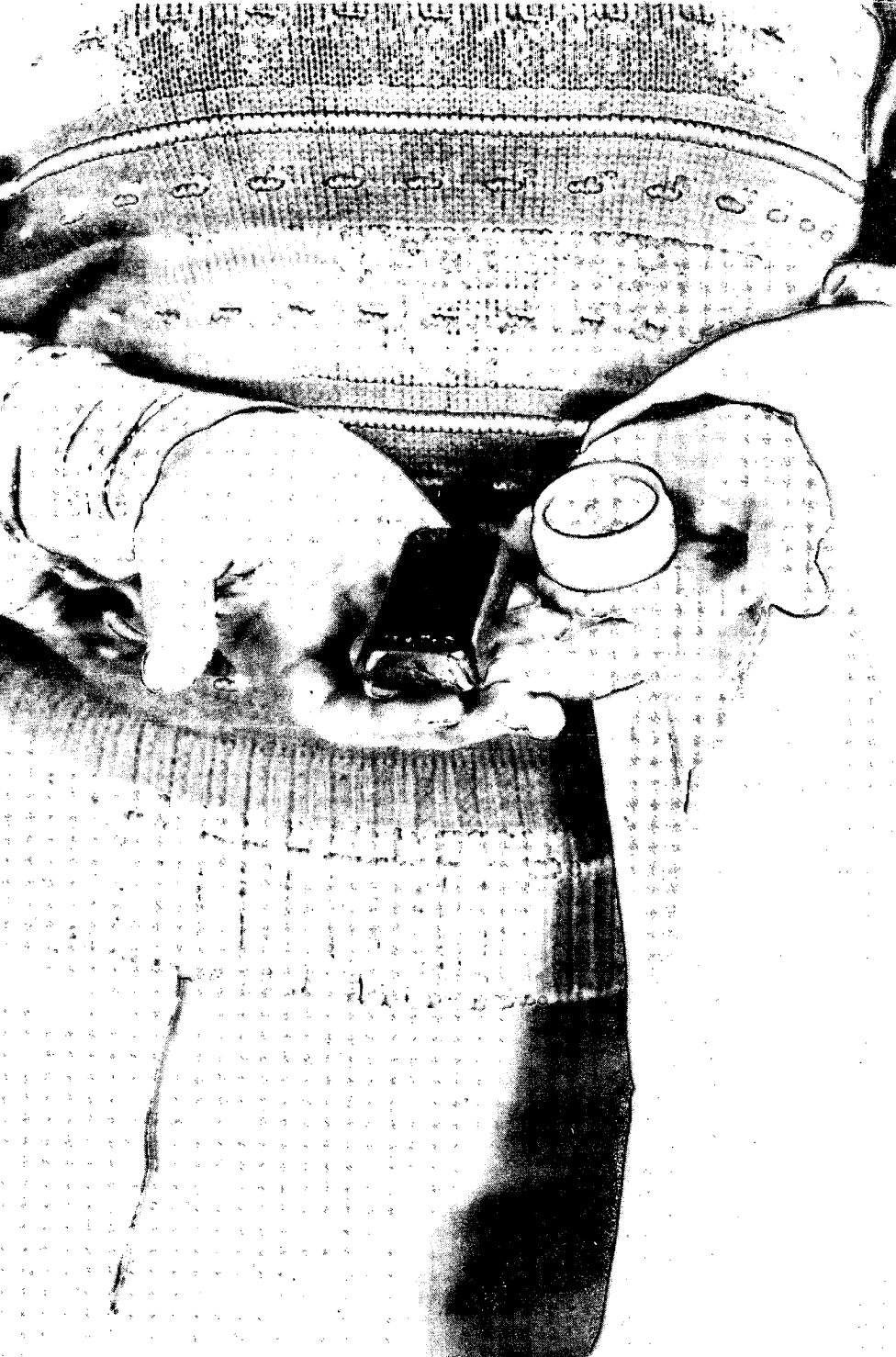
We have been privileged by the abundant wealth of knowledge contained in the Word of God, which we may understand by study under the Spirit’s guidance. Besides the understanding of the Bible and the accumulated research made by our forefathers under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, besides the work of all our own godly researchers and theologians to enrich our understanding of the Scriptures, we have had the inestimable gift of the spirit of prophecy, which has widely enlarged our horizons.

There is no excuse, then, for lack of action on our part, no excuse for lukewarmness or lack of interest in our spiritual well-being, no excuse for a lack of a real and practical experience with God and with Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is a practical and specific way of evaluating our progress, our faith, and our Christian experience?

“When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146, 147.



The Heart of the Laodicean Message

"I counsel thee to buy of me" (Rev. 3:18).

The wonderful thing about God's messages of reproof is that remedies are offered.

For many physical ailments that are correctly diagnosed by the physician, there is no known cure. He has to tell the patient, "This is our diagnosis. We are sure about the nature and the result of your illness. But, unfortunately, we can do nothing to heal you."

Not in the Laodicean case however. We may be very happy that the divine and merciful Physician has not only the ability to discover the origin and the cause of our condition, but He has also the absolute capability of effecting a complete healing. And not only this, but He offers to us very graciously the needed medicines that in this case are specific and absolute in their curing effect.

It would not be fair to overemphasize the negative part of the message and fail to give equal treatment to the most beautiful part of it: Christ's generous offer and the absolute certainty that if the needy person accepts it and does what the counsel calls for, the healing effect is totally guaranteed.

So, in dealing with the positive part of this great subject, we are dealing in essence with the heart itself of the Laodicean message. The wonderful subject of the righteousness of Christ and the possibility of acquiring the character of Jesus and being made participants of the divine nature is the

real issue contained in the message to the Laodiceans.

Every child of Adam has ready accessibility to complete forgiveness and to total victory because he can avail himself of Jesus' grace, the only means of salvation. Moreover, any Christian who feels the need of a change will enjoy the privilege of having the Holy Spirit work upon his heart. In other words, the three members of the Godhead work together to restore every spiritually ailing child of God, sick of sin, looking for deliverance and strength.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **"I counsel thee to buy of me"**
(Rev. 3:18)
2. **"Gold tried in the fire"**
(Rev. 3:18)
3. **"White raiment"**
(Rev. 3:18)
4. **"Eyesalve"**
(Rev. 3:18)
5. **"I rebuke and chasten"**
(Rev. 3:19)
6. **"Be zealous. . . , and repent"**
(Rev. 3:19)

Part 1
"I COUNSEL THEE
TO BUY OF ME"

What are the first words of Christ in the remedial part of the message to Laodicea?

"I counsel thee to buy of me" (Rev. 3:18).

Why does Christ use the verb "to buy" when He refers to spiritual things?

We buy only those things to which we attach some value. To buy means to pay a certain price, usually an amount of money. But money means time, work, and effort put forth in order to earn it. We are willing to trade our money only when we are really interested in having something, and that something should be really worthwhile.

How do we acquire spiritual blessings? Isa. 55:1.

Wine and milk were some of the most appreciated products in the Orient. They represent the most precious blessings of salvation. But human beings can buy these goods "without money." Otherwise God would be very partial and unjust, since money is unevenly distributed among people.

What pleading terms does Christ use to describe the salvation which He freely offers? Rev. 22:17.

Every one of us pays a price in order to avail himself of Jesus and His wonderful goods—by *interest* and *effort* put forth, by decision taken and sustained, by *surrender* made continually.

How does the apostle Paul point out the price the Christian needs to pay? Phil. 2:12.

How did Jesus emphasize the need of paying a real price for sanctification and salvation? Matt. 13:44-46.

The man who found the hidden treasure went and sold everything he had and eagerly bought the field. The merchant, similarly, who found the precious pearl went and disposed of all his goods in order to purchase the pearl.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the cost of salvation in a personal sense? Read Matt. 16:24.

"We can receive of heaven's light only as we are willing to be emptied of self. We cannot discern the character of God, or accept Christ by faith, unless we consent to the bringing into captivity of every thought to the obedience of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 181.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Consecration," pp. 43-46.

Part 2
"GOLD TRIED IN
THE FIRE"

What is the first of the three remedies offered by Christ?

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" (Rev. 3:18).

Every one of the remedies offered by the heavenly Physician is specific and it changes the sad spiritual condition for which it is administered to the sick Laodiceans.

Since the professed child of God has said: "I am rich," when in reality he was "wretched, and miserable, and poor," the "gold tried in the fire" will make him really rich.

According to Ellen White, what does gold represent in this context?

"The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 88.

In what Bible passage do we find these two virtues mentioned? Gal 5:22.

"Satan is constantly at work to remove these precious gifts from the hearts of God's people. All are engaged in playing the game of life. Satan is well aware that if he can remove love and faith, and supply their place with selfishness and unbelief, all the remaining precious traits will soon be skillfully removed by his deceitful hand, and the game will be lost."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 36, 37.

Love is the first evidence of conversion. It cannot be developed by mere human effort. It is of heavenly origin, and only the presence of Christ can fill our hearts with love. Only love can replace selfishness and hatred, anger and envy, jealousy, self-esteem and self-sufficiency. Love replaces them with kindness, forbearance, humility, meekness, and a forgiving spirit. Love dispels contention and strife. It produces peace, goodwill, and joy. It eliminates fear and distrust.

Faith, along with love, establishes between us and God a link so indestructible that nothing and nobody can break it, except sin. It makes accessible to us the forgiveness of God and His power to live the victorious life. Faith puts at our disposal the fulfillment of all the promises of God. It is an active principle that manifests itself in the life by a voluntary surrender to Christ and obedience to the will of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do you distinguish between the real and the counterfeit in faith and love?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 139, 140.

Part 3
"WHITE RAIMENT"

What is the appropriate clothing for the Christian?

"And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev. 3:18).

What is symbolized by white raiment? Rev. 19:8.

"The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 88.

A. The righteousness of Christ by which we are justified:

—Is the work of Jesus for us.

—Is received by faith in Jesus. (See Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 3:24; 5:1.)

—Is imputed—credited to our account—and granted freely, immediately, and continuously.

—Provides our title to heaven, the only merit we can claim.

—Involves repentance, confession, and acceptance of Christ.

—Implies a complete surrender to God.

B. The righteousness of Christ by which we are sanctified:

—Is the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

—Is imparted through a gradual process of growth.

—Provides our fitness, or preparation, for heaven.

—Sanctifies us, imparts to us the character of Christ.

—Is received by faith and through surrender.

—Is also the righteousness of Christ—His character—not ours. All merit belongs to Him.

The two processes are interrelated and inseparable. There could not be one without the other. What we many times forget is that the plan of God is not only forgiveness of sin but change of life, victory, and obedience to the will of God. The faith that secures pardon for us also works by love and purifies the soul. (See Gal. 4:5.) There is not one day we can do without imputed righteousness. On the other hand, imputed righteousness—forgiveness—without the consequent reception of the character of Christ (works, fruits) makes our faith void.

It is our privilege to be constantly with God through our faith in Jesus, depending on Him every minute of our lives, both for forgiveness and for victory. His plan for us is one of pardon for sin, victory over sin, and growth in grace. Victory is also the character of Christ in us, not ours; His work in our hearts, not ours; His righteousness, not ours.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you define justification by faith?

"It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 961-963.

Part 4 **What is the third remedy offered by the heavenly Physician?**
"EYESALVE"

"And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

One of the serious problems of the Laodiceans is that they are blind (verse 17). The eyesalve is offered to cure blindness and restore clear spiritual vision.

What is this eyesalve? "The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 88.

It is only the wisdom and grace given by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart that will enable us to see ourselves as we are and as God sees us. It is only by the promptings of the Spirit that we will be able to see clearly our sin and see it in all its sinfulness. The work of the Spirit, according to the promise of Christ, is this: "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin" (John 16:8).

The closer we get to Jesus, the sharper will be our concept of the difference between the perfection of the Master and our sinfulness. As the blackness of a spot becomes more evident when it is placed beside something immaculately white, so the more we acquaint ourselves with the beautiful and matchless character of Christ, the more we will discover our unrighteousness and the need for our dependence on the justifying righteousness of Jesus. Increasing awareness of our desperate need will ensure for us the cleansing and the transforming power of Christ, His blood, and His Spirit.

Only by beholding the glory and the beauty of the spotless life of Jesus can we become like Him. Thus we become more sensitive to the voice of God, more convinced of our need of Him, more willing to let Him work in and through us.

What other related meaning can the eyesalve have?

"The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. Upon its correct view of things the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends. The 'eyesalve,' the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application; for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God. The sinner, beholding himself in God's great moral looking glass, sees himself as God views him, and exercises repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 965.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I improve my spiritual eyesight?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 964-966.

Part 5
"I REBUKE AND
CHASTEN"

What is an evidence that God loves us?

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19).

Christ opens the curtain to let us see the abundant provision of His infinite love. He sends this rebuke because of His love and His eternal plan to save us.

Like a loving father who cares so much for his children that he punishes them, our heavenly Father confronts us with a reprimand that presents a true picture of our real condition.

What shows that we are true children of God? Heb. 12:5-8.

The formation of character, our fitness for heaven, makes some correction, some chastisement, some trials necessary. Nevertheless, the illustration should not be applied too literally, because it is not actually God who sends us trials. Rather, He permits us to suffer tribulation without intervening to prevent it.

But He is always watching very carefully to see that the furnace in which the dross is melted away may not be hotter than we can bear. When we are in difficult situations, God is with us in a very special way. He does not leave us alone. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2).

Unfortunately people often become complacent and careless when everything seems to be going fine and free from trouble. But when tribulation comes, and sorrow and pain are their lot, they turn to God for help.

Then the Spirit of God can speak tenderly to our hearts and can show us our unrighteousness. Then a hunger and a thirst for God develops, and we can hear His voice. Then repentance and change can occur, and we emerge from the fires and the waters of affliction with a new experience with God, a new determination for our lives. In that spiritual climate revival and reformation are worked by the Spirit of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

When afflictions, problems, frustrations, and perplexities come into my life, how do I relate to them? What can they do for me?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 129, 130.

Part 6
"BE ZEALOUS . . . ,
AND REPENT"

What is the final counsel of the heavenly Physician?

"Be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19).

Repentance is the deep heartfelt response to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life. "Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

"When the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. . . . Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 24.

Some Christians think that repentance takes place only in the first steps of the Christian life. But repentance is an experience that will characterize the life of the child of God every step of the way until the end of the battle. Probably not one single day will pass by without the need of repentance.

A second danger in understanding repentance is the idea that something has to happen in the life, that some change must be made by the sinner himself before he can go to Christ and repent. Should the sinner wait until he has repented before coming to Jesus? The answer is No. "If you see your sinfulness; do not wait to make yourself better. . . . We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 31.

What is the scope of the message to Laodicea?

It is not only a call to repentance and forgiveness, but it is also an invitation to possess the character of Christ, His righteousness, His holiness.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it difficult to repent?

"Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. . . . It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 331.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 141-146.



The Shaking

“I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth” (Amos 9:9).

This prophecy was written about ancient Israel in a time of apostasy. Because God loved His children, He chose to use a strange and painful method in order to arouse them to their need of change. “I will sift.” The original Hebrew expression means, “I will toss about,” or “I will cause to stagger.” God would disperse them among the heathen nations. He would afflict them in order to accomplish their return to Him. They would be sifted in the sieve of trial and persecution.

“The shaking” or “the sifting” are two equivalent expressions that refer to a trial of faith which will cause some to respond positively to God in His plan to sanctify the church. Unfortunately, however, some others will respond in the opposite way—indifference, carelessness and rebellion.

God is eager to prepare His church for the final events. He wants to purify His house and to obtain a complete reformation in order to be able to pour out on His people the plentiful showers of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain so that the work might be promptly finished.

Is the church ready for that wonderful event? Is it ready to receive the thousands of the children of God that are in other churches, ready to join it? God will not allow this influx of members to happen, lest they be

discouraged because of the worldliness, the selfishness, and the shallowness that characterizes Laodicea. Is this not a sobering thought? Shall we let time pass by without seeking for the experience that He is trying to create in our lives for a fast and glorious completion of our evangelistic task?

Evidently the sifting or shaking is a process that will occur simultaneously with the reform movement that will take place within the church. And both things constitute a preparation for the latter rain that will bring about the end of our witnessing mission, which in turn will determine the second coming of Jesus.

In this lesson we shall review not only the essential features and the description of the shaking, but also its causes, its timing, and, even more important, the way we may remain firm as we enter this tempest of trials.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Description and Essential Features (Luke 22:31, 32)**
- 2. Causes of Failure—1 (Matt. 26:41)**
- 3. Causes of Failure—2 (Matt. 7:26, 27)**
- 4. The Timing (Luke 21:28)**
- 5. The Church Will Not Fall (Rom. 8:35-39)**
- 6. How to Avoid Falling (1 Cor. 10:12)**

Part 1
DESCRIPTION AND
ESSENTIAL
FEATURES

In an hour of crisis in the life of Peter, what did Jesus reveal to His disciple?

“The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31, 32).

Peter needed this sifting, this bitter experience, in order to become aware of his own condition, his weakness, and his absolute need of Christ. Some time later, the once proud and self-confident disciple learned how unstable and how cowardly he really was, denying His Lord three times.

Jesus wanted to prevent the complete discouragement of Peter; so He commanded Simon: “When thou art converted [‘When you have returned to me.’ NIV] strengthen thy brethren.” These words proved encouraging to Peter after he had undergone the sifting. Jesus still waited for him to come back, to be converted, and He still had an important work for him.

As in the case of Peter, so every child of God and the church as a whole will undergo in these last days a special trial of faith. Shaking, or sifting, has taken place in the past, but it will be repeated near the end of time in a specific way.

“Shaking” or “sifting” is a figure of speech that designates the particular experience of separating those in the church into two groups—those who follow God and those who follow the world. In some places grain is still shaken in a sieve so that broken kernels, husks, and foreign particles fall through the mesh, while the chaff is blown away.

How does the servant of the Lord describe the shaking?

“A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual foundation of every one to the utmost. Therefore avoid the sand bed; hunt for the rock. Dig deep; lay your foundation sure. Build, oh, build for eternity! Build with tears, with heartfelt prayers.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 129, 130.

Why does God allow Satan to sift and shake the church?

“God is sifting His people. He will have a clean and holy church. We cannot read the heart of man. But the Lord has provided means to keep the church pure.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 99.

As in the case of Peter, so with us. Christ has provided us with all the means to remain firm and loyal in the hour when our spiritual foundations will be wrenched and tested to the utmost.

THINK IT THROUGH

How should the Christian react to mistakes—real or imaginary—in the church?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 89.

Part 2
CAUSES OF
FAILURE—1**Why should the Christian watch and pray?**

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41).

Watchfulness and prayer are the provisions of heaven to enable us to meet any crisis in life.

The first cause of failure in the shaking.

Ellen White was shown in vision a great company mightily shaken, surrounded by angels. The people were clothed with an effective armor—the armor of God. But then she says: “The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks.”—*Early Writings*, p. 271.

So, the first cause of failure is *carelessness and indifference*, lack of pleading and agonizing for victory.

What will be the second cause of failure in the shaking out of many?

Persecution because of the enforcement of the Sunday law.

“Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the halfhearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 602.

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

The test will be an individual one. “The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 463.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I develop the faith, the steadiness, and the maturity that will enable me to be loyal under the most trying persecution?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 179-182.

**Part 3
CAUSES OF
FAILURE—2****What is the third condition that causes people to be shaken out?**

"Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:26, 27).

Superficial knowledge and failure to put the truth into practice is another reason why many will be shaken out in the hour of crisis. They will be deceived by false doctrines.

"God's Spirit has illuminated every page of Holy Writ, but there are those upon whom it makes little impression, because it is imperfectly understood. When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 112.

"The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan's superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God's people. Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 293.

What is the fourth important reason why many will be rejected, shaken out, or spewed out of the mouth of Christ? Rev. 3:16.

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people."—*Early Writings*, p. 270.

Christ's counsel fits this need: (1) Buy gold tried in the fire—faith and love—the fruits of the Holy Spirit. (2) Buy white raiment—the righteousness of Christ; forgiveness (or justification); victory, and growth (sanctification, the perfect character of Christ). (3) Buy eyesalve—the Holy Spirit, which gives wisdom and grace to recognize sin under any disguise.

THINK IT THROUGH**How does the Christian "buy" the above products?****FURTHER STUDY***Early Writings*, pp. 269-271.

Part 4
THE TIMING

What admonition did Jesus give in His prophetic sermon?

"When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Many people have the idea that the shaking is still in the future. But this is not so. The mighty shaking of the people of God, the division of the church into two different classes, has already begun.

What indication do we have in the inspired writings regarding the time of the shaking?

"The mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth and to sacrifice for God and His cause."—*Early Writings*, p. 50.

"I saw that we are now in the shaking time. Satan is working with all his power to wrest souls from the hand of Christ and cause them to trample underfoot the Son of God. An angel slowly and emphatically repeated these words: 'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' Character is being developed. Angels of God are weighing moral worth. God is testing and proving His people. These words were presented to me by the angel: 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the *beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 429.

"God is now sifting His people, testing their purposes and their motives. Many will be but as chaff—no wheat, no value in them"—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 51.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it necessary for God rather than man to separate the chaff from the wheat? In what matters only can the church exercise discipline?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 163.

**Part 5
THE CHURCH
WILL NOT
FALL**

How did Paul express the truth that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ?

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-39).

Paul seems to suggest that tribulation, distress, persecution, or any other difficult experiences that the Christian is called upon to pass through, are not stumbling blocks to success but the very circumstances in which we can be victorious. They are the means whereby our faith is tested.

Nothing and no one will be able to shake us out of our relationship with Christ and His love if we just keep on looking to and trusting in the Author and Finisher of our redemption.

Under adverse circumstances will the church of God fall?

“Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 380.

God will not spew the church out of His mouth, but only the lukewarm, the indifferent, the halfhearted. Only those who do not take refuge in the power of God, who do not surrender completely to Him and allow Him to act in their lives, only those who do not divest themselves of their own righteousness and array themselves in the righteousness of Christ will have to be shaken out. But the church, cleansed and purified, will continue her onward march to the city of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

What proportion of the church will fail because of their lukewarmness?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 413, 414.

Part 6
HOW TO AVOID
FALLING

What is the wise admonition of the apostle Paul?

**"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"
(1 Cor. 10:12).**

The Christian life is a struggle. It is an onward and an upward march. The road is narrow, and the gate is small (Matt. 7:14, NIV). But every child of God has to face a special crisis—the time of sifting. He must withstand the sifting in the sieve of trouble and temptation. He has to face the winds of conflict and tribulation and stand upright.

What vision did the servant of the Lord have regarding the shaking?

"I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them."—*Early Writings*, p. 269.

Although vexed by deep anxiety and passing through a terrible internal struggle, every one of us may pass triumphantly through the test if we maintain unbroken our vital contact with heaven and keep our dependence on Christ, who is our victory and the only Source of our strength.

What were the evil angels trying to do with these afflicted children of God?

"Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward."—*Early Writings*, p. 269.

"We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands. If we make no effort to win souls to Christ we shall be held responsible for the work we might have done, but did not do because of our spiritual indolence. Those who belong to the Lord's kingdom must work earnestly for the saving of souls. They must do their part to bind up the law and seal it among the disciples."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 332.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can we do now in our own lives so that we will not fall in the final shaking?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 80, 81.



Revival and Reformation

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand” (Joel 2:1).

The prophet wrote these words under divine inspiration as a timely admonition when Israel was about to be invaded by an enemy people. This is the immediate historical application. But these words were preserved because they refer also to the time of the end, to the final “day of the Lord,” the eve of the second coming of Christ. The prophet calls for a trumpet to be sounded in Zion (Jerusalem), representative of the church. The message was to spread an alarm in the holy mountain of God, namely, His church.

“In view of that great day [the day of the Lord] the word of God, in the most solemn and impressive language, calls upon His people to arouse from their spiritual lethargy and to seek His face with repentance and humiliation. . . .

“To prepare a people to stand in the day of God, a great work of reform was to be accomplished. God saw that many of His professed people were not building for eternity, and in His mercy He was about to send a message of warning to arouse them from their stupor and lead them to make ready for the coming of the Lord.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 311.

In view of the earth-shaking events that are about to occur in “the day of the Lord,” church members must be awakened by a voice of alarm. They must seek a deep and genuine

conversion. A spiritual reformation must be effected in the church in preparation for the great events of the time of the end.

Undoubtedly we are living in the supreme hour of history. God is ready to intervene powerfully in the affairs of this world. His work has to be finished on earth. And before that, the Holy Spirit is going to be poured out in His greatest fullness in the showers of the latter rain.

But as a preparation for all these outstanding events, the church of God—and its individual components—needs to pass through a deep revival and a complete reformation: a turning to God and a change of life. Therefore, the call to a genuine conversion must resound throughout Zion.

We plan to study in this lesson the need for reformation, the signs of true reformation, the elements of reformation, the methods to accomplish reformation, as well as the efforts of the devil to counteract this by a counterfeit.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Need of Revival and Reformation**
(Joel 2:12, 13)
2. **Discovering Satanic Counterfeits**
(John 8:44)
3. **New Light**
(Isa. 8:20)
4. **Signs of True Reformation**
(Matt. 7:15, 16)
5. **Some Elements of Reformation**
(Eph. 4:22-24)
6. **How to Accomplish Revival and Reformation**
(Rom. 12:2)

**Part 1
NEED OF
REVIVAL AND
REFORMATION****What is the fervent counsel of God in a time of crisis?**

“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:12, 13).

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. . . . Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 121.

“God calls upon those who are willing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit to lead out in a work of thorough reformation. I see a crisis before us, and the Lord calls for His laborers to come into line. Every soul should now stand in a position of deeper, truer consecration to God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 400.

“God’s people will not endure the test unless there is a revival and a reformation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 285.

“A reformation is needed among the people, but it should first begin its purifying work with the ministers.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 469.

What is the difference between a revival and a reformation?

“A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices.”—*Christian Service*, p. 42.

What assurances do we have that the reformation will be effected?

“I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me in the night season. There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God’s call.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 515.

THINK IT THROUGH**How can I make sure that I am part of the revival and reformation?****FURTHER STUDY***Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 115.

Part 2
DISCOVERING
SATANIC
COUNTERFEITS**What should we remember about the nature and plans of Satan?**

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

It has always been the consistent plan of Satan to counterfeit the genuine spiritual reformation that the Lord desires to accomplish in His people. This has been his method to cause confusion, chaos, and disruption in God's plan.

"In every revival he [Satan] is ready to bring in those who are unsanctified in heart and unbalanced in mind. . . .

". . . In all the history of the church no reformation has been carried forward without encountering serious obstacles. Thus it was in Paul's day. Wherever the apostle raised up a church, there were some who professed to receive the faith, but who brought in heresies, that, if received, would eventually crowd out the love of the truth."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 396.

Satan uses three principal methods to disrupt the reformation that is to change the church: (1) he sows a spirit of discord and strife; (2) he inspires destructive criticism of the leadership; (3) he causes fanaticism.

"The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 251. In other words, discord and strife cannot go along with a reformation.

In describing a false reform movement, Ellen White wrote: "He [the so-called reformer] thought God had passed all the leading workers and given him the message."

Another disrupter of reform is fanaticism. "Fanaticism will appear in the very midst of us. Deceptions will come, and of such a character that if it were possible they would mislead the very elect."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 16. Luther, the Wesleys, and William Miller, as well as others, suffered perplexities because of the work of unsanctified and unbalanced fanatics.

THINK IT THROUGH**Why is it dangerous to criticize the leaders in the church?****FURTHER STUDY***The Great Controversy*, pp. 396, 397.

Part 3
NEW LIGHT **What is the standard by which every teaching is to be judged?**

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

With the excuse of trying to cause a revival and reformation in the church, a number of individuals have claimed to bring “new light.” This is one way Satan seeks to trap careless souls. The Bible statement (Isa. 8:20) does not invalidate any correct enlargement on fundamental truths or any clearer understanding of prophecy. But “when the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained.” —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 161.

What are the three great marks of any authentic new light?

1. *It will be 100 percent in accord with the Word of God, and it will not depend on any whimsical and unbalanced interpretation of the Scriptures.*

“Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks. Their doctrines will not bear the test of God’s word, yet souls will be deceived.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 295.

2. *It will not contradict any of the basic truths already established as immovable pillars in the doctrinal structure of the church.*

“He [God] does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body. In every reform men have arisen making this claim.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 291.

3. *Those who proclaim the new light will not be infatuated with the idea that they are superior to their brethren.* They will not be proud that God has chosen them, bypassing His people. This in general, is the exalted view leaders of so-called “reform movements” mistakenly hold of themselves.

“God has not passed His people by and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 291.

“Let none be self-confident, as though God had given them special light above their brethren. Christ is represented as dwelling in His people.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 291.

THINK IT THROUGH **Why is it necessary to have a firsthand knowledge of the truth, and not depend on others for our belief?**

FURTHER STUDY *Early Writings*, p. 124; *Counsels to Writers*, pp. 49-51.

Part 4
SIGNS OF
TRUE
REFORMATION

What is one of the most important signs set by Christ whereby we can judge the correctness of any movement?

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15, 16).

False teachers will sometimes appear to be sheep. But they cannot deny their inner natures. Sooner or later they will reveal their selfish interests and purposes. They will feed on the flock like the wolf that snatches a lamb to satisfy his hunger.

What are the marks of a true reformation?

"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."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 126.

We can glean from this quotation these different elements that distinguish a real reformatory movement:

1. *A spirit of intercession and praise, which implies a spirit of prayer.* Prayer is the focal point of reformation.

2. *A spirit of genuine conversion—a change of life.* Nobody can stop the leavening power of a life really transformed by the Holy Spirit.

3. *A spirit of active witnessing.* The servant of the Lord saw hundreds and thousands of people visiting families and opening before them the Word of God.

4. *An additional mark is a spirit of generosity.*

"Some refused to be converted. They were not willing to walk in God's way, and when, in order that the work of God might be advanced, calls were made for freewill offerings, some clung selfishly to their earthly possessions. These covetous ones became separated from the company of believers."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 126.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I begin a reform in my own circle?

**Part 5
SOME ELEMENTS
OF REFORMATION****What is the advice of the apostle Paul regarding a reformation in the life?****“Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24 RSV).**

Paul is very specific when he points out that a reformation involves a complete change of nature. We no longer tell lies, lose our temper, steal, or use bad language. (See vv. 25-32.) We become kind and forgiving as God has been kind to us and has forgiven our sins.

“The reformation will be outward as well as inward.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 35.

What are some of the external aspects of a reformation?

1. *Habits of personal devotion.* There can be no spiritual life and real conversion without time given every day to prayer and study of the Bible.

2. *Our interrelations,* in the church, in the community, in our institutions and offices, and everywhere. Love will replace hatred and anger. (See Gal. 5:19-23.)

3. *The behavior in the home will be different.* An atmosphere of joy and peace, of cheerfulness and kindness, will prevail within the sacred precincts of the home, making it a little heaven on earth. The relations of husbands and wives, parents and children will be totally different.

4. *Healthful living.* The love of God in our hearts will cause us to heed the principles of health presented to us in the spirit of prophecy. Meat will be eliminated from our diets, sugar will be cut to a very minimum, and cholesterol-producing foods will be greatly restricted or eliminated. Whole cereals, fruits, vegetables, and nuts will be the basic diet. We will use the “true remedies” to restore and maintain health—“pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, [and] trust in divine power.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127.

5. *Dress and fashion.* “Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 647.

6. *Sabbath observance* will be more faithful.

7. *Amusements and social activities,* as well as the kind of music and reading matter, will speak about our complete conversion and reformation. We will not let the TV set become a curse for our home and our character.

THINK IT THROUGH**How does my life and my home relate to these principles?****FURTHER STUDY***Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 399-401.

Part 6
HOW TO ACCOMPLISH
REVIVAL AND
REFORMATION

How did the apostle Paul describe the process of a personal reformation?

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Thus you will prove in practice that the will of God's good, acceptable to him and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, Phillips).

Reformation does not focus on changing symptoms. While it affects both the external and the internal aspects of life, it begins internally with the renewing of the mind.

When the soul looks for the source of spiritual life and surrenders to Christ, it is put under the influence of the Holy Spirit, which in turn begins to work powerfully in producing the change.

"Circumstances cannot work reforms. Christianity proposes a reformation in the heart. What Christ works within, will be worked out under the dictation of a converted intellect. The plan of beginning outside and trying to work inward has always failed, and always will fail. God's plan with you is to begin at the very seat of all difficulties, the heart, and then from out of the heart will issue the principles of righteousness."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 35.

How can we make it possible for the Holy Spirit to work on our minds in order to effect spiritual renewal? 2 Cor. 3:18.

By exposing our minds and our hearts to the beautiful, noble, and perfect character of Jesus, we allow that character to be reproduced in us.

Photographically speaking, if we want to reproduce a lovely face or a wonderful scene of nature with its colors and beauty, we open the camera and let the reflection of the object impress the sensitive film. Then we obtain a marvelous picture that reproduces the original. If we want the character of Christ to be reproduced in our life, our heart has to be exposed to Christ.

What is another element indispensable in securing the experience of reformation? Matt. 5:16.

"The labor of love springs from the work of faith. Bible religion means constant work. . . . We are to be zealous of good works. . . ."

"While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1111.

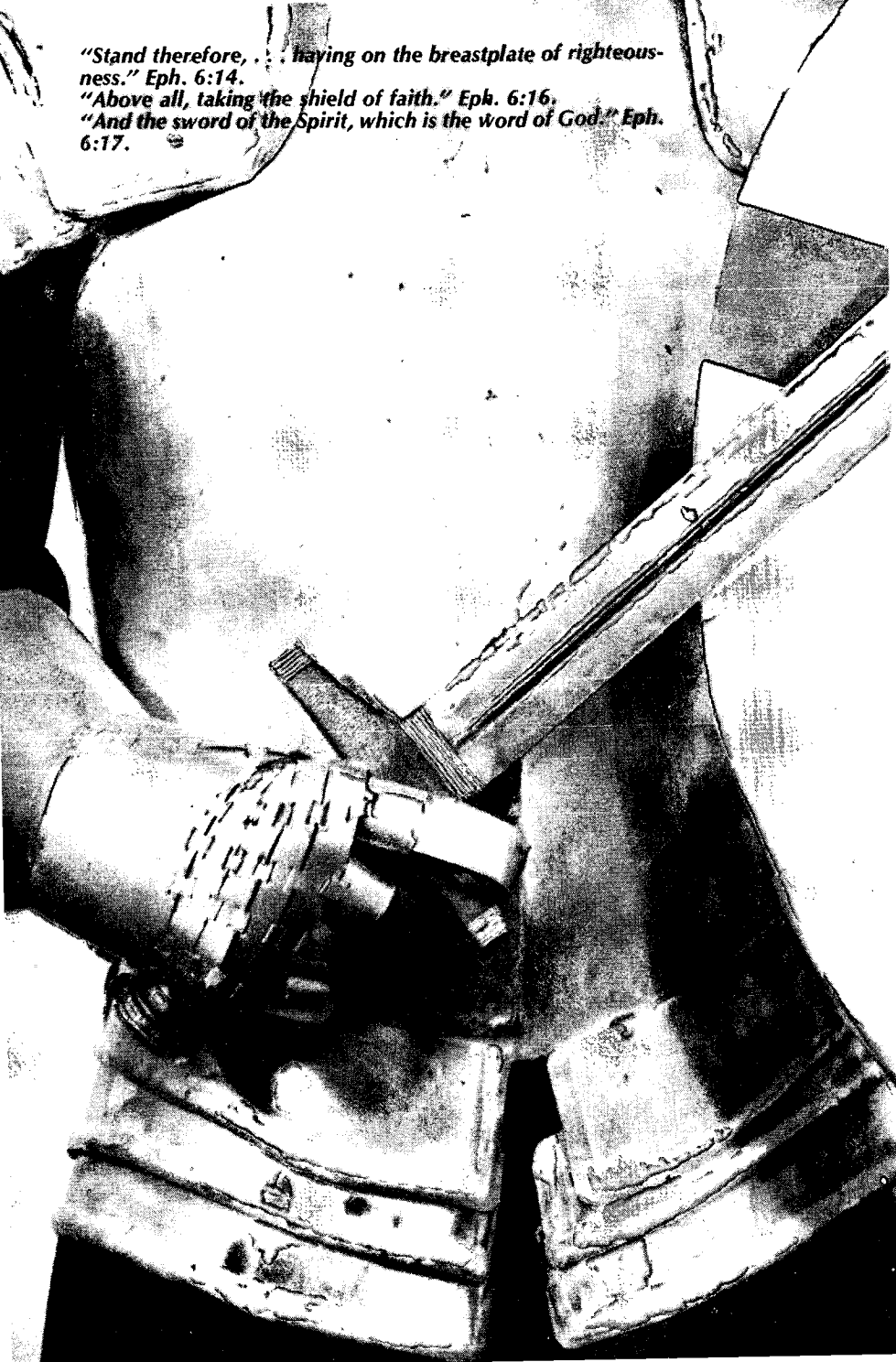
FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1080.

"Stand therefore, . . . laying on the breastplate of righteousness." Eph. 6:14.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith." Eph. 6:16.

"And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. 6:17.



Righteousness by Faith

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isa. 61:10).

Ellen White tells us that the subject of righteousness by faith should supersede all others. (See *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 468.) It is the very heart of the gospel of Jesus. It forms the foundation of every other aspect of the truth.

Once in a while someone claims to be a pioneer in the presentation of the truth of the righteousness of Christ. But the message has been in the Bible from the time it was written, and its light has been flashing in the inspired writings of Ellen White almost from the beginning of her career as a messenger of the Lord.

It is true that for some time, and especially before 1888, our church was inclined to stress obedience to the law on a legalistic basis. Thus many of our brethren lost sight of the truth that righteousness and salvation are to be received by faith alone, by a full recognition of our need and our impotency, and by a total dependence on our Saviour and our surrender to Him. But at the General Conference of 1888, with the presentation of this subject, and also with the continuing efforts of many of the leaders of this movement, the picture has been changed. From that year until our own days the glorious truth that man is justified and also sanctified by faith in Christ and by a complete reliance on Him has been like a struggling light

increasing in brilliance; it has not been easy—the light is continually fighting to keep from being extinguished. This light must illuminate the whole world, since the righteousness of Christ is the third angel’s message in verity. (See *Evangelism*, p. 190.)

The righteousness of Christ is both imputed and imparted. Justification is by faith in Christ and sanctification is by faith in Christ. The one is forgiveness of sin; and the other is victory over sin.

These expressions—imputed and imparted righteousness—do not designate two classes of righteousness. There is just one saving righteousness: it is the righteousness of Christ. It manifests itself in two different aspects, both indispensable but not interchangeable. And the only way of securing that righteousness in either of its two aspects, is by faith.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Need of Righteousness**
(Job 25:4)
2. **Man’s Method Versus God’s Method**
(Phil. 3:8, 9)
3. **Imputed Righteousness**
(Rom. 3:24, 25, 28)
4. **Imparted Righteousness**
(1 John 5:4)
5. **Partakers of the Divine Nature**
(John 8:11)
6. **How to Secure Christ’s Righteousness**
(Gal. 2:20)

Part 1
NEED OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS

What is one of the most ancient cries of the human heart?

“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job. 25:4).

Awareness of sinfulness and a sense of guilt are not superficial feelings. They are deeply rooted convictions in the human heart. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts human beings—Christian and non-Christian alike—of their sinful condition. (See John 16:8.) And He continues to do so in every case unless the individual has hardened himself beyond the point of spiritual perception and repentance.

How does the apostle Paul establish the universal sinfulness of man? Rom. 3:10, 23.

Man's greatest problem is sin and the sense of guilt that comes with it. Nothing burdens the heart so heavily and troubles the mind so much as sin and guilt.

Most of the physical and mental illnesses of humanity have their root right here, and people are willing to pay almost any price to recover peace of mind. For this reason great multitudes go to confession to tell of their sins and mistakes, and even a greater number go to the psychiatrist to unload their hearts from this terrible burden. In some Christian and non-Christian circles hundreds of thousands participate in pilgrimages, physical sacrifices, punishments, and penitences, hoping to solve the great problem.

But it is all in vain for salvation. The only solution is the one presented so clearly in the Bible.

What is the only remedy for sin and sinfulness? Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 12:1, 2.

What a pity that so many people look in the wrong direction to solve their basic spiritual problems!

It is also a shame that so many Christians are so confused and mistaken in this regard, as we shall see in part 2.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you explain righteousness by faith clearly and concisely?

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ Job 14:4. Romans 8:7.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “The Sinner's Need of Christ,” pp. 17-22.

Part 2
MAN'S METHOD
VERSUS
GOD'S METHOD**What two righteousnesses does Paul contrast?**

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:8, 9).

"My own righteousness" is one form of righteousness. The "righteousness . . . of God" through faith in Christ is another. In other words, righteousness by works versus righteousness by faith. To try to obtain salvation by any kind of human effort or by any trust in human works or merit is absolutely futile. Salvation is obtained by grace, the grace of God, and is a result of appropriating the merits of Christ by faith in Him, which includes surrender to Him.

Are we as Seventh-day Adventists in danger of falling into the pattern of the ancient Jews, who sought salvation by their "own righteousness, which is of the law"? Certainly we are. Actually, any moment we lose sight of the vital importance of the work of Christ and rely on our own effort or merits to earn heaven—any moment we trust in our good works—we are falling into the same grave mistake as the Israelites of old. Many Christians make this great mistake today.

The only source of righteousness is God, and our only righteousness is in Christ. Whenever we confess our sins, He forgives us and cleanses us from our sins, presenting us perfect before the throne of God. In addition, He writes His law on the fleshy tables of our hearts, endows us with His Spirit, makes us new creatures. The first is His imputed righteousness. The second, His imparted righteousness. But it is always *His* righteousness.

From the beginning man has tried to develop his own righteousness, substituting his human method instead for the divine plan. Cain despised God's way—a lamb sacrifice which would show his faith in the Redeemer to come—and presented an offering not in keeping with God's plan. Adam made an apron of fig leaves to cover the shame of his nakedness. But the Lord covered Adam and Eve with skins of animals slain as a symbol of the death of Christ, the Substitute for sinners.

THINK IT THROUGH**Why is my own righteousness inadequate for salvation?****FURTHER STUDY***Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 391-396.

**Part 3
IMPUTED
RIGHTEOUSNESS**

With what clear statements does Paul refer to the only way man can be justified? Rom. 3:24, 25, 28.

When we accept Jesus as our personal Saviour and put our faith in Him, we receive instant reconciliation with God. We are forgiven, counted perfect; and before God it is as if we had never sinned.

Review also these wonderful passages: Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 3:20; 1 John 1:7-9; Rom. 5:1.

All these scriptures present in a very clear way the same basic and glorious truth: we are justified, pardoned, cleansed, and reconciled to God—not by the merit of any work, but by faith in Christ.

This is the essence of Christianity: trust in God, reliance on Him, and utter dependence on Christ and His righteousness, a righteousness which becomes ours by faith.

What is faith? How does real faith manifest itself? James 2:14, 17, 18, 20.

Faith is not a mere mental attitude. It reveals itself in works. Faith not only causes a man to believe in Jesus with his mind, but it also involves his emotional faculties—his heart, his love, all of which he gives to God.

Ellen White describes "perfect faith" as the "surrender of self to God."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 260. Or again: "Saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 261.

Thus, righteousness by faith is more than an acquittal, a theory, or a doctrine. It is a transaction that results in a covenant relationship with God and with Jesus. This newfound interaction with God changes the whole life, causing the person to surrender completely to Christ, and Christ gives him forgiveness, victory, and cleansing.

How important is it for us to understand and accept justification by faith?

"The enemy of man and God is not willing that this truth [justification by faith] should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. If he can control minds so that doubt and unbelief and darkness shall compose the experience of those who claim to be the children of God, he can overcome them with temptation."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 3, 1889.

**THINK IT THROUGH
FURTHER STUDY**

How does one exercise faith so as to be justified?

Steps to Christ, "Faith and Acceptance," pp. 49, 50.

Part 4
IMPARTED
RIGHTEOUSNESS**What is the secret of victory over sin?**

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

After being justified by faith in Jesus, we may have the power of God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts to have the personal victory over sin.

What are the two facets of the righteousness of Christ, and what is accomplished by each?

"The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 35.

When we have repented from our sins and confessed them to God, asking for forgiveness in the name of Jesus and accepting His sacrifice by faith, we are completely pardoned and considered righteous. We are justified. It is an instantaneous, miraculous operation. In the sight of God we are perfect, free from guilt, and ready for heaven. Should we die at that precise moment, we would be saved. "The righteousness by which we are justified" is our title to heaven.

But, should we continue to live, that righteousness by which we are justified is accompanied and immediately followed by the righteousness that sanctifies us. Since we shall have our sinful natures until the day of our translation, we shall constantly need to be justified while sanctification also is going on in our lives. Nevertheless, faith that is real and authentic produces works, a change of life. And that changed life is our fitness for heaven. "Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 373.

While justification is an instantaneous operation, sanctification is the work of a lifetime. In justification God *imputes* or *credits* to us the righteousness of Christ. In sanctification He *imparts* to us the perfect character of Christ.

How does the apostle John present both aspects of the righteousness of Christ? 1 John 2:1, 2.

As we shall see under part 5, He has made ample provision for this experience to be real in human life.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you explain justification and sanctification in your own words?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Test of Discipleship," pp. 57-65; *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 397, 398.

**Part 5
PARTAKERS
OF THE
DIVINE NATURE**

What is the plan of God for man after he has been justified?

“Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

After Christ forgave the woman taken in adultery, He told her: “Go, and sin no more.” This is the program God has for His children.

What provision has God given us to achieve this goal? 2 Peter 1:4.

God wants to make us partakers of the divine nature. He wants to restore His image in us. He is willing to impart to us His perfect character. This along with His imputed righteousness is the white garment with which He has promised to clothe us.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 555, 556.

What high standard has Jesus set for the Christian? Matt. 5:48.

The idea of perfection in the original is to “Be mature, grown up.” The Christian life is a spiritual growth.

With what words of assurance does the apostle Jude refer to the willingness and ability of God to keep us holy and faultless? Jude 24.

“When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the suffering of the Son of God.”—*Messages to Young people*, p. 338.

“When Christ is in the heart it will be so softened and subdued by love for God and man that fretting, faultfinding, and contention will not exist there. The religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 610.

THINK IT THROUGH

When can a church be perfect? (See Eph. 5:26, 27.)

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, “Without a Wedding Garment,” pp. 307-319.

Part 6
HOW TO SECURE
CHRIST'S
RIGHTEOUSNESS**What is a prerequisite for having Christ dwell in the Christian? Gal. 2:20.**

The dying of self, the recognition of our own impotency and our need of Christ, is the prerequisite for receiving the rich garment of Christ's righteousness.

This recognition of need leads to a surrender to Jesus—renewed daily, hourly.

"When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. . . . The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, . . . impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

Included in the surrender to Christ is the *confession* and putting away of sins, claiming His promises by faith.

"Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God . . . if they [God's people] will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim his promises. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, 'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1887.

What is another aspect of living a victorious life? A vital and permanent *connection with God*.

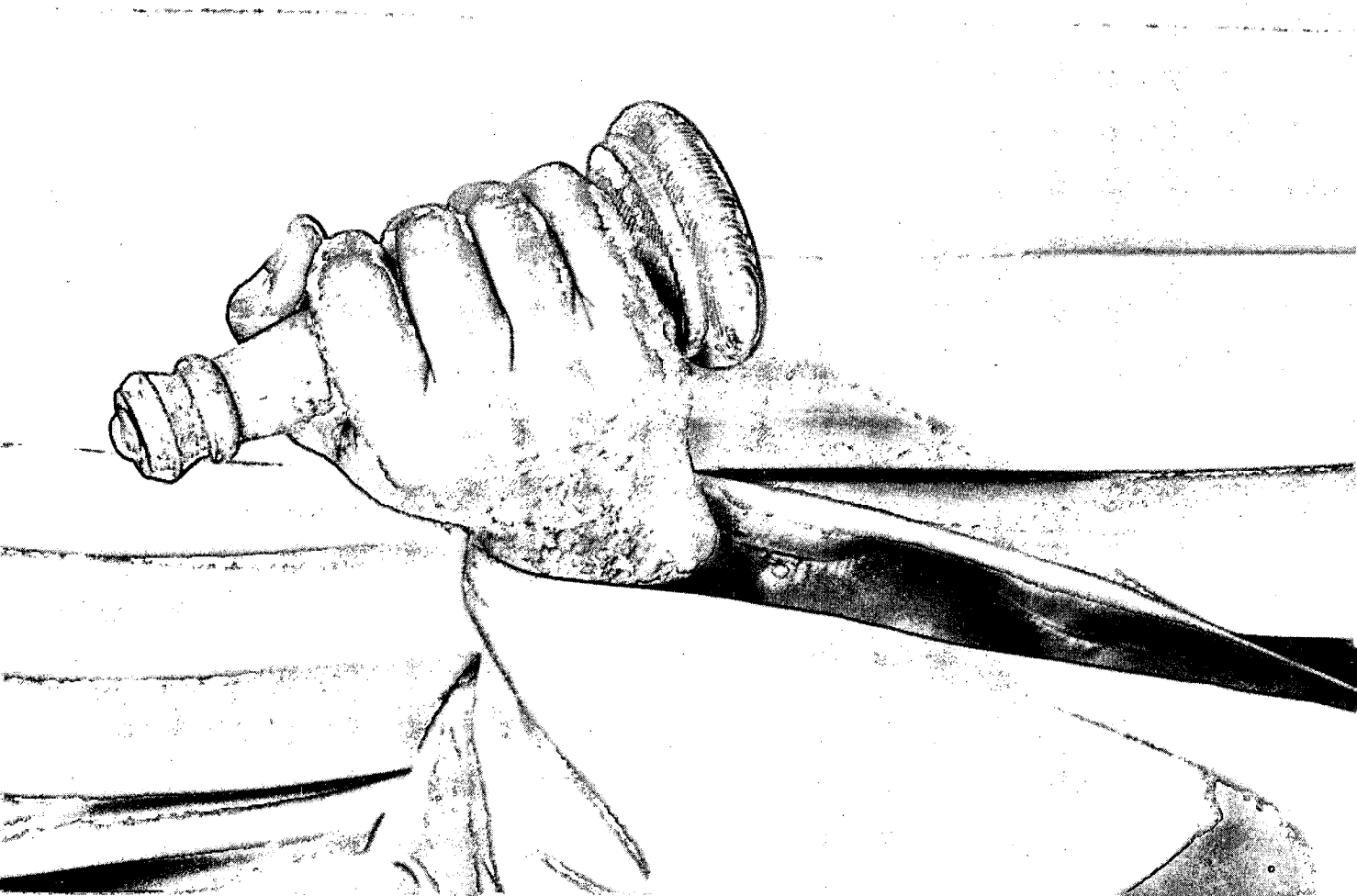
"Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

Why have many been defeated in their Christian warfare?

"They had struggled to refrain from sin, but had trusted in their own strength. We should go to Jesus just as we are, confess our sins, and cast our helpless souls upon our compassionate Redeemer. This subdues the pride of the heart, and is a crucifixion of self."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889.

THINK IT THROUGH**What is the secret of success in the Christian warfare?****FURTHER STUDY**

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Beatitudes" (Matt. 5:4, 6), pp. 9, 18.



The Sealing

“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Rev. 7:3).

Both the Bible and the spirit of prophecy speak about the sealing of the children of God. What is the sealing? It is a spiritual process of sanctification, invisible to the human eyes. It is a personal as well as a cooperative work. The sealing begins the day of an individual's conversion and ends at the close of his probation. This could be at his death or at the end of the investigative judgment.

This work of sealing is done by God, by the Holy Spirit, and by the angels. It consists of writing the principles of the divine law—including the fourth commandment—on the tables of flesh in the heart. In other words, the effect of the sealing will be the transformation of the individual life so that it represents the perfect character of Christ.

The process of sealing is going on right now and will end at the beginning of the time of trouble, that is to say, at the end of probationary time for the human race.

The sealing achieves at least four important objectives:

1. It establishes in the life of the saints the great principles of the perfect law of God so that they will not be broken after the close of probation.

2. Amidst apostasy and fierce persecution it causes those who receive it to be absolutely faithful in Sabbath observance as a testimony of their loyalty to God.

3. It prepares the faithful to go through the time of trouble—a time without a mediator—without falling into sin, and thus remaining unharmed.

4. It preserves the faithful from the plagues and from final destruction.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **“Till we have sealed”**
(Rev. 7:1-4)
2. **What the Seal Is**
(Rom. 4:11)
3. **The Time of Sealing**
(2 Cor. 1:21, 22)
4. **Sanctification and Preparation**
(Eph. 4:30)
5. **Conditions for the Sealing**
(Rev. 7:4)
6. **Fulfilling the Conditions**
(Eph. 1:13)

Part 1
"TILL WE HAVE
SEALED"

How does the Bible describe the sealing? Rev. 7:1-14.

"I was pointed down to the time when the third angel's message was closing. . . .

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, 'It is done.'"—*Early Writings*, p. 279.

Just as in the time of Ezekiel (chapter 9:2-6) a man with a writer's inkhorn was commanded to set a mark on the foreheads of those who "sigh and cry" for the abominations of Jerusalem, so also before the beginning of the time of trouble and the pouring out of the last plagues, an angel seals with the seal of the living God those who have attained the character of the 144,000. This is done in order to preserve them from the general destruction during the "day of the Lord."

What similar marking is carried on by a different power? Rev. 13:16, 17.

"While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

"The Lord is doing His work. All heaven is astir. The Judge of all the earth is soon to arise and vindicate His insulted authority. The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God's commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 451, 452.

In other words, the sealing of the people of God is going on right now, and the seal of the living God is being placed on the foreheads of those who are prepared. When this work is finished, the four angels who hold the four winds will turn them loose, and the seven last plagues will begin to be poured out on the wicked.

What is Satan trying to do?

"Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth and to cause them to waver."—*Early Writings*, p. 43.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the essential difference between the seal of God and the mark of the beast?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 207-209.

Part 2
WHAT THE
SEAL IS

What served as a seal of righteousness for Abraham?

"He [Abraham] received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith" (Rom. 4:11, RSV).

In Old Testament times circumcision was an outward sign of the covenant relationship which God had with Abraham and his descendants. When the children of Israel broke that relationship, then circumcision ceased to be a meaningful rite and became merely a surgical operation (Rom. 2:28, 29). For the Christian, circumcision has no religious value (Gal. 5:6). It is his faith in Jesus, working through love, that is vital.

What are the visible signs of the Christian? John 13:35; 14:15; 15:10, 12.

When the Christian keeps the commandments of God, he accepts the sovereignty of God. When he keeps the fourth commandment, he accepts God as Creator of heaven and earth.

In these days of skepticism regarding the Bible, and general acceptance of the theory of evolution, it is a distinctive mark for a group of Christians to believe in the Genesis story of Creation and to keep the seventh-day Sabbath as its memorial.

Of what is the Sabbath a sign besides that of Creation? Eze. 20:11, 12.

About the seal as an external mark, Ellen White wrote:

"The fourth commandment is the only one of all the ten in which are found both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It is the only one that shows by whose authority the law is given. Thus it contains the seal of God, affixed to His law as evidence of its authenticity and binding force."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

"The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. 'The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' Exodus 31:12, 13. Here the Sabbath is clearly designated as a sign between God and His people."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 117.

A seal is a mark of ownership, a symbol of allegiance, a sign of quality. Can you see how the keeping of the Sabbath fits in with these meanings?

THINK IT THROUGH

How can my keeping the Sabbath be a sign of my allegiance to God?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1161.

Part 3
THE TIME
OF SEALING

How does Paul refer to the sealing work God wants to do in our hearts?

But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Cor. 1:21, 22, RSV).

By establishing us in the faith and giving us a work to do, God has placed His seal of approval on us; and the fact that we have the Holy Spirit operating in our lives is a guarantee that this is the case.

What is God's last message to a dying world? Rev. 14:6-12.

The first angel carries an everlasting gospel to every habitable part of the world. He calls upon everyone to worship the Creator, since a time of judgment has come.

The second angel warns against heresy and false doctrine.

The third angel proclaims doom upon those who worship the beast and its image instead of worshipping the true God.

Thus in the last days there will be two classes on the earth: 1. those who honor God and keep His commandments; and 2. those who give their allegiance to another power and receive its special mark.

The keeping of the Sabbath in the end of time will take on special significance as indicating a loyalty to God, as opposed to rendering allegiance to an earthly power.

When does a special sealing take place? Rev. 7:2, 3.

The context of these verses indicates that the people of God are sealed just before the time of trouble. Four angels hold back the winds of strife till the sealing work is done, because those who are sealed will not be affected by the destruction that takes place when the winds are loosed. Immediately after this the saints are seen in heaven. vv. 9-17.

"The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure."—*Early Writings*, p. 58.

"When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon His people."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 213.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is the keeping of the Sabbath important these days?

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, p. 58.

Part 4
SANCTIFICATION
AND PREPARATION

What is the agency God uses to seal us?

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

It is God Himself, as the Holy Spirit, who does the work of sealing human hearts for eternity.

The context of this verse indicates that the Christian is to shun sin. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. He cannot condone it; so He cannot place His seal on one who indulges in it. See verse 32 for the marks of a true Christian.

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1161.

When God holds His own, how safe are they? John 10:27-29.

Jesus makes it very clear that if we hear His voice and follow Him we can be safe from any adversary.

The sealing is a spiritual preparation for the latter rain and the loud cry. By it believers will be enabled to stand unmoved during the time of trouble.

When will the opportunity to receive the seal of God be gone forever? Rev. 15:5-8.

“Jesus is in His holy temple and will now accept our sacrifices, our prayers, and our confessions of faults and sins and will pardon all the transgressions of Israel, that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still.”—*Early Writings*, p. 48.

THINK IT THROUGH

In view of the importance of the sealing work, how should the Christian react?

“This [the sealing in Rev. 7:1-3] points out the work we now have to do, which is to cry to God for the angels to hold the four winds until missionaries shall be sent to all parts of the world, and shall have proclaimed the warning against disobeying the law of Jehovah.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 11, 1888.

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pp. 279-282.

Part 5
CONDITIONS
FOR THE
SEALING

Who are the ones who are sealed?

“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Rev. 7:4).

Many have been concerned about the number that are sealed—is it a literal or a symbolic number? On the whole it seems more reasonable to suppose that the 144,000 are not literal Jews but figurative Israelites, that is, spiritual Israel who compose the Christian church.

Here are some words of wisdom:

“It is not His [God’s] will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 174.

“Let no man attempt to number Israel today, but let everyone have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 189.

“Let us strive [by looking to Jesus] with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.”—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970.

What are the spiritual traits of the saved? Rev. 15:2-4.

The song of Moses is a song of deliverance. (See Ex. 15:1-21.) The song of the Lamb is a song of praise and adoration to the One who has so marvelously delivered His people. (See Rev. 15:3, 4.) The saints have gained the victory over every earthly power or movement that has presumed to take the place of God. They have not been deceived, but have remained true to God through every trial and affliction. Thus they are now safe on the sea of glass.

“Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 213, 214.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I make sure that I shall be among the sealed?

“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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 216.

**Part 6
FULFILLING
THE CONDITIONS**

Aside from the Holy Spirit, who else is a vital party in the process of the sealing?

“In whom [Christ] also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13).

The context of this verse tells us that we hear the word of God, and then we believe it. When we believe it, we are “marked with a seal” (NIV). This seal is the gift of the Holy Spirit. It becomes a guarantee of redemption, which will find its final fulfillment at the second coming of Christ. (See Rom. 8:23.)

How only can we be saved? Eph. 2:5-10.

When we were dead in trespasses and sins, God took the initiative and saved us because of His inexpressible love. We accept this love and provision and trust in Him, and God completes His work in us. It is wholly God's work (2 Cor. 5:18) and a free gift from Him (Rom. 6:23). Thus there is no room for boasting on our part, because we have only to accept what God has done and can and will do for us.

This grace does not mean that we can keep on sinning and be saved (Rom. 6:1-4). On the contrary, when a person is saved, his connection with Christ means that he lives a new life (2 Cor. 5:17) because his desires have changed. Jesus came to save us from our sins, and He makes us a people “zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:13, 14, RSV).

What promises do we have that as we are vitally united with Christ every day and at every moment, surrendering to Him and depending on Him by faith, the victory is guaranteed? 1 Cor. 15:57; Jude 24; Rom. 8:2.

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God. Those who are planning sin and acting it will be passed by. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great antitypical day of atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God's protection.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I be sure that I am daily in Christ?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 210-216.



The Holy Spirit

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John 14:16).

The Holy Spirit plays such an important role in the plan of salvation and is so vitally related to our preparation for the final crisis and the finishing of God’s work in this earth that He merits a careful consideration in this series of lessons.

On the other hand, the Spirit’s real nature and function have been wrongly interpreted by many. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, to clarify our concepts about Him, His essence, His power, His relationship to God, to Christ, and to the Word of God—as well as His relationship to us and the tremendous task He will perform in this last stage of human history.

The outstanding importance of the work of the Holy Spirit is reflected in these words of the servant of the Lord: “This promised blessing [the reception of the Holy Spirit], claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 285. It is like a great package of spiritual goods that wraps up all the wonderful blessings of heaven. And the beautiful thing about Him is that Christ has promised to send Him to guide us, to strengthen us, to be present with us, to transform us and make us victorious over sin, and to empower us for the finishing of the gospel proclamation.

Nevertheless, unless we understand His nature and mission in our life and in the church, and unless we prepare

our hearts for His abiding presence, we cannot receive the benefits that come from His company and power. Our life will lack the quality and the depth which the times in which we live require of us.

Naturally, our inquiry about the Holy Spirit will not be a complete theological discussion of the matter, but rather a personal and experimental knowledge of what God can and will do in our life through His work.

In this lesson—the first of four consecutive ones devoted to this supreme subject—we shall study the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Godhead. We shall demonstrate that He is a person, that He is the representative of God and of Christ. Then we shall review His many beneficial functions in our life.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Godhead: A Perfect Unity**
(Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)
- 2. A Person**
(Eph. 4:30)
- 3. A Representative**
(John 16:7)
- 4. Functions—1**
(John 16:8)
- 5. Functions—2**
(Rom. 8:26, 27)
- 6. Presence in the Life**
(1 Cor. 3:16, 17)

Part 1
THE GODHEAD:
A PERFECT
UNITY

What passages of Scripture, among others, refer to the Trinity?

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19).

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14).

The word “trinity” is not found in the Bible; but scripture texts that refer to God show very clearly that, although there is one God (1 Tim. 2:5), the Godhead embraces three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In Hebrew, the word for God is *Elohim* (gods). In the account of Creation, the Bible also uses the plural pronoun “us” in referring to God. It is interesting to note that the plural noun *Elohim* is often used with a singular verb. This suggests that God is both a plurality and a unity.

Each member of the Trinity has in Himself the divine attributes: He is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and holy. Each one of the three is fully God and not a part. Each one is an integral unit of the whole. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God. All three are absolutely one in Their thinking and planning, one in Their love and essence. All three have part in our creation and redemption.

What is the most striking demonstration of the absolute unity and also the distinction between the three persons of the Godhead? Matt. 3:16, 17.

The subject of the Trinity is impossible for us to understand. In fact, it will be impossible ever to grasp it with our reasoning powers (1 Tim. 3:16), because our minds are finite and God is infinite. Just as it is impossible to put all the water of the oceans in one single glass, so it is impossible to put the infinite mind and logic of God into our finite minds. “No human mind can comprehend God. Let not finite man attempt to interpret Him. Let none indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 279.

Nevertheless, we should be grateful that such a majestic God has loved us so much that He decided to come to this obscure and sinful world in order to live as we do, to toil, to suffer as a human being, and finally to die that He might redeem us for eternity.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does man know God with the mind and the heart?

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pp. 613-615.

Part 2
A PERSON

What text of Scripture reveals that the Holy Spirit is a person?

“Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

There is a tendency to think of the Holy Spirit in terms of an “influence,” or a “power,” making Him to be something impersonal. The Scriptures teach that the Spirit is a person. The expression, “grieve not,” cannot be applied to anything other than a person.

Other passages point to the Holy Spirit as a person:

1. He speaks (1 Tim. 4:1).
2. He teaches (John 14:26).
3. He reproves (John 16:8).
4. He makes intercession (Rom. 8:26).
5. Man could lie to Him (Acts 5:3).
6. He loves (Rom. 15:30).
7. Man may have communion with Him (2 Cor. 13:14).
8. He may be insulted, tempted, sinned against (Heb. 10:29; Acts 5:9; Matt. 12:31, 32).

Ellen White refers thus to the Holy Spirit:

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds. . . . (From a talk to the students at the Avondale School.)

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. . . .

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’. . .

“The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit”—*Evangelism*, pp. 616, 617.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it important to recognize that the Holy Spirit is a person?

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pp. 616, 617.

Part 3
A REPRESENTATIVE

What did Christ tell His disciples before leaving them?

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7).

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

What was the advantage to the disciples that Christ would depart to heaven and send His Holy Spirit?

"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 Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

What other benefit would the children of God receive from the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension?

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7. 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."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 75.

In this way we can put into practice the counsel of Christ: "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5). The only way for Christ to abide in us is through the Holy Spirit. The only way we can abide in Him is by accepting His promise through faith, studying His word, and living a life of prayer.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it important for the Christian to have the Holy Spirit in his life?

"Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 47-50.

Part 4
FUNCTIONS—1

What is the prime function of the Holy Spirit in the world?

“When he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

Of sin The first work of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin, thus producing real repentance. If it were not for His silent and effective promptings, no heart would be reproved of sin. On the Day of Pentecost a great multitude was convicted and exclaimed: “Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:37, 38).

Of righteousness. The Spirit convicts of righteousness, that is, He invites man to accept the imputed and the imparted righteousness of Christ. He shows that Jesus was righteous and His cause was vindicated (John 16:10).

Of judgment. The Holy Spirit warns man of a judgment to come, and awakens in his mind the desire to yield his life to Christ. In fact, Satan has already been judged at the cross, and the sinner can expect only condemnation (v. 11).

Describe another function of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26; 16:13.

Another very important work of the Spirit is to lead the mind in the study of the Word of God, guiding the student into all truth. It is amazing to see the Spirit in action while we study the Word. He prevents us from falling into errors and opens up new understandings of truth. Further, He speaks to our hearts, pointing out our spiritual needs, showing us new areas of truth, and enlarging our spiritual vision.

Through the leadership and the work of the Spirit of God our forefathers discovered and treasured truth after truth. Naturally they had a humble and teachable spirit, and they combined the hard study and thinking with fervent prayer.

Discover another and related mission of the Spirit. See John 14:26 and Mark 13:11.

It is really encouraging to see how, in moments of necessity or emergency, the Holy Spirit has illuminated the minds of the children of God, reminding them of things already studied. In these last days, when many of us may be called to give an explanation or a testimony of our faith before rulers and courts of justice, these verses present a comforting promise and a wonderful assurance.

THINK IT THROUGH

What ought I to be doing now if the Spirit is going to recall to my mind important truths in an emergency?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 355, 670.

Part 5
FUNCTIONS—2

How does the Holy Spirit help us in our prayer life?

“In the same way the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness. We do not even know how we ought to pray, but through our inarticulate groans the Spirit himself is pleading for us, and God who searches our inmost being knows what the Spirit means, because he pleads for God’s people in God’s own way” (Rom. 8:26, 27, NEB).

With our limited knowledge and human weaknesses, with our ignorance in regard to the future, we are not able to pray for the right things in the right way. But the Spirit, who prompts us to pray, also shows us our spiritual needs and indicates what we should pray for. Also He interprets our petitions before the Father and makes them meaningful. So when we pray with complete submission to God, the Spirit perfects that prayer and intercedes on our behalf. God may not answer our prayers by giving us precisely what we ask for, since that may not be to our benefit. But He will answer the perfected and interpreted prayer of the Comforter, who knows our needs and knows also the will of God.

The Three Persons of the Godhead are actively helping us in every sincere prayer. We pray in the name of the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit adds His intercession.

What is another function of the Holy Spirit in the Christian experience? Rom. 8:16.

He gives us the assurance and bears witness that we are children of God. What a beautiful and comforting certainty!

Another mission of the Spirit is very important. What is it? Gal. 5:22, 23; John 3:5.

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

What is another mission of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

What has been the most important function of the Holy Spirit in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “Like Unto Leaven,” pp. 96, 97.

Part 6
PRESENCE
IN THE LIFE

Where does the Holy Spirit like to dwell?

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

God wants to abide in us through His Holy Spirit. He wants to make each of us a temple in which His Spirit may abide. He knocks at the door of our hearts. He longs to come in, to be with us permanently, blessing us with His wonderful presence.

The only way in which we can avail ourselves of the blessed and multiple ministry of the Holy Spirit is by receiving Him in our lives every day by faith through prayer and the study of the Word.

How willing is God to bestow the Holy Spirit on His children? On what condition? Luke 11:13; Rev. 3:20.

The only condition is that of asking and receiving. God will not force His way into the heart. He stands outside and knocks, and only if we open the door will He come in and sup with us.

"This promised blessing [the Holy Spirit], claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

Before Jesus ascended, how did He empower the disciples? John 20:22, 23.

Jesus not only promised the Holy Spirit (John 16:7) but He breathed the Holy Spirit upon them. The Christian is not only one who follows Christ, but he is one who has the Holy Spirit directing and controlling in his life.

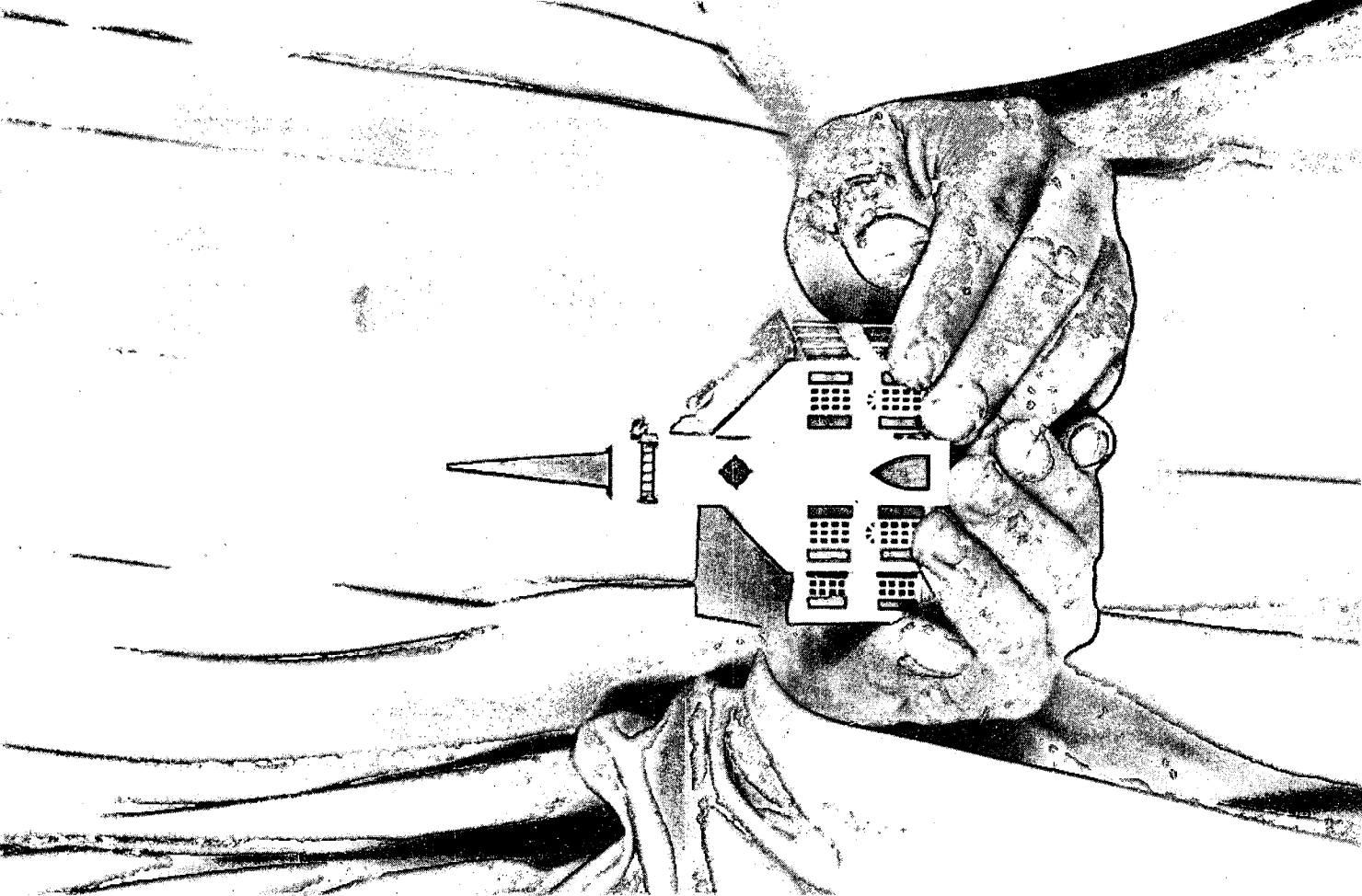
THINK IT THROUGH

When and how does the Holy Spirit come into the life?

"There are many who profess to believe and claim the Lord's promises; they talk about Christ and the Holy Spirit; yet they receive no benefit, because they do not surrender their souls to the guidance and control of divine agencies."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 284, 285.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, p. viii.



The Work of the Holy Spirit

“Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him [Saul] said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 9:17).

As soon as Saul surrendered to the power of Jesus and wanted to be His disciple, Ananias was sent to him with the instruction to pray for the new disciple to be filled with the Holy Spirit. “The Lord . . . hath sent me, that thou mightest . . . be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

The plan of God is that every disciple should receive the fullness of the Spirit, reaching that mature stage where it may be said that he or she is filled with the Spirit.

In this lesson we plan to review the different stages in the work of the Spirit and in our relationship with Him. We shall study what the Spirit of God does on our behalf in each one of those aspects of His work.

Speaking about Christ, John says: “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John 3:34). Christ, as the Second Person of the Godhead, and being Himself God, did not need the

Holy Spirit. But, in order to give us an example as a human being, He was filled with the Spirit. This was visibly evident at His baptism. Just as God did not give His Spirit “by measure,” that is to say, sparingly, to the Son of man, so He does not give the Spirit sparingly to His children.

It is the privilege of every one of us to make room for the Holy Spirit to operate in his or her life. In this lesson we shall seek to make clear how this takes place.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Convicting Power**
(John 16:8)
2. **Indwelling Power**
(John 14:16, 17)
3. **Enabling Power**
(Acts 1:5)
4. **The Latter Rain**
(Joel 2:28, 29)
5. **Receiving the Spirit**
(Luke 11:13)
6. **A Daily Experience**
(Gal. 3:14)

Part 1
CONVICTING
POWER

What three tasks of the Holy Spirit did Jesus point out?

“When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

The Holy Spirit has a threefold task. First of all He convicts man of his sin. The sense of guilt is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. But He doesn't stop there. He goes on to show how a man can be right with God. This is possible only through Christ. And then He points out that the one who refuses to accept God's plan of salvation has to face a judgment. But the first step is a crucial one, for each of us must recognize that he is a sinner before he desires to accept the Saviour.

What happened to those who heard Peter's sermon at Pentecost? Acts 2:37.

Peter minced no words in telling the audience that they had crucified the One whom God had made Lord and Christ (v. 36). He was speaking with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and immediately they cried out: “What shall we do?”

“The arguments of the apostles alone, though clear and convincing, would not have removed the prejudice that had withstood so much evidence. But the Holy Spirit sent the arguments home to hearts with divine power. The words of the apostles were as sharp arrows of the Almighty, convicting men of their terrible guilt in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 45.

“When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 40.

Why is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit so important?

“If the sinner responds to the quickening influence of the Spirit, he will be brought to repentance and aroused to the importance of obeying the divine requirements. . . . The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. . . . Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 52, 53.

THINK IT THROUGH

What happens to a person who refuses to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 51-53.

Part 2
INDWELLING
POWER

What provision has Jesus made that He would be with His disciples after His ascension?

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; . . . he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

"In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. . . . 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."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

What are some of the advantages of having the Holy Spirit in the life? John 3:3; Gal. 5:22, 23; John 16:13.

The advantages may be summarized as follows:

1. We are born again and can see the kingdom of God. John 3:3.
2. We produce the peaceable fruit of the Spirit. John 15:4, 5; Gal. 5:22, 23.
3. We are guided into all truth. John 16:13.
4. Our prayers are made effective. Rom. 8:26.
5. We have companionship and advice so that we are never lonely or frustrated. John 14:16-18. (See NIV.)

"At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 669, 670.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I make sure that the Holy Spirit remains in my heart?

"The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 302.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pp. 419-421.

Part 3
ENABLING
POWER

What kind of baptism did Jesus promise His disciples?

“John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).

“Christ’s visible presence was about to be withdrawn from the disciples, but a new endowment of power was to be theirs. The Holy Spirit was to be given them in its fullness, sealing them for their work.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 30.

For what purpose did Christ promise to send His Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8.

The gift of the Holy Spirit was to enable the children of God to witness effectively for their Master.

“The work committed to the disciples would require great efficiency; for the tide of evil ran deep and strong against them. A vigilant, determined leader was in command of the forces of darkness, and the followers of Christ could battle for the right only through the help that God, by His Spirit, would give them.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31.

Sometimes the Spirit will confer upon some people special gifts or talents like the ones mentioned in First Corinthians 12. The important thing is that, with miraculous gifts or without them, every child of God needs to bear witness to Jesus by his life and his spoken testimony.

How did the Holy Spirit endow the early disciples for witnessing? Acts 2:4-11.

In order to witness quickly to the whole world with its many languages, the disciples had to have the gift of tongues.

“The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 39, 40.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do you think God uses men rather than angels in proclaiming the gospel?

“The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 80.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 110; *Steps to Christ*, “The Work and the Life,” pp. 77-83.

Part 4
THE LATTER RAIN

Upon whom does God say He will pour out His Holy Spirit in the last days?

"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" (Joel 2:28, 29).

Read also Acts 2:16-21.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is illustrated in the Bible as the early and the latter rain. (See Zech. 10:1; Joel 2:23.)

"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. . . .

"But near the close of the earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

How only can the gospel be taken to all the world in these last days? Zech. 4:6.

What encouraging assurance are we given that the whole world will be evangelized, and how? Rev. 18:1, 4.

"It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the Day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. . . . Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.

"God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's Word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth."—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1055.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I be sure that I can be used of God in witnessing?

"Those only who are constantly receiving fresh supplies of grace, will have power proportionate to their daily need and their ability to use that power."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 611, 612.

**Part 5
RECEIVING
THE SPIRIT**

How willing is God to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him” (Luke 11:13).

God does not withhold the gift of the Holy Spirit from a person. But we are slow to ask for the gift, slow to recognize our need of Him, slow to appropriate the gift in order to live the victorious life.

To how many is the Spirit of God promised? Acts 2:39.

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

Thus the Spirit of God instructed Moses and the children of Israel (Neh. 9:20). Caleb and Joshua were men of the Spirit, undaunted by the heathen and their cities in Canaan (Num. 14:24; 27:18). The true church in the Middle Ages in Europe, during the Reformation, and in our own day is led by men of the Spirit. Men and women down through the centuries have decided between truth and falsehood; and when they have placed themselves on the side of God, God has been with them through the Holy Spirit.

Are there any conditions for receiving the Holy Spirit? Acts 5:32.

We must obey Him. He wants to use us, to lead our lives, to encourage us to do good things, and to eliminate bad habits and feelings. The Spirit remains in our lives only as we obey Him. If we disregard His promptings and His biddings, we grieve Him (Eph. 4:30), and He withdraws from us.

“As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise [of the Spirit], they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning. Truths which had passed from their memory were again brought to their minds, and these they repeated to one another.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 36.

The more we pray for the Spirit and yield our lives to God, the more the Spirit is able to perfect our characters.

THINK IT THROUGH

How have some people tried to use the Holy Spirit? Read Acts 8:15-24.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 56, 57.

Part 6
A DAILY
EXPERIENCE

What is an essential condition of receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit?

"That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14).

As in the case of other spiritual blessings, faith is an indispensable requisite of receiving the Spirit. Many times, depressed by the feeling of our own sinfulness and unworthiness, we do not dare to ask for the Spirit with fervor and enthusiasm. Or if we pray for this gift, we do so as a formal thing, without faith in the fulfillment of the promise.

The secret of receiving is believing. This is true of forgiveness of sin, acceptance by Christ, reception of the Holy Spirit. "Therefore I say unto you," said Jesus, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). When faith lays hold of the promise of God, the Lord supplies the fact. But the promise should be claimed by faith. God does not grant any spiritual good according to our goodness or to our own merits, because we have none. He gives us what we need according to His mercy, in the name of His Son, because He loves us and honors our faith.

"At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word. . . .

"The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out. . . .

"So it may be now. Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 20, 21.

How important is the power of Christ to the believer? John 15:5.

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

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is faith so important to the reception of the Holy Spirit?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents," pp. 327, 328.



The Early and the Latter Rains

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

This verse had a historic immediate application. God promised to restore the normal rainfall for the different seasons, since this regularity of the rain was the basis for good crops and abundance of food. The early or former rain used to come in the autumn of the northern hemisphere, and it was very appropriate to produce the germination, because it was the sowing time. The latter rain usually came in spring to ripen the grain and to bring the crop to maturity.

But this promise was preserved because of its important spiritual and prophetic application. “The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506.

This promise applies not only to the individual life of the Christian, but also to the history of the church at large. The Hebrew word translated “rain” means also a violent shower, or a real downpour. This suggests that rain can be torrential as well as gentle!

Applied to the church in general, the early rain represents the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and during the rest of the apostolic era, while the latter rain refers to the powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit that is going to usher in the last stages of the history of the church that will see the finishing of God’s work in the earth.

In this lesson we shall consider the former and the latter rains as individual spiritual experiences as well as phases in the history of the church.

We shall study some of the wonderful promises God has given concerning the outpouring of His Holy Spirit on the church and His purpose in doing so. We are also going to consider the importance of this power, the willingness of God to bestow this gift, and the reasons why this gift has not yet been fully received.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Historic Early Rain**
(Acts 2:1-4)
2. **Promises of the Latter Rain**
(Joel 2:23)
3. **Purpose of the Latter Rain**
(Rev. 18:1, 4)
4. **Importance of the Latter Rain**
(Zech. 10:1)
5. **Reason for Delay**
(2 Chron. 7:14)
6. **Early and Latter Rain Experience**
(Mark 4:28)

Part 1
THE HISTORIC
EARLY RAIN

Describe what happened on the Day of Pentecost.

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

Peter asserts that this experience was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (v. 16). Whereas in Old Testament times people were dependent on their leaders for spiritual guidance, in the New Testament times people would have direct access to a knowledge of the truth through the Holy Spirit.

The figure of pouring out the Spirit is a striking one. It is taken from the climatic conditions of Palestine where vegetation is dependent on the early and the latter rains. These rains could be torrents at times. The early rain came in October and November, at the sowing time, and the latter rain came in March and April when the grain was ready to fill out.

It is also remarkable how quickly vegetation grows out of parched ground when some rain falls. Isaiah refers to the pouring out of the Spirit upon people, and compares the result to the marvel of seeing the wilderness become a fruitful field. God is saying that His people are as good as dead unless they receive His Spirit. When they receive the Holy Spirit, then their lives can blossom as the rose.

What were some of the amazing results of Pentecost? Acts 2:41-43, 46, 47.

“Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit’s teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 45.

“The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 48.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is it that causes a man to thirst for the Holy Spirit?

Part 2
PROMISES OF
THE LATTER
RAIN

In what words did the prophet Joel convey God's promise of the latter rain?

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

God had promised Israel that if they were faithful to Him He would give them rain at the proper time. (See Deut. 28:12.) But if Israel were unfaithful to Him and did not recognize that He was the source of all blessings, He would then send a drought, as in the days of Elijah. (See 1 Kings 17:1.) Then the people would recognize that God alone was the source of the blessing of rain. (See Jer. 14:22.)

What assurance is there from the early rain that there will be a latter rain? Hosea 6:3.

God may have to delay His promises when His people are not ready, but His purposes "know no haste and no delay"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 32. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son," and when the time comes for the latter rain to be poured out, its effect will be clearly manifest.

What are some of the signs that indicate the time when the latter rain will be due? Joel 2:30, 31.

Just as the early church could not have grown without the experience at Pentecost, so the work of God cannot be finished in the last days without a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

"These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 121.

What will be some of the results of the latter rain?

"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. . . . Signs and wonders will follow the believers."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

THINK IT THROUGH

What should the remnant church be doing to prepare for the latter rain?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Pearl," pp. 119-121.

Part 3
PURPOSE OF
THE LATTER RAIN

In what prophetic terms is the latter rain and its glorious results described?

"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with his glory.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her [fallen Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:1, 4).

The angel of Revelation 18 who lights the whole world with the glory of God does not represent a new message, additional to the three of Revelation 14, but a new power added to the proclamation of the three messages; namely, the power of the Holy Spirit through the pouring out of the latter rain.

What are the two main purposes of the latter rain?

1. *To finish the work of God on earth.*

2. *To prepare the saints for the time of trouble.*

"At that time the 'latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out."—*Early Writings*, p. 86.

"It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

What will be one of the main means God will use to lighten the whole earth under the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

"In a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 140.

"God will soon do great things for us, if we lie humble and believing at His feet. . . . More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications."—*Evangelism*, p. 693.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some of the means that God has provided for spiritual growth and commitment?

"Unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 40.

Part 4
IMPORTANCE OF
THE LATTER RAIN

How does the prophet encourage us to plead with God for the reception of the latter rain?

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

If it were not of vital importance for the individual Christian and for the church at large to receive the latter rain, we would not find this emphatic encouragement.

Just as the rain softens the ground and prepares it for plowing so that the seed can be sown, so the Holy Spirit prepares the ground of our hearts for the seed of the Word. And just as the latter rain enables the crop to develop so that there will be a rich harvest, so the Holy Spirit causes the individual to bring forth fruit in his life and ministry that will mean the finishing of God's work on the earth.

“This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 285.

How earnestly should we pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Joel 2:12, 13.

The rending of the garment was a Semitic custom indicating concern. (See Jer. 36:24.) Joel is saying that we should not be concerned in a superficial or external sense, but in a real sense, with our hearts torn because of the situation we find ourselves in.

“It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 419.

“The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it.”—*Evangelism*, p. 701.

“At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 20.

“I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 192.

THINK IT THROUGH

What evidences are there that God is at work in the world today?

FURTHER STUDY

Christian Service, pp. 250-256.

**Part 5
REASON FOR
DELAY**

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

Many of God’s promises are conditional on obedience. When God’s people obey Him with all their hearts, there is no doubt about the blessings that will be bestowed.

At all times God has been anxious to bestow upon His children His choicest blessings, including the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the people of God have not been ready to receive the heavenly gifts.

God never intrudes into the human heart. He never violates the will. In order for Him to come down from heaven and bless us, either individually or collectively, we must feel our need of Him, and we must be ready. By His grace we must empty ourselves of all the sinful practices that prevent us from receiving His presence and His Spirit. We must open the door and fulfill certain conditions.

What practical request does the Lord make of us? Prov. 23:26.

The heart represents our inner being. It determines where we go and what we do. (See Prov. 4:23.) It is safe only when we place it in the hands of God. (See Prov. 3:5.) Can it be that we fail to enjoy the full blessings of God because we have not surrendered our hearts fully to Him?

What warning does the wise man give us? Prov. 14:12.

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

“The Spirit works upon man’s heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 411.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to hasten and make possible the outpouring of the latter rain, both in the church and in my own personal experience?

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pp. 701, 702.

Part 6
EARLY AND
LATTER RAIN
EXPERIENCE

How did Jesus emphasize the concept of a growing Christian experience?

“The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4:28).

Jesus pointed out that spiritual growth is very much like the growth of plants in nature; there are various stages of development; there is a logical sequence. Theologians tend to make Bible truths difficult to comprehend, but the fact is that there is a simplicity about Christian growth that even a child can grasp.

There is the seed planted in the ground—the word of God in the heart. The seed dies, but a new plant springs up—the old man dies, but the Christian rises to walk in newness of life. There are roots that must go deep for stable nourishment and a stem that must be sheltered at first, but later will be able to stand up to the winds of strife. There will be need for the water of life; and then the fruit will appear in its season, fruit that will bring joy and nourishment to others. Throughout the existence, from germination to harvest, the power of God has been at work; so the tree or plant cannot claim any glory to itself.

“It is God’s rain and air and sunshine” that cause the plants to grow. “It is God who is every day feeding millions from earth’s harvest fields. Men are called upon to co-operate with God in the care of the grain and the preparation of the loaf, and because of this they lose sight of the divine agency. They do not give God the glory due unto His holy name.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 367, 368.

Why is the experience of the early and latter rain needed?

“Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, ‘Watch unto prayer,’ ‘Watch, . . . and pray always.’ A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. 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.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 508.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is God the sole source of spiritual life and growth?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 181-184.



"The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by repentance." Education, p. 111.

Conditions for Receiving the Latter Rain

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

As in the days of Peter, today the spiritual refreshing of the Holy Spirit depends upon the preparation of the people of God. “Repent ye therefore,” said Peter, “and be converted.” And when this full conversion takes place, the Lord will not withhold anymore the fulfillment of His promise of showering upon us the power of His Spirit in the latter rain.

The latter rain is indispensable for the finishing of God’s work. It would be well for us to read again what was written about the relationship between the loud cry and the righteousness of Christ, and how our people delayed unnecessarily the coming of Jesus by not receiving that message more promptly in 1888.

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 363. This was published in the *Review and Herald* on November 22, 1892.

And the servant of the Lord has this

comment on what happened in 1888:

“An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message. . . . By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 234, 235.

Let us not repeat that mistake today. Let us prepare our lives for the reception of the great power of heaven, and let us rise together to proclaim the glorious message of the righteousness of Christ.

In this lesson we shall study the necessary preparation.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Insistent in Prayer**
(Luke 11:13)
2. **Repentance and Conversion**
(Acts 3:19)
3. **Obedience**
(Acts 5:32)
4. **Willingness to Witness**
(Acts 1:8)
5. **Unity**
(Acts 2:1)
6. **Reception and Belief**
(Acts 2:41; 4:4)

Part 1
INSISTENT
IN PRAYER

How only can we expect to receive the latter rain?

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

If we ask fervently for something, it is because we appreciate it, we feel our need of it, and we are ready to receive it.

What does Jesus encourage every Christian to do? Matt. 7:7.

Why is it blessed to hunger and thirst after righteousness? Matt. 5:6.

"If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plentitude.

"Since this [the Holy Spirit] is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it?"—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.

"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."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 509.

"The Holy Spirit will come to all who are begging for the bread of life to give to their neighbors."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 90.

THINK IT THROUGH

Where does one have to go to satisfy his hunger and thirst for righteousness? How does he get filled?

"The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 508.

FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Workers, pp. 288, 289.

**Part 2
REPENTANCE
AND CONVERSION**

How did the apostle Peter express a condition of receiving the Holy Spirit?

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, RSV).

Peter points out that repentance and conversion will bring forgiveness of sins and times of refreshing. God sends rest to the weary, peace to the troubled, a surge of new life to those who are exhausted, whenever they recognize their sinfulness and turn to Him for forgiveness. There is no peace like the peace which Jesus gives. (See John 14:27.)

How important is conversion to the Christian? Matt. 18:3.

“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. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. . . . But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. 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.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507.

“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.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 54.

THINK IT THROUGH

What happens when a person is converted?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 54-56.

Part 3 **What does Peter say is a condition of receiving the Holy Spirit into the life?**
OBEDIENCE

“We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

The context of this verse indicates that Peter was telling the Jewish leaders that they were a disobedient group, and so the Holy Spirit was not with them. No wonder they were “cut to the heart” (v. 33)!

Ideally, there is a close connection between the church and the Holy Spirit; so a lie to the church is a lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3), and an action of the church is in fact an act of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28). But all this is dependent on absolute obedience on the part of the members.

What is implicit in obedience, according to Peter? 1 Peter 1:14, 22. According to Paul? 2 Cor. 10:5.

Christ and the Holy Spirit come to our lives in order to guide us and rule our thoughts, plans, and acts according to the will of God. As soon as the Spirit comes to us, He begins to guide us. If we gladly and willingly obey, we make it possible for the Spirit to remain in us, becoming our Lord. The life begins to be cleansed from all unrighteousness and defilement, and we become happy media to convey the good news to others who come in contact with us. But if we are not willing to surrender self, and we ignore the overtures of the Spirit, and we want to use Him instead of His guiding us, He is grieved and departs from us.

“Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord’s promise; they talk *about* Christ and *about* the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people ‘to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ Phil. 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

THINK IT THROUGH **How does the Christian gain freedom by surrendering every thought to the obedience of Christ?**

FURTHER STUDY *Counsels to Teachers*, pp. 359-361.

Part 4
WILLINGNESS
TO WITNESS

What is the privilege that may be enjoyed by every Christian?

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus called His disciples and then sent them to preach. (See Luke 10:1.) He endowed them with power so that they performed miracles (v. 9). They came back rejoicing and reported their successes. (See v. 17.) But Jesus warned them that they were not to take pride in their victories over the evil one. Rather, they were to rejoice that their names were written in heaven. (See v. 20.)

The Christian is empowered from on high to witness. He does not claim any credit for himself. But it is his privilege to be used of God, and it is the close connection he has with his Master that gives him joy and satisfaction.

How did Jesus perform His ministry as one who was sent? John 4:34; 9:4.

Jesus represented His Father completely. He spoke His words and performed His deeds. There was an urgency about His work that sets for us an example of supreme dedication.

The purpose of God in the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter rain is to bestow the needed power to His children that they may witness for Christ and finish the proclamation of the gospel in the world. Only as we fervently pray for the showers of grace will they come. The finishing of God's work on earth is one of the prime objectives of the Christian life. This gives urgency to our prayers for the latter rain.

“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.”—*Christian Service*, p. 253. (*Review and Herald*, July 21, 1896.)

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that some people are afraid to witness for Christ?

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pp. 278, 279.

Part 5 **What special spiritual condition of the disciples made it**
UNITY **possible for God to answer their prayers for the outpouring of**
 His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost?

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1).

Jesus had told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem, and they waited. But they did not spend their time in idleness. They were “continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” (Luke 24:53). They spent time in prayer, their faith increasing day by day as they contemplated the work of their ascended Lord. They reviewed their past experiences, confessed their failures, and pleaded for forgiveness. They wanted to be fit to be witnesses, and they drew closer to one another as they sought to draw closer to God. Very soon they forgot their differences, their conflicting ambitions. Now in “one accord,” they were ready for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 35-37.)

What kind of unity did Jesus pray His disciples might enjoy?
John 17:21.

“He longs to pour upon us His Holy Spirit in rich measure, and He bids us clear the way by self-renunciation. When self is surrendered to God, our eyes will be opened to see the stumbling stones which our un-Christlikeness has placed in the way of others. All these God bids us remove. He says: ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.’ James 5:16.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 43.

“When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is filled by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 287.

“There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.”—*Christian Service*, p. 254.

THINK IT THROUGH **How can I empty myself of self?**

“No man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, un-Christlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 159.

Part 6
RECEPTION
AND BELIEF

What was the basis of acceptance into the church?

“They that gladly received his [Peter’s] word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

“Many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 2:41; 4:4).

The message of the preacher must be compared with Scripture so as to confirm its truth. It must then be believed and applied in the life. (See Acts 17:11, 12 for the example of the Bereans.) Only in this way can one become a true member of the church and a recipient of the Holy Spirit.

How does James emphasize the importance of faith? James 1:6, 7.

“Men, women, and youth, God requires you to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance, minds that cannot take the assertions of another, but which will investigate for themselves before receiving or rejecting, that will study and weigh evidence, and take it to the Lord in prayer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 130.

“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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 21.

What other characteristic does James say is important? James 5:7, 8.

The Bible writers recognize a characteristic of impatience in man, and therefore they stress patience. (See Heb. 10:35-37.) The fact is that it is God who has to be especially patient with us. He is long-suffering, but His purposes will not be long delayed.

“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 to-day. . . . Without the Spirit’s aid, our efforts to present divine truth will be in vain.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 25, 1896.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is the church ready to receive a large influx of members? What should it do to be ready?



The Finishing of God's Work

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14).

The end cannot come until the gospel has been “preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14). A series of events of great magnitude will take place before the end: the shaking and reformation, the sealing, and the latter rain. According to the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, along with all these things, and simultaneously with them, the people of God will undertake their evangelistic work with special strength and fervor.

Under the powerful outpouring of the latter rain multitudes will be admonished, and everyone true of heart will accept the gospel invitation and will receive the seal of the living God. But many will refuse to accept the truth and will receive the mark of the beast, becoming enemies of God and of His people.

As the investigative judgment ends in the court of heaven, probation will close for the living. At that moment the time of trouble begins, as well as the outpouring of the seven last plagues. Also the preaching of the gospel will have been completed according to the many promises and prophecies of the Bible. After a short time of trouble the Lord will at last descend from heaven, bringing to an end all sorrow, pain, and unrighteousness.

God could have dispensed with human beings in proclaiming the truth. He could have used angels,

who, with a swift flash of glory, could have done the job in a very short time. But He reserved to men and women saved by His grace this honorable and beautiful task because He wanted to honor us by associating us with Him. Also He planned to let us enjoy the happiness of seeing souls saved by the blood of Jesus. He implants in every born-again Christian an impelling desire to share his faith.

“No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 78.

We are going to study in this lesson the promises of a finished work, the kind of message that has to be given at this time, the work that will be done by the Holy Spirit using human instrumentalities, and the two great conditions needed to finish the work.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Promises and Prophecies**
(Rev. 14:6-11)
2. **A Time for a Clear Message**
(Isa. 60:1, 2)
3. **A Fast and Miraculous Work**
(Rom. 9:28)
4. **The Latter Rain and the Finishing of God's Work**
(Rev. 18:1-4)
5. **First Necessary Condition: Consecration**
(Joshua 3:5)
6. **Second Necessary Condition: Witnessing**
(Mark 16:15)

**Part 1
PROMISES AND
PROPHECIES**

What did the seer of Patmos behold sweeping across the heavens? Rev. 14:6-11.

This is a prophecy written in no uncertain words. The prophet saw what was going to happen in the last days. The first angel was proclaiming the message "with a loud voice"—a voice loud enough to make it possible for every nation and kindred and tongue and people to hear him.

What other emphatic promise and prophecy did Jesus pronounce? Matt. 24:14.

In spite of the delay resulting from human lukewarmness and lack of both preparation and consecrated activity, the day will come when in the providence of God the work will be finished and "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world" (Matt. 24:14). "God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 645.

Read and analyze another prophetic assurance of a finished work in the time of the end. Rev. 10:5-7.

The angel swore "that there should be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel [our time], the mystery of God [the plan of redemption], as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled" (verses 6, 7, RSV).

When God promises something, He has the power and the willingness to fulfill that promise. So many times we have the tendency to get discouraged about the finishing of the evangelistic task, especially in view of the population explosion. But the work is God's, not ours. And we should not engage in calculations lacking faith, but trust His Word, knowing that no promise of God has failed or will fail.

"The message loses none of its force in the angel's onward flight, for John sees it increasing in strength and power until the whole earth is lightened with its glory. The course of God's commandment-keeping people is onward, ever onward. The message of truth that we bear must go to nations, tongues, and peoples. Soon it will go with a loud voice, and the earth will be lightened with its glory. Are we preparing for this great outpouring of the Spirit of God?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 383.

THINK IT THROUGH

"The work will surely go forward, whether we advance with it or not. It will be victorious, but the question is: Shall we be victorious with it?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 571.

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, p. 277.

Part 2
A TIME FOR A
CLEAR MESSAGE

Read Isaiah 60:1, 2

At the precise moment when "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," the command of God was: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

We are living in the darkest hours of history. Modern theology has done away with the main truths of the Bible and has perverted the gospel of Jesus. Satan is confusing and deceiving the multitudes that are hungry for the bread of life. For this special time God commands His people to preach a clearer and more direct message.

What is one of the messages that will be proclaimed before Jesus returns? Rev. 18:1-4.

"This scripture points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 603.

As the Spirit came upon Elijah, moving him to give a strong message of rebuke, so "the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments. . . . The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

This message will arouse persecution. The people of God will go through a time of temporary consternation and dismay, thinking that their imprudent preaching has produced these consequences. But again the Spirit of God reassures them, and they keep on pressing forward with their prominent message. They persist until the sincere souls are rescued from the sophistries of Babylon and the work is finished amid a great manifestation of the power of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I develop in my life the moral stamina I will need in the time of persecution to proclaim boldly the open message of God?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 603-610.

Part 3
A FAST AND
MIRACULOUS WORK

What assurance do we have of a fast and miraculous work?

"For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).

"I saw that the quick work that God was doing on the earth would soon be cut short in righteousness and that the messengers must speed swiftly on their way to search out the scattered flock."—*Early Writings*, p. 50.

"Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 96.

"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."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 46.

What important providences will God work to speed up the proclamation of His truth?

"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. When Satan works through his agents, propositions are made, that, if carried out, would impede the work of God and produce great evil. The good angels move upon these agents of God to oppose such propositions with strong reasons, which Satan's agents cannot resist. A few of God's agents will have power to bear down a great mass of evil. 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."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 203.

"The efforts made to retard the progress of truth will serve to extend it. The excellence of truth is more clearly seen from every successive point from which it may be viewed. Error requires disguise and concealment. It clothes itself in angel robes, and every manifestation of its real character lessens its chance of success."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 454.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I be ready for the Spirit to use me in this last stage of the onward march of truth?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 611, 612.

Part 4
THE LATTER
RAIN AND THE
FINISHING OF
GDD'S WORK

Read carefully Revelation 18:1-4.

Can you imagine this world as a huge, new city whose establishment has been carefully planned in advance? For months there has been no light, no electric power. The homes and public buildings are being erected, and the electricians are also working hard to set the installations for light and power. When all this work is ready, after many weeks of hard toil, finally one day the signal is given to the power plant. The connection is made, and all of a sudden the whole city is inundated with light, both the streets and the houses.

Similarly the hard work of the children of God that is going on right now in the world to sow the seed of truth—by lay members, colporteurs, pastors and evangelists, using the spoken word, radio and television, and especially the printed page—is like the task of the electrical engineers and technicians who are preparing the city for a flood of light.

When the latter rain descends from heaven on the children of God, the whole earth will be quickly lighted with the truth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

How does the spirit of prophecy present this thought?

"The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

How does Zechariah refer to the only power that can enable the church to finish her appointed task? Zech. 4:6.

With the assurance we have of the latter rain, with the certainty of Christ's constant companionship in our labors, with the wonderful promises spread all over the Bible like the stars in heaven, we should prepare as a people and stand up as one man to do the work in the power of the Spirit of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

How am I contributing now to filling the earth with light?

Part 5
FIRST NECESSARY
CONDITION:
CONSECRATION

On the eve of Israel's great test of reliance on God's power—the crossing of the Jordan—what divine command did Joshua convey to the people? Joshua 3:5.

For "sanctify" the NASB reads "consecrate."

Only a miracle of the grace and power of God will finish the work and allow modern Israel to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. But for the Lord to perform the miracle in us, we need to consecrate ourselves. First came consecration, then came the miracle.

We need to collaborate with God so that He can finish the work He has begun in us—and He is able and willing to do it. We need to reject all unrighteousness and to become partakers of the divine nature. We need to receive, by faith and surrender, the sanctifying righteousness of Christ—His character restored in us.

God cannot pour out the Holy Spirit on a worldly and unconsecrated people. He cannot fill contaminated vessels with His Spirit. A thorough preparation needs to be done. "Sanctify yourselves" is the command of the hour.

What did Jesus do so that His disciples may be sanctified? John 17:19.

Jesus has set us an example. Just as He dedicated Himself to the work of redemption, so we are to be dedicated to the truth, living it and preaching it.

The word "sanctify" comes from two Latin words which mean "to make holy." To sanctify, therefore, has the added connotation of moral uprightness, spiritual thinking, and issuing in a life of goodness and godliness. A selfish life is not part of the process of sanctification.

Too much time has elapsed. The hour is late. Finally the opportunity has come for us to cross the Jordan. Before we can finish the work in the world, under the power of God, He has to finish it in our own hearts.

The consummation of the work of the gospel is primarily a divine work. God has promised it, and He has ample resources to accomplish it. But in order to carry out His marvelous design, the Lord uses human beings as instruments. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent God's people on the march, engaged in the fulfillment of the gospel commission.

The first condition that the Most High requires of His people in order to make bare His holy arm is that they consecrate themselves to God and His work.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does it mean for me to consecrate myself?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 436-438.

Part 6
SECOND NECESSARY
CONDITION:
WITNESSING

What command did Jesus give His disciples?

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

No amount of consecration can replace work, the witnessing activity. No amount of prayer and study of the Bible can be substituted for the actual use of our opportunities to testify for Christ. Yet we are never alone in working. (See Mark 16:20.)

In what other words does Jesus express our responsibility?
Matt. 20:4.

It is interesting to note that Jesus promises wages for whatever we do for Him. These wages are always fair and sufficient for our needs (v. 13) if not altogether generous.

In His wisdom God has established the fact that missionary activity is an indispensable part of our Christian experience. As growing Christian children, we need not only food (the study of the Word) and spiritual oxygen (prayer) but also exercise (work for Christ).

"Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. . . .

"The Saviour's life on earth was not a life of ease and devotion to Himself, but He toiled with persistent, earnest, untiring effort for the salvation of lost mankind. . . .

"So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 77, 78.

What are the benefits of working for others?

"The effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. . . .

"The Spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. . . .

"The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 79, 80.

There can be no symmetrical development of character without unselfish work for Christ.

What union will be necessary to finish God's work?

"The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 352.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I organize my activities so that I can devote more time to witnessing?

FURTHER STUDY

Christian Service, pp. 65-71.

How to Be Prepared for the Crisis—1

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Matt. 7:24, 25).

These last two lessons are of vital importance. Just a theoretical knowledge of the tremendous events of this last hour of earth’s history will not be enough to carry us safely through the time of trouble, to meet Jesus with great joy, and to be able to enter with Him through the pearly gates.

We need a preparation. The rain will descend, the winds will blow, the flood will come. Our house should be built upon the Rock of Ages. We need to build right now a relationship with Jesus that will enable us to receive the seal of the living God, the fullness of the Spirit. We must reach a stage of victory over sin and of righteousness imparted by Christ that makes us able to stand without a mediator during the time of trouble and be received at last into our heavenly home.

“My brethren, do you realize that your own salvation, as well as the destiny of other souls, depends upon the preparation you now make for the trial before us? Have you that intensity of zeal, that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition shall be brought against you? . . . The time that so many are now allowing to go to waste should be

devoted to the charge that God has given us of preparing for the approaching crisis.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 716, 717.

“I saw that God’s people are on the enchanted ground, and that some have lost nearly all sense of the shortness of time and the worth of the soul.”—*Early Writings*, p. 120.

“The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 715.

Our willingness to obey should cause us to take whatever steps are necessary to be really ready. In these final lessons we plan to study the specific factors of this spiritual preparation.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Time With God**
(Mark 6:30, 31)
2. **Alone With God**
(Mark 1:35)
3. **Daily Dying**
(1 Cor. 15:31)
4. **Study of the Scripture**
(John 6:63)
5. **Prayer and Communion**
(Luke 18:1)
6. **Christ in You**
(Col. 1:27)

Part 1
TIME WITH
GOD **“The apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while” (Mark 6:30, 31).**

After the disciples had worked hard for a time, the Saviour invited them to retire to a quiet place with Him. They needed to enjoy not only a little rest but also a season of communion with Him. In the closeness and privacy of the Master with the disciples, He could communicate freely with them, correct their mistakes, encourage them, and strengthen them for their future work. As disciples, we too need the refreshing company of Him who is the Source of all power, comfort, and wisdom.

Every child of God has a vital need to enjoy the wonderful companionship of Jesus in the precious moments of private communion with Him. Amidst the hurry and worry of life, even in the work of God, every Christian needs enough time dedicated to his private devotions.

What was the loving reproach Jesus addressed to the busy and concerned Martha? Luke 10:41, 42.

Every one of us needs “that good part, which shall not be taken away” from him, namely, to sit quietly at the feet of Jesus, like Mary, and commune with Him. He is the only fountain of courage, strength, and victory.

A few hurried minutes every morning are not enough. A few minutes each day are better than nothing. But in order to feel the presence of God and hear His voice completely, many believers feel they need at least one half to one hour spent in quiet communion with the heavenly Father and the Saviour.

This may mean that we need to set a special program in which we deliberately eliminate many nonvital things to make room for our personal devotions, because this is the basis of our spiritual strength and our Christian experience.

THINK IT THROUGH **What ought to be a major theme of our meditations?**

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.

FURTHER STUDY *The Great Controversy*, p. 622.

Part 2
ALONE WITH GOD

On one occasion, what did Jesus do in order to have time for private meditation?

"In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).

Family worship is a necessity and a sound basis for a happy home. Worship at church or in groups is also a great source of spiritual strength and is indispensable to our Christian growth. But our private devotions alone with God are also a necessity. Each of us has some specific items to discuss with our Father in private.

In private devotion we do not need to be worried about time. If we need to confess our faults and sins, express our love to God, unburden our souls of grief and sorrow, pray for victory over definite weaknesses or sins, or intercede before the Lord on behalf of unconverted souls, we can do all these things only without hurry in our direct and personal contact with the throne of grace. God is never tired of hearing us.

What happened to Saul after his vision on the Damascus road? Acts 9:9.

"For three days Saul was 'without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.' . . .

"These days of close self-examination and of heart humiliation were spent in lonely seclusion. . . .

"During the long hours when Saul was shut in with God alone, he recalled many of the passages of Scripture referring to the first advent of Christ. . . .

"As Saul yielded himself fully to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, he saw the mistakes of his life and recognized the far-reaching claims of the law of God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 118, 119.

Where did Elijah hear "a still small voice" speaking to his heart? 1 Kings 19:12.

This is the voice of the Holy Spirit that every child of God needs to hear. The Spirit can speak to our hearts better when everything is quiet and we are alone with God.

"We need more study, more earnest meditation and communion with Christ. We need to listen for the still small voice, and to rest by faith in the love of Christ. We should have a much more healthful experience, and become much more vigorous Christians."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 346.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to spend more time alone with God?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 578, 581, 582.

Part 3
DAILY DYING

How did Paul describe his Christian experience?

"I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31).

Although Paul is referring primarily to his life of constant danger and persecution, these words can also have a spiritual application of a relationship with God. (See Gal. 2:20.)

It is our privilege to renew our Christian experience daily. Every day God has provided a fresh supply of His grace. Every day there awaits us a renewal of our personal contact with Heaven. Every day we may die again to sin and to the world. Every day we may rejoice to renounce self and surrender to Christ so that He may take over in the leadership and rulership of our lives.

It is not enough to take sufficient time to be alone with God one day. The following day we may have the same joy. As we eat food every day to have physical strength, so also we eat spiritual food every day. Thus we keep a close contact with Jesus.

"Those who fail to realize their constant dependence upon God will be overcome by temptation. . . . Satan is planning to take advantage of our hereditary and cultivated traits of character, and to blind our eyes to our own necessities and defects. Only through realizing our own weakness and looking steadfastly unto Jesus can we walk securely."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 382.

What is the only way of attaining perfection of character?
1 John 3:6.

"So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

How is our need of a continual contact with God further stressed? John 15:5.

"Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted as if borne by everlasting arms."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 514.

THINK IT THROUGH
FURTHER STUDY

What should be the object of my daily meditations?

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 273.

PART 4
STUDY OF THE
SCRIPTURE

Of what importance are the words of Jesus?

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

The daily study of and meditation on the words of Jesus—and, by extension, the Word of God in general—is of utmost importance. Christ's words are spirit and life, and by feeding on them we receive spiritual life that only they can impart.

What, according to Jesus, does a study of the Scriptures reveal? John 5:39.

We have eternal life in the Scriptures because they testify of Jesus. From the very first page to the last, the Bible contains a clear presentation of Him.

How can we abide in Jesus and have all the benefits that come from that experience? John 15:7.

It is evident that the way in which we can abide in Jesus and have Him abide in us is through what He calls "My words." When we are in a prayerful spirit and a teachable mood with the Bible open before us, we are in contact with our heavenly Father. We hear His voice speaking to us. Through His Holy Spirit the Lord points out our needs to us and also our weaknesses. He encourages us with His wonderful promises, full of power, through which we are made "partakers of the divine nature." He strengthens our souls and takes us by the hand to make us victorious.

Who only will be able to stand through the last great conflict?

"None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 625.

"When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 602

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I make my personal study of the Word of God such that it will allow me to stand firm in the great crisis we have to face soon?

Part 5
PRAYER AND
COMMUNION

Why did Jesus tell the parable of the widow and the judge?

"He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

There can be no genuine Christian life without prayer. In fact, our spiritual experience will be as strong as the intensity and the steadfastness of our prayer life.

Jacob spent a night of struggle with God in earnest prayer, humbling his soul. He sought the assurance of forgiveness and the protection and the grace of God, and a miracle was wrought in his life. Even his name was changed. (See Gen. 32:24-28.) Jesus agonized in prayer as a man in Gethsemane. God gave Him the victory and enabled Him to put the golden seal on the plan of salvation by giving His life. In his trip to Mount Moriah Abraham spent the days of his journey and the nights of rest in humble and fervent communion with God when the Lord requested the life of his son, and he was able to stand the most terrible ordeal of his life. (See Genesis 22.) Not one of us today, as children of God, can afford to lose the power of "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" that "availeth much" (James 5:16).

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

What are some of the conditions of an efficient prayer life?

(1) To feel our need of God's help (Matt. 5:6). (2) To eliminate any known sin from our life. (Ps. 66:18). (3) To pray with faith (Mark 11:24). (4) To pray with a spirit of love and forgiveness (Matt. 6:12). (5) To pray with perseverance (Rom. 12:12).

"There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in prayer meeting. . . .

"We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 98.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is prayer the life of the soul?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Privilege of Prayer," pp. 93-104.

Part 6
CHRIST IN YOU

How does the apostle Paul sum up the very essence of a victorious Christian experience?

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

The very heart of the mystery of godliness is expressed in a simple, short, and wonderful formula: “Christ in you.” The entrance of Christ into our hearts and His permanent dwelling there is the great secret of a completely wholesome spiritual condition, of a Christlike life. This is the crux of sanctification: Christ and His Holy Spirit abiding in our hearts, the Rulers of our life through an attitude of faith and complete surrender of our will. This results in a blessed identification of our life with Christ and of our will with His will.

How did Jesus illustrate the close relationship that should exist between man and Christ, and the blessed results? John 15:4-7.

The means of grace whereby the soul is brought into such close and vital connection with Christ as to produce the fruits of a totally converted and victorious life are these: *faith* in Christ and in the Word of God, *obedience*, *surrender* of the will to God, *study of the Word*, and *meditation* and *secret prayer*.

What is the process that effects the identification of our will with the will of God? Heb. 12:2.

“By beholding we are to become changed. . . . It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. . . . In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will. . . .

“Continual devotion and piety bring the man in such close relation to Christ that he has the mind of Christ. He is one with Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 338.

“When we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to make my experience with Christ more real and permanent?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 909.

How to Be Prepared for the Crisis—2

“I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth” (Rev. 16:15).

This scripture has a double application. First, the end of the investigative judgment and of the close of probation will come sooner than many expect, and many people will be caught unprepared. Second, for every human being the end of probation and grace comes at the day of his death, and none is sure of his life for one hour.

In our past lesson we saw that the basis of the preparation we need for the coming crisis is our devotional life: enough time dedicated every day, preferably in the early hours of the morning, to be alone with God and with Christ in the study of the Word and in secret prayer.

As a necessary corollary, this devotional life that puts us in a very close connection with Christ will produce in our lives the following elements: complete surrender, cleansing from sin, victory over weaknesses and defects of character, obedience, and a diligent application to witnessing. And these are the subjects we shall review in order to complete the study of how to be prepared for the coming crisis.

To try to obtain the necessary preparation when we are already in the midst of the crisis will be too late. The five foolish girls who went to buy oil during the brief time of waiting discovered that unfortunately they arrived too late at the gates of the house in which the wedding had already begun, and they were not admitted.

Now is the time to be prepared. Now is the day of salvation.

Now is the time to watch and to put on the garments of the righteousness of Christ. Now is the time to put forth every effort to attain, by the grace of God, the spiritual stature necessary for heaven.

The time for a happy reunion in the kingdom of God will soon come. But while we are still on the road to heaven, we need to work out our “salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). It depends completely on our choice whether in that day we shall find ourselves ready for translation, or whether God will not let us into His eternal kingdom.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Self-denial**
(Matt. 16:24)
2. **Cleansing From Sin**
(Matt. 9:2)
3. **Total Victory**
(Jude 24)
4. **Obedience**
(Matt. 3:7, 8)
5. **A Work of Witnessing**
(Matt. 21:28)
6. **A Wonderful Reunion**
(Rev. 7:9, 10)

Part 1 **What must the Christian do if he wants to be a true disciple**
SELF-DENIAL **of Jesus?**

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

The denial of self is the door of entrance to discipleship. Only when self is crucified can Christ occupy the throne of our heart. And self is our worst enemy. So a complete surrender of our will to God and to Christ is a necessity for a healthful spiritual condition.

Satan offers fame, power, riches, sensual pleasure, and the intoxication of self-love. By the power of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, we need to deny ourselves all these things and others akin to them. We must crucify all of them along with the old man and plead with Christ to occupy our heart and be our Lord and supreme Ruler.

How does the apostle James stress the need of surrender?
James 4:7.

"Unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

"Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

"When you give up your own will, your own wisdom, and learn of Christ, you will find admittance into the kingdom of God. He requires entire, unreserved surrender. Give up your life for Him to order, mold, and fashion. Take upon your neck His yoke. Submit to be led and taught by Him. Learn that unless you become as a little child, you can never enter the kingdom of heaven."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 110.

THINK IT THROUGH **How do I renew every day my complete surrender to Christ in order to enable Him to work in me the miraculous transformation needed for translation?**

FURTHER STUDY *Christ's Object Lessons*, "Talents," pp. 331, 332.

Part 2
CLEANSING
FROM SIN

What is the importance and meaning of the words of Jesus spoken to the palsied man in Matthew 9:2?

"They brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

Read the whole story in Mark 2:1-12.

His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his pain and anguish resulted in bitter remorse. "It was not physical restoration he desired so much as relief from the burden of sin. If he could see Jesus, and receive the assurance of forgiveness and peace with Heaven, he would be content to live or die, according to God's will. The cry of the dying man was Oh, that I might come into His presence! There was no time to lose; already his wasted flesh was showing signs of decay."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 267.

"The burden of despair rolls from the sick man's soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed. . . . The guilty sinner is pardoned!"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 268.

What is the absolute assurance given us about the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus? 1 John 1:8, 9.

The cleansing of our soul from every sin through repentance and confession and by faith in the precious blood of Jesus is the very basis for a real preparation for the crisis. Now our Redeemer is interceding in our behalf in the courts of heaven. Now He is presenting His loving sacrifice for our forgiveness. Now He is anxious to impute to us His righteousness. Some day, very soon, the door to opportunity will be closed; the decree will be issued in heaven, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still"; and the sun of mercy will set forever. God is waiting for us to acknowledge our sins. He will forgive our sins as soon as we claim His promise by faith.

Unconfessed and unforsaken sins are incompatible with a real preparation for eternity. And even when we do not have gross sins to confess, we need every day the imputed righteousness of Christ. Every day we need the experience of repentance. The nearer we are to God and to Christ, the more we see our defects. Every day we need to reaffirm our faith in Jesus. This will renew our confidence in our salvation and will give us peace of mind and trust in the Lord.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there a sin that cannot be forgiven, and if so, what is it? Matt. 12:31.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Confession," pp. 37-41.

Part 3 **Who is able to give us total victory in the Christian warfare?**
TOTAL VICTORY

"Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" (Jude 24).

The plan of God for our life is forgiveness accompanied by Christian growth and victory over sin. God's requirements correspond to the individual's opportunities. We who have been blessed with great light shall be accounted for a high degree of spiritual maturity. We shall be sealed for eternity with the seal of the living God, which will not be put on the forehead of those who "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."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 214.

"We shall fail often in our efforts to copy the divine pattern. We shall often have to bow down to weep at the feet of Jesus, because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged; we are to pray more fervently, believe more fully, and try again with more steadfastness to grow into the likeness of our Lord. As we distrust our own power, we shall trust the power of our Redeemer, and render praise to God."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 337.

What relation exists between victory and complete submission?

"Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you can not overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 331.

Besides the victory over self, what other victory has God promised us? 1 Cor. 15:54-57.

"Christ's true disciples follow Him through sore conflicts, enduring self-denial and experiencing bitter disappointment; but this teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they are led to look upon it with abhorrence. Partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

THINK IT THROUGH **What is it that keeps the Christian striving in spite of the hardships of the way? 1 Cor. 15:58.**

FURTHER STUDY *Steps to Christ*, "Growing Up Into Christ," pp. 67-75.

Part 4
OBEDIENCE

What is the natural fruit of repentance?

“When he [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:7, 8).

The Pharisees had an emotional experience of repentance, but the emotion had not been translated into deeds.

What does Isaiah say are two characteristics which must go together if we are to eat the good of the land? Isa. 1:19.

Willingness is sometimes present without a corresponding capacity to do. Paul complained about this experience in his own life. (See Rom. 7:22-24.) But he found release and victory through Jesus Christ (v. 25).

In the day of judgment God will refuse to recognize many professors of the faith who claim to have taught in His name and even to have cast out demons.

While it is true that we shall be saved by faith in Jesus and through His priceless sacrifice, it is also true that the fruits of obedience follow authentic faith. If faith is not capable of producing a change, it is not saving faith at all. It is dead. (See James 2:14-23.)

“Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell—perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise—harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 373.

“While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 377.

“Let no man present the idea that man has little or nothing to do in the great work of overcoming; for God does nothing for man without his cooperation. Neither say that after you have done all you can on your part, Jesus will help you. Christ has said, ‘Without me ye can do nothing’ (John 15:5). From first to last man is to be a laborer together with God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 381.

THINK IT THROUGH

Which is more active in the life of a Christian—his faith or his works?

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 373-382.

Part 5
A WORK OF
WITNESSING

In what parable did Jesus teach the importance of eventual obedience and a life of faith?

"A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard" (Matt. 21:28). Read to verse 32.

Some are hasty in professing obedience, but they become delinquent. Others do not obey at once, and it would seem that they are disobedient; but a change takes place in their attitude, and they do what they know to be right. Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that their apparent zeal for the law was of no consequence if it did not lead to total commitment. By contrast, the publicans had apparently broken the law again and again; but when, like Zacchaeus and Matthew, they repented and followed Jesus, then their lives represented true obedience.

The true Christian is not marked by what he professes to do but by what he actually does.

Of what should a Christian be a diligent witness? Luke 8:39.

The story of the Gadarene demoniac is told in three Gospels, and this indicates its importance. That the people were more concerned about the loss of the swine than the healing of the maniac shows how many people are more concerned about temporal wealth than they are with spiritual healing, and they are often afraid of supernatural power. The healed man wanted to follow Jesus, but he was told to witness to what God had done for him, and in this task he was highly successful. (See Mark 5:20.)

Jesus wants us in our day to witness to what God has done in and through us. Only in this way can the work be finished and Jesus come soon.

"God expects personal service from everyone to whom He has entrusted a knowledge of the truth for this time. Not all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, but all can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 30.

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450. These words were written in 1900.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I go about doing more and more effective work for God?

FURTHER STUDY

Christian Service, pp. 9-13.

Part 6
A WONDERFUL
REUNION

Describe the great reunion of the saved after the conflict is over.

"I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9, 10).

Here we see the final and glorious outcome of the great controversy of the ages. Here the prophecy of Isaiah regarding Christ is fulfilled: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). When the Redeemer looks at the innumerable multitude of the saved of all time, redeemed by His blood, He will be completely satisfied, since He would have come to rescue just one soul.

All the saints of the ages are there. They come from every kindred and people and tongue. It is a universal harvest. It is the most blessed and unique reunion of all the victorious children of God.

They are clothed with white robes, which means that they are saved by the perfect righteousness of Christ, made available to anyone by faith. They have palms in their hands, which represent the fact that they have won the victory over Satan and sin by "the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11).

How does John the revelator bring his book to a close? Rev. 22:20.

The revelator replies, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." He seems to say: "Lord, I am ready. The sooner You come, the better!" This is the response that every Christian should be prepared to make.

How does Paul sum up his lifework? 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

The more active a person has been for Christ, the more he is ready for Christ's appearing. It is not that he is selfish about the second coming, but he knows that there are many who "love his appearing" and to them the day of reward will be one of great joy. Surely the time must come when sin and sorrow will cease and Christ will usher in His everlasting kingdom of peace.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can one maintain a balance between being busy for the Lord now, and looking forward to Christ's coming?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 593-602.

Lessons for 4th Quarter / 1979

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the fourth quarter of 1979 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "Our Wonderful God."

First Lesson

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS. Memory verse, Isa. 45:22.

1. *The Eternal God (Ps. 90:1, 2).*
2. *The Only God (Isa. 44:6-8).*
3. *The Universal God (Isa. 14:26, 27).*
4. *The Living God (Jer. 10:10, 11).*
5. *The Omnipresent God (Ps. 139:8-10).*
6. *The Greatness of God (1 Chron. 16:24, 25).*

Second Lesson

THE LORD MOST HIGH. Memory Verse, Ps. 91:1, 2.

1. *The Supreme Ruler of All (Rev. 5:13).*
2. *The Creator of All (Col. 1:16, 17).*
3. *The Infinite God (Ps. 147:5; Rom. 11:33, 34).*
4. *The All-powerful God (Eph. 1:19-21).*
5. *The Judge of All the Earth (Gen. 18:25).*
6. *The Accepted God (Jer. 31:34).*

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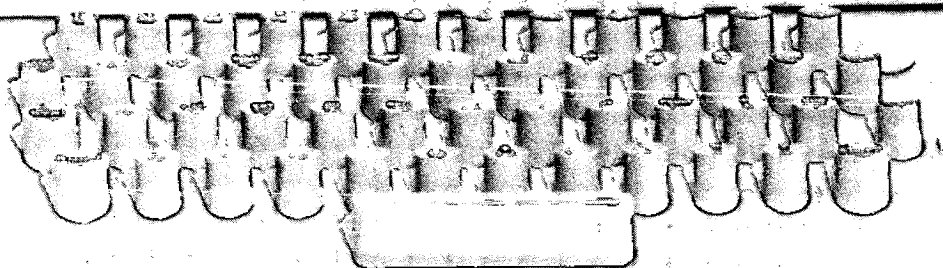
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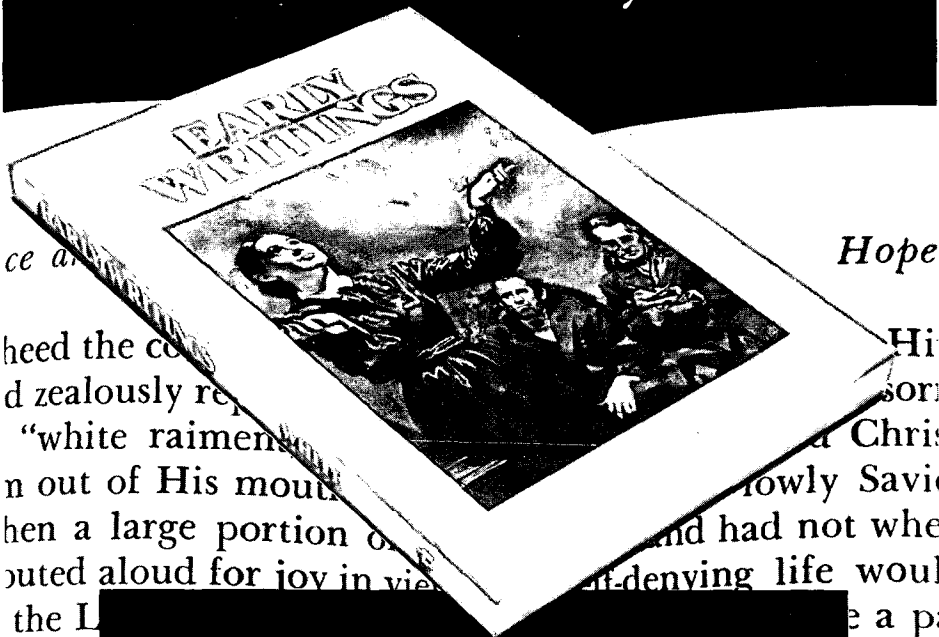
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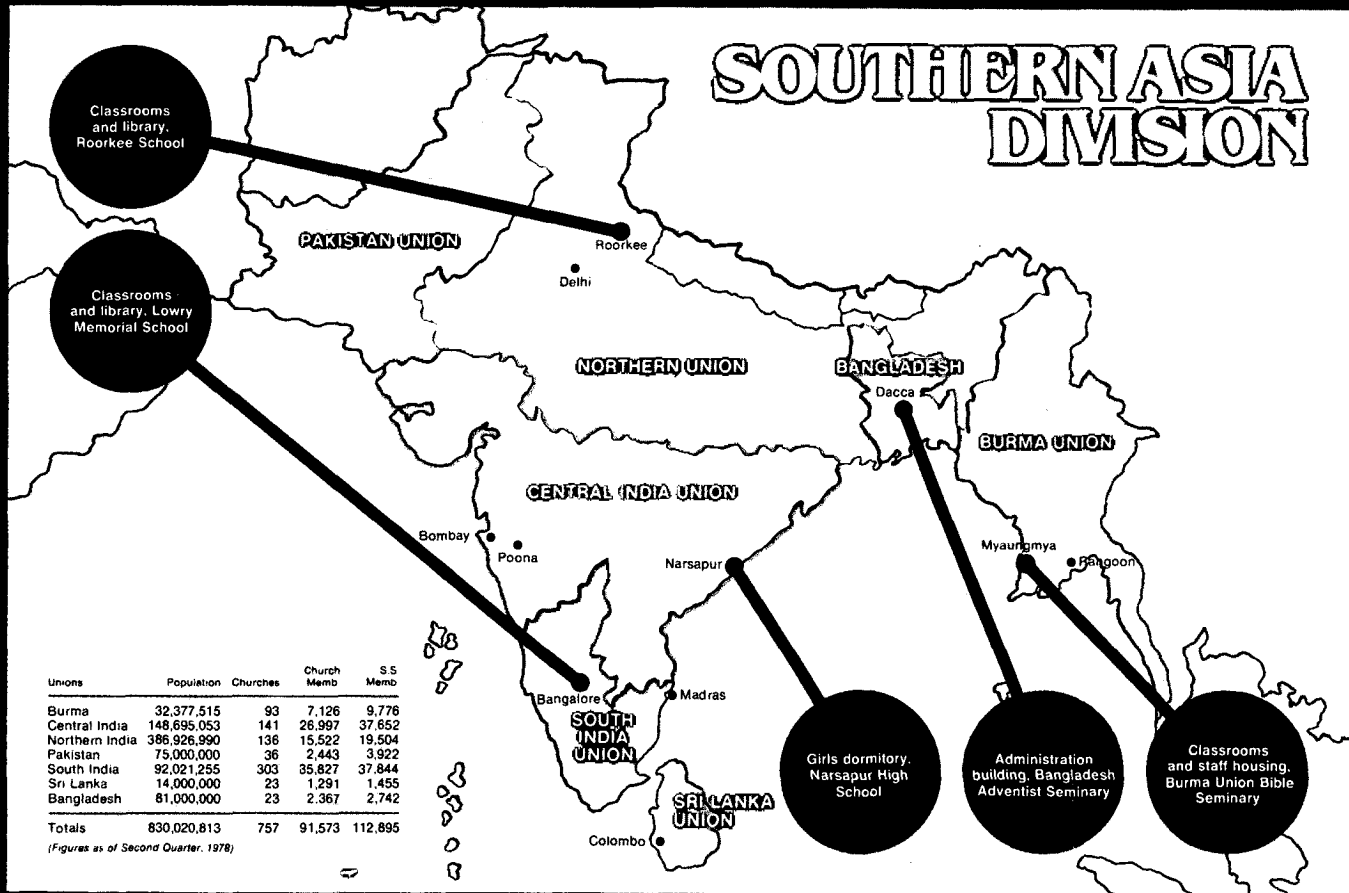
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Unions	Population	Churches	Church Memb	S S Memb
Burma	32,377,515	93	7,126	9,776
Central India	148,695,053	141	26,997	37,652
Northern India	386,926,990	136	15,522	19,504
Pakistan	75,000,000	36	2,443	3,922
South India	92,021,255	303	35,827	37,844
Sri Lanka	14,000,000	23	1,291	1,455
Bangladesh	81,000,000	23	2,367	2,742
Totals	830,020,813	757	91,573	112,895

(Figures as of Second Quarter, 1978)