

**THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
**His Office and Work in the World**

By

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## **Contents**

### **PREFACE**

#### **1. PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **2. THE AUTHOR OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

#### **3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRIST**

#### **4. THE COMFORTER-A CHANGED RELATIONSHIP**

#### **5. THE COMFORTER-AT WORK**

#### **6. PENTECOST-THE EARLY RAIN**

#### **7. THE APOSTASY AND THE PENTECOSTAL POWER**

#### **8. THE LATTER RAIN**

#### **9. FALSE EVIDENCES OF THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE**

#### **10. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN**

#### **11. RECEIVING THE SPIRIT**

## **Preface**

Apart from the giving of His Son, the most precious gift of God to His church on earth is that of the Holy Spirit. In fact, most that we Christians know of God, of Jesus, and of God's word to man, we owe to the teachings of the Spirit. All that we spiritually know of ourselves, we have learned from Him. All our knowledge of truth, all our experience in regeneration and sanctification, all our victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil must be ascribed to His presence and influence. When He is present, He reproves of sin, points the sinner to the great Sin Bearer, Jesus, leads the believer into all truth, speaks comforting messages from Jesus to the soul, and provokes the church to active effort in helping to save lost men. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with love for God and a passion for souls.

In bestowing this blessed gift upon the church, God purposed that the Holy Spirit should be the constant companion and guide of the believer. "I will pray the Father," said Jesus, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Although it is true that this promise was made directly to Christ's disciples, yet we are assured by Peter in his Pentecostal address that no particular people or generation were to have a monopoly upon this precious gift. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2: 38, 39.

God has never revoked the gift of the Spirit. In times of apostasy He has been forced to withdraw His presence and power from the organic church, but He has ever been present with the true follower of Jesus.

We should seek as earnestly today for the fullness of the Spirit's presence as did the disciples before Pentecost. The promise is as verily ours as it was theirs. One of keen spiritual discernment has well said that this promised blessing, if claimed by faith, would bring all other blessings in its train. Surely a gift so freighted with blessing for the church cannot be disregarded without the suffering of untold loss. Let us pray for the fullness of the Spirit.

## **1. Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit**

THE nature and work of the Holy Spirit is a divine mystery—far too great for the finite mind to fathom fully. Jesus aptly illustrated this fact by His significant statement to Nicodemus when He explained to him the mystery of the new birth. "The wind blows where it listeth," He said, "and thou hears the sound thereof, but cannot not tell whence it comes, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3: 8. We cannot see the wind. But we are made aware of its existence by many undeniable proofs. We hear it. We feel it. We see the results of its contact with nature. Mighty changes are wrought by it: the sea is lashed into fury; great trees are uprooted, and mighty rocks are displaced; whole cities are carried away in fragments, and many lives are crushed out. And yet as we stand by and behold the results of its mighty work, it is quite impossible for us either to explain its character or to behold it with the eye.

Just so it is with the Holy Spirit. Of His existence there can be no question. We Christians see the results of His work. We hear Him speak through the Sacred Scriptures. We feel His influence and power in our lives. We see Him striving with sinners and leading them by an irresistible influence to renunciation of sin and acceptance of the salvation offered by the Son of God. We see their lives mightily transformed by His power. And yet we do not actually see Him. His exact nature and character no one can explain: for this is one of the mysteries that our heavenly Father has not seen fit to reveal. No doubt in this withholding of exact knowledge there is a divine purpose on the part of an all wise and loving God.

Some day, of course, we shall understand. Some day this dimming veil which now separates God and His people will be withdrawn, and these deep and hidden mysteries will then stand revealed. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Corinthians 13:12.

But although we are not now able to sound the depths of this mystery, yet there is much that we may know—yes, that is essential that we should know—about the person and work of this divine Spirit.

There are three living persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. (See Matthew 28: 19) Not three Gods, but one God in three persons. Should an exact explanation be required of the nature of God the Father, we would be at a loss to give it; and yet the entire universe abounds with evidence that He exists and that He has a distinct personality and is clothed with infinite wisdom and omnipotent power. Just so with the Holy Spirit. He is the third person of the heavenly trio. The Spirit is not merely an influence emanating from God, but is a distinct person in the Godhead, working in unison with the Father and the Son in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Evidence of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit abounds in the Sacred Scriptures. The Master Himself, in explaining to the disciples how the Spirit was to take His place in the church after His ascension, everywhere employs the personal pronoun in His references to this heavenly being.

Note carefully the following which are only a few of the multitude of Scriptural evidences of the personality of the Spirit.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of Me." John 15: 26.

"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin." John 16: 7, 8.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Verse 13.

Note also the things the Spirit is to do:

"He shall testify of me."

"He will reprove the world of sin."

"He will guide you into all truth."

"Whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

"He will show you things to come."

Can a mere influence without personality and knowledge testify as a witness, reprove sinners, guide the people of God, hear God's voice, and, in turn, speak the messages of God to the church? The answer is obvious. Only an intelligent personality could accomplish these, for they are personal actions, not the work of non intelligent influence.

Knowledge is spoken of as one of the attributes of the Spirit. "The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Corinthians 10, 11.

The Spirit, therefore, is more than a divine attribute or power. He is a person, possessing both attributes and power. The disciples performed their marvelous miracles "through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." (Romans 15: 19.)

The Spirit is a life-giving agency. "It is the Spirit that quickens." John 6: 63.

He directs the servants of God. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts 13: 2. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia." Acts 13: 4. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Acts 20: 28.

He warns the church of apostasy. "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." 1 Timothy 4: 1.

He has the power of revelation. "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Luke 2: 26.

He exercises His own will. "But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." 1 Corinthians 12: 11. Again: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." Acts 15: 28.

He can be vexed. "They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." Isaiah 63: 10.

He is grieved by sin in the lives of God's children. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Ephesians 4: 30.

He seals the redeemed. "Whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4: 30. Such language as is used in the above texts could apply only to an intelligent personality. Any other deduction would surely lead to utmost confusion and would do violence to the plainest statements of Holy Scripture. The basis of the work of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, His personality and deity. The evidence of His personality also proves His Godhead and reveals His omnipotent power. We believe that these two points require great emphasis, for a believer's estimate of the necessity and the nature of the work of the Spirit will be greatly affected by the strength of his faith in the personal glory of the Spirit. To place a small estimate on the dignity of the Spirit's person would inevitably lead to restricted views of the necessity and nature of His work. Let us, then, give particular attention to the question of His 'divinity.

## ***The Deity of the Spirit***

Let it first be noted that the very names that apply to God are also applied to the Spirit, as is seen in the following texts:

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3: 17.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts 5: 3, 4. Note carefully that Ananias in lying to the Holy Ghost was lying to God. Here the deity of the Spirit is expressly declared in language that cannot be misunderstood. Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit, to God.

Again, let us carefully compare the following parallel passages, which clearly reveal His deity:

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

"What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" 1 Corinthians 6: 19.

Here the terms "God" and "Holy Ghost" are used interchangeably. The body is declared to be the temple of God and also the temple of the Holy Ghost; thus the deity of the Spirit is clearly set forth.

Jesus declared to the cavilers of His day: "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Luke 11: 20. In Matthew's record of Jesus' words this miracle of dispossessing men of the spirits of demons is ascribed to the power of the Spirit: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Matthew 12: 28. Thus again the terms "the finger of God" and "the Spirit of God" are used synonymously.

Not only are the names of deity repeatedly applied to the Holy Spirit, but He also possesses the attributes and performs the works of God. For instance, God is declared to be eternal: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." 1 Timothy 1: 17. But so also is the Spirit eternal: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Hebrews 9: 14.

The Spirit is omnipresent. He can be in all places at one and the same time. David asks: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hides not from thee; but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Psalm 139: 7-12.

The Spirit is omnipotent. He has all power. Paul declares that his mighty miracles were wrought "by the power of the Spirit of God." (Romans 15: 19.) Zechariah 4: 6 reads: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." Creative power is ascribed to Him, as is also power to give life, and He is declared to have brought Jesus from the dead. "The Spirit of God hath made me." Job 33: 4. "Thou sends forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renews the face of the earth." Psalm 104: 30. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins. . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." 1 Peter 3: 18.

The Spirit is omniscient. He knows all things: "The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2: 10.

Surely there is much in these considerations to bring courage to every believer's heart. What a mighty Leader is this for the church! A divine personality, yet One who can be in all places at once, One who is eternal, who has all knowledge and all power, who is commissioned personally to direct

the work of the church on earth, and who even deigns to dwell in the heart of the humble believer, making his body become His temple! What confidence and sweet assurance are found here! What leadership is thus provided for the armies of God upon earth! Even the angels of God are under His control as they are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. It is under such masterful and all sufficient leadership that the church militant can look "forth as the morning," appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun," and become as "terrible as an army with banners." (Song of Solomon 6: 10.)

## **2. The Author of the Holy Scriptures**

FOR the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

The Holy Spirit is the author of the Sacred Scriptures. The book we call the Bible is not of human origin, as are other books, but it is literally a message from God to man. It is a breath of life from heaven. The Sacred Scriptures came not . . . by the will of man." True, men were the writers, but these men did not set down their own thoughts or endeavor, through their writings, to enforce their own wills upon others; but they "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The messages given by the Spirit are clothed in human language and often bear the peculiar style of the particular individuals through whom they were transmitted, but this does not detract in the least from their high authorship. They are as truly God's word as if they had been spoken as He spoke the Decalogue from the summit of Sinai-audibly.

Paul declares that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Timothy 3: 16. The Greek word used here by the apostle is, literally interpreted, "breathed." Thus all Scripture is "God-breathed." We are clearly told that when the writers of the books of Scripture undertook their sacred work, they wrote "not in the words which man's wisdom teaches," but with the words taught by the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, the Bible is not a man-made book. This accounts for the fact that there are many things contained therein which are beyond human understanding. It is filled with mysteries too great for the finite mind to comprehend fully. Such profound teachings as that of a personal God, who is author and preserver of all creation; the incarnation of Christ; the new birth; the indwelling of Christ in the hearts of His children; the resurrection of the dead. And the final glorification of the saints in an eternal kingdom carry the human mind far beyond its depth. Such profound mysteries never sprang from the heart of man; only the mind of God could conceive such things.

But the very fact that the Bible is so profound in its teachings and idealisms that it goes beyond the depths of human reasoning should give us great confidence in the fact of its inspiration. If the Bible were a man-made book, men could easily and readily understand all its philosophy. They could solve all its mysteries and, as a result of experience and increased knowledge, would even be able to produce a better book. But this, men never can do.

True, many of the teachings of Scripture are simple and easily understood. The way of salvation has been made so clear that every sinner will be without excuse in the day of God. God has revealed His plan of human redemption even "unto babes" and has written it very plainly. And yet the glory of the Book of God is revealed in the fact that beneath these simple teachings, which clearly reveal the way of eternal life, lie mines of precious truths so profound and so wonderful that man will require an eternity in the school of heaven to comprehend them all.

Everywhere in the Scriptures is the claim set up that the Holy Ghost is the author. Let us note carefully the following testimonies on this point: "And when they [the Jews in Rome] agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." Acts 28: 25. "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." Acts 1: 16. "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Hebrews 3: 7, 8. "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, said the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10: 15, 16. "But those things, which God before

had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Acts 3: 18. "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue." 2 Samuel 23: 2.

And this authorship extends to the entire Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New. Paul declared emphatically that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." This statement could have referred to nothing less than the whole of the Old Testament. The Old Testament canon was accepted by the Jews in the days of Christ and His apostles, just as we have it today, and the term "Scripture" was applied to it all. When Paul said "all Scripture," he was bearing testimony to the fact that the entire Old Testament was made up of inspired writings and was "profitable for doctrine. . . . for instruction in righteousness."

But the apostle spoke not only of the Old Testament. He was writing from Rome, and these words are found in one of his last messages. It was probably about AD. 66 that they were penned, and by that time much that now constitutes the New Testament had been written and accepted by the Christian church as Scripture. The early church, therefore, would have understood his unqualified statement to include these writings along with the books of the Old Testament. Thus he declares that all Scripture is God-breathed, and is, therefore, "profitable for doctrine" and "instruction."

The Scriptures, in their original form, before errors of copyists and translators crept in, constituted the pure word of God and were the product of the Holy Spirit's working through holy men. And so carefully has the Spirit watched over and preserved this word in the hands of translators and scribes that even today the astonishing fact remains that although it has been translated into over one thousand languages and dialects, yet no essential truth has been lost; and the plan of redemption still shines forth from its pages with undimmed glory.

It should be carefully noted here that it is the book that is inspired and not the writers of the book. The writers "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is with what they spoke and set down in writing that we have to do. The men were only transitory instruments. They were not infallible, neither did they possess any special wisdom above that of their fellows. They were only men among men, and the Holy Ghost simply employed them as transmitting agents through which to convey messages of eternal import to the world. The instruments have long since passed away, but that which was produced by them is still a quickening and regenerating agent. Thus it is truly said that the people are as grass, but the word of God shall stand forever. (See 1 Peter 1: 24, 25).

To emphasize further the fact that the inspiration of the Spirit lay in the writings and not in the writers, let it be here stated that many of the prophets themselves did not understand their own writings; and at times their prophecies were spoken without their intention or desire. Daniel, after writing out the details of a vision which pertained not to his day but to the future, declared, "And I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Daniel 8: 27.

Caiaphas uttered a prophecy of Christ without even discerning the fact. He declared to the council of priests and Pharisees: "Consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spoke he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation." John 11:50,51. And Balaam, while determined in his heart to curse Israel, was, under the compulsion of the Spirit, led three times to pronounce a beautiful benediction upon them instead. Therefore, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man." Rather, it was by the will of God and through the dictation of His Spirit. It is, therefore, the very word of God." This word may be clothed in human Language; it may have come through human instruments; it may bear the style and reflect the peculiar characteristics of its writers, but still it is not of the earth, earthly; it is of heaven, heavenly. Just as Christ, being clothed in human flesh, was nevertheless the Son of God, so the Bible, although clothed in human language, is nevertheless the word of God. "The word of God shall abide forever."

The Bible is different from other books in that it is filled with a vital, life-giving force that is peculiar to itself. Paul declares: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4: 12.

To say that this word is "quick" is to say that it is alive. It is not an inanimate form consisting merely of paper and ink; but it is a living force, "power-full," and when brought into contact with men discerns even their inmost thoughts and purposes. Paul refers to it as "the sword of the Spirit" and tells of its mighty accomplishments in the following graphic language: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:4,5.

The authenticity of the Bible's claims to inspiration is in its marvelous accomplishments in the lives and hearts of men. What has it ever done for the people of the world? Ask any sincere Christian what the word of God has done for him. Ask him whether it is any more to him than other books. Ask him whether its influence over his life has been different from that of the works of other writers. Ask him to tell you just what is in his heart about the Bible. His reply will be to you an evidence of its inspiration.

Wherever the Bible goes, it produces Christians and a Christian civilization. It lifts the drunkard from the gutter and stays the hand of the assassin. It changes the hearts of men and plants in them hope instead of despair. It touches weak, vacillating, degraded men and transforms them into strong, noble characters, fit for the kingdom of God. It is, in fact, the greatest dynamic force in the world. It is the living, powerful word of God.

Let us drop a copy of the Bible into a heathen village in central Africa where it has never been seen or heard of before. Let it be in a tribe that has no knowledge of God and that has never heard of heaven. Let it be in the language of the people so that they may read. Then after a few years have elapsed, let us visit this village and note the effect of the influence of this wonderful book. What do we find? The results are too marvelous to describe. During these few short years this book has been working as leaven among these ignorant people and has literally transformed their lives. They have become clean, and hope is now expressed in their countenances instead of fear and despair. Their village is clean; the idol shrines are deserted or perhaps broken down, and if we listen carefully, the voice of prayer may be heard in their lowly huts. What does all this mean? Simply that this book, which is the product of the Spirit of God, and which is living and powerful, has put the people of this heathen village in touch with the New Jerusalem and with its King, Jesus; and it has translated them out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God, so mighty is the power of the word of God given through His Spirit.

In summing up his instruction to the elders of the Ephesus Church, Paul bears a remarkable testimony to the power of the word by saying: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20: 32.

Let us also permit this powerful word to accomplish the same purpose in our lives. Let it be to us the voice of God; and when it is read, let us say with Samuel, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant hears." Then shall we hear the Spirit's still, small voice, and then shall we be led by the Spirit into all truth. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psalm 12: 6.

### **3. The Holy Spirit in Christ**

AND the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11: 2.

That the prophet is here speaking of the earthly life of our Lord there can scarcely be any question. The Bible abounds with evidence that during Jesus' life on earth He was continually dependent upon the power and co-operation of the Holy Spirit of God in all His undertakings. In confirming this, however, let it not be understood that I am in any way questioning the deity of Jesus Christ Himself. I most emphatically declare my faith in the absolute deity of the Son of God. I believe that while Jesus was upon earth, He was as truly God as was His Father in heaven. And, of course, as God He could not be dependent in any way upon the power of the Spirit. As God He was omnipotent. He Himself possessed all the attributes of the Godhead. As God He was self-existent, offering life to all who would accept it from Him as its source and very fountainhead. He declared: "I have power to lay it [my life] down, and I have power to take it again." In fact, He boldly declares that all power in heaven and in earth was given into His hands.

But as truly as Christ was divine, He was also human. He was God manifested in the flesh. He was a God-man. We read that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1: 14) And when the divine Son of God stooped to become a man, He took upon Himself real humanity. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it became him to be made like unto his brethren." Hebrews 2: 14-17. He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He became subject to temptation and was actually tempted in all points as we are. He was subject to suffering, weariness, sorrow, and death.

It was the humanity of our Lord that was strengthened by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. As man He was as dependent upon the Spirit of God for succor and sustaining power as are other men. In all His temptations and struggles with the enemy He never once called into play His own inherent divine power, but depended utterly upon the indwelling presence and intervention of the Holy Spirit. He was working out the righteousness of God in human flesh; and as He was to be a true example to His followers, it was essential that He should have no advantage over them. He would demonstrate that the power that is available to man, through the Spirit, is all-sufficient to bring complete deliverance from sin and glorious victory over all the power of the enemy.

"In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God, till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours."- Mrs. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.

It was as man that Jesus received the Spirit, and the Holy Ghost continued with Him during His earthly ministry. In fact, it was to the divine Spirit that the Father committed the glorious task of forming our Lord's humanity. This was the beginning of the operation of the Spirit in Christ. The record declares:

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favor with God. And, behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb, and bring

forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1: 26-35.

Matthew's record states that "the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 1:18. The conception, of course, was a miracle of miracles. It was an unheard-of thing that a virgin should conceive and bear a son. The solution of this staggering mystery lies only in the creative power of God exercised through the Third Person of the Godhead. The virgin is overshadowed of the Holy Ghost, covered with the power of the Highest, and that Holy Thing that was born of her was the Son of God. Through the power of the divine Spirit the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. What condescension on the part of the great God! The Creator, the Son of God, took on Himself the nature of a servant, actually in form becoming a man in order that He might become our Savior. The Majesty of the universe stooped to become our kinsman. We behold Him now not as a mighty reigning king, but as a babe in a lowly Bethlehem manger.

And when the loving Father sent forth His only Son into the world, He did not lend Him merely, but He made an absolute gift. He became a man, not for thirty-three years, but for eternity. When He had finished His earthly ministry and ascended again into heaven, He retained His human form. As man He ascended; as man He was exalted by the Father into union with Himself and seated at His right hand on the throne. He went as a member of our race; as our Elder Brother, as an Advocate for men He went, still bearing the marks of the crucifixion; and His acceptance by the Father became an earnest of our acceptance with Him also in the coming kingdom. In receiving the man Christ Jesus, Heaven has committed itself to receiving the men who follow Him.

During His earthly life Jesus, as man, was dependent upon the Holy Spirit for keeping power, for wisdom and understanding. The prophet had said: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:2. He was filled with the Spirit; for John declared, "God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him." John 3: 34. He was filled without measure, or beyond measure. He had the entire fullness of the Spirit's power in order that He might be safely protected from the pitfalls of sin. He was not independent of the Spirit. He lived a life of faith and trust, even as we must. As man He was as dependent upon supernatural, sustaining grace as we are, and we find Him leaning hard upon the arm of omnipotent power and partaking largely of the Spirit. See Him, wet with the dews of heaven, a result of an all-night vigil on Olivet. Behold Him arising a great while before day" and wending His way out of the busy city to His secret closet of prayer. No wonder He spoke as never man spoke. The multitude hung upon His gracious words. He had prayed as never man had prayed and trusted as never man had trusted.

A wonderful manifestation of the Holy Spirit was seen upon the occasion of Jesus' baptism. Matthew's record declares: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight way out of the water. And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a (love, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3: 16, 17.

It was at this time that Jesus was to enter fully upon His earthly ministry, and God was especially fitting Him for His task by the bestowal of the Spirit. He was now fully invested with the office of Messiah. Every gift and grace required for the accomplishment of the great work before Him

was included in this immeasurable gift of the Spirit. Luke's record declares that He was "full of the Holy Ghost" as He returned from Jordan. (Luke 4: 1.) And again: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10: 38.

It was this in filling of the Spirit that prepared the Master for the fearful ordeal of fasting and temptation in the wilderness. The record says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Matthew 4: 1. In His bitter conflict with His ancient foe He constantly relied upon the Spirit for defense.

It was the "sword of the Spirit," which is the word of God, that He wielded so mightily and effectively as to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. His constant appeal was, "It is written," "It is written ... .. It is written." Three times the sword was drawn, and the third blow brought victory. "Then the devil leaves him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Matthew 4: 11.

Covered with the glory of triumph, Jesus came out of the wilderness of temptation and "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were listened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4: 14-21.

Here, then, was the source of the Lord's fitness for His task and the secret of His powerful ministry. The scriptures which predicted His anointing were fulfilled, and He stood forth clothed with the armor of heaven. "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Verse 22.

It was through the power of the Holy Ghost and the ministration of angels under the Spirit's control that the wonderful miracles accredited to Jesus were performed. The record declares that His going "about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" followed His anointing with the Holy Ghost and with power. (Acts 10:8.) He was clothed with miracle-working power because "God was with him." In reply to the taunt of the Pharisees that it was through Baalzebub that He was casting out devils, He clearly indicated the source of His power. After silencing their quibbles on the ground that Satan could not maintain his kingdom if it were divided against itself, He declared: "That if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Matthew 12: 28. The Spirit with which He was anointed was a "spirit of might." It was through this might that the blind received their sight, the lame were enabled to walk, the lepers were cleansed, And the dead were raised to life again. Poor mortals should beware, then, of how they tamper with the miracles of Jesus lest they be found guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost!

Another function of the Spirit was that of testifying to the son ship and deity of Christ. "He shall glorify me," says Jesus, "for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16: 14. And again: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me." John 15: 26. The testimony of the Spirit concerning Christ has ever been, and ever will be, that He was the Son of God sent down from heaven to tabernacle in human flesh, that though He was encumbered with humanity, yet this served only to veil His glory that He, as God, might dwell with men. His testimony is that Christ was

the true Messiah, and that His death on the cross constituted a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. That He was raised from the dead, caught up into heaven, and serves now as our Advocate and High Priest at the right hand of God; that this Christ is our one and only Savior, and that apart from Him we are without hope in the world.

Our Lord's atoning death on Calvary derives its great importance from the dignity of His own person. "He offered himself" for our sins, and His offering was accepted as being all-sufficient to accomplish our redemption; and yet it was through the power of the Spirit that Jesus was enabled to hold His human nature to the program He had outlined for Himself. As He wrestled with God in Gethsemane, His flesh revolted against going on to the cross. He was struggling with the final and overpowering temptation of His earthly existence—that of allowing the ungrateful human race to perish, and returning to the Father's house without making the supreme sacrifice. What power was it that sustained Him in that fateful hour and kept Him from yielding to the flesh and turning back? It was the power of the Spirit of God. Notice carefully the record: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 9: 14.

Nor was this all. When our Lord lay buried in Joseph's new tomb. When the tomb was secured by the Roman seal and the guard of soldiers stood by to make sure that no one stole His body; when the hopes of His followers seemed blighted, and all appeared to be lost. It was again the Holy Spirit that intervened, turning the night of the disciples into eternal day and striking fear and consternation to the hearts of Christ's enemies by raising Jesus from the dead. Peter's testimony is very clear on this point: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." 1 Peter 3: 18.

And to this Paul adds: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he . . . shall also quicken your mortal bodies." Romans 8:11. Our Lord was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4) How close, then, is the association of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the supreme effort that is being made to save the lost race! How carefully did the Father guard over His only-begotten Son during the years of His exile through the agency of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity—the Holy Spirit! Even the angels of God were commissioned to carry out the commands of this divine Spirit. Thus do we behold the glorious spectacle of all heaven blending its forces in one gigantic endeavor to redeem a lost race.

#### **4. The Comforter - A Changed Relationship**

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

"But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7: 3 9.

As we have already seen, the Holy Spirit has been at work in the world from the beginning. Our first introduction to Him is in Genesis 1: 2, where we are told that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. He was one of the active agents in creation. From that time on throughout the entire Old Testament period we find traces of His gracious work performed in a great variety of ways. In Isaiah 40: 13, 14 He is set forth as one possessing all knowledge and understanding. In Isaiah 63: 11 we read of God's putting His Holy Spirit within Moses. In Judges 13: 25 we are informed that the secret of the mighty Samson's power was that he was moved by the Spirit of God. We also read that David spoke by the aid of the Spirit (Matthew 22: 43). That the Spirit was in Joshua (Numbers 27: 18),

that the Spirit testified through the prophets (Nehemiah 9: 30), that God's people are upheld by Him (Psalm 51: 12), that it is impossible to flee from His presence (Psalm 139: 7).

We might continue to accumulate evidence, but this is more than sufficient. The Holy Ghost was in the world and at work among men from the time of creation. How is it, then, that Jesus speaks of sending Him after His departure? Said He: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." And how could John say truly that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given"? Here is an apparent contradiction of Scripture, but it is immediately clarified when we understand the changed relationship and office of the Spirit after the death of Christ. Before this time He had been operating in the world in His own right, co-operating with the Father and Son in the plan of human redemption. Now He was to become the Vicar of Christ. He was no longer to operate as an independent agency, but as the personal representative of the great Head of the church. Henceforth He was to speak for Christ, to testify of Christ, to show the church the things of Christ, to dwell in the hearts of men in Christ's name; and in all things He was to exalt the name and power of our mighty Savior.

He was now to come into the world in an official capacity' and His work was to be that of making the great sacrifice of our Lord efficacious in working out our redemption. His presence in the church was to be as the very presence of the Lord Himself. It would be just as though Jesus were personally dwelling in the heart of each individual believer. He was to make Christ's presence real to men by dwelling with them in Christ's name. Henceforth, for the Spirit to dwell in men's hearts would be for Christ to dwell there inasmuch as He was to come as Christ's representative.

Let us note a few of the New Testament texts which show this representative position the Spirit was now to occupy:

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father.... he shall testify of me." John 15: 26.

"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.

"He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." Verse 13.

"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Verse 14.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14: 26.

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14: 18.

"But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Romans 8:9,10.

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in Our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." 2 Corinthians 4: 10, 11.

"And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." Galatians 4: 6.

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Ephesians 3: 16, 17.

Thus it is clearly revealed by a multitude of witnesses that henceforth the presence of the Spirit in the church, or in the heart of the believer, was to be as the very presence of Jesus Himself. He comes in Jesus' name, speaks Jesus' words, ministers Jesus' life to the heart, carries on Jesus' work, and testifies of Jesus' power in working out our salvation. So Paul could truly say, "Christ lives in me,"

although the personal Christ was seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

It was in this sense that the Holy Ghost had not been given before Pentecost. He was to assume an entirely new relationship, taking Christ's place as head of the church upon earth. Christ ascended to take up His work as our great High Priest in the sanctuary above and to act as our Advocate before the Father. Thus He could be personally present with the Father and at the same time, spiritually present with every believer.

Jesus took occasion to explain this glorious truth to His disciples just at the time when they were passing through a period of discouragement because He had announced His departure. He had said to them, "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you ask me, Whither goes thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." John 16:5,6. It seemed to the sorrowing disciples that all was lost. They had hoped that He would wrest the lost dominion from the hands of the Roman usurpers and re-establish the throne of David. They had expected to crown Him king. Then He announced that He was about to depart. Surely no greater calamity could possibly come to the struggling church than to have their Lord and Master separate Himself from them and leave them alone! How astonished, then, must they have been at His next statement: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16: 7. No doubt this was a hard saying to them. How could it be expedient for them that He should depart? just this: It was a wonderful thing to have Christ with them in the flesh, but it would be a far greater and more blessed experience to have Him present in the Spirit. In the flesh Jesus could be in only one place at a time; in the Spirit He could be constantly with all His believing children throughout the world. In the flesh He could only dwell with them, whereas through the Spirit He could dwell in them.

"The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore, it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Savior would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high." - Mrs. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

How glorious is the dispensation of the Spirit! Through Him the fullness of the Godhead is brought into vital touch with man; through Him Jesus dwells in the hearts of His children.

But why should the Spirit now testify of Christ and speak for Christ instead of Himself? Because "it pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should all fullness dwell," and "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Colossians 1:19,18. It was Jesus Christ the Son of God who became man's only Savior. It was through the shedding of His blood on Calvary that He purchased our redemption. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12.

The Spirit's work was to lead men to Christ, to exalt the name of Jesus, and to administer the atonement of our Lord to poor lost souls in order that Jesus, our one and only Savior, might become "all and in all" to us. It follows that the more one has of the Spirit, the more he will glorify Christ; for, said Jesus, "He shall glorify me." Immanuel is the name that is above every name as far as humanity is concerned, and the Spirit is given to bring this blessed Immanuel nearer to us and render His sacrifice in our behalf efficacious.

Through Jesus, God was brought into vital contact with humanity. Christ became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; He bore our sicknesses, our sorrows, and our grief's, and was touched with the feeling of all our infirmities. He suffered, was tempted in all points as we are. All this was done that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest and be able to succor them that are tempted. The

Spirit was given with the purpose of making this contact still closer by His dwelling within the heart and ministering the life and love of the Savior to the soul.

The presence of the Spirit, or Comforter, becomes as the very presence of Christ to the soul. Thus it is that the Lord can make the promises: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 2 Corinthians 6: 16. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more; but you see me: because I live, you shall live also. At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." John 14: 16-20.

"Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal." -Mrs. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 388.

"Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of His children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them, so that men, beholding, 'marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.' " -Mrs. E. G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 75 (pocket edition).

## ***The Witness of the Spirit***

One of the particular functions of the Comforter is that of witnessing to the character of our Lord's person and the efficacy of His atonement. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of Me." John 15: 26.

Thus in the New Testament Scriptures, written under His direction and inspiration, there is a constant setting forth of the life and work of Christ and of the sacrifice of His life on Calvary as a redemption price for guilty men.

The Spirit testifies that the death of the Son of God was a willing sacrifice. "He gave himself." He was not torn from the throne by the Father and thrust forth into the world, but He craved the privilege of coming. He went not as a reluctant, but as a willing, victim to the altar. He was not dragged to the cross. He went there voluntarily. He was urged forward by His undying love for man. He loved sinners so ardently that He loved not His own life unto the death. His love for us was so great that it blunted the sense of the pain that was required to redeem us. Not all the Jews in the raving mob outside Pilate's judgment hall could have driven Him to Calvary; not all the Roman soldiers could have carried Him there; but His eternal love took Him there! No nails could have held Him to the cross, but His love for men fastened Him there. It was all a voluntary sacrifice. When the proud Pilate boasted to Him, saying: "Know you not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou could have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." John 19: 10, 11. Jesus clearly revealed the fact that His sacrifice was entirely voluntary on His part. They thought they were forcing Him. They believed Him to be in their power. But He knew that He was willingly rushing to the rescue of lost humanity at the cost of life itself. The urgency of His going to Calvary was not resting upon the hatred of the mob as it cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him," but upon His own eagerness to hasten to man's rescue. Hear Him as He exclaims concerning man: "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Job 33: 24. "Therefore does my Father love

me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself" John 10: 17, 18.

The blessed Spirit reveals that Jesus loved sinners better than Himself. Notwithstanding their guilt, wretchedness, and fickleness, He loved them so much as to die for them. It was not in any sense for Himself that He went to the cross, but it was all for us. And when He freely permitted His hands and feet to be pierced with the cruel nails, it was just as though He was having our names engraved there as tokens of His undying love for us. Zion had said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." But the Lord replied: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Isaiah 49: 14-16.

### ***Witness of the Spirit to Christ's Atoning Work***

Everywhere in the New Testament the Spirit testifies that this sacrificial gift of the life of the Son of God was made as an atonement for the sins of men. There was no other way of escaping the wages of sin. The holy law of God had been broken by the entire race, and this law could not be set aside. In all justice it demanded the death of the transgressor. In no way other than by death could the penalty be met and the demands of the law be satisfied. For "without shedding of blood is no remission." Man's only hope was in a substitute who would die in his stead, the shedding of whose blood could atone for his guilt and sin. And this is just what was provided in the death of Christ. His spilled blood was counted for our blood, His death for our death, His suffering for our suffering so that by accepting Him as our Redeemer it is counted that we have died. In that way we have actually paid the death penalty for our sins. We did it in Him, and by making Him ours, we receive with Him complete deliverance from all our sins. He "was surrendered to death because of the offences we had committed, and was raised to life because of the acquittal secured for us." Romans 4: 25, Weymouth. "No distinction is made; for all alike have sinned, and all consciously come short of the glory of God, gaining acquittal from guilt by His free unpurchased grace through the deliverance which is found in Christ Jesus. " Romans 3: 23, 24, Weymouth. "If therefore we have now been pronounced free from guilt through His blood, much more shall we be delivered from God's anger through Him. For if while we were hostile to God we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, it is still more certain that now that we are reconciled, we shall obtain salvation through Christ's life. And not only so, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now obtained that reconciliation." Romans 5: 9-11, Weymouth.

This, then, is the reason that "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Hebrews 7: 25) He has paid the full redemption price. There is nothing more to pay. The demands of the law have been fully satisfied, and all that remains to complete the fact of our redemption is our act of accepting Him. The fateful and final decision as to our salvation or our eternal doom rests within our own choice. The Spirit's voice calls to one and all, saying, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22: 17.

### ***The Spirit's Witness to the Believer's Heart***

There is also a sense in which the Comforter witnesses to the children of God, encouraging

them to trust in Jesus absolutely for acceptance and salvation. We read: "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Romans 8:16. "He that believes on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John 5: 10. And again, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." 1 John 4: 13. The Spirit, therefore, is verily a comforter to the true disciples of Jesus. He reveals to them their Savior, testifies of the atonement Christ has made for their sins, and then bids them rest their cases fully in His care, believing that He that has begun a good work is able also to finish it. His admonition to the repentant sinner is to rest in the Lord."

If instead the believer is continually fretting and worrying about whether he shall be able to endure and be saved, he is manifesting distrust in the keeping and saving power of the Savior. The Spirit's testimony to the believer is that Christ "is able to keep you from falling". He can "succor them that are tempted". He can save "to the uttermost". He will "hold thy right hand". He "will strengthen thee"; He "will uphold thee"; He will "make a way in the sea"; He "will be with thee". He will make a way of escape with every temptation that He suffers you to endure. and He will save "with an everlasting salvation."

Then let us trust Him and "rest in the Lord." In this way Christ will become all to us. He will be all our salvation, all our strength, all our trust. And He will become our all in all. He will be seen in all our mercies, in all our trials, in all our afflictions, in all our joys, in all our lives. What more can a mortal need or want? What more could a loving Father have done for us than He has done? Verily, nothing. In giving Jesus, He has emptied heaven of its treasures in a mighty effort to save a lost race. And He did it because He loved us.

## **5. The Comforter at Work**

ONE of the chief functions of the Holy Spirit is to implant in the human heart the sense of sin. Jesus declared: 'And when he is come, he will reprove [margin, convince] the world of sin.' John 16: 8. Not all the manifestations of the Spirit bring rejoicing to the heart. There is a scourging and chastening that must of necessity be endured before the soul is prepared to rejoice in the Lord. Before a sick man can realize his need of a physician, he must first be impressed with the fact and character of his illness; and so it is with the sinner. Before he will flee to the Savior for deliverance from his bondage and guilt, he must be made to realize his lost and undone condition. This work must be accomplished by the Holy Spirit before the sinner will take his first step toward his Savior. Newton has aptly said: "No man ever did, or ever will, feel himself to be a lost, miserable, and hateful sinner unless he be powerfully and supernaturally convinced by the Spirit of God."

The chief instrument used by the Holy Spirit in convincing of sin is the divine law of God as contained in the Ten Commandments. The Spirit first bears testimony to the holiness, spirituality, and justice of the law, declaring it to be a perfect standard of righteousness and morality and a reflection of the character of God. (See Psalm 19: 7 and Romans 7:12)

When this divine law is brought into the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and the sinner is led to see himself in the light of its precepts, he is immediately convinced of his sin. He sees by the law what purity and holiness mean and how undone and miserable he is. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3: 20. Also, the law is declared to be our schoolmaster (disciplinarian) to bring us to Christ. (Galatians 3: 24.) In fact, the great apostle testifies that ,only through this instrument was he led to realize the, presence of sin in his heart; for we hear him say: "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shall not covet." Romans 7: 7.

James compares the law to a glass (mirror), by looking into which one's true condition is clearly revealed. By the contrast between the low life of sin and shame and the purity and holiness of the law, the sinner is involuntarily led to exclaim, "The law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good. . . . But I am carnal, sold under sin. Romans 7: 12-14. Through the divine law the Holy Spirit leads the soul to realize its lost and undone condition and to come in humility and contrition to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Thus it is that Christ, working through the Holy Spirit, calls sinners to true sorrow for their sins, which is repentance. "But go you and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matthew 9: 13.

When the sinner is brought under conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, he will probably feel, as did the apostle, that he is the "chief of sinners." He seems now to be more vile, guilty, and polluted than anyone else in the world. He no longer swaggers about in bold defiance of God, but bows his head in abject shame and feels the condemnation of death resting down upon him. His views in relation to God and His holy law are reversed. He sees Jesus, not as an austere monarch seeking his destruction, but in the light of Calvary, giving His all, even His very lifeblood, for his redemption. He recalls how often he spurned Christ's loving offers of mercy, and a terrible sense of guilt rests down upon the conscience. Sorrow wrings his heart. He is led to exclaim with the prophet Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isaiah 6: 5.

But is his case hopeless? Must he perish in his sins? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" There is. The physician is Jesus of Nazareth; the balm is His own precious blood that was shed in the sinner's behalf. He can cleanse the soul until it will be no longer red like crimson, but

pure and white as snow! He can apply the balm and bind up the wounds sin has made until the broken heart is entirely healed. For Jesus has declared Himself to be the binder up of broken hearts:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Isaiah 61: 1-3.

The Christian who has had the mortifying experience of praying earnestly for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and finding upon arising from his knees that there has come over him an awful sense of guilt and sin, should not allow this experience to lead him to feel that his prayer has been unanswered. The Spirit has come in response to his petition, but before He can bring joy and comfort to the heart, He must first reveal the fact that some sin has fastened itself upon the life and that this must be removed before the Spirit can gain entrance. That conviction of guilt is the Spirit's pleading for the idols to be cast out now and forever.

Never has a sinner come to Jesus without finding a welcome. No prodigal son of God has ever returned to his Father's house to be buffeted, scolded, or turned away. "All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6: 37. The Master waits today to welcome repentant sinners to the warmth and love of home. He pleads with them by His Spirit, saying, "My son, give me your heart." He spreads forth His nail-scarred hands in loving invitation and cries, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

But we must come with repentance in the heart and confession upon our lips if we would be accepted of Him, and all genuine repentance is promptly rewarded with full and complete forgiveness and justification. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9. And again: "Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1: 18.

Thus the sinner, coming to Jesus, finds in His blood a fountain for sin and uncleanness, and through its great efficacy he is made whole. His sins are cast into the depths of the sea. They will be remembered against him no more, and he is declared to be righteous instead of sinful. How it is possible for God to be truthful and still call a sinner righteous? Here is the answer:

"Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Savior, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God, just as if you had not sinned."- Mrs. E. G. White, Steps to Christ, p. 62 (pocket edition).

## ***Regeneration, or Being Born of the Spirit***

In connection with the forgiveness of sin there is also another work of the Spirit of God that is performed for the sinner. It is that of regeneration, or the new birth. The Christian life does not consist simply of a modification and reformation of the old life, but of an entirely new life that is implanted in the soul. This is the experience David sought when, confessing his sins, he prayed: "Create in me a

clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51: 10. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5: 17.

This is the great truth that the Master sought to teach Nicodemus when in the secrecy and solitude of the night He had been sought out by this teacher in Israel. 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee,' said Jesus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again." John 3: 3-7.

This new birth is produced by the Spirit. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." John 3: 5. "It is the Spirit that quickens." John 6: 63. It is through the operation of the Holy Spirit that a new life is engendered in the soul and the man becomes a "new creature." This new life is the life of Jesus. The "old man," the carnal heart, with its lusting after the flesh, is crucified. And the "new man," Christ Jesus, assumes control of the temple of the soul, the transformation taking place in the life being so complete that the new Christian is spoken of as a "new creature," or a "new-born babe." He has been twice born-once of the flesh and now of the Spirit. He has been transformed by the renewing of the mind, and the actual life of Jesus is now "made manifest in our mortal flesh." (2 Corinthians 4:11.)

The unrenewed state of man is likened to death. The soul by nature is morally dead. Thus it is described: "When we were dead in sins." Ephesians 2: 5. "Dead in trespasses and sins." Ephesians 2: 1. "You, being dead in your sins." Colossians 2: 13. The carnal heart is insensible to all spiritual things, and though it is alive, yet it lives to the flesh. The understanding, the will, and the affections are under the control of the carnal propensities of the fallen nature; and the works of the flesh are manifest in the life. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like. Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5: 19-21.

But it is not possible for the carnal nature to reform itself, "because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8: 7. It is necessary, therefore, that men should become possessed of a new nature, and this is exactly what happens at the new birth. "We know," exclaims the beloved John, "that we have passed from death unto life." 1 John 3: 14. 'Verily, verily, . . . he that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened." Colossians 2:13. A new life is breathed into the soul by the Spirit of God, and the body of the believer becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost: "What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?" 1 Corinthians 6:19. "And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." Galatians 4: 6.

Let it be remembered that when the Spirit comes into the life, He comes in the name of Jesus. He is the "Spirit of his Soil." He comes not to speak of Himself, but to minister the life of Christ to the soul; so fully does He represent Christ, the Lord, that it can be said in very truth that Christ Himself is abiding in the soul. Then can the new believer exclaim with the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2: 20.

This is the fellowship of the Spirit, and it brings Christ nearer to the soul than if He were bodily

present with the individual. "For thus said the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57: 15.

What glorious condescension is this! Solomon, at the dedication of his magnificent temple, exclaimed: "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have built?" 1 Kings 8: 27. Where shall we find a temple worthy to become the dwelling place of Deity? Shall we search out the ancient abbeys and repair the altars? Shall we erect a temple of gold and garnish it with costly stones and pearls? No! No! It is not such a temple that He seeks. He has a far more divine and sacred building than all these. It is the heart of the humble and the so of the contrite that tremble at His word. Think of it "You are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 2 Corinthians 6: 16. Although the very heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, He finds a home' a place of rest and satisfaction, and rears His throne within the heart of the poor sinner who, in sincere penitence and deep contrition, confesses his sins to God and accepts Jesus Christ as his only Savior! There he reigns and transforms the sinner through grace into the image of God.

In man's original state of innocence before the fall, Jehovah was the one and supreme object of the creature's love and adoration. Seduced from that state of simple and supreme affection by the tempter's promise that, if they ate of the fruit of the tree forbidden by God, they 'should be as gods,' in one moment they threw off their allegiance to Jehovah, renounced Him as the object of their supreme love, the center of their holiest affections, and became gods to themselves. The temple was ruined, the altar was thrown down, the pure flame was extinguished, God departed, and 'other lords' entered and took possession of the soul. But what a change does grace produce! It repairs the temple, rebuilds the altar, rekindles the flame, and brings God back to man. God in Christ is now the supreme object of his love, his adoration, and his worship. The idol self has been cast down, self-righteousness renounced, self-exaltation crucified. A stronger than it has entered, cast out the usurper, and 'creating all things new,' has resumed His rightful supremacy. The affections, released from their false deity, and renewed by the Spirit, now turn to and take up their rest in God. God in Christ! How glorious does He now appear! Never did the soul see in Him such beauty, such excellence, such blessedness as it now sees. All other glory fades and dies before the surpassing glory of His character, His attributes, His government, and His law. God in Christ is viewed as reconciled now; enmity ceases. Hatred has passed away; opposition grounds its weapons; hard thoughts of His law and treasonable thoughts against His government subside; love kindles in the soul, and in the one precious Christ, the one Mediator, God and the sinner meet, embrace and blend. Truly they become one. God says, 'Thou art mine.' The soul responds, 'Thou art my God: other lords have had dominion over me, but henceforth Thee only will I serve, Thee only will I love. "My soul follows hard after Thee; Thy right hand upholds me. . . . One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple."

"God in Christ is now the object of confidence and trust. Trust in a reconciled God and Father was no mark nor portion of his unrenewed state. It was then, trust in self, in its imagined wisdom and strength and goodness. It was then, trust in the arm of flesh, in second causes. Now the soul trusts in God, trusts Him at all times and under all circumstances, trusts Him in the darkest hour, under the gloomiest dispensation, trusts Him when His providences look dark and lowering, and God seems to hide Himself; yea, trusts Him, 'though He slay.' Now 'though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine; the labor of the olive fail, and the fields yield no meat. Though the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall, he will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation.' Oh, how safe he feels in God's hands and' under His government now! His soul, his body,

his family, his business, his cares are completely surrendered, and God is all in all. Reader, this is to be born again."-Octavius Winslow, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 67-71.

## ***The Old Man Not Dead***

But the experience of the new birth does not destroy the old nature. It is brought into subjection and is placed under control of the Spirit, but it is not eradicated. To the truthfulness of this fact every Christian can testify. Immediately to destroy all evil propensities would be to remove the new convert from all possibility of temptation. There could be no testing and trying, no growing in grace, no trusting in the keeping power of Christ to prevent from falling, no further mortifying of the flesh, and no watching unto prayer. The surrender of the soul to the control of the Spirit is tantamount to a declaration of war between the Spirit and the flesh. Hitherto the flesh has had full sway, and the general tendency of the life has been downward. Now the flesh is placed in a state of "crucifixion," but not of actual death. The flesh pleads continually for pity and recognition; stirred up by Satan, it seeks to regain the ascendancy of power. "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Galatians 5:17.

There is, therefore, no co-operation of the flesh with the Spirit in the new creation. Paul understood this when he declared: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Romans 7: 21-23.

There must be a daily, hourly, momentary denying of self and surrendering to the control of the Spirit. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "I die daily." The flesh must be mortified again and again. There must be a daily surrendering and a daily choosing of whom we will serve. My having made the choice yesterday will not suffice for today or tomorrow. I must choose now. "If any man will come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9: 23.

There is in the life of every Christian a daily crucifixion. Either self is made to bear the cross, or, by yielding again to its pleadings and cravings, we "crucify . . . the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." The Christian still has the free exercise of the will, and it becomes a daily matter for him to decide whether it shall be placed on the side of the Spirit or the flesh. God will never coerce the will. "If any man will to do his will," is the basis upon which the Spirit will continue in control of the life.

Though the "old man" is not actually put to death, yet we are asked to relate ourselves to him just as though he were. "Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6: 11. We must close the ears of the will to the pleadings of the old man of sin and allow no sympathy to be extended because of his sufferings. He is to be treated, as dead. "Let not Sin therefore reign as king in your mortal bodies, causing you to be in subjection to their cravings; and no longer lend your faculties as unrighteous weapons for Sin to use. On the contrary surrender your very selves' to God as living men who have risen from the dead, and surrender your several faculties to God, to be used as weapon to maintain the right." Romans 6:12,13, Weymouth.

I repeat that this surrendering of the faculties to either God or sin is a daily, hourly matter. But the surrender of the will to the Spirit today will make it infinitely easier to surrender to Him again tomorrow. This is growth in grace. As we practice daily surrender to the Spirit, the voice of the flesh becomes less and less audible, and the evil propensities of our nature become more and more

neutralized. This is what is meant by being led by the Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8: 14.

"Therefore, brethren, it is not to our lower natures that we are under obligation that we should live by their rule. For if you so live, death, is near; but if, through being under the sway of the spirit, you are putting your old bodily habits to death, you will live." Romans 8: 12, 13, Weymouth.

## ***Power Over Sin***

It is not necessary that the twice-born individual should ever again surrender to the power of sin. God has provided grace sufficient for every possible temptation and trial. If the Spirit is granted full control of the life, He declares His ability to "save to the uttermost" to keep from falling, to preserve blameless, and to provide a way of escape from every temptation. He can "make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." Hebrews 13: 21.

The soul that is fully surrendered to the control of Christ through the Spirit is secure in His keeping. The attacks of the enemy are warded off, and the fruits of holiness are produced in the life. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59: 19. It is possible for the Christian to live without committing known sin as long as he submits to the control of the Spirit.

## ***Provision Made for Our Weakness***

But it is not impossible for the Christian to commit sin. When our God laid the plan of redemption, He knew that He was making it for fallen human beings, and He realized that provision must be made to cover all possible failures. He, therefore, sends us the loving message: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2: 1. God's ideal for His children is "that you sin not," and He has provided grace to keep them from sinning. But "if any man sin," his case is not hopeless. Thank God for this provision! But for it, what Christian could hold up his head and still hope for eternal life! "If any man sin." Let the erring Christian remember that his Lord is still his advocate before the throne. Even today, if such a one will confess his yielding to the flesh and surrender once again to the control of the Spirit, Jesus will spread His hands, which still bear the nail prints, before the Father and plead His blood for His repentant disciple, thus securing the fullness of pardon.

Do not delay to come to Him. Come with all your sins, your back sliding, and your worldliness. Come, and lay it all at His feet and leave it there. He will heal the wounds that sin has made, and He will not upbraid you. By your continuance in sin you are crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to open shame. Come today, and rest yourself in the shelter of your Father's love, knowing that He has power to keep you from sin.

## ***The Fruits of the Spirit***

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5: 22-25.

What a marvelous transformation is wrought in the life by the Spirit! The sinner comes to God burdened down with the works of the flesh-adultery, fornication, hatred, strife, idolatry, envying, murders, drunkenness, and such like. Through the gracious operation of the Spirit these drop from the life as the dead leaves fall with the coming of life and sap into the tree in the springtime, and there appear in their place the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Who but God would be able to accomplish such a change?

## ***The Spirit and Sanctification***

And it is through the gracious working of the Spirit, dwelling in the heart of the believer, that the life is sanctified and finally scaled for the kingdom. The doctrine of sanctification is a Bible doctrine. It is God's plan that all His true children should be sanctified and made holy by the indwelling of the Spirit. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thessalonians 4: 3. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thessalonians 2:13. Heaven is a holy place, and the God whose glory fills the temple is a holy God. It is His purpose that all who dwell there with Him shall also be holy. And without this holiness "no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12: 14.) "I am the Lord your God: you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy." Leviticus 11: 44.

It has been said that "sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." It results from a continual daily yielding to the control of the Spirit of God. It is witnessed by a progressive conformity to the will of God and the divine nature. Thus we are made "partakers of His holiness" (Hebrews 12: 10), and the more we have of Him, the more fully is the life sanctified by His presence.

But let it be carefully noted that there can be no advance of sanctification in the life when the will is being daily surrendered to the cravings of the flesh. This point must be very carefully guarded. It is of the utmost importance that our wills be kept on the side of Christ. This will be our struggle. We cannot produce righteousness in the soul, but we can will to do His will. "What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourselves give God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him."- Mrs. E. G. Mite, Steps to Christ, p. 47 (pocket edition).

It should be noticed that the life of one who is progressing in holiness by the indwelling of the Spirit will be a life of obedience to God's moral law. He does not keep the law as a means of grace that through it he might be saved, but he keeps it because he is saved and has been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Too weak to keep it of himself, he has been "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," and he now discovers that he can "do all things through Christ which strengthens him. (Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 4: 11)

" If we suppose the law to have lost all authority and use -to be entirely abrogated- we must suppose the relation of God to His creatures as their moral Governor also to have ceased-that, having

laid aside all rule of obedience, He had with it abdicated the throne of the universe, and that man had ceased to be the subject of a moral government. But, so far from this, the law of God remains in all its dignity, purity, and force. The believer in Christ is released from it as a ground of acceptance but not as a standard of holiness. Is it true that Christ is the standard and pattern of a believer's holiness? Undoubtedly. Then we argue that the moral law was the standard of Christ's holiness, therefore it must necessarily be the standard of the believer's. The whole life of Jesus was a conformity to the purity of the divine law-it was His standard of holiness-His pattern of obedience. And, in following the example of Christ, we are conformed to the purity of the law 'in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.'

"Sanctification, then, is a growing conformity to the spirituality of the divine law. The sincere believer acknowledges 'that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good'; he knows 'that the law is spiritual' he therefore 'delights in the law of God after the inward man.' Does his faith in Jesus 'make void the law'? 'God forbid,' yea, rather, his faith 'establishes the law,' reflects its spirituality, maintains its purity, vindicates its holiness, and glorifies its divine Author. The closer, then, the resemblance of the believer to the spirituality of the law of God in his life, his temper, and his habit of mind, his principles, his daily walk in the world and out of the world, among the saints or as surrounded by the ungodly, the more thoroughly is the work of sanctification advancing in his soul." - Octavius Winslow, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 185-187.

The work of sanctification is a great and continuous work. It begins at the time of the new birth and does not cease until life's race is finished. As long as we are in this present evil world, just so long will we be surrounded by the foul miasma of sin, and so long will we need to rely upon the Spirit for protection and succor. Daily are we to continue the growth in grace and the knowledge of the truth. The new-born babe is to develop and grow until he becomes "a perfect man," measured by "the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4: 13) The purging process is a daily experience. As the will is yielded to the control of the Spirit, hidden weaknesses and evil propensities, hitherto unrecognized, are brought to light; and these are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. Thus, day by day is the Lord purging away the dross and removing the tin (Isaiah 1: 25) and preparing us to shine forth as gold tried in the fire seven times. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Zechariah 13: 9.

But though there is a progression in holiness, each day bringing its fresh revelations of hidden sin and its additional victories through faith and surrender, yet it is also true that God counts the yielded life to be sanctified and holy from the beginning. The "new-born babe" has much of growth and experience to attain before he becomes a full-grown man, but he may still be perfect as a babe. And all along the way and at each stage of development, if he submits to the purging, pruning process without drawing back, he is still accounted perfect, notwithstanding the fact that there are still greater heights of holiness yet to be attained. "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord." Isaiah 62: 12.

No person who is really making progress in the glorious work of sanctification will ever be heard to boast of his attainments. Never will he refer to himself as being holy or sanctified; for although God may count him as such, yet as he gains clearer and clearer views of the exalted character of Jesus, he is led to place lower and lower estimates upon his own attainment.

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you. . . . The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to

esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Savior. . . . The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image."- Mrs. E. G. White, Steps to Christ, pp. 64, 65 (pocket edition).

In speaking to Satan concerning job, the Lord declared him to be a "perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and hates evil." Yet job did not see himself in the same light at all. The more he progressed in Christian experience and the clearer views he caught of the Lord, the lower he sank in his own estimation. Hear this perfect man saying to the Lord, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42: 5, 6. And again, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life." Job 9: 20, 21. This is the spirit of true humility and contriteness-and such God will not despise. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembled at my word." Isaiah 66: 2. "For thus said the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57: 15. Boasting of our spiritual attainments is, as Paul declares, "forever shut out." (Romans 3: 27, Weymouth.) "God forbid," said he, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians 6: 14.

The child of God will never be satisfied with Ills attainments in holiness. He may have climbed from the valley to the foothills through the ministration of the Spirit, but he beholds the great mountain peaks still beyond. Not stopping to waste time in self-gratification over past attainments, he must forget the things behind and press on, ever on.

"I do not say that I have already won the race," declared Paul, "or have already reached perfection. But I am pressing on, striving to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it. But this one thing I do-forgetting everything which is past, and stretching forward to what lies in front of me, with my eyes fixed on the goal, I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus. Therefore let all of us who are mature believers cherish these thoughts; and if in any respect you think differently, that also will God make clear to you. But whatever be the point that we have already reached, let us persevere in the same course." Philippians 3: 12-16, Weymouth.

## ***THE REFINER'S FIRE***

He sat by a furnace of sevenfold heat  
As he watched by the precious ore,  
And closer he bent with a searching gaze  
As he heated it more and more.

He knew he had ore that could stand the test,  
And he wanted the finest gold  
To mold a crown for the king to wear,  
Set with gems of price untold.

So Christ laid our gold in the burning fire,  
Though we fain would have said Him nay;  
And He watched the dross that we had not seen  
As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter and yet more bright;  
But our eyes were so dim with tears  
We saw but the fire, not the Master's hand,  
And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow,  
As it mirrored a Form above  
That bent o'er the fire, though unseen by us,  
With looks of ineffable love.

Can we think that it pleases His loving heart  
To cause us a moment's pain?  
Ah, no! But He saw through the present cross  
The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,  
With a love that is strong and sure;  
And His gold did not suffer a whit more heat  
Than was needed to make it pure.  
-SELECTED.

## **6. Pentecost - The Early Rain**

AND it shall come to pass, if you: shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou may gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and your oil." Deuteronomy 11: 13, 14.

It was on the day of Pentecost, following the ascension of our Lord, that the Holy Spirit entered upon His new office as the Vicar of Christ. Though He had been in the world and at work in the church from the beginning, yet He had not before assumed the role of spokesman and representative for Christ. In this sense the "Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7: 39.

Before the Comforter could come and take definite leadership of the church militant, it was necessary that Christ first appear before the Father's throne and ascertain whether the sacrifice He had offered for men's sins was a sufficient price for their redemption, and whether His humility would be accepted into fellowship with the Father. Until this could be forever settled, Jesus bade His disciples "tarry in Jerusalem." They were not to embark upon their world wide mission until Jesus was glorified and the Comforter had come. The coming of the Spirit was to be the visible token to the church that the atonement was fully ratified in heaven, and that Jesus had been admitted again to the throne. What solemn days for the church were these days of waiting! What momentous issues were in the balance!

As our Lord appeared before the throne, following His ascension, He spread forth His nail-scarred hands before His Father. And pointing to His feet and His side where the evidences of His crucifixion still appeared, He cried: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me." Is the sacrifice sufficient? Is it enough? The universe waits breathlessly for the decision. The angels bend their ears to hear the fateful reply to the question. The church upon earth prays in Jerusalem's little upper room for acceptance "with him." The destiny of a world hangs in the balance! Then the Father speaks, and as His gracious words roll through the heavens, the hosts of heaven hear Him saying to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. . . . And let all the angels of God worship him." Hebrews 1: 8, 9, 6.

Yes, the price was sufficient. When Jesus tasted death on the cross for every man, when He bore our guilt upon the cruel tree, it was a price adequate to meet all the demands of the law. He had literally purchased our redemption. He had taken the sinner's place so fully and had suffered the penalty for his sins so completely that it was now possible for the sinner to go free. Through Christ those who accepted Him would be "justified from all things," and for His sake they would be accepted into the kingdom of God, "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

In this announcement of the Father that all the angels should worship the Son, the question was forever settled. A way had been found whereby man could be saved from death. Jesus, who stands before the throne as our Elder Brother, Advocate, Priest, and Mediator, was seated at the Father's right hand and restored to the position of equality with God which He held before He assumed humanity.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2: 9-11.

But this Christ who is exalted is the "man, Christ Jesus. He appeared in the presence of God for us. He is a representative of our race, and in His acceptance with God was bound up our acceptance

with God. His acceptance became the earnest, or pledge, of our acceptance also. And, thank God, He was accepted! In His acceptance "he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians 1: 6) What a glorious truth is this! What cause for rejoicing on the part of the believer!

Have you been tempted by Satan at times to question your acceptance with God? Have your sins appeared so black and terrible that it seemed to be presumptuous to believe that God could grant you a full and free pardon? Have you said in your heart, "Perhaps others can be saved, but I cannot; I am too vile, and have so often proved myself to be unworthy that for me there is no hope"? Have you? Then let me direct your eyes to your glorified Lord as He sits at the Father's right hand in the heavens. If the price Jesus paid for your redemption had not been all-sufficient to cover your every sin and accomplish your complete justification, He would not have been accepted by the Father and seated on the throne. For He went there as your personal representative. It was for you that He suffered, bled, and died; and for you He was raised, taken to heaven, and glorified. It was all done as fully for you as if you had been the only one requiring salvation. Therefore, when Jesus, your representative, was accepted by the Father, your acceptance was made certain. It was involved in His acceptance. The question now is not, "Will He accept me?" That has been settled. "He hath made us accepted." But it is, "Will I accept Him?" Upon the answer to that burning question our destiny now hangs.

When Christ was coronated, his first thought was to fulfill the promised blessing of sending the Comforter to the church. It was the day for the feast of Pentecost. "And 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." Acts 2: 1-4.

Peter, speaking under inspiration of the Spirit, definitely connected this Pentecostal experience with the exaltation of Jesus in heaven. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which you now see and hear." Acts 2: 32, 33.

Thus it was that "when Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven's communication that the Redeemer's inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers, as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people." -Mrs. E. G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

But the Pentecostal experience had another meaning and purpose. In announcing His departure to the sorrowing disciples, Jesus explained to them that His mantle must now fall upon them and that they were to go to all the world and continue the glorious work which He Himself had begun. Their commission was to all nations. "And he said unto them, Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16: 15-18.

But the church was not equipped for such a sacred and mighty work. The disciples were not even united in heart. Peter had thrice denied his Lord; James and John had angered the others by seeking the highest positions in the kingdom; Thomas had openly declared his lack of faith; Peter, James, and John had failed to watch even one hour during that fateful evening in Gethsemane; and at the cross all forsook their Lord. They were a company of unlearned men of various occupations, and

although they had been with the Lord during His earthly ministry, yet they had not learned the secret of Christian fellowship and service. The destiny of the church could not be committed into the hands of such unstable representatives. They could be helpers and co-workers, but they had to have divine leadership; they had to be connected with the heavenly currents of power and grace if they were to continue the sacred work their Master had begun.

It was to await the arrival of this heavenly Leader that they were told to linger in Jerusalem before they launched out upon their world crusade. It was also to provide opportunity for heart preparation for His reception. Thus He "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, you have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . . But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1: 4, 5, 8.

This command to wait and look for the coming of the Comforter was a divine challenge to the disciples to set their house in order and prepare for the heavenly Guest. It was a call to prayer and consecration such as they had as yet not experienced. The promise of the Spirit through the prophet Joel was conditioned upon this sort of preparation.

"Therefore also now, said the Lord, turn you 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 repented him of the evil. . . . Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. . . . And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." Joel 2: 12, 13, 15-18, 28-30.

Let it be carefully noted that it was to be after the praying and the weeping and the rending of the heart before God that the Spirit was to come. This is why the ten days of tarrying in Jerusalem were so essential for the members of the early church. Before the Comforter could assume control, there had to be a dethronement of self. Before they could be filled with the Spirit, their hearts had to be emptied, swept, and garnished. The Light that was to come could have no fellowship with, the darkness that filled their hearts. Christ could have no concord with Belial.

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

What a wonderful prayer meeting this must have been! Men who were openly jealous and envious of one another got together. They confessed their faults one to another and their sins to God. They each learned to "esteem other better than themselves." As they prayed for the heavenly blessing, their petty differences seemed to disappear, and they became of "one accord." It was no doubt a

prophecy of this experience that the psalmist uttered when he exclaimed:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Psalm 133.

It was after this brotherly unity had been experienced that the promised blessing came, and the room where they were sitting was filled with the presence of God. As an outward sign of His presence "cloven tongues like as of fire" rested upon each one present, "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The true Leader was now in control of the church of Christ, and it was ready to enter at once upon the execution of its world-wide commission.

It was an auspicious time to make a beginning. The feast of Pentecost had caused thousands of people from all nations to flock into Jerusalem. There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Romans, Jews, Cretes, Arabians, Phrygians, Egyptians, and people from remote parts such as Cappadocia, Libya, etc. And when the Spirit of God fell upon the disciples, the fact immediately became noised abroad throughout this mixed multitude that filled the city. It became the chief subject of conversation throughout Jerusalem. In a little while the disciples found themselves surrounded by a curious multitude, and the work began. As the disciples bore witness to the presence of Christ through the Spirit, and as they proclaimed the gospel of salvation through His name, the people were "confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" Acts 2:6-8.

This was the first miracle performed through the New Testament church by the Spirit. There was need of a quick work. Representatives in all nations and tongues were needed. The disciples had no opportunity to acquire the languages of these listening multitudes, and the Holy Spirit demonstrated His deity and omnipotence by a miraculous endowment of the gift of tongues. If these strangers could be won to the cause, how rapidly the work would spread when they returned to their homes filled with the joy of a new experience and a new life! Peter, the chief spokesman of the day, preached Christ and Him crucified to an awe-stricken crowd. He told of Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and glorification; he preached repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; and so powerfully did the Spirit witness to his ministry that about three thousand souls were converted, baptized, and added to the church. This conversion was followed by a sacrificial giving of their goods to the cause.

Thus the new church was equipped for its God-given task of proclaiming the gospel to a lost world. They received the baptism of the Spirit, and as long as this powerful Leader was permitted to control, they were an invincible army. Jesus had promised that through the Spirit they would have unlimited power in the prosecution of their work. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father." John 14: 12.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16: 17, 18.

In fulfillment of these promises we behold the miracles of Christ duplicated by His disciples. The inanimate walls of buildings trembled at the Spirit's presence, the sick were healed; the lame were made to walk, and even the dead were raised to life. Special miracles were wrought through the ministry of Paul, "so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Acts 19: 12. They were released from the shackles and the prison cells. Great iron gates that were locked and barred swung open before

them. Jailors appointed to keep guard over them were converted and added to the church by baptism. In the midst of persecution there was no fear. "They spoke the word of God with boldness." Acts 4: 31. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Verse 33. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2: 47. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven had been made available to the church, and it went forth conquering and to conquer. The Holy Spirit was to them as the very presence of Christ in the soul, and the hearts of the believers thrilled with the conscious presence of their ascended Lord. In the power of this Presence they fulfilled John 14: 12.

## ***The Early Rain***

There are many emblems used by the Lord to illustrate the manifold graces and functions of the Spirit. He is

personified as fire, a dove, water, dew, rivers, oil, anointing oil, a still small voice, etc. One of the favorite emblems, or symbols, however, is rain. This symbol is used as an indication of the fullness of the Spirit's presence and power, and of the wonderful refreshing and growth that follow in His wake. We read: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures." Psalm 72: 6, 7.

"Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isaiah 32: 15-17.

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, you beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree bears her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, you 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. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil." Joel 2: 21-24.

This comparison of the Spirit with rain was easily understood by the dwellers in Palestine. There they annually enjoyed two rainy seasons, known as the early and latter rains. The early rain came in the fall, just at the time of seed sowing. By its plentiful showers the hard, fallow ground was softened and made fit for plowing and the planting of the seed. Before the time for the harvest in the spring another season of rain came, the latter rain, which caused the growing grain to develop and ripen for the harvest. Without these seasons of rain the efforts of the planters would have been in vain. With them the laborers reaped an abundant harvest.

Just so it was to be with the descent of the Comforter. He was to come as the early and the latter rain. He was to prepare the fallow ground of men's hearts for breaking and seed sowing, and he was also to water the seed and cause it to grow and flourish. And since Pentecost came at the very beginning of the gospel era, the reception of the Spirit at that time must be understood as the early rain. By its copious showers the church was purified and revived and endowed with power for a world work. Under its influence the disciples "went everywhere preaching the word," and so fully did they accomplish their task that before the death of the great apostle to the Gentiles, he was able to declare that the gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven." (Colossians 1: 23)

## **7. The Apostasy and The Pentecostal Power**

WHAT a tragedy that the Pentecostal power was lost by the church! Had she continued in full possession of this wondrous gift, what might have been accomplished in the line of winning a lost world to God! But the first generation of the Christian era had not yet passed when there began to appear a marked decline in spiritual fervor, a breaking up of the unity of the church, with a corresponding decline of power in the prosecution of her work. And after a few short years following the passing of the apostles, we behold the church shorn of her power and rapidly sinking into a state of apostasy and worldliness that is unparalleled in sacred history.

But this apostasy on the part of the church did not come as a surprise to her divine Leader. Faithfully had the voices of the prophets warned of the impending danger as they spoke under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In detail had they outlined the decline and fall that awaited the church if she in any way rejected the continued leadership of the Vicar of Christ. Even the Apostle Paul, speaking with the voice of prophecy, clearly predicted the awful results that would surely follow should the once pure and powerful church fail to stem the spirit of worldliness and pride which even in his day was manifesting itself. In writing to those in the church who believed that the return of their ascended Lord was imminent, he declared: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember you not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? . . . For the mystery of iniquity does already work." 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-7.

It is clear that a definite apostasy or "falling away" was to be experienced by the Spirit-filled church. Instead of maintaining her allegiance to her divine Leader, there was to be a revelation of the "man of sin," who would pose as the rightful leader and who would boldly exalt himself above God and claim the attributes of Deity as belonging to himself. This spurious leader was to go "the length of taking his seat in the very temple of God, giving it out that he himself is God." 2 Thessalonians 2: 4, Weymouth.

Here, then, is a clear and definite prophecy of the rise of some influence in the church which would defile its purity and enthrone a man as spiritual leader to take the place of the divine Spirit. As we look about to find the fulfillment of this Pauline prophecy, we discover that the bishops of the church at Rome early began to clamor for the ascendancy of power and before long had succeeded in securing recognition for Rome as the seat of authority in spiritual matters. This accomplished, these grasping bishops, having now tasted the sweets of leadership, began to seek control of the state also and finally succeeded in establishing the Roman prelate as head of both church and state and the sole corrector of heretics. This, of course, soon led to a state of intolerance; and it was only a short step to the persecutions which followed, and which fell to the lot of the faithful who endeavored to preserve the purity of the faith and maintain their allegiance to their divine Leader.

Soon the Roman bishop acquired the title of "pope," or papa (father); and this was followed by the assumption of other titles belonging only to Deity, such as "holy father," "the vicar of Christ," etc., and finally, "another God on earth." John the revelator, speaking of this same apostate power, declares of him: "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; . . . and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Revelation 13: 5, 6.

In the acceptance of the leadership of the pope of Rome the church turned her back upon her

rightful leader, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and exalted a man to occupy the usurped throne. There was, therefore, nothing left to the Spirit but to withdraw from the organic church and leave her to the course of her own choosing. What a fateful hour was this for the church! What could she accomplish without a divine guide? What, but to sink farther and farther into error and sin? And alas, this is the very course she took. She began to fall headlong into all the deadly errors of the heathen world about her until, in a few short centuries, it became all but impossible to distinguish between the one and the other. Every doctrine of gospel truth was rejected and displaced by heathen philosophy. A work of completely counterfeiting the original Christian religion was carried on until the apostasy was as complete as it was possible to make it. The essence and glory of the early Christian church had departed.

The doctrine that Christ is the only mediator between God and man was discarded, and the Virgin Mary was . . . . . exalted to this office.

The priestly work of Christ was displaced by a line of earthly priests.

The place of Christ's ministry in heaven, the "heavenly sanctuary," gave place to an earthly sanctuary in which an earthly priesthood ministered.

The "continual, daily" work of Christ in ministering His blood before the throne in behalf of sinners gave place to the mass, offered by human priests.

The doctrine of righteousness by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was discarded for a system of penance and bodily mortification for sins whereby the individual becomes his own savior by his good works.

Infant baptism was introduced.

Saint worship was borrowed from the pagan world, as was also the idea of the worship of images.

The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul took the place of the plain Biblical teaching that man is mortal, subject to death, and that immortality and eternal life come only as a gift from God to those who accept the gospel.

The original seventh-day, weekly Sabbath, which had been observed by all the saints of God from Eden down to and including the apostolic church as a memorial of the mighty work of creation, was now discarded; and the, Sunday Sabbath was instituted in its place. This was done principally because the pagan world had chosen that day for the worship of their sun god, and the apostate." church conceived the idea of winning the heathen world to her fold by affecting a compromise with them. Dr. T. H. Morer, an Anglican rector and a historian, says:

"It is not to be denied but we borrow the name of this day from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and we allow that the old Egyptians worshiped the sun, and as a standing memorial of their veneration, dedicated this day to him. And we find by the influence of their examples, other nations, and among them the Jews themselves, doing him homage. Yet these abuses did not hinder the Fathers of the Christian church simply to repeal, or altogether lay by, the day or its name, but only to sanctify and improve both, as they did also the pagan temples, polluted before with idolatrous services, and other instances wherein those good men were always tender to work any other change than what was evidently necessary, and in such things as were plainly inconsistent with the Christian religion. So that Sunday being the day on which the Gentiles solemnly adored that planet, and called it Sunday, partly from its influence on that day especially, and partly in respect to its divine body (as they conceived it), the Christians thought fit to keep the same day and the same name of it, that they might not appear causelessly peevish, and by that means hinder the conversion of the Gentiles, and bring a greater prejudice than might be otherwise taken against the gospel."-Dialogues on the Lord's Day, pp. 22, 23.

The apostasy of the organic church became complete, and as she gained in power and

popularity, so did she grow also in the spirit of intolerance. Then set in that awful period known in history as the Dark Ages, during which time untold millions of those who desired to remain true to God and His truth were sent to martyrs' deaths. The country flamed red with the fires of persecution, and so faithfully did the church carry on her work of terror that she bade fair to stamp out the remnant of God's elect. Centuries before, the prophet Daniel had been shown, in visions of the night, the development of this mighty persecuting power that would arise in the name of Christ and endeavor to enforce its doctrines upon the consciences of all men. Under the symbol of a "horn" he describes it thus:

"Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the cast, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered." Daniel 8: 8-12.

The work of the "horn" is also described in Daniel 7: 25: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

When the church goes so far as to "cast down the truth to the ground" and to destroy those who are true, the withdrawal of the Spirit of God is inevitable. The Holy Spirit is given only "to them that obey him." (Acts 5: 32) He is given upon the condition of our willingness to follow His leading and subject our bodies and minds to His full control. He cannot serve in a rebellious heart, and when He departs, the life is left parched and barren as a desert.

"And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou may gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou may eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and you turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest you perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord gives you." Deuteronomy 11: 13-17.

An illustrative figure of this period of the supremacy of the apostate papacy was the three and one-half years of drought in the days of Elijah. Israel was in apostasy. They had forsaken the commandments of the Lord and had followed Baalim. Israel's priests had led the people into idolatry and had themselves become the priests of a false religion. The departure from God was complete; since Baal was the sun god, the people now looked upon this shining orb as the true Shekinah. They had become worshipers of the creature rather than the Creator. It was at this time that the Lord shut up the heavens and gave no rain upon the earth in order that Israel might be made to realize the enormity of her sin.

Since prophetic time is measured by taking a day for a year, this three and one-half years of drought in Elijah's day might prefigure the 1,260 years of papal oppression, stretching from the final establishment of the papal power in AD. 538 to the breaking of its power in AD. 1798 through the imprisonment and exile of the pope by the French army. It was during that period that the night was the darkest and that the truth was most nearly stamped out of the earth. Finding himself an unwelcomed guest, the Holy Spirit withdrew His presence; but, like Samson of old, the church "wist not that the

Lord had departed from" it. (Judges 16: 20.)

But in withdrawing from the organic church, the Spirit of God did not abandon the earth, but remained to succor and care for those individuals who, remaining loyal to God, preferred a martyr's grave to the praise and plaudits of an apostate church. In every age, even in the darkest moments, God has had His true children; and these have kept the light of truth burning, though often dimly, in spite of the fires of persecution and the torments of the enemy. With these faithful ones God's Spirit has ever remained as a comforter, guide, and sanctifying power. Never, even in the darkest hour, has He forsaken a faithful, trusting child of God. Never since the day the Master declared, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28: 20), has He left one such to suffer alone.

During those years of apostasy and darkness the true church is said to have been in the wilderness (in obscurity), where she was given protection and succor from the flood tide of persecution in order that truth might be preserved, although at times the light of the torch burned exceedingly low. John declared: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Revelation 12:13,14. This period of seclusion and secret nourishment spoken of as a time, and times ' and half a time is the same as the 1,260 years of papal reign spoken of in Daniel 7: 25 and Revelation 13: 5. A "time" in Jewish reckoning is one year. Here is, first, one time, or one year. Next, the plural is used, "times"; that would be two years. And lastly, "half a time." This gives us again the total of three and one-half years; or taking a day for a year, we have a period of 1,260 years. (The Jewish year had 360 days.) During this time of apostasy God's Spirit was brooding over a faithful few here and there in the secret and secluded places of the earth, waiting for the day to dawn when once again He could lead them forth as Elijah appeared from his wilderness haunts to call his people back to the worship of the true God.

## **8. The Latter Rain**

JUST as there were prophecies of an apostasy, the Bible also abounds with predictions of a final reformation and complete restoration of the truth that will prepare the world for the final harvest. This is to be accomplished under the restored leadership of the Holy Ghost. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, paraphrased Joel's prophecy and turned it into a prediction of a "last day" experience which would come in preparation for the "great and notable day of the Lord." "And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2: 17-21.

A little later, as Peter and John stood in Solomon's porch, Peter again referred to this great day of the Lord, which was still future, and urged upon men the necessity of repentance as a preparation for the refreshing and restitution which it would bring: "Repent you 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.

Here is a clear prediction of a pouring out, or visitation, of the Spirit that will far surpass the experience of Pentecost. This will be the latter rain, and it will come in connection with a world reformation and a preparation for the second coming of Christ to the world.

Just at the world's darkest hour, when it seems that all is lost, and that truth has almost completely been driven from the earth, "the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings," and He will raise up a "remnant" in which all that was lost through the apostasy will be fully restored. Isaiah exclaims: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isaiah 60:1-3. "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shall be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 58:11,12.

This glorious display of the glory of God resting upon the church comes at a time of unparalleled darkness and in connection with a mighty restoration message which builds up the waste places, raises up again the broken foundations of truth, repairs the breaches, and restores the paths in which men should dwell. It will be accompanied by a mighty appeal to men to forsake sin and turn to God. "Cry aloud," is the command. "Spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58: 1.

Let it be carefully noted that this appeal and reformation is in preparation for the coming of the notable day of the Lord. (See Acts 2:20) This glorious event has been foretold by seers of all ages, and it will be the culminating event in the great work of human redemption. Jesus Himself declared: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there

you may be also." John 14:3. His coming will be personal and real. "Every eye shall see him." Revelation 1:7. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew 24:30,31.

According to the declaration of the angels who stood by the disciples as they watched Him ascend, "this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven" will come again. (Acts 1:11.) He ascended in the flesh. As man He appeared before the throne, and as man He was seated at the right hand of the Father. So when He returns the second time to gather His people to Himself, He will come in person, and He will still be "the man" Christ Jesus. His hands and feet will still bear the marks of the crucifixion, and He will appear as a member of our race. Not this time, however, will He come to begin life in a Bethlehem manger or to suffer persecution and afflictions at the hands of cruel men. But as King of kings and Lord of lords will He appear, riding forth upon a cloud of glory, accompanied by all the armies of heaven. (See Revelation 19: 11-16.)

It is in connection with this event that the righteous dead will be raised to life. They come forth with immortalized bodies, free from all taint of sin; they behold their glorified Lord and are gathered together to meet Him. Paul pictures this wonderful event in the following graphic language:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18.

## ***A Time of Judgment***

The second coming of Christ will be a time of judgment. It will be a time when every man will be rewarded according to his deeds. For weal or woe, sentence must be passed in every case. No one can escape, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5: 10.

Jesus emphasizes this work of judgment at the time of His appearing by the following description of this momentous event: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25: 31-34, 41.

The return of Jesus will come to the sinner as an overwhelming surprise and as a day of destruction from the Almighty. (Joel 1: 15.) It will be accompanied by a mighty earthquake such as never has taken place since there was a nation. Even the very heavens will be shaken. The mountains will be shaken down; the islands will be removed out of their places, and every city will fall as great

Babylon (the apostate church) comes in remembrance before God. In that day the wicked will cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sits upon the throne, for they will recognize that they cannot stand before Him. (See Revelation 6: 12-17.)

But to the righteous the coming of Christ will be a time of joy and great rejoicing. To these it will bring the fruition of all their hopes and aspirations. They will recognize in Jesus their Savior and great Deliverer, and with unspeakable joy they will welcome His appearing. "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah 25: 8, 9.

As Jesus nears the earth, His angels are sent forth to all parts of the world to gather together His elect, those who were raised from the dead, together with those who were still among the living. These will be caught up to meet their Lord in the air and will be transported by Him into His eternal kingdom. (Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; John 14:3) They are clothed now with glorious immortality and eternal life. All causes for tears are removed, and they enter into the joys of eternity. (Revelation 21: 4)

## ***The Message of His Coming***

But God could not permit so momentous an event as this to take place until the nations of earth had received an adequate warning. Never does God pour out His judgments i, upon the shelterless heads of wicked men without first having given them ample opportunity to escape if they will. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3: 9.) Thus, before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the angels of the Lord carried the warning to these cities of the plain. When Nineveh was about to perish, Jonah was sent to cry against it. When the Flood was threatening, Noah was sent to preach to the doomed world for 120 years, pleading with them to turn to God and be saved.

Just so will the Lord, before His second advent to the world, send to all men an adequate warning, giving to all an opportunity to turn from their transgressions and prepare to meet Him in peace if they will. We read:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come, said the Lord of hosts." Malachi 3:1. "Sanctify you a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord, Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." Joel 1:14,15. "Blow you 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 comes, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1. "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." Matthew 24:14.

John the revelator saw the rise and work of this preparation message and graphically described it as an angel flying across the sky, crying to all the people of the earth in a mighty effort to turn them back to the true God in preparation for the advent of their Lord. Said he: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the

sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14: 6, 7.

Here, then, is a message that is to be heralded among every tribe and nation, announcing to the world that the hour of God's judgment is come and pleading with men to worship the God who is the creator of all things. With the warning is proclaimed over again "the everlasting gospel," which is the good news of salvation from sin through faith in the atonement made by Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. It is a call back to God and away from human theories such as evolution and modernism. It is a call to return to the truths of God's word that were lost sight of through the apostasy of the Dark Ages. It is the Elijah message, urging men everywhere to forsake the worship of Baal (every false god and theory) and return to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And as the message progresses in its work, it will succeed in calling out of all the nations of the earth a people of whom it will be said, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14: 12. And when men have cast error aside and have their faith in Jesus as their only Savior fully restored, when they are led to the keeping of all God's commandments as did the early church before the "falling away," then will they be ready for the appearing of their Lord as He comes to reap earth's harvest. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." Revelation 14: 14-16.

Among other outstanding reforms that will be brought about under the proclamation of this preparation message will be the restoration of the original seventh-day Sabbath, which ' as we have seen, was one of the truths lost sight of during the apostasy. Says Isaiah: "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shall be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable. And shall honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: then shall thou delight thyself in the Lord. And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58: 12-14.

By accepting a man-made Sabbath instead of God's holy day, men have been trampling the Sabbath of God underfoot. They have, He says, been doing their pleasure on His holy day. But as the old foundations of truth are raised up again, and as right paths are restored for men to dwell in, God's true people will turn their feet away from trampling down His Sabbath and will begin to honor it again as did the apostolic church. The Sunday Sabbath will be seen to be an institution of a human power and a sign of a fallen condition of the church; whereas the Sabbath of God, the seventh day, commonly called Saturday, will shine forth as the memorial of God's creative works and as the rightful sign between God and His people. 'Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20: 12, 20.

So once again the truth which was "cast down to the ground" shall arise and will shine forth to the world in clear, distinct rays until the whole earth will be illuminated with its radiance. (See Revelation 18: 1.) All the light and truth of all ages will be focused upon the world in the last messages of God to lost men. As the darkest hour of the night is just before dawn, so the world's darkest hour is just before the rise of a flood tide of light that will shed its beams of glory to the farthest tribe and nation. God will leave men without excuse. If any are not ready at His appearing, the responsibility will

rest upon them and not God. The sad truth is, however, that, notwithstanding all the efforts of a loving God to warn and save men, the masses of humanity will refuse to heed the message and will thus seal their own doom. The lost will be as the sand of the sea for multitude. (See Revelation 20: 8.) The way to destruction is still broad and the gate still wide "that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matthew 7: 13.) There will be comparatively few who find the straight and narrow way. It will be only a "little flock," spoken of in Scripture as "a very small remnant," that will respond to God's last reformatory message and who will be charged with the awful responsibility of carrying it to the nations of earth. And this faithful group of truth seekers and commandment keepers will have to face the bitter opposition of an unfriendly world and the persecutions of their enemies. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12: 17. Their fidelity to God's law and their zeal for His truth stirs up the wrath of the dragon (Satan). He goes out "to make war" with them. He attempts to overcome and destroy them in an effort to stop their work. But God gives victory to His remnant people, and John later sees them standing triumphant on the sea of glass before the throne of God, singing a song of deliverance and victory over all their enemies. (See Revelation 15: 1, 3.)

### ***The Baptism of the Spirit***

But the work of warning the whole world of the approach of the day of God and of the opening of the judgment cannot be accomplished by the few men and women who accept the message and who constitute the remnant church. There must be divine leadership. Man unaided can never accomplish God's purposes, and especially is he helpless here. Let the mind dwell for a moment upon the situation. A world is lost! Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. The truth of God has long been trampled underfoot, and error and human tradition have reigned supreme. Truth has become unpopular, and those who live and advocate it are hated and persecuted. There are few of them, only a "little flock." (See Luke 12: 32.) Surely, if ever men needed a visitation of the Holy Ghost, it is now!

And this is what God has promised. He will send upon the remnant church the Spirit in the form of the latter rain, and, like the disciples of old, they will go forth to labor "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (See Acts 2: 4) "And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath. Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2: 17-21.

God will not leave to unaided human beings the task of presenting His last appeal to lost men; but the Spirit, now fully restored to the church, will take full control of the work. Through wonder-working signs will He manifest His presence. Through visions and dreams will He reveal His will to men. And as signs appear in the sun, moon, and stars, and upon the earth, which indicate that the great day of God is at hand, His truth sounds forth among the nations as a clarion call of the Spirit to all men everywhere to prepare to meet their God.

"Be glad then, you 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. Note that the former rain was given moderately.

The Holy Spirit was given by measure unto the disciples. He did not come upon them in the fullness of His power. But in the latter rain this gift is promised without measure. It will be as the former and latter rain in one. It will be a veritable flood tide of divine power that will rest upon the church to enable her to arise and accomplish her God-given work quickly. It is to be a double portion of God's Spirit, similar to that asked by Elisha as he was about to succeed Elijah.

"Ask you of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zechariah 10: 1. "Turn you to the strong hold, you prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee." Zechariah 9: 12.

Pentecost is to be repeated, but with a double rendering of the Spirit's power. As "the harvest is the end of the world," so the latter rain will come to ripen the grain and prepare it for the sickle. Under the latter rain there will be seen the grandest display of God's presence and power that has ever been witnessed among men. It is thus that the work will be cut short and finished in the earth. "Esaias also cried concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Romans 9:27,28. It is through the "remnant" that the work will be carried on, but it is the Spirit of God who works through them. He finishes the work. He cuts it short. As in the days of the rebuilding of the ancient temple, it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, said the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 4: 6.)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Isaiah 11:11,12.

It is a world work. God's call to men to prepare to meet their God is a universal appeal. His faithful are to be gathered from the four corners of the earth. All lands must yield up some precious sheaves for the coming harvest. From the north, the south, the east, and the west shall the ransomed come to Zion. All nations must contribute to the citizenry of God's nation. He will gather out of them all a people for His name. It will be a greater movement than that from Egypt to Canaan. It will be a more wonderful experience than Pentecost. It will be God's last message of mercy to a rebellious world, and it will be given in power. The sword of the Spirit will be unsheathed and bathed in the lightning of heaven. "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5.

## 9. False Evidences of the Spirit's Presence

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4: 1.

Satan has made it his studied purpose to counterfeit every good thing that God has prepared for His people. He is continually seeking to deceive and destroy and is trying to palm off upon the saints of God some spurious experience that they will accept as coming from the Holy Spirit. Jesus was continually uttering the warning to His disciples, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Matthew 24: 4, 5. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Verse 24.

How very subtle some of these deceptions will be is clearly indicated in the language of Paul: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Corinthians 11: 13-15.

How necessary it becomes that we carefully try the spirits and that we be not carried away with a movement simply because it may be characterized by religious fervor and enthusiasm. How often men mistake noise and excitement and even emotion for the work of the Holy Spirit!

We are living in a day when many counterfeit holiness movements are abroad in the land, and this is to be expected; for it is the time of the latter rain, and Satan always times his deceptions correctly. He sends them at the exact time when the church has a right to expect the genuine, and he hopes to have the counterfeit accepted instead of the true. He himself poses as an angel of light, and his ministers claim to be ministers of righteousness.

Many of these movements are characterized by great earnestness and often by supernatural manifestations. Miracles appear to be wrought in the name of Christ, and there is much bodily exercise and much excitement. There is a so-called speaking in tongues that is accepted as proof of the Spirit's presence. With such a babble of voices as this crying, "Lo, here," and, "Lo, there," it behooves the child of God to remember the warning to "try the spirits" to see "whether they are of God."

In Elijah's day when the priests of Baal cried to their gods to send fire upon the slain sacrifice, they seemed to be in real earnest. They besought their gods for a whole day. They leaped upon the altar; they cried aloud; they cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them, but there was no answer. Religious fervor, earnest entreaty did not bring the fire of God to consume the sacrifice. They had forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and had followed Baalim (1 Kings 18:18), and their earnestness and zeal could not make up for this apostasy.

But Elijah had not forsaken either God or His commandments; and when he quietly prayed, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word," the fire of the Lord fell, and the sacrifice was consumed. (See 1 Kings 18:36,38.) Emotion and excitement cannot take the place of quiet, implicit obedience to God's holy law, and no one who is living in willful disobedience to the commands of God can rightfully expect the visitation of the Lord's Spirit.

The divine measuring line by which all manifestations are to be tried is clearly set forth in Isaiah 8: 20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The Holy Spirit is given only to them that obey God. (Acts 5: 32) Whenever, therefore, any movement claims the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the divine rule should

always be rigidly applied in order to avoid deception.

It should be remembered that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14: 33), and whenever any movement is particularly characterized by confusion, excitement, and noise, it is well to be suspicious of it. The priests of Baal made a great noise and danced about the altar and leaped upon it, but they were not the messengers of God. At one time Elijah was commanded to go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. The Lord was to pass by him there. Soon "a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What does thou here, Elijah?" 1 Kings 19: 11-13. God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire; but He was in the still small voice. Outward show and demonstration are, in themselves, no evidence of the Spirit's presence. "The kingdom of God comes not with outward show." Luke 17: 20, margin. It is not with the blare of trumpets, with dancing, shouting, and weird music that the Spirit of God is to manifest Himself. But in quietness and power will He be revealed to the remnant church who keeps the commandments of God and earnestly endeavors to arouse a lost world from its state of lethargy and spiritual death lest the day of God find it unprepared. Such quiet power will produce in the lives of the saints a reformation of genuine primitive godliness such as has not been witnessed since the days of the apostolic church. It will produce in their hearts a holy joy and a peace and trust that passes all understanding, a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; but it will not produce a spirit of boastfulness on the part of the believers or cause them to become in any way unseen-fly in their conduct. There will be no rolling, dancing, jumping, whooping, and jazzing; but a quiet, dignified, holy joy and assurance will accompany their message and strike conviction to the hearts of their hearers.

## ***Unknown Tongues***

Much has been said by some regarding the necessity of the gift of tongues in the church, and many have even claimed the ability to speak in "unknown tongues." In fact, this is often urged as an evidence of the presence of the Spirit. True it is that on the day of Pentecost, when there were gathered together representatives from every nation under heaven, the Spirit of God gave the disciples special ability to speak to these strangers in their own languages. This was God's method, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, of making it possible for this great multitude of foreign-speaking people to hear the story of Jesus and His cross from those who had been His constant companions. If they could be made familiar with the gospel story and become converted to it, they in turn could become its heralds among their own people upon their return to their various homelands. Thus the rapid spread of the message would be assured. But let it be carefully noted that none of the languages spoken by the disciples upon that occasion were unknown tongues. Someone there knew and understood every tongue that was spoken. "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" Acts 2: 8. And again, "Every man heard them speak in his own language." Verse 6.

There is a great difference between giving men ability on an occasion like that to speak in foreign languages so that all present might hear and understand the gospel, and giving ability to speak in gibberish which nobody understands and by which no one is edified or enlightened.

Most of the modern speaking in tongues that I have witnessed has been of this latter sort. If it

were a language at all, it was surely unknown to anyone present. Had it been known, even then no one could have understood the messages borne, since many tongues were spoken at once and general confusion prevailed. At times someone would essay to interpret what someone else had spoken in a tongue, but he translated it back into the language of all those present. They could have understood better had it been put straight into their own language by the first speaker!

The gift of tongues was not given to the disciples on Pentecost as a show of power, but as a medium of communication whereby the gospel might be made known. But what message and truth is communicated by these modern unknown tongues? The disciples spoke in the language of the people who heard them speak. The modern tongues preachers speak in tongues understood by no one, or at most by an interpreter. One was a means of communicating gospel light-the other is merely a show of supernatural power. The one is a gift of the Holy Spirit granted the church for a special work-the other is a counterfeit experience invented by the enemy of souls to deceive the unwary.

The idea of speaking in unknown tongues is not a Bible doctrine. True, in the Authorized Version, in 1 Corinthians 14, we read of speaking in unknown tongues, but it should be carefully noted that in each instance the word "unknown" is in italics, indicating that it was not found in the original text but was supplied by the translators. With this word removed, it becomes clear that the apostle is speaking simply of the work of those who had the gift of speaking in foreign languages, and he is carefully admonishing them not to employ this gift unnecessarily, merely for outward show of power. Let us note his admonition:

"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For you shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices [languages] in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaks a barbarian, and he that speaks shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so you, forasmuch as you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church." 1 Corinthians 14: 6-12. "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupies the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understands not what thou says? For thou verily gives thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. . . . For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Corinthians 14: 15-19, 33.

It is very evident to the onlooker that much of the present day manifestation of tongues is a form of spiritualism. That there is some superhuman power present no one can properly deny. But there are other spiritual powers than of God. There are "seducing spirits" that cause people to depart from the faith. (1 Timothy 4: 1.) There are spirits that "peep and mutter," but they are not sent from God. (See Isaiah 8: 19) This tongues movement is said to be traceable back as far as the early part of the nineteenth century. It first flared up in Germany, England, and America, and is now found in almost all lands in one form or another. But in most cases it is evident that it is a distinct form of spiritualism, and as such becomes a counterfeit of the true gift of tongues that was bestowed upon the early church.

The apostles of the modern tongues movement endeavor to make it appear that speaking in tongues is the most important gift that the Spirit bestows upon the church and that every truly

converted person must surely possess it. But the Scriptures, on the other hand, teach quite the contrary: the gift of tongues is the least important of all the gifts, and not everyone is expected to have it. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" 1 Corinthians 12: 28-30.

It is clear that there is a diversity of gifts and that all do not possess the same ones. All are not apostles; all do not prophesy; all do not work miracles; all do not speak with tongues, etc. We are told to covet earnestly the best gifts, but nothing is said about coveting the gift of tongues. We do not say that the gift of tongues should not be manifested in the church today, for we believe it should. The remnant church is to come behind in no gift as it waits for the return of her Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9) But whenever and however this gift is manifested, we can be sure that it will be to fulfill a definite need in the work of God and not merely for show and display. In this connection we would call attention to the fact that the Word of God is published today, in whole or in part, in most of the languages of the world-in all, more than one thousand-and the messengers of the cross are preaching the gospel intelligently to most of the tribes and nations of earth in their mother tongues. May it not be that this modern miracle of the printing and world-wide distribution of the Scriptures and the rapid acquisition of difficult foreign tongues is God's chosen way of accomplishing today what He accomplished at Pentecost in a slightly different manner? At least it is true that the word of the living God has acquired the tongues of the nations, and today they not only hear it spoken, but they can read it in the tongues wherein they were born.

In the light of the foregoing considerations we feel it our duty to utter a note of warning to those who are being beguiled by these so-called holiness movements, which do not measure up to God's measuring line, but which depend largely upon the tongues manifestations for their proof of genuineness. At first many go only to be amused, but they often remain to become ensnared and taken. Were they movements of human origin only, the danger would not be too great; but when one is brought into contact with the spirits of darkness, he is in peril. He cannot look upon the scene with impunity and run no risk of becoming bewildered and ensnared. The enemy of souls has had nearly six thousand years' experience in the art of deception, and we do well to beware how we place ourselves under his influence and power. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter," then let your answer always be, "Should not a people seek unto their God?" (Isaiah 8: 19)

## ***Faith Healing***

One of the gifts of the Spirit is that of healing. "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16: 18. Yet wonderful as this gift is, it is perfectly possible for it also to be counterfeited; and the fact that healing is performed is not, therefore, conclusive evidence that a work is of God. Satan has power to bind people with affliction; and could he not also, should it serve his purpose of deception, release the bonds and let his prisoners go free? Jesus healed a woman on one occasion whom, He declared, Satan had bound for eighteen years. (See Luke 13: 16) Might not Satan have loosed the bonds had he so desired?

When Moses and Aaron were sent of God to deliver Israel, God gave them certain signs by

which they were to prove that God had sent them. As they began performing these signs before the people, the magicians managed to counterfeit most of them so that to the eye it appeared that their miracles were as wonderful as those performed by the true servants of God.

Paul warns us that prior to the coming of Christ miracles will be performed "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12.

And again, speaking of Satan's agent, under the symbol of a two-horned beast, the revelator says, "And he does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Revelation 13: 13, 14.

Thus the doing of miracles in these last days may as easily be a sign of a false movement as a true, and cannot be taken as positive evidence of the Spirit's presence. In Elijah's day the sending of fire from heaven was a sign of the true God. But in our day it is Satan who is to bring fire down from heaven in the sight of men that he may thereby make his deceptions more complete.

We must see the absolute necessity of applying the Bible test to all movements purporting to be of God. They must all be measured by God's yardstick. No matter what miracles they may perform, no matter what high-sounding claims are made, no matter how holy they appear, no matter how many tongues they can employ, they still must be submitted to the acid test: "To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8: 20. A movement may qualify as genuine by every other test, but if it fails in this one, it should be branded spurious. Unless all its teachings are based upon a "Thus said the Lord," and are in full accord with the Ten Commandment law of Jehovah, it is a dangerous deception. Let us note carefully the following warning uttered by the prophet Ezekiel:

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear you the word of the Lord. Thus said the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. You have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord said: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have you not seen a vain vision, and have you not spoken a lying divination, whereas you say, The Lord said it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus said the Lord God; Because you have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, said the Lord God. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord God." Ezekiel 13: 1-9.

## **10. The Unpardonable Sin**

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

There is a line beyond which men may not go. When they cross that line, they are eternally lost. For them there is forgiveness "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Like Esau, they find no place for repentance. (See Hebrews 12: 16, 17.) They have passed beyond the limits of God's grace, and there is nothing more that a loving God can do for their salvation. From such the Spirit of God turns away in sorrow, and they are left "having no hope, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2: 12.) For them nothing remains "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Hebrews 10: 27) No other state of man could be so terrible as this. It is the extremity of hopelessness and despair.

But what is the unpardonable sin? May we commit it inadvertently in an unguarded moment, or does it come as a culmination to a life of sin and rebellion? Is it one particular sin which God refuses to forgive, or is it just any sin that we may refuse to permit Him to forgive? In the study of this important matter these questions are vital, and in order to arrive at a satisfactory answer to them it will be necessary for us to inquire more carefully into the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart and the relationship we are expected to sustain to this work.

Let us be reminded that the great change which takes place in the life at regeneration is frequently spoken of in the Bible as a calling. In Galatians 1: 15 Paul speaks of his having been called by grace. In Romans 8: 28 the people of God are said to be "called according to his purpose." First Peter 2: 9 speaks of being called out of darkness. In 2 Timothy 1: 9 it speaks of Him "who hath called us with an holy calling." In Hebrews 3: 1 the saints are said to be "partakers of the heavenly calling." And in 2 Peter 1: 10 we are admonished to make our "calling and election sure." It is clear that any person who has been transformed by the power of the gospel and regenerated by the operations of the Holy Spirit has been called to this experience. He has been called "out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2: 9. And the agency through which men and women are called is the Holy Spirit.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." Revelation 22: 17. "Come now, and let us reason together," is His loving invitation. Isaiah 1: 18. "My son, give me your heart," is His constant appeal. Proverbs 23: 26. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands." Romans 10: 21. "And your cars shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left." Isaiah 30: 21.

Those who heed the call of the Spirit are led to Jesus the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, and in Him they find abundant salvation. And as the purifying process of sanctification is carried on, it is the Spirit that is constantly pointing out secret hidden sins and wooing men to forsake them and become more and more like Jesus. Thus are they led by the Spirit, and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8: 14)

As men "follow on" to know the Lord, the Spirit will guide them into all truth; the soul temple will be fully cleansed from indwelling secret sins, and the soul will become the dwelling place of the Lord Jesus. What state could be more blessed!

But not all will heed the call of the Spirit. To many He stretches out His hands and pleads in vain. "All day long," mourns the Spirit, "I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Romans 10: 21. "I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and

no man regarded. But you have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." Proverbs 1: 24, 25.

It is this refusal to heed the pleading of the Spirit that is so fraught with danger and peril to the soul. As the voice of the Spirit is quenched, and as men continue on in sin and transgression in violation of conscience, the conscience becomes callous and seared. And the Spirit's call is rendered less and less audible as time goes on until finally the conscience becomes seared as with a hot iron. (See 1 Timothy 4: 2.) It is this hardening of the heart, this continuance in sin in disregard of the pleadings of the Spirit that finally grieves the Spirit and compels Him to turn from the heart in sorrow, leaving the soul to the fate of its own choosing. God's warning is: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Genesis 6: 3. There comes a time when men by their refusal to heed the call pass beyond the point where it can be heard. The Spirit is literally "grieved" away. Not that He would not gladly continue to call after the wayward one, but He sees that there is no longer any use. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4: 17. So long has the deaf ear been turned to the Spirit's voice that it can no longer be distinguished from other voices.

The unpardonable sin is not some particular transgression which God refuses to forgive even though it be repented of, but instead it is the sinful, continual hardening of the heart against the Spirit's voice until the conscience is seared and the heart so hardened that His voice can no longer be recognized. The continued transgression of any command of God, the willful and repeated indulgence of any sin may lead to the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Many have said with Felix, "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee," only to find that through their procrastination they became less and less desirous of calling. Thus after a time they reach the state where they call evil good, and good evil," they "put darkness for light, and light for darkness," and they "Put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." (Isaiah 5: 20) They are no longer capable of discerning between the good and the evil. What once the conscience condemned now appears to be proper and right. No longer are the prickings of conscience felt, and sin can be indulged without the slightest qualm. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2: 11, 12.

Furthermore, when this state is finally reached, there is no longer any desire to be delivered from sin's power. There may, perchance, be present in the heart a selfish desire to be saved, but not at the sacrifice of any of the heart's idols, and there is no place found for repentance. Said Jesus, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John 6: 44. And the drawing process has ceased. The sinner has so long refused to be drawn that the Spirit was compelled to cease His efforts, and the individual is left to his own course.

It is not, therefore, the commission of any one act, of any particular sin that we should fear so much, but it is rather this hardening of the heart against the voice of the Spirit and the continued indulgence of any sin that is so very perilous. "Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But you have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes; when your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish comes upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof." Proverbs 1: 24-30.

In the words of another: "No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. 'Man turns from God, not God from him.' Our, heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities

and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even 'the light that is in thee' has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul." - Mrs. E. G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 137, 138.

There came a time in the history of Judah when, through continued transgression and refusal to repent, they reached the place where God had to reject them; and He went so far in His rejection that He charged Jeremiah the prophet not to pray for them, declaring that He would no longer hear prayer in their behalf. Note carefully the experiences which led up to their rejection:

"The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust you not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor. If you oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, said the Lord. But go you now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because you have done all these works, said the Lord, and I spoke unto you, rising up early and speaking, but you heard not; and I called you, but you answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein you trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee." Jeremiah 7: 1-16.

When Jesus was in the world, He gave to men many infallible proofs of His divinity through the things which He did and said. "If I do not the works of my Father," said He. "Believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me ' believe the works: that you may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." John 10: 37, 38. And again: "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John 5: 36. As He went about from city to city, He constantly taught the people, and the unanimous testimony of them that heard was that "never man spoke as this man." His words were gracious and at the same time filled with authority and power. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, made the lame to walk, opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, and raised the dead to life. As these things were repeatedly performed, those who saw and heard were left absolutely without excuse for not accepting Him. They were powerfully convinced that He was the Son of God. There was no escaping the issue. His arguments and proofs were unanswerable. And yet, in the presence of all this array of evidence, the Jewish leaders refused to accept Him as the Messiah and as their Savior. They still called Him an impostor. They persistently denied His claims of divinity. They refused to believe, and He became grieved at the hardness of their hearts. (See Mark 3: 5.)

There was once brought to Him "one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?" Matthew 12: 22, 23. Here was a crowning miracle. His healing and deliverance left the onlookers without possible excuse. Had they had any cause for doubting hitherto, it was dispelled now. And as the dumb and blind man was released so that he could then both speak and see, a cry arose throughout the multitude, "Is not this the son of David?" Yes, they were fully convinced. There was no further question. This miracle-worker was the Son of God. The Spirit of God was upon Him and was using Him in the performance of these mighty works. But there were the Pharisees; they heard the cry of the multitude, and they were greatly displeased. If this stranger were exalted in the eyes of the people, their own popularity and power would thereby be caused to wane. They, too, were convinced, but they dared not admit it. Thus far they had successfully rejected His claims; they had steeled their hearts against His message. And now it was only a short step to the final rejection which sealed their doom. Hear them as they deliberately denounced Him as the tool of the devil and attributed what they knew to be the work of the Holy Spirit to the power of Beelzebub.

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matthew 12:24-32.

Note that Jesus here definitely declared it to be by the Spirit of God that He cast out devils. This the Pharisees well knew. They were not in ignorance concerning the source of His power. And when they, knowingly and deliberately, attributed to Satan a work that they knew had been performed by God's Spirit, they revealed the fact that they had gone beyond the bounds of God's grace and mercy. They had grieved the Holy Spirit from them and now were guilty of the sin for which there is no pardon. They had not reached this state in a moment, but through repeated and continued rejection of light and truth they had so hardened their hearts that now it was only a short step to this final rejection. No longer did their consciences operate. They were seared as with a hot iron. And in a little while we hear them clamoring for the life of the One who had come to be their Savior and saying, "His blood be on us and on our children," as glibly as though they had no guilt. They had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and they had done it as a result of a continued rejection of light and truth which had been revealed to them in the life and works of Jesus.

Awful are the warnings given by the Spirit, through the Scriptures, against this repeated rejection of God's grace. Terrible are the consequences that must inevitably follow such a course. "For it is impossible," says the Spirit, "in the case of those who have once for all been enlightened, and have tasted the sweetness of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have realized how good the word of God is and how mighty are the powers of the coming Age, and then fell away-it is impossible, I say, to keep bringing them back to a new repentance, for, to their own undoing, they are repeatedly crucifying the Son of God afresh and exposing Him to open shame. For land which has drunk in the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose

sakes, indeed, it is tilled, has a share in God's blessing. But if it only yields a mass of thorns and briers, it is considered worthless, and is in danger of being cursed, and in the end will be destroyed by fire." Hebrews 6: 4-8, Weymouth.

This does not indicate that there is no salvation for backsliders. Far from it. God is constantly calling to the wandering prodigal to come home. The door is always ajar, and the Father's arms are outstretched to welcome. But the trouble is that through repeated rejection and refusal the heart becomes so hard that they refuse to repent. They have by their sins "crucified the Son of God afresh" so often that they no longer feel conscience-smitten over the act. They become as land that drinks in the rain and enjoys the gifts of heaven, but yields only thorns and briers; and as a result they stand in danger of receiving the curse of God and final destruction in the fires of hell!

And to this agree the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "If we willfully persist in sin after having received the full knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains in reserve any other sacrifice for sins. There remains nothing but a certain awful expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which before long will devour the enemies of the truth. Any one who bids defiance to the Law of Moses is put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment, think you, will he be held to deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, has not regarded as holy that covenant-blood with which he was set free from sin, and has insulted the Spirit from whom comes grace?" Hebrews 10: 26-29, Weymouth.

It is this willful persistence in sin that is so perilous to the soul. It constitutes an insult to the Holy Spirit and finally forces His departure. Thus, the continued transgression of any commandment of God may become the cause of the hardening of the heart and the final rejection of the Spirit of grace. All sin is forgivable if it is repented of, but continued willful transgression finally makes repentance impossible, and then is the condition hopeless. For, says Paul, it is impossible to keep bringing them back to a new repentance if they continue repeatedly to crucify the Son of God afresh and expose Him to open shame by their rejection of His pleadings.

There's a line that is drawn by rejecting our Lord,  
Where the call of His Spirit is lost,  
And you hurry along with the pleasure-mad throng.  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

Have you counted the cost, if your soul should be lost,  
Though you gain the whole world for your own?  
Even now it may be that the line some have crossed,  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

You may barter your hope of eternity's morn,  
For a moment of joy at the most,  
For the glitter of sin and the things it will win  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

While the door of His mercy is open to you,  
Ere the depth of His love you exhaust,  
Won't you come and be healed, won't you whisper,  
I yield, I have counted, I have counted the cost?

-A. J. HODGE.

Some may inquire, "How may I know whether I have already crossed that line?" We reply that the test is your own willingness or unwillingness to repent of sin and be saved. He that wills to do His will shall know of the doctrine. If the prodigal son will return to his father's home, he will surely be received. The whole matter turns on our own attitude. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7: 25. The question is, Are we willing to come? The promise of the Master is that "him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6: 37. If, therefore, you find in your heart a desire for righteousness, if you are willing to be made whole, and if you will come to your crucified Lord, you have the full assurance of your acceptance. He beckons to you with stretched-out arms and through the Spirit beseeches you to come. He does not ask you to wait to make yourself better than you are now, but He is ready to receive you just as you are. You may feel poor, wretched, vile, and worthless; but Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. It was for such as you that He came. It was for such as you that He died. If you will but arise and go to Him, He will receive you gladly. It is only the one who remains away until the voice of conscience is forever silenced, and who no longer feels a desire for better things that is lost. Oh, then, come at once. Further delay may be indulged in only at the peril of your soul. To you the "Holy Ghost said, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. 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." Hebrews 3: 7-13.

OH, DON'T STAY AWAY  
Come, soul, and find thy rest,  
No longer be distressed:  
Come to thy Savior's breast,  
Oh, don't stay away.

Come with thy load of sin,  
Christ died thy soul to win;  
Now He will take thee in,  
Oh, don't stay away.

Time, here, will soon be past,  
Moments are flying fast;  
judgment will come at last,  
Oh, don't stay away.

Prayers are ascending now,  
Angels are bending low,  
Both worlds are blending now,  
Oh, don't stay away.  
-JOHNSON OATMAN, JR.

## **11. Receiving the Spirit**

AND when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive you the Holy Ghost." John 20: 22.

It is the will of God that every believer should receive the Holy Ghost. This gift is not to the few only, but it is available to all God's children. To every Christian today Jesus still is saying, "Receive you the Holy Ghost." He waits not for us to beseech Him to come in; He is not as one who must be persuaded to turn aside to us, but He actually pleads for admission.

The words of Jesus, "Receive you the Holy Ghost," are not a command but an appeal. He longs to come in, and He waits only for an open door. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3: 20. The absence of the Spirit's presence in the life, therefore, is not in any sense due to any restriction on God's part. It is not because of any unwillingness to bestow, but it is only because of our unwillingness to receive. We still hear Jesus saying: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you 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 11:9-13.

What an astonishing statement is this! No more would our Father withhold the Holy Spirit from us when we ask for His presence than an earthly father would withhold necessary food from his children. Yes, it is even more than that. The earthly father is evil in heart, and yet he desires the good of his offspring. But "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." With Him there is no possibility of failure to bestow. An earthly parent's interest and solicitude might possibly fail, but God's watchful care over His children never will fail.

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love," is His message to every child of His. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. The bonds of His love are stronger than death. His affection for His children is deeper and stronger even than the love of the mother for her helpless infant as it feeds at her breast. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Isaiah 49: 15, 16.

And because of His love for His people, He desires above all else to dwell with them and in them that He may protect them from danger and effectually use them to accomplish His work. He is continually seeking admission to the heart that has not as yet been thrown open to Him. "I sleep," exclaimed Solomon, king of Israel, "but my heart wakes: it is the voice of my beloved that knocks, saying, Open to me. . . . for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Song of Solomon 5: 2. How astonishing that the Majesty of the heavens should so desire companionship with men as to stand and plead for admission to the citadel of their hearts! Does someone ask, "How may I receive the Holy Spirit? What are the terms upon which I may enter into the experience of having His presence in the soul?" We reply that the terms and conditions are the same as those upon which you received pardon and justification when you first believed. All God's spiritual blessings to men come by faith. There are, of course, other conditions to be met, such as repentance and confession of sin, renouncing the world, etc.; but all these avail nothing in bringing the blessings of God to the soul unless they are accompanied by the exercise of faith. It is by grace through faith that we are saved.

(See Ephesians 2: 8) "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11: 6. It was when Abraham believed God that he was counted to be righteous, for righteousness comes by faith; justification comes by faith; the forgiveness of sins is received by faith; sanctification is a work of faith, and just so is the gift of the Spirit received by faith. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3: 14. This blessing of God, like all other spiritual blessings, is available to those whose faith will reach up and lay hold of it. "Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Mark 11: 24. The secret of receiving is believing. When God makes a promise to His children, their part is to believe the promise and confidently claim its fulfillment. When they believe and claim the promise, God supplies the fact. It is so if they believe.

The reception of the Holy Spirit is not in any sense dependent upon our feelings. Neither is feeling any indication of His presence or absence. He can be just as near us when we are passing through the shadows as when we are in the light. We may be passing through the waters of affliction and may even feel depressed, but that is no evidence that the Spirit has departed from us. (See Isaiah 43: 19.) The extent to which His presence fills the life is not dependent upon our feeling, but upon our believing. No matter how we may feel, no matter how dark may be the clouds that hide His face, no matter how Satan tries to depress our spirits, we have the blessed privilege, yes, the perfect right, to claim the Spirit's presence and rely wholly upon Him for succor.

"Ask you of the Lord rain," says the Spirit, "in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zechariah 10: 1. Do I hear someone say, "But I have asked repeatedly, and I see no evidence of the presence of the Spirit?" We reply that the difficulty can only be with your asking. You did not ask in faith, and without faith we receive nothing from the Lord. The prayer of faith not only asks for the Spirit's presence, but also thanks God for it. The answer is taken for granted. It is actually received by faith, and when faith lays hold of it, God supplies the fact. It is granted. That is, believe that you receive whatsoever things you desire when you pray, and when you believe that you receive, the unerring promise is, "You shall have them." The blessing promised must be claimed by faith. We are not only to ask but to claim the thing for which request is made. There must be an exercising of faith on our part in order for God to fulfill His part. Let us quote the words of another:

"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."- Mrs. E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 8, pp. 20, 21.

If our prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit have apparently not been answered, let us change the form of asking. Let us begin really to ask in faith. Note carefully the words of James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James 1: 5-7. How important it is then that we pray in faith! How necessary that, like Abraham of old, we should believe God!

Faith is the channel through which all God's spiritual blessings flow out to man. It has ever

been so. It was by faith that the children of Israel started into the Red Sea, believing that God was making a way for them to pass over.

It was by faith that the victory was claimed over the walled city of Jericho. The shout of victory arose while as yet the impregnable wall still stood about the city, but "it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." Joshua 6: 20. What is needed today is the shout of faith. God waits, yes, longs to bestow His Spirit in fullness upon His children, but He cannot make the bestowal upon a faithless and unbelieving heart. It is a grief to God when His children fail to accept Him at His word. "How long will this people provoke me?" He asks. "And how long will it be ere they believe me?" Numbers 14: 11. But when faith is manifested, the promise is fulfilled, and the Spirit's power is seen in the life. "If thou can believe," said Jesus, "all things are possible to him that believes." Mark 9: 23. And again, "He that believes on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." John 7: 38, 39.

And this asking for the Spirit and claiming His presence and power should be a daily experience in the life of every believer. "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.'" -Mrs. E. G. White, Acts of The Apostles, p. 56.