

Study for the Month of March 2007

**Part I of a Four-part study on:
*The Promised Power of the Holy Spirit in the Former and Latter Rain***

The Urgency of This Message

Note: All verses in bold before quotes are provided by this writer/complier.

“Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. 2: 9-14, 10. The carnally minded, meaning, those who live after the flesh, will fail to appreciate this present, sealing truth. Rom. 8: 5-8; 2 Pet. 1:12. Thus, in order to perceive the beauty and sense the urgency of this message, we must first fervently plead for the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyes that we may see the wondrous things in God’s Word, comprehending it with the “mind that was also in Christ Jesus.” Ps. 119: 118; Phil. 2:5.

KEY TEXT:

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.” Amos 8: 11, 12.

I believe this prophecy applies both *now* but more so in the near future when probation has already closed upon mankind, and the seven last plagues are beginning to be poured out upon the finally impenitent. Notice the following:

“The time will come which **many** will be deprived of the written word. *But, if this word is printed in the memory, no one can take it from us: and it is a talisman that will meet the worst forms of error and evil.* The sanctuary question is the foundation of our faith, and in the sanctuary is the ark, and in the ark are the tables of stone on which are the law spoken from Sinai amidst the scenes of awful grandeur. *These tables of stone are in the heavens, and they will be brought forth in that day when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, and men shall be judged according to the things written in the books.* They will be judged by the law written by the finger of God and given to Moses to be deposited in the ark.” A record is kept of the deeds of all men, and according to his works, will every man receive his sentence [Ecl. 12:13, 14; Rev. 22:12].” –MS 20, Feb. 2, 1906.

Talisman comes from the Greek *telesma*, meaning: “Something that produces extraordinary effects, especially in averting evil.” *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth edition, 1942.* How appropriate indeed the meaning of this word when coupled with the other Biblical descriptions of the Word of God as being (a) “the sword of the Spirit” in the whole armor of God (Eph. 5: 11-18) and (b) as “living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” Heb. 4: 12. David learned the secret of how to avert evil. “Thy word,” he said, “have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” Ps. 119:11.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ Isa. 8:20. **The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of the spirits of darkness.** Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. **The last great delusion is soon to open before us.** Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them *except* by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and miracle must be tested . . . **None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.** To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? **The decisive hour is even now at hand.** Are our feet planted on the rock of God’s immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? . . . The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love. **But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.** . . . Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”- *Great Controversy*, pp. 593-5.

“The Bible declares that **in the last days** [the very days in which we live] men will be absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be **blind** to eternal realities. Christ says [Matt. 24-37-39 quoted]. So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah’s day the warning of the flood was to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. **So the message of Christ’s coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord’s table** [the gospel feast of God’s word]. . .

The world is perishing for the want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. [How and why?] There are few that preach the word *unmixed* with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do *not* receive the blessing that God places in it for them.”- *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 228.

“Then I saw Jesus lay off His priestly attire and clothe Himself with His most kingly robes. . . The plagues were falling upon the inhabitants of the earth. [1] Some were denouncing God and cursing Him. [2] Others rushed to the people of God [the 144, 000 at this time] and begged to be taught how they might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them. The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonizing prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given. The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them. When the saints and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had no interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desire life but made no effort to obtain it. . . . With terrible distinctness they hear the words, ‘Too late! Too late!’ **Those who had not prized God’s word were hurrying to and fro [Amos 8:11, 12 quoted].** What would they not give for one word of approval from God! But no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day they have slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever.”- *Early Writings*, p. 281.

“In the plague that follows [the fourth], power is given to the sun ‘to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat.’ Rev. 8: 8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time [Joel 1:10-12, 17-20; Amos 8: 3 quoted]. . . **In that day multitudes will desire the shelter of God’s mercy which they have so long despised. [Amos 8: 11, 12 quoted!].**”- *Great Controversy*, pp. 628-9.

Unbelievers and Christians alike are famishing today in the midst of plenty because most evangelists, ministers, and pastors mingle human tradition with Bible truth!

Too Late Now to Feed on Milk!

See Rom. 13: 11-14; Heb. 5: 12-14. Many well-meaning ministers describe their churches (and I mean other churches and denominations as well) with such buzz words and phrases as: “a hospital where the spiritually sick are brought for healing and recovery,” or “a cradle for new beginnings,” etc., etc. But these men of God also need to reckon with the radically-altered dynamic of the church’s status and condition *today*, having entered the closing phases leading up to the blazing climax of the church’s history!

Because of advancing truth and diminishing earth time, there is a difference between the requirements of the followers of Christ in Noah’s day, in Martin Luther’s day, and in our day since the first angel’s message announced the opening of the investigative judgment in 1844. We are under the swelling of the proclamation of the third angel’s message that will end with the final loud cry of the fourth angel of Revelation 18—at the outpouring of the latter rain.

The godly Reformers---Luther and Calvin---both subscribed to the Augustinian false doctrine of *predestination*. Hence, both advocated child baptism having not yet fully understood the true nature of sin—that it is a matter of *choice* and not of *nature or birth!* This is the old basis of the so-called “new theology” of apostate Protestantism. But since the late 50’s and 60’s this doctrine has been one of the major causes of the shaking in the remnant church. Hundreds of ministers, elders, Bible teachers, and members have left Adventism because of it —and more will fall away in the days ahead, as prophesied.

But our final generation is required more than all the generations past. Why? Because of 6,000 years of accumulated light of truth--the most advanced of which is the all-encompassing and comprehensive doctrine of “the sanctuary, in connection with 2300 days, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (EW 63). Indeed, as Jesus said, “Unto whom much is given much is required,” Luke 12: 48.

If at all, the church *in these last days*, being “the fold enclosing Christ’s flock” (6BC 1118), “the field” in which “both wheat and tares grow until the harvest”—which is “the close of probationary time” (COL 70-75, 123), and is “God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men” (AA 9)--- is more akin to a “**boot camp**” than to a “cradle for new beginnings.” Why? by the simple fact that it is in its penultimate stage as the “**church militant**,” before finally emerging as the “church triumphant, after its final purification by the enforcement of the “mark of the beast” of Revelation 13. Lest we forget, it is God’s *only little army on earth* that is quite unprepared at the present time to confront, as David did, the colossal “Goliath” of the worldwide confederacy of the churches and “the kings of the earth” who are preparing for the final assault against God’s law and His people under Satan’s masterful deception and orchestration.

All who join the remnant church in these last days should diligently be brought up to speed by their Bible teachers, ministers, and pastors as to the real nature of the conflict and what they and their children are soon to face! They must be told that they have enlisted under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel; they have entered *the battlefield of battlefields*, not a dance floor nor a nursery! They need to put their boots on, not dancing shoes. They need to “quit like men and be strong.”

As to being “a hospital where the spiritually sick are brought for healing and recovery,” it must be remembered that Jesus brought healing and restoration *wherever* He went—whether on the hillside, by the streets, on the seashore, or in the homes. Whenever and wherever the physically and spiritually sick and dying sought His healing mercies, there was His “hospital.”

“Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ’s life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. **We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation.** In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps.” – My Life Today, p. 225.

Yes, Christ did heal the demoniac in the synagogue (DA 255-6), as well as the man with a withered hand (DA 286-7). But the Jewish leaders excommunicated anyone from the synagogue who believed in Jesus (DA 538)! In fact the congregation in Nazareth cast out Christ from the synagogue (DA 240)! Thus He did more healing outside of the synagogue—and had to cleanse the temple twice, driving the buyers and sellers out with a whip in divine displeasure for desecrating the place of worship with their blasphemous trafficking of things religious. Isn’t this what is happening today in some of churches, too? In fact the genuine medical missionary work, which is the right arm of the third angel’s message, is the opening wedge of *public evangelism*.

And yet, how many members, *years in the church*, really understand what health reform comprehends, much less are actually practicing this “right arm of the third angel’s message” *in their very own homes*? And truth is no truth unless it is practiced! Without this “right arm” many of those who profess to be waiting for the Second coming of Christ are actually spiritually maimed and handicapped—unprepared to receive the sealing latter rain which is “coming soon as the midnight cry but with ten times the power.”

What we all need to realize

At this very time all must honestly and courageously deal with three startling facts—verities that every church member whether clergyman or layman, old or young, veterans in the faith or babes in the truth, should seriously take to heart, namely:

1. This is the last church—that desperately needs healing herself!

The Faithful and True Witness—Christ, through the Holy Spirit—has long diagnosed the remnant church as being corporately afflicted with the spiritual disease of lukewarmness—the condition of being “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” Rev.3: 14-22. Unless the under shepherds, called “the ancient men” of the church, undertake immediately the unpopular yet indispensable work of awakening their congregations to their true condition—they, too, “will be weighed in the balances and found wanting.”

The prophets described them as being “asleep” as well. Hence, they themselves need to be awakened. The church desperately needs genuine revival and reformation. Those who refuse to do so for whatever excuse and yet keep their positions as “spiritual guardians of the people,” will eventually be classed “as dumb dogs that will never bark.” See Isa. 56: 10-12. This of course does not apply to those church leaders, ministers, pastors, elders,

Bible teachers, and active laymen, who are doing all they can, in their appointed spheres of responsibility and influence to stem and even turn the tide. But as always, their numbers are few. Notice the following fearful revelations (emphasis mine):

“The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, *will be left without the seal of God*. The Lord commissions His messengers, the man with the slaughtering weapons in their hands: ‘God ye after him in the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My Sanctuary. Then they began with the ancient men which were before the house’ [Eze. 9:4-6].

“Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who has stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and marked manifestation of God’s power as in the former days [the former and latter rain]. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. **Thus ‘Peace and safety’ is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that will never bark** are the one who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and children all perish together.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 211.

As to when this terrible event of Ezekiel 9 occurs is not now, as some fanatics and offshoots have been dangerously proclaiming. This takes place during the “general destruction” or the “general slaughter” at the outpouring of the seven last plagues of God’s wrath unmingled with mercy *after* the close of human probation. Notice:

“All fornicators will be outside the City of God. Already God’s angels are at work in judgment, and the Spirit of God is gradually leaving the world. The triumph of the church is very near, the reward to be bestowed is almost within our reach, **and yet iniquity is found among those who claim to have the full blaze of heaven’s light.**

He who presides over His church and the destinies of nations is carrying forward the last work to be accomplished for this world. To His angels He gives the commission to execute His judgments. **LET THE MINISTERS AWAKE, let them take in the situation.** The work of judgment begins at the sanctuary. . . . Read Ezekiel 9: 2-7. . . . And when their task is done, when the last vial of God’s wrath is poured out, they return and lay their emptied vials at the feet of the Lord.” – *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 431-2.

“Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God and murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! **Unless they repent**, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion [the church], they will *never* receive the mark of God’s sealing approval. They will fall in **the general destruction** of the wicked, *represented by* the work of the five men bearing the slaughter weapons.

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

But **the general slaughter** of those who do not thus see the wide contrast between sin and righteousness, and do not feel as those do who stand in the counsel of God and receive the mark, is described in the order to the five men with slaughter weapons [Eze. 9: 5, 6 quoted].” – *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 267.

2. We are living under the most solemn period of both earth and the church's history---the judgment hour period announced in the first angel's message of Rev. 14: 6!

“Solemn are the scenes connected with the *closing* work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. **The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon---none know how soon---it will pass to the cases of the living.** In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Savior's admonition: ‘Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.’ **Mark 13:33.** ‘If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.’ **Rev. 3:3.** . . . ‘Watch ye therefore . . . lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.’ **Mark. 1: 35, 36.** Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments---**it may be in that hour** the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: ‘Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.’ **Dan. 5:27.**” - *Great Controversy*, pp. 490-1.

Many, including Bible teachers, mistakenly confine the verses quoted above (in bold) to the Second coming of Christ, or worse, to its counterfeit doctrine of the “rapture.” However, a more diligent study of the sanctuary message in connection with 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 will readily show that Christ, in these verses, is actually referring to the close of the individual's probation, at death,—which no mortal knows precisely when, where, how, and by what immediate cause. Today may be our last.

It is a cardinal Bible teaching and a prominent doctrine distinctive of Adventism that all who profess faith in Christ, beginning with Adam and Eve, have the books in heaven recording their whole life since birth opened for judgment immediately at point of death. Sitting in this heavenly tribunal officiated by the Father through the intercession of Christ, are all the numberless angels, the 24 elders, and the 4 “living creatures” of the highest order of angels. The closing work of the atonement going on in heaven is also referred to as “being weighed in the balances of the sanctuary.” This investigative judgment begun with cases of the righteous dead then will move on to the cases of the living at the outpouring of the latter rain—the precise time which is not revealed as well!

“The **dead** were judged,” says John, ‘out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ Rev. 20:12. *Angels of God have kept a faithful record of the lives of all, and they are to be judged according to their deeds.* In view of this Judgment, Peter exhorted the men of Israel: [Acts 3: 19-21 quoted]. . . . The lives of all who have believed on Jesus pass in solemn review before God. *Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate examines the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted; names rejected.* From age to age, all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon [forgiven, justified] written against their names in the books of heaven, and in the closing work of Judgment, their sins are blotted out---and they themselves accounted worthy of eternal life.”—Vol. 4, *Spirit of Prophecy, 1884 original edition of the Great Controversy*.

Since “names are accepted and names rejected” in the Judgment currently taking place, how dare any mortal confidently and presumptuously say: “I am *already* saved,” or “once-saved, *always* saved!” It was in self-confidence that apostle Peter fell!

“Angels of God witness each sin and register it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from the father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. Men may be deceived by those corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life!”- *Great Controversy*, 1911 edition. (Please read rest of the chapter!)

Indeed, it may be “in that hour that they think not” that God, the righteous Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: “Thou are weighed in the balances and art found wanting” upon any professed Christian who suddenly dies without a moment’s notice with his sins unconfessed and unrepented of! The same irreversible verdict will be pronounced on those obsessed with enriching themselves not realizing they have a hell to shun and a heaven to win; on those who presumptuously indulge their unsanctified appetites and desires, or those who vainly waste time, money, and energy in adorning their mortal bodies so soon to be food for maggots!

But this weighing in the balances of the sanctuary is not merely confined to individuals. The remnant church is *specifically mentioned in name*, as being subject to this awesome closing work of the atonement! Notice:

“In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence, ‘Found wanting.’ By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.” - *Testimonies*, p. 247.

Q. Have you ever heard the “spiritual guardians of the people” ever sharing this fearful truth to their flocks from their pulpits? And if not in their sermons, at least some time, some place—such as during Bible studies, in the church newsletters, or in the church bulletin? If not—earnestly pray for them, for yourself, and for God to send any one, be it a man, woman, or even a child, to awaken us to these warnings while mercy lingers!

Moreover, are you aware that “performances” that held in our schools were already being divinely rebuked way back in our pioneers’ time? How much more today when in many of our high schools and even in our churches the element of entertainment and sporting events are at an all time high!! All in responsible positions in these institutions will be “weighed in the balances of the sanctuary” for allowing or worse, being the prime movers behind these events of a worldly mold that give Satan the victory! Notice:

“During the following night I seemed to be witnessing the **performances** of the afternoon. The scene was clearly laid out before me, and I was given a message for the manager and teachers of the school. **I was shown that in the amusements carried on at the school that afternoon the enemy gained a victory, and teachers were weighed in the balances and found wanting.** I was greatly distressed and burdened to think that those standing in responsible positions should open the door and, as it were, invite the enemy in; for this they did in permitting the exhibitions that took place. As teachers, they should have stood firm against giving place to the enemy **in any such line.** By what they permitted they marred their record and grieved the Spirit of God. The students were encouraged in a course the effects of which were not easily effaced. **There is no end to the path of vain amusements, and every step take in**

it is a step in a path which Christ has not traveled.” – *Counsels to teachers & Parents*, pp. 348-9.

3. The sad fact is that an increasing number of members are becoming more and more frustrated with the church because it has failed them in these very areas of high expectations!

Instead of experiencing “healing and recovery,” some are becoming even more sick and discouraged over the seemingly unchecked lukewarmness, coldness, and worldliness that has been steadily creeping into the churches. They ask, “Where do we go”?

Some, having listened to too many ear-pleasing, mushy, “peace-and-safety” sermons based on “reformational” or “new theology” that convey the fatal idea that “they are already saved,” or that “no one can overcome all his sins,” have presumptuously gone back to their former worldly lifestyles (although “faithfully attending church on Sabbath and regularly paying their tithes”). Las Vegas after church--what a delusion!

Others, in a desperate effort to preserve the “old-fashioned,” reverent manner of worship being slowly edged-out by the more popular contemporary forms of worship and music patterned after the *worldly* churches, have resorted to joining conservative small groups and fellowships that uphold these and the inspired writings of E.G. White. Indeed, the church is being shaken; soon it will be finally sifted by the fiery ordeal of persecution after the enactment and enforcement of the “mark of the beast.” Who will be found standing in that day among the faithful few? Shall you? Shall I?

A Special Warning to the Church Today

There is a special message that all faithful spiritual guardians and under shepherds---whom God expects to stand as “watchman of the night,” will include in their discourses and ministries: they will remind their regular members, while judiciously informing those just joining the church as newly baptized members in these days, that:---

“It is too late now to feed with milk. *If souls a month or two old in the truth, who are about to enter the time of trouble such as never was [Dan. 12:1], cannot hear all the straight truth, or endure the strong meat of the straightness of the way, how will they stand in the day of battle? Truths that we have been years learning must be learned in a few months by those who now embrace the third angel’s message. . . . There is no need of milk after souls are convinced of the truth. As soon as the conviction of truth is yielded to and the heart willing, the truth should have its effect, the truth will work like leaven, and purify and purge away the passions of the natural heart. It is a disgrace for those who have been in the truth for years to talk of feeding souls who have been months in the truth, upon milk. It shows they know little of the leadings of the Spirit of God. Those who embrace the truth now will have to step fast.* There will have to be a breaking up of the heart before the Lord, a rending of the heart, and not the garment.” – *MS 1, Feb. 12, 1854/Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, pp 33-34.

It is precisely for this reason that the church, *at this time*, can hardly be described as “a cradle for new beginnings.” Why? “It is too late now to feed with *milk!* It is almost a “peace-and-safety” slogan! Let’s read the above quote once more and honestly examine ourselves as to what kind of “disciples” we are. Are we part of the majority who delight in

“drinking the milk of the gospel” all these long years, declining to “eat the strong meat of the straightness of the way?” See Heb. 5:12-1.

Jesus said: “Except you eat the flesh of the Son, and drink His blood (not milk!), ye have *no life* in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6: 53, 54. When the truth sank into the minds of the crowds who claimed to be His disciples, but in truth were following Him merely “for the fish and loaves,” the sad record of the Scriptures says: “From that time *many of His disciples* went back, and walked no more with Him,” prompting Jesus to sadly turn to only twelve disciples remaining, inquiring, “Will ye also go away?” See John 6: 66, 67.

What did Jesus mean when He declared “I am the Bread of life” (John 6:48)? And of “eating of His flesh and drinking His blood”?

“Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel garments. But the light from the word is shining amid the moral darkness, and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied. It must be searched for as hidden treasure. **Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the word, which will make men wise unto salvation. This is the meaning of the words of Christ in regard to eating His flesh and drinking His blood** [John 17:3 quoted].”- *Letter 12*, May 10, 1894.

“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Savior, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, **that we are to become partakers of His nature.** What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Savior. **A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life.** His love, His grace, must be assimilated. . .

Christ had spoken a sacred, eternal truth regarding the relation between Himself and His followers. He knew the character of those who claimed to be His disciples, and His words tested their faith. He declared that they were to believe and act upon His teaching. All who receive Him would partake of His nature [His “flesh and blood”] and be conformed to His character. This involved the relinquishment of their cherished ambitions. It required the complete surrender of their lives to Jesus. They were called to be self-sacrificing, meek, and lowly in heart. They must walk in the narrow path traveled by the Man of Calvary, if they would share in the gift of life and the glory of heaven.

The test was too great. The enthusiasm of those who had sought to take Him by force and make Him king grew cold. . . They had welcomed His miracle-working power; they were eager to be freed from disease and suffering; but they would not come into sympathy with His self-sacrificing life. They cared not for the mysterious spiritual kingdom which He spoke. The insincere, the selfish, who had sought Him, no longer desired Him.”- *Desire of Ages*, pp. 390, 391.

What did Jesus mean when He said, “The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51)? What is the burden and message of the whole chapter of John chapter 6?

“The only safety for any one of us is to plant our feet upon the word of God and study the Scriptures, making God’s word our constant meditation. **Tell the people to take no man’s word regarding the Testimonies, but to read them and study them for themselves,** and then they will know that they are in harmony with the truth. The word of God is the truth. Of a good man the psalmist declares, ‘His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.’ (Ps. 1:2). He who puts his mind and heart into this work gains a solid, valuable experience. **The Holy Spirit is in the word of God. Here is the living, undying**

element so distinctly represented in the sixth chapter of John. . . . Here is presented before us the rich banquet, of which all who believe in Christ as a personal Savior may eat. He is the Tree of life to all who continue to feed on Him. . . . I am instructed by the Word of God that His promises are for me and every child of God. The banquet is spread before us; we are invited to eat the Word of God, which will strengthen spiritual muscle and sinew." – *This Day with God*, p. 292.

See John 9:4. "The end is near, stealing upon us stealthily, imperceptibly, like the noiseless approach of the thief in the night. **May the Lord grant that we shall no longer sleep as do others, but that we shall watch and be sober.** The truth is soon to triumph gloriously, and all who now choose to be laborers together with God, will triumph with it. The time is short; the night soon cometh when no man can work." – *Maranatha*, p. 27.

Good News for the Faithful of the Remnant Church

The gospel is "the good news of salvation," meaning, all who truly repent of sin can, and *will be saved from* the power of Satan by faith in Christ, following His example of yielding his whole will and life to joyfully obeying God's Word and law, thus magnifying it and making it honorable. Isa. 42:21. This is the perfect victory *in* Christ.

Indeed, "Salvation means to us complete surrender of soul, body, and spirit. Because of the unruly elements of our nature our passions often gain the mastery. The only hope of the sinner is to cease from sin ["Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." John 5: 14]. Thus his will will be in harmony with the will of Christ. His soul will be brought into fellowship with God." (*This Day with God*, p. 140).

The other good news is that Jesus declared Himself to be the Rock of ages, the foundation upon which the true church is built. He assures us that "even the gates of hell cannot prevail against it." Matt. 16:18. Thus, in spite of the widespread declension of faith and piety "*the church may appear to fall but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out*" (2SM 380). Its ultimate, triumphant, shining moment is still in the very near future when the whole world will witness the final revival of primitive godliness, as the *faithful few* that remain in the church and *overcome* by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, receive the sealing, latter rain, and fulfill the prophecy of Revelation 18.

The church triumphant, however, will bear no resemblance to the church militant of today! The transformation resulting from all the shaking and then the final sifting would have been so thorough and complete that "not one spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" will be found among the overcomers! Eph. 5: 26, 27; Rev. 22: 7. "Militant" means "engaged in warfare; fighting; also, combative; aggressively active." – *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 5th edition, 1942.*

And yet while the church militant is imperfect, currently made up of "wheat and tares," it still is--and make no mistake about it--*God's only living, visible church on earth in these last day*, even as defective ancient Israel was during the Old Testament times!

At the outpouring of the sealing, latter rain upon those who have diligently prepared to receive it, the difference between the church militant and the church triumphant will be like night and day! However, even before that time, those who had merely a nominal, easy-going and shallow understanding of their faith, as well as those cherishing fanatical interpretations of who the church is, would have already fallen away, apostatized, or

separated from the church, thereby, unknown to them, helping accelerate the cleansing of the church!

“The Lord desires us to realize that it is of great importance that we stand in these last days upon the platform of eternal truth. **Those who think that the church militant is the church triumphant make a great mistake.** The church militant will gain great triumphs, but it will also have fierce conflicts with evil that it may be firmly established upon the platform of eternal truth. **And every one of us should be determined to stand with the church upon this platform.**” - *Manuscript 46*, May 18, 1904/ *Upward Look*, p. 152.

“**Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant.** We are sorry that there are defective members [in the church militant], that there are tares amid the wheat . . . Although in our churches, that claim to believe advance truth, there are those who are faulty and erring, as tares among the wheat, God is longsuffering and patient. He reproves and warns the erring, but He does not destroy those who are long in learning the lessons He would teach them. . . .” - *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 45.

“**The church of God on earth will be imperfect, but God does not destroy His church because of its imperfection.** . . . *There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church.* One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God.” - *Ibid*, p. 46.

“Some people seem to think that upon entering the church they will have their expectations fulfilled, and are zealous in their faith, and when they see faults in the church members, they say, ‘We left the world in order to have no association with evil characters, but the evil is here also;’ and they ask, as did the servants in the parable [of the wheat and tares], ‘From whence then hath it tares?’ **But we need not be thus disappointed, for the Lord has not warranted us in coming to the conclusion that the church is perfect; and all our zeal will not be successful in making the church militant as pure as the church triumphant.**” - *Ibid*, p. 47.

Q. Who then will make up the church triumphant?

See Rev. 18: 1-5; 2 Pet. 1:10-12; Ps. 89:47; Rom. 9:28; 1 Cor. 7:29. “**The truth is soon to triumph gloriously, all who now choose to be laborers together with God, will triumph with it.** The time is short; the night cometh when no man can work [John 9:4]. . . . The time is coming when there will be as many converted in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost, after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit. . . . *During the loud cry [(Rev. 18)], the church,* aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation *so abundantly* that light will be communicated to *every* city and town. The earth will be *filled* with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of *present truth* will be seen flashing everywhere.” - *Evangelism*, pp. 692-694.

How important then that every member fully understands what it means to be “laborers together with God” and immediately set their hearts and minds to doing it without delay!

“Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. **Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children.** At that time many will separate from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted the love of God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has cause to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord’s Second coming.” - *Great Controversy*, p. 464.

Some quote this very passage and quite confidently point out that since they are “among the people of God” now, that they will receive the “Spirit and power of God” as “His children” at that future time. What they do not bother to find out is this: who are those being referred to as “God’s children” at the time the Holy Spirit is poured out in latter rain power! This 4-part series will clearly show who,—and it will not be those who are lukewarm or presumptuously self-confident of their spiritual condition!

The Bad and Good News

The *bad news* is that God will, at a particular appointed time, determined by their own choices, pass by those who presumed on His mercy and goodness in entrusting them with the greatest light of truth ever given to any generation but squandered away this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The *good news* is these vacancies will be replaced by the “eleventh hour laborers.” (See parable of the “eleventh-hour, one-hour laborers, Matt. 20: 1-16). Notice:

“But I speak not mine words when I say that **God’s Spirit will pass by those who have had their day of test and opportunity, but who have not distinguished the voice of God or appreciated the movings of His Spirit.** Then [at that time] thousands **in the eleventh hour**, will see and acknowledge the truth [Amos 9: 13 quoted]. These conversions to the truth will be made with *a rapidity that will surprise the church*, and God’s name alone will be glorified.” – *Letter 43, 1890/ Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 16.

“Multitudes are to be gathered into the fold. *Many who have known the truth have corrupted their way before God and departed from the faith.* **[But] the broken ranks will be filled up by those represented by Christ as coming in at the eleventh hour.** There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving.

The time of God’s destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, **while the door of mercy is closed to those who would not enter.** Large numbers will be admitted who in these last days hear the truth for the first time.” – *Letter 103, June 3, 1903/ TGD 163.*

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world’s insignia; the other was led by the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel. **Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. . . Now the church is militant.**

Now we are confronted with a world in midnight darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry. But the day is coming in which the battle will have been fought, the victory won. . . .

This is the scene that is presented to me. **But the church must and will fight against seen and unseen foes.** Satan’s agencies in human form are on the ground. Men have confederated to oppose the Lord of hosts. The confederacies will continue until Christ shall leave His place of intercession before the mercy seat and shall put on the garments of vengeance. Satanic agencies are *in every city*, busily organizing into parties those opposed to the law of God. Professed saints and avowed unbelievers take their stand with these parties. **This is no time for the people of God to be weaklings.** We cannot afford to be off our guard for one moment.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, p. 41, “A View of the Conflict” chapter.

The Heart-breaking News

See Rev. 13: 3, 7, 8; 12:4. The heart-breaking news is that Satan *will* succeed in deceiving “the whole world,” and all churches *except* the remnant church, specifically “those who remain faithful and endure to the end,” and “overcome even as Christ overcame.” Matt.

24:13; James 5:11; Heb. 12: 1-3. The master deceiver will employ the same methods he so successfully used in deceiving one-third of the angels in heaven (Rev. 12:4), and then, Adam and Eve in Eden (Gen. 2: 16, 17; 3: 1-24).

Not that any person, church, or denomination has been *predestined* to be deceived and lost but because of *sinful neglect and criminal negligence* of the great plan of redemption offered to all at the infinite cost of the Creator's sacrifice! See Heb. 2: 3.

"[Jesus] added a warning to those who had impressed by His words, who had heard Him gladly, but who had not surrendered themselves for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. **It is not only resistance but by neglect that the soul I destroyed.**" - *Desire of Ages*, p. 323.

"Habits of negligence should be resolutely overcome. Many think it is a sufficient excuse for the grossest errors to plead forgetfulness. But do they not, as well as others, possess intellectual faculties? Then they should discipline their minds to be retentive. **It is a sin to forget, as sin to be negligent. If you form a habit of negligence, you may neglect your own soul's salvation, and at last find that you are unready for the kingdom of God.**" - *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 358-9.

Even sadder is the news that, **like the Jewish nation**, many members of the *remnant church*—"those who profess faith in the third angel's message," thus, **Seventh-day Adventists**---will be found unprepared to receive and be sealed by the latter rain when it is poured out. Why? They likewise obstinately chose to remain spiritually lukewarm in spite of the abundance of merciful warnings sent to them until total blindness set in their souls. These are the very ones who become the worst enemies of their former brethren when the final, separating test comes upon all that dwell on the earth. Notice:

"As the storm approaches, **a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth**, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who one rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. **When Sabbath-keepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false report and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.**" - *Great Controversy*, p. 308.

Isa. 30: 9-13; Matt. 24:4, 5; 2 Thess. 2: 3, 9, 10. "The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and *before* the time for such a movement will come, **he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.**

In many of the revivals which have occurred during the last half century, the same influences have been at work, to a greater or lesser degree, that will be manifest in the more extensive movements of the future. *There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead.* Yet none need be deceived. In the light of God's word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Wherever men *neglect* the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed. And by the rule which Christ Himself has given, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7:16), it is evident that these movements are *not* the work of the Spirit of God." - *Great Controversy*, pp. 464-5.

Matt 24: 37-51; Luke 17: 26-37; 19:41-44; 21: 20-28; Gen. 6: 11, 12. "A terrible condition of the world has been presented before me. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. **The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself.** They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations *corrupt*. It is *as impossible* to cause their minds to dwell upon the pure and holy things as it would be to turn the course of Niagara and send its waters pouring up the falls. . . Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions and be controlled by principles." – *Adventist Home*, pp. 328-329.

"The days in which we live are solemn and important. **The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. . . .The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us.** *The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future.* Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. Men have become infatuated with vice, and every species of evil prevails."- *Testimonies for the Church*, vol.9, p. 11.

"The youth should seek God more earnestly. **The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.** The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of the earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. **The end is near, probation is closing.** Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near [Isa. 55:6, 7]! The prophet says: 'Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger' [Zeph. 2:3]." –*Maranatha*, p. 37.

"**Everything in the world is in agitation.** The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. . . Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. *Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.* The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round. . . . Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding the theaters, horse races, gambling halls. **The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is bout to be eternally decided.** . . .Solemnly there come down to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives; 'take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.'"- *Desire of Ages*, p. 636.

"**Transgression has almost reached its limit.** Confusion fills the world, and a **great terror** is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as *an overwhelming surprise*."- *Maranatha*, p. 138.

“The work of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them as a *blinding force*.” - *Maranatha*, p. 182.

Heb. 2: 3. **“Many do not realize what they must be** in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive *the seal of the living God* and are protected in the time of trouble **must reflect the image of Jesus fully.**” - *Early Writings*, p. 71.

Dan. 12: 1; Amos 4:12. -- “I saw that **many were neglecting the preparation so needful** and were looking to *the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’* to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how *many* I saw in the time of trouble *without a shelter!* They had *neglected* the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that *all must have* to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God.” - *Ibid.*

“Those who **refuse to be hewed by the prophets** and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is [Laodicean-Rev. 3:15-17], will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they **neglected** to be hewed and squared for the building. . .”

1 John 2:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:57. --“I saw that **none** could share the ‘refreshing’ **unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action.** We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be **earnestly seeking that preparation necessary** to enable us to stand in the *battle* of the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that *none but holy beings* can ever dwell in His presence.” - *Ibid.*

If you were wondering earlier what becoming “laborers together with Christ” means, here is one answer—*obtaining the victory over very besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and every wrong word and action—all by the grace of God!* This is what this study is all about—preparing us to receive the sealing, latter rain!

The Dispensation of the Spirit

“The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, **to those that ask**, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.” - *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 511.

John 14: 16, 17, 26; 16: 7-14. --“Before vacating His office as teacher, Jesus introduced His Successor in His valedictory discourse. He promised His disciples the coming of the other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, as the culmination and continuation of His work on earth for them. To receive the Holy Spirit was their supreme privilege, and is likewise the privilege of every disciple of that same Lord since then, while waiting for His glorious, visible, bodily return to receive them to the heavenly mansions.” Notice:

“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.*” - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.-

“In the teachings of Christ, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is made prominent. What a vast theme is this for contemplation and encouragement! What treasures of truth did He add to the knowledge of His disciples in His instruction concerning the Holy Spirit, the Comforter! He dwelt upon this theme in order to *console* His disciples in the great trial they were soon to experience, that they might be cheered in their great disappointment. . The world’s Redeemer sought to bring to the hearts of the sorrowing disciples the strongest solace. *But from a large field of subjects, He chose the theme of the Holy Spirit*, which was to inspire and comfort their hearts. **And yet, though Christ made much of this theme**

concerning the Holy Spirit, how little is it dwelt upon in the churches!"- Bible Echo, Nov. 15, 1893.

Leroy E. Froom in his book, *The Coming of the Comforter*, says:

“Christ unfolded the tremendous fact of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and this dispensational aspect cannot be overemphasized. It is based on the *earthly work* of Christ, and its coming was impossible *until* that work was finished and He ascended on high. In John 14 and 16 Jesus opened before them [His disciples] the three mighty truths of --- (1) the promised coming of the Holy Spirit; (2) the character and personality of the Holy Spirit; and (3) the mission, or work, of the Holy Spirit.”- p. 26.

“Taking these in order, observe first the explicit declaration of the coming of the Holy Spirit. One must be impressed with the fact that *just as truly as the prophets announced Jesus’ advent, so He announced the advent of another, coequal with Himself. As one ascended, so the other descended. And the same recognition of authority and deference paid by the disciples to their Lord, was to be given to the Holy Spirit as Christ’s Vicar on earth.*

As Christ had a definite mission, so the Holy Spirit likewise has a definite mission, His special dispensation being from Pentecost to the Second Advent. He is a person of the Godhead who came to earth in a definite way, at a definite time, for a definite work, and has been here ever since, just as really as Jesus was here on His special mission during the thirty-three years.

We are under the direct, personal guidance of the third Person of the Godhead as truly as the disciples were under the leadership of the second person [Jesus Christ].

Pentecost was, as it were, the inaugural of the Holy Spirit for this special work, though the Holy Spirit was existent and operative from the ages past. Many a biography begins with Bethlehem and ends with Olivet [or Calvary], despite the fact that He was from the days of eternity.” – p. 27.

Basic Conditions for Receiving the Holy Spirit in the Former and Latter Rain

1. We must demand its reception with a “spiritual violence,” Matt. 11:12.

“The Holy Spirit awaits our demand and reception.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 121.

See John 6: 63. How many of us realize this awesome truth—and have disciplined ourselves to *humbly* demand and receive of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis? Perhaps, few, as we see widespread spiritual declension rather than greater moral strength even while “religious activity” and “religious activism” is increasing everywhere—including in the political world! But motion does not necessarily mean there is life! The moving, talking, dancing, colorful creatures of the “Happiest place on earth,” Disneyland, all run on batteries, electricity, and machinery. Many Christians are like that—“having the form of godliness but denying its power,” 2 Tim. 3:5. Physically alive but spiritually “dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph. 2:1; cf. Rom. 6:1-23. In the church but not in Christ!

“It is not orthodox theories, not membership in the church, not the diligent performance of certain round of duties that gives evidence of life. In an ancient tower in Switzerland I saw the image of a man that moved as if it possessed life. It looked like a living man, and I whispered when I came near, as if it could hear me. But though the image looked like life, it had no real life. It was moved by machinery. Motion is not necessarily life. We may go through all the forms

and ceremonies of religion; but unless we are alive in Christ, our work is worthless. The Lord calls for living, working, believing Christians.” – *Evangelism*, p. 117.

“But this I do know, that **our churches are dying** for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and for kindred truths.” – *This Day with God*, p. 93.

See Matt. 11:2; cf. Gen. 32: 26. “With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, under the Holy Spirit’s power, we could, become living channels of light. We could *then* approach the mercy seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and **seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its rewards. We would take it by force as did Jacob.** Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation. Our supplications would be full of earnestness, full of a sense of our great need; and we would not be denied. *The truth will be expressed by life and character, and by lips touched by living coal from off God’s altar* [see Isa. 6:1-6; cf. Rom. 12:20]. When this *experience* is ours, we shall be lifted out of our poor, cheap selves that we have cherished so tenderly. We shall *empty* our hearts of the corroding power of selfishness, and shall be *filled* with praise and gratitude to God. We shall *magnify* the Lord, the God of all grace, who has magnified Christ. And He will reveal *His power* to us, making us as sharp sickles in the harvest.” – *E.G. W. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1069.

2. We must ask in order to give (See *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 139-149).

See **Luke 11: 5-13**; cf. Prov. 20:11; 22:6; Jer. 1:6 (5-9); Isa. 11:6; Matt. 18:4. The Holy Spirit will come to all who are asking for Him with child-like persistence and importunity in order that they may impart spiritual food to those who are dying for want of the truth.

A small boy is sent to bed by his father. . . . Five minutes later. . . . “Da-ad.” . . . “Yes, son.” “I’m thirsty. Can you bring me a drink of water?” “I’m sorry. You had your chance. Lights out.” Five minutes later. . . . “Da-aaaad....” “YES?” “I’m THIRSTY...Can I HAVE a drink of water?” “I told you NO. If you ask again I’ll have to spank you!” Five minutes later.... “Daaaa-aaaAAD.”..... “WHAT?!” “When you come in to spank me, CAN YOU BRING ME THAT DRINK OF WATER?”

This illustration may make you laugh but the lesson conveyed is no laughing matter. Some older members of the church may have to learn from the children--both literal and the young in the faith--the essential grace of persistence called importunity in Luke 11: 5-13, KJV. Indeed, “a little child shall lead them.” Isa. 11:6. Many have, either because of advancing age, lingering illness, or plain lukewarmness, fallen asleep spiritually. But seeking for the enlightenment and power of the Holy Spirit have three indispensable requirements, namely: *asking, seeking, knocking*—not merely for our own edification and salvation, but in order to impart the light to others who are dying for want of truth. We must ask not merely for ourselves but in order to give more abundantly!

“Christ was continually receiving from the Father that He might communicate with us. . .Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God he came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others.”- *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 139.

“Christ’s lessons in regard to prayer should be carefully considered. There is a divine science in prayer, and His illustration [in the parable, Luke 11:5-13] brings to view principles that all need to understand. He shows what the true spirit of prayer is. He teaches the necessity of perseverance in presenting our requests to God, and assures us of His willingness to hear and answer prayer. Our prayers are not to be selfish asking, merely for our own benefit. We are to ask that we may give. The principle of Christ’s life must be the principle of our lives.” – *Ibid*, p. 142.

“There are conditions to the fulfillment of God’s promises, and prayer can never take the place of duty. ‘If you love Me, ‘ Christ says, ‘keep My commandments.’ [1 John 14; 15, 21 quoted]. Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not [do] those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him. **Many are forfeiting the condition of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God.** *If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us.* We present to God His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by doing so He would dishonor His own name!”- *Ibid*, p. 143.

3. We must wait humbly before God

See Ps. 37:7; Micah 6:8; Isa. 40:31, 28-30. “Only the Holy Spirit of God can quicken the perceptive faculties. *Only those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given.* This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive.” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 33.

4. We must desire to be true representatives of Jesus

See Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3: 2, 3. “*The impartation of the Holy Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.* Those only who are thus taught of Christ, those only who possess the inward working of the Holy Spirit, and in whose life the *Christ-life* is manifested, can stand as *true representatives* of the Savior.”- *Ibid*.

I am my neighbor’s Bible. He reads me when we meet.
Today he reads me in my home, tomorrow in the street.
He may be a relative or friend, or chance acquaintance be,
He may not even know my name, yet he is reading me.
–*Author Unknown*

5. We must yield our will to God’s will

See Rom. 6:13. “God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, *if they will yield themselves to Him.* The Spirit of God received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted *unreservedly* to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and to fulfill the requirements of God. . . . If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we shall lift up Jesus.”- *Ibid*.

6. We must surrender the whole heart to His indwelling

See Isa. 11:2. “As the Holy Spirit opens to you truth, you will treasure up the most precious experiences, and will long to speak to others of the comforting things that have been revealed to you. When brought into association with them, you will communicate some fresh thought in regard to the character of the work of Christ. You will have some fresh revelation of His pitying love to impart to those who love Him and to those who love Him not. . . .*To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling.* Our Lord Himself has given the command, ‘Be filled with the Spirit [Eph. 5:18],’ and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment.” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 31.

7. We must desire to be assimilated to His image

See John 5:39; Ps. 139:23; Matt. 4:4. **“Would you become assimilated to the divine image? . . . Would you drink of the water which Christ shall give you, which shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life? Would you bear fruit to the glory of God? Would you refresh others? Then with heart hungering for the bread of life, the Word of God, search the Scriptures, and live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Your soul’s sanctification and righteousness will result from faith in the Word of God, which leads to obedience to its commands. Let the Word of God be to you as the voice of God instructing you, and saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’ Isa. 30:21. Christ prayed, ‘Sanctify them through thy truth’ thy word is truth.’ John 17:17.”** – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 21.

The 4 Whys that demand our immediate answer: “Since this (being filled with the Spirit) is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not *hunger and thirst* for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not *talk* of it, why do we not *pray* for it, and why do we not *preach* concerning it?” - *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50. What is your answer my friend?

8. We must seek to answer the Lord’s Prayer recorded in John 17!

See Phil.2: 2, 3. **“We are to seek most earnestly to be of one mind, one purpose. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, and nothing else, can bring us to this place. Let us by self-renunciation prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit that a great work may be done for us that we say not, ‘See what I am doing,’ but ‘Behold, the goodness of God.’”** – *Review & Herald*, vol. 4, p. 422.

Gal. 3: 26-28. **“The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord and differences is found in separation from Christ. Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love, growing into the character and image of Jesus. With God there is no respect for persons.”** – *That I May Know Him*, p. 99.

John 17: 21. **“By our unity we are to bear strong, indisputable evidence that Christ came into this world to save sinners. Satan works with all his ingenuity to prevent human beings bearing this evidence. He wants them to develop *unsanctified individuality* so that they will not love one another. To often professing Christians yield to Satan and then the *merest trifle* causes a difference to spring up among them. Men and women professing godliness build walls of separation among them and their fellow workers, because not all think in exactly the same way, or follow exactly the same methods. Those who stand apart, refusing to harmonize, dishonor God before the world. Christ prayed for unity. It is His will that His followers shall labor together in Christian fellowship.”**- *Upward look*, p. 271.

9. We must cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

See 2 Cor. 7:1. “I was shown that if God’s people *make no effort on their part*, but wait for the refreshing [latter rain] to come upon them and reveal their wrongs and correct their errors; if they depend upon that to cleanse them from the filthiness of the flesh and the spirit [2 Cor. 7:1], and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, *they will be found wanting. The refreshing or the power of God [of the latter rain] comes only to those who have prepared themselves for it by doing work which He bids them namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*- *Counsels on Diets and Food*, p. 619.

(Part II follows as our study for the month of April, 2007)