

# **The Latter Rain**

By Meade MacGuire

## THE POWER OF PENTECOST

---AN INTRODUCTION---

The coming of Christ is the sole hope of a desperately confused world! For 6,000 years the human race has been looking for this event. Now, the time is almost here! Is the church ready for the heavenly Guest? The question is asked --- What preparation is most needed to enable the church to meet the Bridegroom in peace? Today, the greatest need of the church is the baptism of the Holy Spirit ---a preparation of heart and life, so the Holy Spirit can do a work similar to that done for the waiting church of Pentecost.

The experience of Pentecost can be ours and the power of the Holy Spirit can fall upon us, if we are willing to meet the conditions, and pay the necessary price of a full surrendered life. There are three facts the personal worker must not lose sight of --- (1) His own life must be right, (2) He must know and use the Scriptures, (3) He must pray! Are we committed to the plan of getting ready for Christ's coming?

The Bible says --- "Ye are the light of the world." God's purpose for us is that we should be the light of the world! Do not let our light be extinguished by worldliness, the love of the world, and preoccupation with the things of the flesh. Make sure we have the Oil of the Holy Spirit in our lamps when needed.

In Proverbs 20:27 the Bible teaches that "the Spirit of Man is the candle of the Lord." If the Lord lights our candle, shall we not hold out our little candlestick to other guests, as a light shining in a dark place? Shall we not accept the offer of the divine remedy so graciously offered us by the Laodicean Message?

The church could never have been what it has been, it could not have existed as it has existed, or exercised the moulding power on the centuries which the annals of history record, but for the one masterful, overpowering event which 'we connect with and name by Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The "unspeakable gift" of Christ and the immeasurable gift of the Spirit are the two great dispensational gifts. They are the peculiar heritage of the Church until the dispensation shall change its character.

The Books of Acts is the book of Pentecost. The first chapter prepares for it; the second chapter records it; and the subsequent chapters tell its effects up to the point of Paul's arrival at the center of the Roman Empire. We humbly submit therefore, to the earnest consideration of all, the following sevenfold characteristics of Pentecost. Men who are in real earnest, in these closing days of the age, all feel that the work and life and ministry which God will accept as gold, silver, and precious stones," must have the stamp of the Pentecostal Spirit. The promise to the Jewish remnant is the promise still, yes and more assuredly to us: "My Spirit is among you, fear ye not." And again, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

Haggai 2:5; Zechariah 4:6. Let the points here briefly given be prayed over and meditated upon, and may the living Breath make them spirit and life to every reader!

Taking Acts 1 and 2 as our guide, we note --- The Precept of Pentecost. Acts 1:4 Before the risen Lord ascended, He "charged them not to depart from Jerusalem. but to wait for the promise of the Father." Or, as the same writer gives it in the Gospel narrative (Luke 24:49), "And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." Carefully mark the words. "Wait for the promise," also. "Tarry ye in the city." These words give the precept of Pentecost. Tarry. Wait. Do not take a step or speak a word until ye be clothed with power." Here is the root of all our failure. We bustle about and make a stir and organize machinery but do we wait and tarry before God? Have we His power? The path of power is the path of obedience to precept. It is granted, at once, that the Spirit here waited for was to be given once for all, for the dispensation; but there is, and must be, a most solemn application of this to individuals. A type is only given once: and here is type for the age, for you, for me, for all God's saints.

Dare we go out without this power? Dare we associate Christ's name with our powerless ministrations? Is not this to make Christ the minister of helpless talk and empty life? Oh, let us search and see how it is! Is Christ glorified in our heart and life? If not, the Holy Spirit is not yet in that heart and in that life. The principle is the same. Just as the Spirit could not come until the Son of man was glorified, so the Spirit cannot come and clothe a man with power for service, until there is self-judgment, an utter repudiation of self, and a complete enthronement of the risen Lord, as the Lord of our spirit, soul, body, and belongings.

Let us deny the old self that rejected Him, and yield ourselves to God to be clothed with power. Is it not clear that to go out and face the world with fine and fair speeches about Christ, without the power of the Spirit, is but to insult humanity, and make Christ the unheeding and helpless being that the world thinks He is! If Christ Himself needed the clothing, the anointing of the Spirit, after thirty years of a perfect life, for service and ministry, much more do we need, it. Thirty years' obedience and then the anointing. So with us. First the tarrying, then the filling. Do we feel our words and lives empty and fruitless? May not the reason 'be that we have not obeyed the precept of Pentecost? The Power of Pentecost. (Acts 1:14: 2:1)

These disciples show us the right way. They were obedient. They tarried. They waited. And they tarried and waited in the true attitude; all waited in prayer. Not a word of testimony to men, but very earnest words of prayer to God. If we are to touch the dead, we must first touch God. With these disciples it was the obedience of prayer. Herein they fill up the type for us. Note these words: "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Intensely interesting company! The fate of souls, of peoples, of kingdoms hung upon their prayerful obedience.

Look how they stood. They stood between the two pillars of precept and promise, and thus lifted holy hands, and longing, believing hearts to God. They had a promise, and they believed it; they had a precept, and they obeyed it.

[3] Prayer expressed them both. We say the Church has failed. True, but the Spirit of God has not failed. Let us get back to the attitude and prayer of Pentecost: back to the Lord! "If ye will return, return unto Me, saith the Lord."

What kind of prayer was it? That is easy to tell First, it was collective, 'these all,' the disciples, the women. Mary, and Jesus' brethren. Second, it was united, harmonious. "With one accord," one mind, one interest, one desire, one thing, no sectarian severences. Third was continuous, steadfast, persistent. As to self, they were "out of joint," feeling their weakness as Jacob, and they would not let God go. It was not personal salvation they were seeking; that they had; but it was power, as men and women "out of joint", to face the world, to preach salvation through a murdered Man, a rejected God, a hated Jesus of Nazareth.

What has all this to say to us? As individuals, as collective unities, have we ever really, and in earnest, prayed the prayer of Pentecost?

Without doubt the Great Quest of Life is to gain eternal life! Nothing else is comparable!

The problem today is that of the church losing its first love, and how to regain it. A careful study is necessary of the steps to be retraced in ones' experience that must be made to see how our first love experience was lost, and to search the Word for divine counsel to enable us to regain once more our former experience.

God says --- "and ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13.

Prayer Power has vast resources! Dr. Alexis Carrel said: "The most powerful form of energy that one can generate is prayer. Only in prayer do we achieve that complete and harmonious assembly of body, mind, and spirit, which gives the frail human reed its unshakeable strength."

We come to the conclusion that, if we are to have the experience of Pentecost, we must first meet the requirements of Pentecost, and the works of Pentecost will result.

"We are living in the perils of the last days All heaven is interested in the characters you are forming. Every provision has been made for you, that you should be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Man is not left alone to conquer the powers of evil by his own feeble efforts. Help is at hand, and will be given every soul who really desires it. Angels of God, that ascend and descend the ladder that Jacob saw in vision will help every soul who wills to climb even the highest heaven." Fundamentals of Education, pages 86, 85.

Note: The following articles on the "Latter Rain," by Meade McGuire, appeared in the Review and Herald in 1943. The writer of this introduction was impressed with this series of articles, especially so in the light of the. Laodicean Message of Revelation 3:14-22. It was thought a recirculation of this material would be helpful to the church. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Hebrews 10:24.

## **THE LATTER RAIN**

BEFORE departing from this world, Jesus promised definitely that He would return to take His people to the heavenly mansions He had prepared for them. (John 14:13.) On one occasion The

disciples came to Him with the pointed question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" In reply He foretold many events which would precede His coming, and He declared that the generation witnessing these events would not pass till all these things were fulfilled. (Matthew 24:3, 34.)

Later, through the apostle John, the Lord revealed that a mighty message would be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, announcing that the hour of God's judgment had come. (Revelation 14:6, 7.) This was to be God's final appeal to a doomed world. Those who accept it will be prepared to meet the coming King of kings.

All through the ages God has done all that infinite love and mercy could do to lead men to accept the plans of salvation. Now the world enters its final crisis. God purposes to manifest His divine love and power once more through His people, in order to attract and win all who will accept the Saviour.

Ninety-eight years ago this judgment-hour message was proclaimed with mighty power all around the world. Thousands were awakened and convinced of the truth, and they immediately prepared for the coming of the Lord. For years the message was preached and men were urged to prepare quickly, for there was no time to lose. Decade after decade passed. Our organization has reached out all over the earth. Our institutions are numerous and our plans many.

Today we are faced with the solemn and imperative question, which should grip the heart of every advent believer, Why has the Saviour not come? Was it the purpose of God when this message was first given that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed? Can we know the answer to these questions?

We believe that a careful study of God's word and the testimony of His messenger, makes it very plain that while God foreknew the delay, it was not His purpose or desire. We can find a clear explanation of what has caused the delay and what God urges His people to do immediately, that there may be delay no longer, but that the way may be prepared for His coming.

We need to understand that God does not work arbitrarily through his children, but that as they accept His word and co-operate with the divine agencies at work in the world, He uses them to carry out His plans. This great second advent movement which has been carried forward by the people of God, is represented as a mighty angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth." Revelation 14:6.

Divine power has attended the giving of this message from the beginning, but greater power is promised before the work is finished.

"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice." Revelation 18:1, 2.

We understand this to mean that God's people will be clothed with great power by the Holy Spirit, as at Pentecost, which will result in the "loud cry" and will lighten the earth with the glory of God.

“It is true that in the time of the end, when God’s work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God’s church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time, the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

“But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’ In response, ‘the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ “He will cause to come down . . . the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain, ’ ”---“Acts of the Apostles,” pp. 54, 55.

For years we have preached to the world that the hour of God’s judgment is come, and that the Saviour is coming in this generation. We expected Him to come many years ago, and we urged people to prepare at once to meet Him. Some may think that we were mistaken in this positive announcement, but those whose faith is firmly founded on God’s word have no such misgivings.

Others seem to think that the Lord has a certain date determined for the coming of Christ, and when that time arrives, He will appear. They do not believe that anything which occurs in this world affects God’s plans. We believe that God foreknows the end from the beginning, but we have many positive statements telling us that it is not God’s will that the coming of the Lord should be so long delayed.

“If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory.”---Review and Herald, Oct. 6, 1896.

“Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.”---“Testimonies,” Vol. VI, p. 450. (Published 1900.)

These unequivocal statements show not only that the Saviour desired to come and could have come many years ago, but that those who professed to be His people and were giving His message are primarily responsible for the delay. Surely it is time for us to face this matter earnestly and learn what God would have us to do.

We are all familiar with the fact that in many ways the experience of ancient Israel in the exodus movement typified, or illustrated, the experiences of God’s people in this second advent movement. This is brought out forcibly in the following statement:

“The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience,

they would have seen the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

"It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But "they could not enter in because of unbelief." Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out." ---"The Great Controversy," pp. 457, 458.

If the full significance of these statements should penetrate the minds and hearts of God's people, it would surely bring a mighty awakening and revival. The very fact that Jesus wanted to come, and would have come fifty or in more years ago had we been ready should startle and arouse us. We might be thrilled with the glory of our Saviour's presence, rejoicing with the redeemed in the peace, and joy, and victory of heaven, but for our own neglect.

"Could the curtain be rolled back, could you discern the purposes of God and the judgments that are about to fall upon a doomed world, could you see your own attitude, you would fear and tremble for your own souls and for the souls of your fellow men. Earnest prayers of heart-rending anguish would go up to heaven. You would weep between the porch and the altar, confessing your spiritual blindness and back-sliding." ---"Testimonies," Vol. VI, p. 408.

The Saviour gave a parable portraying the condition of the church when His coming is at hand. It represents two classes in the church as five wise and five foolish virgins "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Thus He revealed that He would "tarry" and His people would sleep, which is in harmony with the preceding statements that the coming of the Lord has been delayed, and His people are unprepared for that event. The reason for this delay is also made very plain.

"God's people are not prepared for the loud cry of the third angel. They have a work to do for themselves which they should not leave for God to do for them. He has left this work for them to do. It is an individual work; one cannot do it for another."---Id., Vol. I, p. 486.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of "refreshing" and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and

then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father."---"Early Writings," p. 71.

Another striking statement should cause both workers and people to consider seriously our present condition.

"Every truly converted soul will be intensely desirous to bring others from the darkness of error into the marvelous light of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with his glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God."---Review and Herald, July 21, 1896.

How startling is the thought that The coming of Christ is delayed because His people are too occupied with other things to study and become enlightened regarding His plans which are clearly revealed in His word. We cannot afford to neglect the study of this solemn question or to form wrong conclusions because of superficial study.

It is important that we understand the significance of the expressions "early rain" and "latter rain." which are mentioned frequently in the Scriptures.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8.

"In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. . . .

"The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection."---"Testimonies to Ministers," p. 506.

From this and other statements it is evident that this illustration may be applied dispensationally, and also in our personal experience. The early rain came at Pentecost and will continue until the gospel work is done. The latter rain falls as the work of the gospel is closing. Likewise the early rain comes. to us personally as we hear and accept the message; it cause the seed to spring up and continue to grow until the time of the harvest. Then the latter rain comes to complete the work and fit us for the time of trouble and the coming of Christ.

"Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. . . .

"At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on

the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. . . .

“If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.”---Id., pp. 507, 508.

Thus it is evident that the latter rain will not be received by nor benefit anyone who has not reached a certain standard of spiritual development under the ministration of the former rain. The illustration itself makes this plain. If the grain was sown in the field in October, but the ground was dry and the early rain which was due in that month did not fall, it would not come to maturity and be perfected by the latter rain which came in March. The grain must spring up and grow and be almost ready for the harvest in order to be brought to perfection by the latter rain. In like manner, unless we seek and obtain the necessary experience under the former rain, we shall not recognize nor receive the latter rain, and thus “we shall lose our souls,” and the fault will be our own.

When the promise of the Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost, it was immediately recognized by all the true disciples of Christ.

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Acts 2:14-16.

Will it not be the same when the latter rain is given in much greater measure? Many statements are made regarding what will take place when the latter rain is poured out. If we study these statements prayerfully, we need be in no uncertainty as to when and where the latter rain is falling.

“The light that was shed upon the waiting ones penetrated everywhere, and those in the churches who had any light, who had not heard and rejected the three messages, obeyed the call and left the fallen churches. . . . A compelling power moved the honest, while the manifestation of the power of God brought a fear and restraint upon their unbelieving relatives and friends, so that they dared not, neither had they the power to, hinder those who felt the work of the Spirit of God upon them. . . . Mighty miracles were wrought, the sick were healed, and signs and wonders followed the believers. . . . Souls that were scattered all through the religious bodies answered to the call, and the precious were hurried out of the doomed churches, as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before her destruction..”---“Early Writings,” pp. 278, 279.

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.” ---“The Great Controversy,” p. 612.

If a large number of people respond when the message is preached in a new field, or presented in a new way, some seem to think that is evidence of the latter rain. They seem to forget that the ministry of the Holy Spirit which causes people to accept the message, is the early rain. The latter rain comes only when a Christlike character has been developed, and the grain is almost ready for the harvest.

Again we return to the question, Why has not the latter rain come? The promise of the latter rain is made in the second chapter of Joel, and it is made only on certain conditions which are clearly and explicitly given.

This is God's summons to His own people:

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand."

"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. . . . 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 Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" Joel 2:1, 12, 17.

What a startling and impressive spectacle it would be to the world if God's remnant people should respond accordingly to God's summons. Does not God intend that this summons be literally carried out? What vivid pictures He has given us through His messenger of the remnant people pleading and agonizing at the throne of grace for victory over every sin, and power to finish the work.

Would it not seem that Satan is seeking with all his subtle devices to lull God's people to sleep, or to keep, them so occupied in work which may be right in itself, that they fail to prepare for the divine power without which the work cannot be finished?

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

"I saw that God's people are on the enchanted ground, and that some have lost nearly all sense of the shortness of time and the worth of the soul."---"Early Writings," pp. 119, 120.

"All things are ready, but the church is apparently upon the enchanted ground. When they shall arouse and lay their prayers, their wealth, and all their energies and resources at the feet of Jesus, the cause of truth will triumph."---"Testimonies," Vol. IV, p. 475.

“We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon His word, especially upon the scenes of the judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan's enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God; the foe is lurking near, ready at any moment, should you become lax and drowsy, to spring upon you and make you his prey.”---“The Great Controversy,” p. 601.

With these startling statements before us. there need be no uncertainty regarding our present standing. The work cannot be finished until the latter rain is poured out. But it is promised only on certain definite conditions which we have not met. Many are in the Laodicean condition, which the Scriptures describe as lukewarm, self-satisfied, and complacent, though utterly unprepared for the end. The last church is represented by ten virgins, all of whom slumbered and slept while the bridegroom tarried. More than fifty years ago this earnest appeal was made:

“Meetings should be held in every church for solemn prayer and earnest searching of the word to know what is truth. Take the promises of God, and ask God in living faith for the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is shed upon us, marrow and fatness will be drawn from the word of God. . . . When the churches become living, working churches, the Holy Spirit will be given in answer to their sincere request. Then the truth of God's word will be regarded with new interest, and will be explored as if it were a revelation just from the courts above. . . . The Bible will be regarded as a charter from heaven. Its study will absorb the mind, and its truths will feast the soul. The promises of God now repeated as if the soul had never tasted of his love, will then glow upon the altar of the heart, and fall in burning words from the lips of the messengers of God. They will then plead with souls with an earnestness that cannot be repulsed. Then the windows of heaven will be open for the showers of the latter rain.”---Mrs. E. G. White, in Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1890.

O that God may put into the hearts of His people a great determination at this time to get off Satan's “enchanted ground,” that we may become enlightened with regard to our condition and our need, and may fully meet God's expectations. Then we are assured the latter rain will fall, and Jesus will soon come to take His people home.

It is evident from the instruction given us in the Scriptures and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy that a special responsibility rests [12] upon the leaders and workers in the cause of God at this time.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion. and sound an alarm in My holy mountain.”

“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 Thine heritage to reproach. Joel 2:1, 17.

“Those who stand in responsible positions in the work of the Lord are represented as watchmen on the walls of Zion. God calls upon them to sound an alarm among the people. Let it be heard in all the plain. The day of woe, of wasting and destruction, is upon all who do unrighteousness. With special severity will the Lord's hand fall upon the watchmen who have failed to place before the people in clear lines their obligation to Him who by creation and by redemption is their owner.”--- “Testimonies,” Vol. VIII, p. 195.

For more than half a century the Lord has been calling for a revival and a reformation among His people. The spirit which burned so brightly in the apostolic church under the ministry of Pentecost gradually died down and succumbed to the influences of the world. In like manner the deep spirit of devotion and sacrifice and the burden for souls that characterized this work when it was first begun, in the experience of many, has largely died out. But that passionate longing for the coming of the Saviour, that intense burden for souls, and that hatred for sin and hunger for righteousness must again take full possession of the people of God. Today we need above all things a genuine revival and reformation, and God tells us definitely what we must do to bring this about.

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow his blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our Heavenly Father is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us his blessing.”---Mrs. E. G. White, in Review and Herald, March 22, 1887.

When we think of the repeated statement that Christ desired to come, and might have come more than half a century ago, we marvel at His patience and long-suffering toward us. Do we really long to see Him? and to see an end to the misery, suffering, and sin of this world? Then surely this appeal will stir our hearts to deep repentance and reformation.

“Leaving the first love is represented as a spiritual fall. Many have fallen thus. In every church in our land there is needed confession, repentance, and re-conversion. The disappointment of Christ is beyond description. Unless those who have sinned speedily repent, the deceptions of the last days will overtake them.” ---Id., Dec. 15, 1904.

Let us remember that the Lord does not reprove and rebuke His people to discourage them, but because He loves them and would make the way plain to a life of deliverance from sin, and of power for service. He says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” He wants us to awaken and discern the deceptions of Satan, and by faith lay hold of the divine provisions made for our victory.

### **The Fears of Satan**

“There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out his Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come.”---Id., March 22, 1887.

Many years ago the messenger of the Lord was shown what will take place when God’s remnant people heed His counsel and turn to Him with all their hearts.

“In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were

wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844.”---“Testimonies,” Vol. IX, p. 126.

As we read these cheering assurances and the earnest appeals from our loving heavenly Father, surely they should stir our hearts and lead us to inquire, What shall we do? We are told that “a revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.” But how are we to begin? Shall we wait for someone in our church to make a special appeal and call a committee to lay plans for a revival? Again we are given plain instruction:

“Are we awake to the work that is going on in the heavenly Sanctuary, or are we waiting for some compelling power to come upon the church before we shall arouse? Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? That time will never come.

“There are persons in the church who are not converted, and who will not unite in earnest, prevailing prayer. We must enter upon the work individually. We must pray more, and talk less.”---Mrs. E. G. White, in Review and Herald, March 22, 1887.

Here and there earnest souls have sought the Lord, and He has sent rich blessings upon them. But we must remember that “there is nothing Satan fears so much as this revival among God’s people, and only by faith and determined perseverance may we hope to triumph in this supremely important matter. May the Lord help us to respond with all our hearts to His call and not disappoint Him longer.

We have stated several times in these studies that there are certain definite conditions upon which the Lord has promised to give the latter rain. God is waiting for us to meet those conditions, and until we do so, we are delaying the coming of the Saviour. In view of these tremendous facts, we can see the paramount importance of studying carefully what the Lord has revealed on this subject. Here are some of the statements in which the conditions are tersely set forth.

“I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully. .

..

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action.”--  
-“Early Writings,” p. 71.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple

of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost."---"Testimonies," Vol. V, p. 214.

"Today you are to give yourselves to God, that he may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for his service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord -- fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit."--Review and Herald, March 22, 1892.

Whenever there is a special interest manifested in the truth and a large number of people eagerly study and accept it, either in heathen lands or at home, some immediately talk of this as the latter rain. They seem to forget that it is the early rain that causes the seed to spring up and grow, and the latter rain comes at the close of the harvest to bring it to perfection. There have been, and doubtless will continue to be, wonderful miracles of healing and deliverance under the early rain.

But we cannot expect the experience of the latter rain foretold in Joel 2:23, until the people of God meet the conditions described in Joel 2:12, 13. We can never expect to reach this high and holy standard of "victory over every besetment" and Christlike perfection of character until we turn to the Lord with all our hearts, with fasting and weeping and mourning. We do not understand that it is the fasting and weeping that brings the results, but they indicate that we are awake and realize our desperate need, and like Jacob, we are determined to hold on to God until we have complete deliverance. This experience is graphically described by the messenger of the Lord.

"I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale, and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. . . .

"As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts, and light up their countenances. Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these, and went to the aid of the earnest, praying ones. I saw angels of God hastening to the assistance of all who were struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels, and, trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But His angels left those who made no effort to help themselves, and I lost sight of them."---"Early Writings," pp. 269, 270.

Here it is plainly indicated that those who do not participate in the revival God is calling for---the deep heart searching and crying to Him for deliverance from all sin--will not continue with God's people, and this is called "the shaking."

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour

forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people."---Id., p. 270.

When the church of Christ fully meet His requirements and reach out by faith, the latter rain falls upon all who have "come up to every point, and stood every test" to fit them for the closing work. The Lord gives us a wonderful picture of His people at that time.

"My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy.

"The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Evil angels still pressed around them, but could have no power over them."---Id., p. 271.

How many of us today have loved ones who profess the truth, yet have no living connection with the Saviour. We need to plead and agonize with God, not only for ourselves but for those who we know will soon be shaken out unless they awake and cry to Him before it is too late. May God help us to be in earnest now while the door of mercy still is open.

Again and again the messenger of the Lord calls attention to the experience of the early disciples at Pentecost. There are some points that are especially emphasized and need to be carefully considered. One is the fact that in preparing for the fulfillment of the Master's promise, they confessed and put away every sin, making sure that everything was right between them and God. They also pressed together, making every wrong right with one another, so that they were of one accord and one mind. They put away all differences so that love and, unity prevailed among them.

"In obedience to the word of their Master the disciples assembled in Jerusalem to wait for the fulfillment of God's promise. Here they spent ten days, days of deep heart searching. They put away all differences and drew close together in Christian fellowship. At the end of ten days the Lord fulfilled His promise by a wonderful outpouring of His Spirit."---"Testimonies," Vol. VIII, p. 15.

This is the very course that God's people are to pursue today if they would meet His requirements. And how greatly it is needed wherever we go. Probably the enemy has no more successful method of delaying the coming of our Saviour than by sowing the seeds of discord among God's people. Even where there is no dissension or contention, there is often a lack of tender, unselfish, brotherly love and unity.

“This testimony in regard to the establishment of the Christian church is given us, not only as an important portion of sacred history, but also as a lesson. All who profess the name of Christ should be waiting, watching, and praying with one heart. All differences should be put away, and unity and tender love one for another pervade the whole. Then our prayers may go up together to our heavenly Father with strong, earnest faith. Then we may wait with patience and hope the fulfillment of the promise.

“The answer may come with sudden, velocity and overpowering might; or it may be delayed for days and weeks, and our faith receive a trial. But God knows how and when to answer our prayer. It is our part of the work to put ourselves in connection with the divine channel. God is responsible for His part of the work. He is faithful who hath promised. The great and important matter with us is to be of one heart and mind, putting aside all envy and malice, and, as humble supplicants, to watch and wait. Jesus, our Representative and Head, is ready to do for us what He did for the praying, watching ones on the day of Pentecost.”---“Ministry of Peter,” pp. 9, 10.

O that God’s people today might follow the example of the early disciples. O that we might realize that the Saviour is longing to take His people from this troubled world to the heavenly mansions, but our own attitude of luke-warmness and spiritual indifference is delaying His coming.

“If we know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, unspeakable gladness will come to the soul. Oh, how we need the divine presence! For the baptism of the Holy Spirit every worker should be breathing out his prayer to God. Companies should be gathered together to call upon God for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that the people of God may know how to plan and devise and execute the work.”---“Testimonies to Ministers,” p. 170.

Is not this the very experience we need, and the very course we should pursue today?

“We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today. Moral darkness, like a funeral pall, covers the earth. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and satanic deceptions are misleading the minds of men. Without the Spirit and power of God it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth.”---Id., Vol. V, p. 158.

We would again call attention to the positive instruction Jesus gave His disciples regarding the necessity of being filled with the Spirit before entering upon their great work.

“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49.

“Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.” Acts 1:4.

It is evident that the disciples understood not only that they must not depart from Jerusalem until the promise was fulfilled, but also that there was a special work of preparation necessary on their part. They engaged in this with all earnestness, and God waited ten days for them until they were ready. Then they were filled with the Spirit and power of God.

O that we might understand that the work of God can never be finished except by the power of God. All human plans and inventions and efforts will never succeed without the mighty

outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May God help us to seek it as earnestly, and meet the conditions as perseveringly, as did the early disciples. Then the latter rain will come and God will finish His work and cut it short in righteousness.

Before considering more fully the preparation required in order to receive the latter rain we may do well to notice some further details in the experience of the early disciples at Pentecost. We need to study earnestly and prayerfully that experience which has come down as a lesson to us in these last days.

“It is our privilege to take God at his word. As Jesus was about to leave his disciples, to ascend into heaven, he commissioned them to bear the gospel message to all nations, tongues, and peoples. He told them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. This was essential to their success. The holy unction must come upon the servants of God. All who were fully identified as disciples of Christ and associated with the apostles as evangelists, assembled together at Jerusalem. They put away all differences. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, that they might receive the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit; for they were to preach the gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit and in the power of God. It was a time of great danger to the followers of Christ. They were as sheep in the midst of wolves, yet they were of good courage, because Christ had risen from the dead, and had revealed himself to them, and had promised them a special blessing which would qualify them to go forth to preach his gospel to the world. They were waiting in expectation of the fulfillment of his promise, and were praying with special fervency.

“This is the very course that should be pursued by those who act a part in the work of proclaiming the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven; for a people are to be prepared to stand in the great day of God. Although Christ had given the promise to his disciples that they should receive the Holy Spirit, this did not remove the necessity of prayer. They prayed all the more earnestly; they continued in prayer with one accord. Those who are now engaged in the solemn work of preparing a people for the coming of the Lord, should also continue in prayer. The early disciples were of one accord. They had no speculations, no curious theory to advance as to how the promised blessing was to come. They were one in faith and spirit. They were agreed.”---“Gospel Workers,” pp. 370, 371, edition of 1892.

Here again is emphasized the necessity of earnest, persevering prayer, of putting away all differences and being of one accord, and of faithfully observing the conditions the Master has laid down. Another point which seems to disturb some in their consideration of this subject is the fact that when the latter rain comes, some will not recognize or receive it. How can we be sure that we are not among that class? If the various statements mentioning this point are studied together, it does not seem so difficult to understand.

“We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain.

“Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.”--“Testimonies to Ministers,” pp. 399, 507.

“The Lord calls for a renewal of the straight testimony borne in years past. He calls for a renewal of spiritual life. The spiritual energies of His people have long been torpid, but there is to be a resurrection from apparent death. By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King's highway. As we do this, the power of the Spirit will come to us. We need the Pentecostal energy. This will come, for the Lord has promised to send His Spirit as the all-conquering power.”--“Testimonies,” Vol. VIII, pp. 297, 298.

In the very nature of the case it would appear that those who refuse to meet the conditions the Lord has laid down, would neither recognize nor receive the latter rain. Those who are in the Laodicean condition and refuse to take the counsel of the True Witness; those who will not engage in the revival and reformation which God has been calling for so long; those who will not turn to the Lord with all their hearts, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning, but are willing to believe that their condition is much better than it is, will be unprepared for this wonderful experience. They are lukewarm and self-satisfied, feeling rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing.

This was strikingly illustrated on the day of Pentecost, when those who had not followed the teachings of Jesus accused the disciples of being drunk.

“ ‘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 their appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.’ In that assembly there were mockers, who did not recognize the work of the Holy Spirit, and they said, “These men are full of new wine.’ . . .

“The Lord was at work in His own way; but had there been such a manifestation among us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, would not some have mocked. as on that occasion? Those who did not come under the influence of the Holy Spirit, knew it not. To this class the disciples seemed like drunken men.”---“Testimonies to Ministers,” p. 66.

We often think of the experiences of ancient Israel and of all the solemn warnings, reproofs, and entreaties God sent to them, appealing to them to put away all idolatry and make Him supreme in their lives. We are amazed at their strange spiritual blindness and backsliding, and what appears to be a stubborn indifference to God's patience, mercy, and love.

“Those who have not a living connection with God. have not an appreciation of the Holy Spirit's manifestation, and do not distinguish between the sacred and the common. They do not obey God's voice, because as the Jewish nation, they know not the time of their visitation. There is no help for man, woman, or child who will, not hear and obey the voice, of duty: for voice of duty is the voice of God. The eyes, the ears, and the heart will become unimpressible if men and women refuse to give heed to the divine counsel, and choose the way that is best pleasing to themselves.”---Id., p. 402.

Surely now is the time to turn to the Lord with all our hearts.

Let us now briefly review the points we have been considering before we conclude these studies.

1. Before leaving, this world, Jesus promised that He would return, and He gave many signs by which. His people would know when His coming was at hand.
2. He declared that the generation that saw those signs would not pass till all was fulfilled and that a special message would be given to the world to prepare a people to welcome Him.
3. In connection with the giving of that message He promised a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit similar to that witnessed at Pentecost, only in greater measure, which would lighten the earth with His glory.
4. The signs appeared, and God was ready to finish the work many years ago, but His people were not ready, and are not yet ready.
5. God foreknew all this; He revealed it in His word and made provision for our present situation by His counsel to the church of the Laodiceans, and the alarm and appeal of the prophet Joel.
6. When God's people heed this counsel, there will be a great revival and reformation; they will renounce and overcome all sin, and be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness.
7. Thus the way is prepared for God to pour out the latter rain, which will bring the loud cry and finish the work of the gospel in this world.

Another vital question connected with this study should have our careful consideration. Thousands of God's people are longing for the Saviour to come. They are working and praying to that end, and are trying daily to overcome their sins and be ready when the latter rain comes. But they do not understand why the latter rain does not come, nor realize that it is our own condition that prevents the showers from falling. They have not been impressed with the emphatic statement. "I saw that none could share the 'refreshing,' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment." And when their attention is called to this statement, they do not understand how such an experience can be obtained. Some are inclined to be discouraged, fearing that such a high standard is unattainable by them. But it is God who has made this requirement, and He has revealed plainly how it may be attained. The important thing is to believe that God means just what He says, and to pray humbly and earnestly for light to understand, and to co-operate with Him. Here is His command:

"Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. And here is the promise: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. 5:23, 24. "None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory."---"Acts of

the Apostles,” p. 531. In the beginning God created man in His own image, but through sin that image has been well-nigh obliterated. Salvation is the restoration of the divine image. It must, therefore, be more than the forgiveness of sins. The promise is, “Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.” God has predestinated all His children “to be conformed to the image of His Son,” and by beholding Him we are to be “changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” This is the goal that every true believer must set for himself.

“Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children,--begotten by His Spirit,---you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells ‘all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;’ and the life of Jesus is made manifest ‘in our mortal flesh.’ That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for ‘the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.’ Psalm 19:7, margin. Through love ‘the righteousness of the law’ will be ‘fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ ”---“Mount of Blessing,” p. 118. [pp. 77, 78, standard edition.]

If we have any appreciation of the wonderful provisions our loving heavenly Father has made for our salvation, we shall gladly co-operate with Him in His plan to perfect our characters.

“As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing to require.”---“Christ’s Object Lessons,” p. 163.

“True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection. Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all”---“Acts of the Apostles,” p. 565.

Let us set our eyes resolutely upon the priceless goal of Christ-like perfection of character studying, praying, working together with our divine Master, that through the agency of the Holy Spirit we may soon reach the goal. Perhaps you have heard the story of a little child whose parents were discussing the meaning of a texts of Scripture. There seemed to be a difference of opinion. Finally the little girl said, “Well, if God did not mean what He said, why did He not say what He meant?” How important it is that we study God’s word to know just what He says, and then accept it with simple, childlike faith, believing that He means just what He says.

“God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. “The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for

their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God."---"The Desire of Ages," p. 311.

"Many of us fail to improve our privileges. We make a few feeble efforts to do right, and then go back to our old life of sin. If we ever enter the kingdom of God, we must enter with perfect characters, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."---"Messages to Young People," p. 105. "God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind of people whom God will have to compose His kingdom."---"Christ's Object Lessons," p. 315.

Sometimes we meet persons who quote scriptures which they think set forth a different standard. They say. "The Bible teaches that 'there is none righteous, no, not one.'" But the same passage from which they quote, Romans 3:10-18, also says that "there is none that seeketh after God." and "their feet are swift to shed blood," and "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Anyone reading this passage will see at once that it does not apply at all to God's children, but to the godless and unbelieving world. The word of God never contradicts itself, and we read in Genesis 7:1, "The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." And again we read of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Luke 1:6. Whatever we may think of Gods requirements for the past, there is no question about His standard for those who live to see the close of probation, the time of trouble, and the coming of the Saviour.

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble."--"The Great Controversy," p. 623.

Again, there are those who are conscious of their defects of character, and what are often called "little sins and imperfections." But they feel sure that when the time of trouble and persecution comes, they will arouse and seek God and obtain the victory. But the Lord has warned us against the danger of this attitude.

"Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain in the time of trouble, or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless."---Id., p. 620.

There are others who have the idea that if they "try hard" to overcome their besetments, and if they "do the best they can," whatever wrongs and imperfections of character remain will be taken care of when Jesus comes. Here again the instruction is plain and specific.

"It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity. Death brings dissolution to the body, but makes no change in tile

character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change.”---“Testimonies,” Vol. V, p. 466.

“We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us. . . . “We are now in God’s workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of what ever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us, here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality.”---Id., Vol. II, pp. 355, 356.

God does not want this high standard to discourage us, and so He makes it very plain that He will accomplish the work if we will only co-operate with Him.

“God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.” ---“Mount of Blessing,” p. 116. [p. 76, standard edition.] We have reason to be of good courage, and to press forward with hearts full of joy and confidence when we read what God has done, and will continue to do in our behalf.

“The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angel of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to co-operate with human agencies, look on with astonishment, and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughter of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven. . . . “The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory--- Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory.”--“Testimonies to Ministers,” pp. 18, 19. In preceding articles we have noticed how God plans to finish the work of the gospel by the

outpouring of His Spirit in the latter rain. We have quoted some of the many statements setting forth the conditions on which we may receive that experience to which we have so long looked forward. We must have "victory over every besetment," perfect characters "not having spot, or wrinkles or any such thing," cleanse ourselves "from all filthiness, of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Let us now consider earnestly and prayerfully the provisions God has made by which everyone who will cooperate with Him may attain to Christian perfection of character and share in the latter rain and the finishing of God's work God promises to do this work of perfecting our characters Himself.

"The very God of peace. sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. 5:2-3, 24.

It is nowhere taught in the Scriptures that man can make himself perfect, but rather that such a thing is impossible. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jer. 13:23. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. The very first step in this wonderful experiences is God's work of re-creation, or the new birth, by which His divinity is united with our humanity, thus providing unlimited power to overcome all sin.

"Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character."---"The Desire of Ages," p. 123. When Adam and Eve sinned, human nature became fallen, corrupt, and impure, and we all inherit that fallen. nature from our human parents. Therefore Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. We can become God's children only being born of God. (John 1:13.) Through that new birth we receive the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4.)

"When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God."---Id., p. 172, 173. (Italics mine.)

This is not a matter of simply assenting to the teaching of the Bible. It is a divine miracle, involving the exercise of God's creative power. The apostle Paul declares, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17. "When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan."---Id., pp. 323, 324. The abiding presence of the Holy

Spirit in Jesus, while He was here on earth, kept Him from yielding to the fiercest temptations of the enemy. He will do the same for us if we yield our wills fully and continually to Him. Thus through divine power we shall be enabled to attain to Christian perfection of character.

“He came to show man how to obey, how to keep all the commandments. He laid hold of divine power, and this is the sinner's only hope. He gave his life that man might be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”---“Messages to Young People,” p. 165. “The work of the holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the holy Spirit is the comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul. He who looks to Christ in simple, childlike faith, is made a partaker of the divine nature through the agency of the holy Spirit.”--Review and Herald, Nov. 29, 1892.

“We want to see the King in his beauty. Then let us daily keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, the perfection of human character, and laying hold of his divine nature, we shall have the strength of divinity to overcome every evil tendency and desire.

“Christ came to earth to suffer and to die that we might lay hold on eternal life. He gave himself that we might be partakers of the divine nature, and overcome the corruption that is in the world through lust.”--Quoted in Review and Herald, Jan. 13, 1910, p. 9.

How marvelous are these provisions when we consider them. When we surrender ourselves fully to Christ, “a new power takes possession of the new heart.” “That power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God.” He brings a “supernatural element into human nature.” “We shall have the strength of divinity to overcome every evil tendency and desire.” A soul thus kept “is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.” Oh, if we could only realize how exceedingly interested God is in doing all this for and in us.

“The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.”---“The Desire of Ages,” p. 671.

“None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality.”---“Testimonies,” Vol. II, p. 505.

What is there in all this world that compares in value with the attainment of such a life? Long has our merciful heavenly Father waited for us to heed His loving appeals and warnings and turn to Him with all our hearts. Let us obey His summons now, and by His grace prepare quickly for the latter rain, the loud cry, and the finishing of the work.

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