

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



Lessons on the
Holy Spirit

Vol. 94, No. 4

October–December, 2018

Justin

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

Illustrations: Good Salt on the front cover, and Map Resources on pp. 4, 46, 72.

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Foreword

“Christ declared that after His ascension, He would send to His church, as His crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take His place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit—the soul of His life, the efficacy of his church, the light and life of the world. With His Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.

“In the gift of the Spirit, Jesus gave to man the highest good that heaven could bestow. . . .

“It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon the church.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904.

“It is the life of Jesus Christ in the soul, it is the active principle of love imparted by the Holy Spirit, that alone will make the soul fruitful unto good works.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 327.

As we study the Sabbath school lessons this quarter, let us cooperate with the Holy Spirit and surrender our hearts completely to His control. As the Spirit works upon our hearts, we will be drawn closer to one another, and we will want to share the blessings we have received. May the Lord help us to wholeheartedly unite with our brethren in asking for the power of the Holy Spirit to go before us in spreading the good news of Jesus’ soon coming.

“The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for his blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been whole hearted in this work.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 2, 1897.

“At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 509.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for Schofields Church Project, NSW, Australia

Dear Sabbath School Members
around the world:

Sydney is the largest city and financial capital of Australia. The influence of Australia in the Asia Pacific region has been steadily growing in the last few years, and completing the center for the church and Union in this area is extremely necessary to expedite the influence from a spiritual perspective.

In the late 1990's we moved both the Union headquarters as well as the church to the western part of Sydney to the suburb of Schofields. Due to the high cost of building, we were able to complete the Australasian Union Headquarters as well as the dining hall which we have been using as a church. We are now ready for the second stage of our project which will include some Sabbath School rooms as well as the restroom facilities that we so urgently need.

Most of our classes at Elim Missionary College are held at this church and during that time it becomes a greater center for evangelism. The opportunities for evangelistic outreach are constantly growing even after the school's completion and with more workers, we have great opportunities. "There is a work to do all over the world, and as we near the time of the end, the Lord will impress many minds to engage in this work. If you are able to use your influence in setting in operation the work that needs to be done in Sydney, many souls will be saved who have never yet heard the truth. The cities are to be worked. The saving power of God is to go forth through them as a lamp that burneth."—*Evangelism*, p. 425.

Sydney has the 8th highest cost of living in the world and so the financial demands on our membership is very great. The church in Schofields has been very liberal in assisting other parts of the world but now we need your help. We have sufficient funds to begin the project but we really need your help to bring this project to completion. It is our sincere prayer that the Lord will bless you for your generosity in furthering His work in this region.

The brethren and sisters from Schofield Church



The Office of the Holy Spirit

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10).

“The Holy Spirit takes of the things of God, and reveals them to the one who is sincerely seeking for the heavenly treasure. If we yield to his guidance, he leads us into all light.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1896.

Suggested Reading: *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, pp. 9–18.

Sunday

September 30

1. LIMITS TO HUMAN WISDOM

- a. What is the greatest mystery for the human mind? Job 11:7; Isaiah 40:28.

“Let none seek with presumptuous hand to lift the veil that conceals [God’s] glory. ‘Unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.’ Romans 11:33. It is a proof of His mercy that there is the hiding of His power; for to lift the veil that conceals the divine presence is death. No mortal mind can penetrate the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works. Only that which He sees fit to reveal can we comprehend of Him.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 438.

- b. How can we comprehend the things of God? Deuteronomy 29:29.

“The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the nature of God; but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can comprehend God. Let not finite man attempt to interpret Him. Let none indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 279.

2. DIVINE REVELATION NECESSARY

- a. Who does God use to reveal the things of Himself to us? Why is this divine agency necessary even today? 1 Corinthians 2:10 (first part).
-

“The Holy Spirit, sent from heaven by the benevolence of infinite love, takes the things of God and reveals them to every soul that has an implicit faith in Christ. By His power the vital truths upon which the salvation of the soul depends are impressed upon the mind, and the way of life is made so plain that none need err therein. As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God’s Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 113.

“In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. . . . Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the Word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings.”—*Amazing Grace*, p. 198.

- b. How were the Holy Scriptures written and why? 2 Peter 1:21; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16.
-

“The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 10.

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. . . . The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, pp. 945, 946.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE DIVINE WITNESS

- a. **What shows that the Holy Spirit is one of the three powers in heaven that comprise the Godhead? Matthew 28:19. What is His work?**
-

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.”—*Evangelism*, p. 615.

“The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

- b. **What work of the Holy Spirit also indicates that He is a divine person equal with God? 1 Corinthians 2:10 (second part).**
-

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’”—*Evangelism*, p. 617.

4. PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. **Why will the exact nature of the Holy Spirit remain a mystery? John 16:13.**

“It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, ‘the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.’ It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, ‘He shall not speak of Himself.’

“The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. . . . Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 51, 52.

- b. **Though the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery, what shows that He is “as much a person as God is a person”? Romans 8:16, 26, 27.**

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these [Avondale school] grounds.

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God.”—*Evangelism*, p. 616.

- c. **How do we know that the Holy Spirit has a free will, even while ministering as directed by Christ and the Father? 1 Corinthians 12:11; Acts 13:2.**

“When the Saviour said, ‘Go, . . . teach all nations,’ He said also, ‘These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.’ The promise is as far-reaching as the commission. Not that all the gifts are imparted to each believer. The Spirit divides ‘to every man severally as He will.’ 1 Corinthians 12:11. But the gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord’s work.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 823.

“The work of God’s people may and will be varied, but one Spirit is the mover in it all.”—*My Life Today*, p. 276.

5. A DIVINE COMFORTER

a. In what way is the Holy Spirit “another Comforter”? John 14:16.

“The Comforter is called ‘the Spirit of truth.’ His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. . . . Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

b. What will the Holy Spirit do for every believer? John 16:13 (first part).

“As the heavenly torch is placed in his hand, the seeker for truth sees his own frailty, his infirmity, the hopelessness of looking to himself for righteousness. He sees that there is in him nothing that can recommend him to God. He prays for the Holy Spirit, the representative of Christ, to be his constant guide, to lead him into all truth.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 450.

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

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much does God reveal of Himself to us? Why?
2. What is the only way we can gain a true knowledge of God?
3. How do we know there are three persons in the heavenly trio? Give examples from Scripture.
4. What shows that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person?
5. In what way does the Holy Spirit “comfort” us?

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” John 7:38, 39.

“The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.”—*The Great Controversy, Introduction*, p. vii.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy, Introduction*, pp. vii–xii.

Sunday

October 7

1. WATER AS A SYMBOL

- a. How does water symbolize the nature and work of the Holy Spirit? John 3:5; Titus 3:5.

“The washing was the burial with Christ in the water in the likeness of His death, representing that all who repent of the transgression of the law of God receive purification, cleansing, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Baptism represents true conversion by the renewing of the Holy Spirit.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 143.

- b. What does Jesus invite those who are spiritually thirsty to do? John 7:37–39; 4:14.

“He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again. Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, ‘The Desire of all nations,’ is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

2. WIND AS A SYMBOL

- a. In what ways does the wind represent the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion? John 3:8.
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-

“Christ used the wind as a symbol of the Spirit of God.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 155.

“The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God,—a patient, protracted process.

“While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 172, 173.

- b. In what way is the Spirit of God used to emphasize the frailty of proud human beings? Isaiah 40:7, 8.
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3. OIL AS A SYMBOL

- a. How was oil used as a fitting symbol of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ? Psalms 45:7; 23:5; Isaiah 61:1.
-

“Christ, preaching at Nazareth, announced Himself as the Anointed One. The Spirit of God accompanied His utterances, and convicted hearts of their truth. All bore witness to the gracious words that fell from His lips.”—*The Bible Echo*, August 19, 1895.

- b. How does oil represent the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the consecrated believer? Zechariah 4:6, 12, 14.
-

“From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God’s presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God’s people that heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Zechariah 4:6.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 408.

“Our hearts cannot reflect light until there is a vital connection with heaven. This alone can make them burn steadily with holy, unselfish love for Jesus and for all who are the purchase of His blood. And unless we are constantly replenished with the golden oil, the flame will die out.”—*The Home Missionary*, July 1, 1897.

“The oil is received into vessels prepared for the oil. It is the Holy Spirit in the heart which works by love and purifies the soul. . . . Were it not that this holy oil is poured from heaven in the messages of God’s Spirit, the agencies of evil would have entire control over men.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, pp. 1179, 1180.

“As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light bearer in the world.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 510.

4. AS A DOVE

- a. **What made the dove a fitting, visible symbol of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus Christ? Matthew 3:16.**
-

“The emblem in the form of a dove that hovered over Jesus at His baptism represents His gentleness of character.”—*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 238.

- b. **How will the gentleness of the dove manifest itself in those who receive the Holy Spirit? Matthew 10:16; Galatians 5:22.**
-

“When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new motive power is given, and he loves the things that God loves. . . . Love, joy, peace, and inexpressible gratitude will pervade the soul, and the language of him who is blessed will be, ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great’ (Psalm 18:35).”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 302.

“As the light of Christ is received into the soul, the spirit is softened. The gentleness of Christ is expressed in the life. The personal influence of the humble, consecrated soul, like the fragrance of a flower, extends far beyond himself. There is something about him that does not consist in display. It is a spiritual power which he receives from the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth. The Holy Spirit, coming from God to the instrumentality He employs, flows forth into other lives, making others labourers together with God.”—*Australasian Union Conference Record*, June 1, 1900.

- c. **What other lessons can we learn from the symbol of the dove? Psalm 55:6.**
-

“A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. . . . It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 70, 71.

5. FIRE AS A SYMBOL

- a. In what ways does fire symbolize the Holy Spirit? Matthew 3:11; Revelation 4:5.
-

“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.

- b. What appeared unto the disciples that looked like fire but was not? Acts 2:3–8.
-

“The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 39.

“Under this heavenly illumination, the scriptures which Christ had explained to them, stood forth in their minds with the vivid luster and loveliness of clear and powerful truth. The veil which had prevented them from seeing the end of that which was abolished was now removed, and the object of Christ’s mission and the nature of his kingdom were comprehended with perfect clearness.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 266.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does water baptism represent in relation to the Holy Spirit?
2. How is wind used to represent the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart?
3. What must happen in order for our spiritual light to burn constantly?
4. What does the dove teach us about the Christian life?
5. How does the symbol of fire represent the Holy Spirit?

The Heavenly Teacher

“Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him?” (Isaiah 40:13).

“The Holy Spirit, Christ’s representative on earth, is set forth and exalted as the heavenly teacher and guide sent to this world by our Lord at His ascension, to make *real* in the hearts and lives of men all that He had made *possible* by His death on the cross.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 472.

Suggested Reading: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 124–134.

Sunday

October 14

1. THE TEACHER OF TRUTH

a. How was the Holy Spirit a teacher of truth in Old Testament times? Proverbs 1:23.

b. Who did Nehemiah say was the instructor of God’s people after they left Egypt? Nehemiah 9:20. How did the Spirit work throughout history?

“From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. . . . And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God’s faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions and for the translation of the Bible into the languages and dialects of all nations and peoples.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

2. ABOVE WORLDLY WISDOM

- a. **What contrast did the apostle Paul show between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit? 1 Corinthians 2:12–14.**
-

“Divine inspiration asks many questions which the most profound scholar cannot answer. These questions were not asked that we might answer them, but to call our attention to the deep mysteries of God and to teach us that our wisdom is limited; that in the surroundings of our daily life there are many things beyond the comprehension of finite minds; that the judgment and purposes of God are past finding out. His wisdom is unsearchable.

“Skeptics refuse to believe in God because with their finite minds they cannot comprehend the infinite power by which He reveals Himself to men. But God is to be acknowledged more from what He does not reveal of Himself than from that which is open to our limited comprehension. Both in divine revelation and in nature, God has given to men mysteries to command their faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 261.

- b. **How does God use the Holy Spirit in revealing truth to us? 1 Corinthians 2:6, 7, 9, 10. How do we show that we are listening to our Teacher?**
-

“Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

“Ask God to reveal light and truth to you by His Holy Spirit, that you may understand what you read in His Word. When, after the resurrection, Christ walked with the disciples to Emmaus, He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. The same divine Teacher will enlighten our understanding if we keep the windows of the heart opened heavenward and closed earthward. The office of the Holy Spirit is to bring all things to our remembrance and to guide us into all truth.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 202.

“Do not crowd into your minds so many things that are cheap and unsatisfying. In the Word of God is spread before you the richest banquet. It is the Lord’s table, abundantly provided, whereof you may eat and be satisfied.”—*Ibid.*, p. 201.

3. KNOWING THE THINGS OF GOD

- a. **How deep is the knowledge and wisdom of God and the Holy Spirit? Matthew 10:29–31; Romans 11:33–36.**
-

“When on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, they understood the truths that Christ had spoken in parables. The teachings that had been mysteries to them were made clear. The understanding that came to them with the outpouring of the Spirit made them ashamed of their fanciful theories. Their suppositions and interpretations were foolishness when compared with the knowledge of heavenly things which they now received. They were led by the Spirit, and light shone into their once darkened understanding.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 267.

- b. **What things does the Spirit know which man cannot know on his own? 1 Corinthians 2:11, 16.**
-

“God intends that even in this life the truths of His word shall be ever unfolding to His people. There is only one way in which this knowledge can be obtained. We can attain to an understanding of God’s word only through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 109.

- c. **What should we always do before we study the Bible? Psalm 119:18.**
-

“The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God’s word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises. We should make the psalmist’s petition our own: ‘Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.’ Psalm 119:18. Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God’s promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 599, 600.

4. A TRUE TEACHER

- a. What are the qualifications of a true teacher? John 7:18; Matthew 7:15–20.
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“[Jesus] now gave a test by which the true teacher might be distinguished from the deceiver: ‘He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of Him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.’ John 7:18, R. V. He that seeketh his own glory is speaking only from himself. The spirit of self-seeking betrays its origin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 456.

- b. How did Jesus fulfil these requirements? John 7:16; 8:50; 14:10; Hebrews 5:5 (first part).
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“Christ was seeking the glory of God. He spoke the words of God. This was the evidence of His authority as a teacher of the truth.”—*Ibid.*

“God does not intend that your light shall so shine that your good words or works shall bring the praise of men to yourself; but that the Author of all good shall be glorified and exalted. Jesus, in His life, gave to men a model of character. . . . He declared, ‘My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work!’ If we had this devotion to the work of God, doing it with an eye single to His glory, we should be able to say with Christ, ‘I seek not mine own glory.’ His life was full of good works, and it is our duty to live as our great Example lived.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 41.

- c. Who does the Holy Spirit glorify? How does this prove that the Holy Spirit is distinct in person from Christ? John 16:13, 14.
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“The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is his office to present Christ, the purity of His righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through Him.”—*Christian Education*, p. 59.

“The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.

5. A COMFORTING GUIDE

- a. **Though the Comforter is distinct in person from Christ, whom does He represent on earth? John 14:18, 21; 15:26. When in particular?**
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“When God’s people search the Scriptures with a desire to know what is truth, Jesus is present in the person of His representative, the Holy Spirit, reviving the hearts of the humble and contrite ones.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 145.

“When you search the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is by your side, personating Jesus Christ.”—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 328.

- b. **How much will our heavenly guide teach us and what will be the result of such teaching? John 14:26.**
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“The Holy Spirit has been given us as an aid in the study of the Bible. Jesus promised, [John 14:26 quoted]. When the Bible is made the study book, with earnest supplication for the Spirit’s guidance, and with a full surrender of the heart to be sanctified through the truth, all that Christ has promised will be accomplished. The result of such Bible study will be well-balanced minds. The understanding will be quickened, the sensibilities aroused. The conscience will become sensitive; the sympathies and sentiments will be purified; a better moral atmosphere will be created; and new power to resist temptation will be imparted.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 357.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Give examples of how the Holy Spirit aided God’s people in the past.
2. How does the Holy Spirit help us to learn what is truth?
3. How did the disciples’ understanding of truth change after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost?
4. How does the Holy Spirit fulfil the requirements of being a true Teacher?
5. What attitude is essential on your part if you are to be led into all truth by the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him” (Isaiah 42:1).

“From the manger to the cross, the life of Jesus was a call to self-surrender, and to fellowship in suffering. It unveiled the purposes of men. Jesus came with the truth of heaven, and all who were listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit were drawn to Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 57.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 109–113, 236–243.

Sunday

October 21

1. CHRIST’S WORK PROPHESIED

- a. Which prophecies were fulfilled at the birth of Jesus? Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Luke 1:35.
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“Before the foundations of the world were laid, Christ, the Only Begotten of God, pledged Himself to become the Redeemer of the human race, should Adam sin. Adam fell, and He who was partaker of the Father’s glory before the world was, laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high authority to become a Babe in Bethlehem, that by passing over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell, He might redeem fallen human beings. He subjected Himself to all the temptations that the enemy brings against men and women; and all the assaults of Satan could not make Him swerve from His loyalty to the Father. By living a sinless life He testified that every son and daughter of Adam can resist the temptations of the one who first brought sin into the world.”—*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 226.

- b. What did John the Baptist announce about the work of Jesus? Matthew 3:11.
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2. FULFILLING PROPHECY

- a. **What was to be the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Messiah? Isaiah 11:2, 3; 61:1-3.**
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“The work that the Saviour was to do on the earth had been fully outlined: ‘The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.’ The One thus anointed was ‘to preach good tidings unto the meek; . . . to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.’ Isaiah 11:2, 3; 61:1-3.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 224.

“In His life no self-assertion was to be mingled. The homage which the world gives to position, to wealth, and to talent, was to be foreign to the Son of God. None of the means that men employ to win allegiance or to command homage, was the Messiah to use. . . .

“The Messiah was to be hid in God, and God was to be revealed in the character of His Son.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 692, 693.

- b. **When were the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Messiah’s ministry fulfilled? Luke 4:16-21.**
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“Jesus stood before the people as a living expositor of the prophecies concerning Himself. Explaining the words He had read, He spoke of the Messiah as a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth. His impressive manner and the wonderful import of His words thrilled the hearers with a power they had never felt before. The tide of divine influence broke every barrier down; like Moses, they beheld the Invisible. As their hearts were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, they responded with fervent amens and praises to the Lord.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 237.

3. A SPIRIT-FILLED MINISTRY

- a. How did the Holy Spirit affect the life of Jesus? Luke 2:40, 52.
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“In the sunlight of His Father’s countenance, Jesus ‘increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.’ Luke 2:52. His mind was active and penetrating, with a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years. Yet His character was beautiful in its symmetry. The powers of mind and body developed gradually, in keeping with the laws of childhood.

“As a child, Jesus manifested a peculiar loveliness of disposition. His willing hands were ever ready to serve others. He manifested a patience that nothing could disturb, and a truthfulness that would never sacrifice integrity. In principle firm as a rock, His life revealed the grace of unselfish courtesy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 68, 69.

- b. What occurred at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry on this earth? What example has Jesus left for us to follow? Mark 1:12, 13; 1 Peter 2:21, 22.
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“When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He was to travel.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 227.

“‘The prince of this world cometh,’ said Jesus, ‘and hath nothing in Me.’ John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to 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.

4. IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

- a. **What took place immediately after the baptism of Jesus? Matthew 3:16, 17.**
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“Upon coming up out of the water, Jesus bowed in prayer on the river bank. . . .

“Never before have the angels listened to such a prayer. They are eager to bear to their loved Commander a message of assurance and comfort. But no; the Father Himself will answer the petition of His Son. Direct from the throne issue the beams of His glory. The heavens are opened, and upon the Saviour’s head descends a dovelike form of purest light—fit emblem of Him, the meek and lowly One. . . .

“The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. . . . The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 111–113.

- b. **What did Jesus accomplish through the power of the Holy Spirit? Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38; Matthew 12:28.**
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“As a man [Jesus] supplicated the throne of God, till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that connected humanity with divinity. Receiving life from God, He imparted life to men.”—*Education*, pp. 80, 81.

“Never was there such an evangelist as Christ. He was the Majesty of heaven, but He humbled Himself to take our nature, that He might meet men where they were. To all people, rich and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. His fame as the Great Healer spread throughout Palestine. The sick came to the places through which He would pass, that they might call on Him for help.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 22.

“Toward the close of His ministry in Galilee, He again visited the home of His childhood. Since His rejection there, the fame of His preaching and His miracles had filled the land. None now could deny that He possessed more than human power. The people of Nazareth knew that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. About them were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick. The mercy revealed in every act of His life testified to His divine anointing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 241.

5. LIVING BY THE WORD

- a. Who inspired the words which Jesus spoke? John 6:63; 8:28.
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“The life of Christ that gives life to the world is in His word. It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power. Like their Master, they were to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Matthew 4:4.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 390.

- b. How can we make the Word of God our source of power? Jeremiah 15:16.
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“As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know ‘what saith the Lord.’”—*Ibid.*

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is one reason the Son of God came as a real man to our world?
2. How was the power of the Holy Spirit shown in the life of Christ?
3. How was the Holy Spirit visibly present at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry?
4. What significance does Christ’s resistance of temptation have for believers?
5. What must you do for yourself in order to live as Christ lived?

First Sabbath Offering Literature for Mission Fields

In the 21st century, while the Internet, e-books, and other media are modern ways to spread the gospel, there is still a uniquely versatile method of presentation that no other media type can replace: The printed page is one of the most effective ways for the gospel to reach even the remotest places on earth—without electricity. By this means the good news is penetrating former communist, atheistic, and



Islamic countries and can be shared on a one-to-one basis. The servant of the Lord has said: “Let the publications containing Bible truth be scattered like the leaves of autumn” (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 323). “Our publications should go everywhere. Let them be issued in many languages. The third angel’s message is to be given through this medium and through the living teacher. You who believe the truth for this time, wake up. It is your duty now to bring in all the means possible to help those who understand the truth to proclaim it” (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 62).

“Publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel” (Jeremiah 31:7). God’s people, the remnant of Israel, are to publish the good news of salvation. While we have an ample supply of Bibles, books, and pamphlets for evangelism in many countries, still there are vast multitudes around the world that do not have the same privilege. It is our duty and honor to support the distribution of literature to various regions of the world. The Bible has been translated into many languages and dialects, yet essential books such as *Steps to Christ*, and *The Great Controversy* are not available to millions. How about if we share the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* with those who are searching for the present truth today?

Consider the Pacific islands and the African countries where the reform message has not yet entered. Let us remember the promise in Ecclesiastes 11:1, “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” We must spread the Word of God before it is too late. We may not see the results immediately, but it will not be long before we can witness the great harvest when the latter rain comes in fullness. Let us be wise stewards who store treasure in heaven—not on this earth.

We are very thankful for all that our brethren and friends everywhere have done in the past—but the need is greater now than ever before. So let us be generous in this work!

The General Conference Publishing Department

Heaven's Crowning Gift

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

“In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 273.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 52–56.

Sunday

October 28

1. THE PARTING PROMISE

a. For what situation was Jesus preparing His disciples? John 13:33.

“[John 13:33 quoted.] The disciples could not rejoice when they heard this. Fear fell upon them. They pressed close about the Saviour. Their Master and Lord, their beloved Teacher and Friend, He was dearer to them than life. To Him they had looked for help in all their difficulties, for comfort in their sorrows and disappointments. Now He was to leave them, a lonely, dependent company. Dark were the forebodings that filled their hearts.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 662.

b. What comforting promise did Jesus make to His disciples? John 14:16, 17.

“Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, Christ sought for the most essential and complete gift to bestow upon His followers, a gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of grace.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 668, 669.

“Christ declared that after His ascension, He would send to His church, as His crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take His place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit—the soul of His life, the efficacy of His church, the light and life of the world. With His Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904.

2. CHRIST'S REPRESENTATIVE

- a. **Why was it necessary for Christ to ascend to heaven before sending the Comforter? John 16:7.**
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“Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.”— *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

- b. **What shows that the Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative? John 14:18; 15:26.**
-

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

“The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. [Christ] would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 23.

- c. **What was the evidence that Christ was now seated upon His mediatorial throne? What did this enable the disciples to do? Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8.**
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“The Life-giver held in His hand not only the keys of death but a whole heaven of rich blessings. All power in heaven and earth was given to [Christ], and having taken His place in the heavenly courts, He could dispense these blessings to all who receive Him. The church was baptized with the Spirit’s power. The disciples were fitted to go forth and proclaim Christ, first in Jerusalem, where the shameful work of dishonoring the rightful King had been done, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. The evidence of the enthronement of Christ in His mediatorial kingdom was given.”—*My Life Today*, p. 47.

3. THE GREATNESS OF THE GIFT

- a. **What prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit? Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:8. How complete was His gift?**
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“Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation. . . . It came with a fullness and power, as if for ages it had been restrained, but was now being poured forth upon the church. . . .

“The Holy Spirit was sent as the most priceless treasure man could receive.”—*My Life Today*, p. 36.

- b. **What gifts of grace did the Holy Spirit distribute to the church? For what purpose were they given? Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 12:8–11.**
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“The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. [1 Corinthians 12:8–11 quoted.] All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327.

- c. **For how long would these gifts be needed? Ephesians 4:13.**
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“Here we are shown that God gives to every man his work, and in doing this work, man is fulfilling his part of God's great plan. Every faithful worker will minister for the perfecting of the saints. All who have been benefited by the labors of God's servant, should, according to their ability, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers, and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 12, 1908.

4. FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD

- a. What blessing did the New Covenant promise include? Galatians 3:14; Acts 3:25, 26.
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“The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, it is His representative. Here is the divine agency that carries conviction to hearts.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 313.

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

- b. What experience will be ours when we receive the Holy Spirit? Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:16–19.
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“Here are revealed the heights of attainment that we may reach through faith in the promises of our heavenly Father, when we fulfill His requirements. Through the merits of Christ we have access to the throne of Infinite Power. ‘He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?’ Romans 8:32. The Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son, and we also may partake of its fullness.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 477.

“When Christ dwells in your heart by faith, this rich experience will be yours. Then you will know that love is flowing into your hearts, and subduing every affection and every thought, and bringing them into captivity to Christ. You cannot explain it; human language can never explain how the love of Christ can take possession of the soul, and lead captive every power of the mind. But you will know it by a personal experience.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 15, 1892.

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

5. PETITIONING THE THRONE OF GRACE

- a. What must we do to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? Luke 11:13.
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“The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should they pray that God will baptize His chosen ambassadors in mission fields with a rich measure of His Spirit.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 50, 51.

- b. What should our request to God include? Psalm 51:9–12.
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“Repentance as well as forgiveness is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convinced of sin, and feel our need of pardon. None but the contrite are forgiven; but it is the grace of the Lord that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and He will help us. He will hear the prayer of faith; but the sincerity of prayer can be proved only by our efforts to bring ourselves into harmony with the great moral standard which will test every man’s character. We need to open our hearts to the influence of the Spirit, and to experience its transforming power.”— *The Review and Herald*, June 24, 1884.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was the gift of the Spirit such a comforting promise to the disciples?
2. Whom does the Holy Spirit represent to us?
3. Why is the Holy Spirit the greatest gift that Jesus could give to his followers?
4. What New Covenant blessing is realized as we submit to the Holy Spirit?
5. What should our prayer be in view of the promised gift?

Heaven's Power

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:5, 6).

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 662–680.

Sunday

November 4

1. A CREATIVE POWER

- a. Under the direction of God, the Father, with what work was the Spirit of God closely involved? Genesis 1:1–3, 26; Job 33:4.
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“All things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things therein, came into existence by the breath of His mouth.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 414.

- b. What did the first human being receive from God? How does this compare with the renewal of spiritual life? Genesis 2:7; John 20:22.
-

“The Holy Spirit is the breath of life in the soul. The breathing of Christ upon His disciples was the breath of true spiritual life. The disciples were to interpret this as imbuing them with the attributes of their Saviour, that in purity, faith, and obedience, they might exalt the law, and make it honorable.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 13, 1899.

2. A REGENERATING POWER

- a. What parallel is there between the creation of our world and the redemption of the soul? 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 2:10.
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“Though marred by sin, [nature] speaks not only of creation but of redemption. Though the earth bears testimony to the curse in the evident signs of decay, it is still rich and beautiful in the tokens of life-giving power. The trees cast off their leaves, only to be robbed with fresher verdure; the flowers die, to spring forth in new beauty; and in every manifestation of creative power is held out the assurance that we may be created anew in ‘righteousness and holiness of truth.’ Ephesians 4:24, margin. Thus the very objects and operations of nature that bring so vividly to mind our great loss become to us the messengers of hope.”—*Education*, p. 27.

- b. When man sinned and thus forfeited eternal life, who became the agent for the new birth? John 3:5, 6.
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“The change of heart represented by the new birth can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. It alone can cleanse us from all impurity. If it is allowed to mold and fashion our hearts, we shall be able to discern the character of the kingdom of God, and realize the necessity of the change which must be made before we can obtain entrance to this kingdom. Pride and self-love resist the Spirit of God; every natural inclination of the soul opposes the change from self-importance and pride to the meekness and lowliness of Christ. But if we would travel in the pathway to eternal life, we must not listen to the whispering of self. In humility and contrition we must beseech our heavenly Father, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me’ (Psalm 51:10). As we receive divine light, and cooperate with the heavenly intelligences, we are ‘born again,’ freed from the defilement of sin by the power of Christ.”—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 24.

“This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the Word of God. When by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 520.

3. A CONQUERING POWER

- a. **Who continually worked on the conscience of the sinner before and after the Flood? Genesis 6:3.**
-

“The Spirit of God continued to strive with rebellious man until the time specified had nearly expired, when Noah and his family entered the ark, and the hand of God closed its door. Mercy had stepped from the golden throne, no longer to intercede for the guilty sinner.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 321.

“The divine Comforter is full of pity and sympathy; He seeks to woo men to God, to direct their attention to Christ as He really is, full of mercy, compassion, and pardoning love.”—*The Bible Echo*, March 19, 1894.

- b. **In what kind of battle are we all involved and who directs it? Ephesians 6:12.**
-

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

“[Christ’s followers] are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our sins and mistakes grievous; but the grace of God is for all who seek it with contrition. The power of Omnipotence is enlisted in behalf of those who trust in God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 352.

- c. **How only is it possible to resist evil? 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5; Ephesians 3:16.**
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“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.”—*Ibid.*, p. 671.

4. AN ENLIGHTENING POWER

- a. What guiding light will the Holy Spirit give to those who will allow Him to dwell in their hearts? Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 30:21.
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“We cannot use the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit, God works in His people ‘to will and to do of His good pleasure’ (Philippians 2:13). But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. 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.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

“God is speaking to us through His word, pointing out the path of faith and righteousness as the only path to glory. All who have the Spirit of Christ will place high value upon the Scriptures, for they are the oracles of God. They are as actually a divine communication saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it’ (Isaiah 30:21), as though these words came to us from Isaiah in an audible voice. Oh, if the people only believed this, what awe, what reverence, what prostration of soul would attend their searching of the Scriptures, which show the way to eternal life!”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 212.

- b. What should we always endeavor to do in the Christian walk? Acts 24:16.
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“Take your conscience to the Word of God, and see if your life and character are in accordance with the standard of righteousness which God has there revealed. You can then determine whether or not you have an intelligent faith, and what manner of conscience is yours. The conscience of man cannot be trusted unless it is under the influence of divine grace. . . .

“It is not enough for a man to think himself safe in following the dictates of his conscience. . . . The question to be settled is, Is the conscience in harmony with the Word of God? If not, it cannot safely be followed, for it will deceive. The conscience must be enlightened by God. Time must be given to a study of the Scriptures and to prayer. Thus the mind will be stablished, strengthened, and settled.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 143.

5. AN INTERCESSORY POWER

- a. **What is the role of Jesus in the presence of the Father in heaven?** 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34.
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“Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1077.

“[Jesus] thinks of us individually, and knows our every necessity. When tempted, just say, He cares for me, He makes intercession for me, He loves me, He has died for me. I will give myself unreservedly to Him.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 391.

- b. **How does the Holy Spirit assist when the sinner comes before God in prayer?** Romans 8:26.
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“Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1077, 1078.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What is the Holy Spirit to the soul?**
2. **How does the Holy Spirit work as a regenerating agent?**
3. **What part does the Holy Spirit play in the battle against the forces of evil?**
4. **What does it mean to live with a good conscience before God and men?**
5. **How does the intercession of the Spirit differ from that of Christ?**

Directing God's Church

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22).

"All who have a vital connection with God are guided by His counsel. United in church capacity, they give themselves to do Christ's work. If we will open the door to Jesus, He will come in and abide with us; our strength will always be reinforced by his actual representative, the Holy Spirit."—*The Review and Herald*, February 23, 1897.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 87–96.

Sunday

November 11

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

- a. During which special occasion during the life of Moses was the working of the Holy Spirit seen? Numbers 11:16, 17, 25.

"Like the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, they [the seventy elders] were endued with 'power from on high.' It pleased the Lord thus to prepare them for their work, and to honor them in the presence of the congregation, that confidence might be established in them as men divinely chosen to unite with Moses in the government of Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 381.

- b. In what way was Joshua prepared for his work and directed by God? Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9; 31:22, 23.

"[Joshua] was most solemnly consecrated to the future important work of leading, as a faithful shepherd, the people of Israel. 'And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him. And the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.'"—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a, p. 56.

2. IN THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES

- a. How did the early disciples gain the power needed to carry out the gospel commission? John 20:21–23; Mark 16:20.
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“Before the disciples could fulfill their official duties in connection with the church, Christ breathed His Spirit upon them. He was committing to them a most sacred trust, and He desired to impress them with the fact that without the Holy Spirit this work could not be accomplished.

“The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 805.

“The commission that Christ gave to the disciples, they fulfilled. As these messengers of the cross went forth to proclaim the gospel, there was such a revelation of the glory of God as had never before been witnessed by mortal man. By the cooperation of the divine Spirit, the apostles did a work that shook the world.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 593.

- b. What did the first church do in order to grow spiritually? Acts 2:42.
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“From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer’s love and of His saving grace.”—*Ibid.*, p. 49.

“Then let us cease to look to ourselves, but look to Him from whom all virtue comes. No one can make himself better, but we are to come to Jesus as we are, earnestly desiring to be cleansed from every spot and stain of sin, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . By living faith we must lay hold of His promise, for He has said, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 213.

3. A LIVING, GROWING CHURCH

- a. What was the strength of the early church? Acts 4:32; 2:46, 47 (first part).
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“Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of love and benevolence. One interest prevailed. One subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 20.

- b. How did unity among the believers affect the work of the gospel? Acts 4:33; 2:47 (last part).
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“The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.”—*Ibid.*, p. 21.

- c. How can we have this same spirit of unity? Where does it begin? Philippians 2:3.
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“The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 179.

“Think of the Lord Jesus, and His merits and His love, but do not seek to find the defects and dwell upon the mistakes that others have made. Call to your mind the things worthy of your recognition and your praise; and if you are sharp to discern errors in others, be more sharp to recognize the good and praise the good. You may, if you criticize yourselves, find things just as objectionable as that which you see in others. Then let us work constantly to strengthen one another in the most holy faith.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 232.

“As we seek to win others to Christ, bearing the burden of souls in our prayers, our own hearts will throb with the quickening influence of God’s grace; our own affections will glow with more divine fervor; our whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 354.

4. DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. What was necessary when the church became larger? Acts 6:1, 2.
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“Under the wise leadership of the apostles, who labored unitedly in the power of the Holy Spirit, the work committed to the gospel messengers was developing rapidly. The church was continually enlarging, and this growth in membership brought increasingly heavy burdens upon those in charge. No one man, or even one set of men, could continue to bear these burdens alone, without imperiling the future prosperity of the church. There was necessity for a further distribution of the responsibilities which had been borne so faithfully by a few during the earlier days of the church. The apostles must now take an important step in the perfecting of gospel order in the church by laying upon others some of the burdens thus far borne by themselves.

“Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 88, 89.

- b. On what basis was the selection of new church officers made? Acts 6:3, 4. Who is to guide in such matters? Acts 13:2; 20:28.
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“The appointment of the seven [deacons] to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.”—*Ibid.*, p. 89.

“The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christian shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to cooperate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give to the world the glad tidings of the grace of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 164.

5. THE NEED OF A DIVINE INFLUENCE

- a. How should the Holy Spirit influence those who teach from God's Word? 1 Corinthians 2:1-4, 10-13.
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- b. What were the conditions of receiving the gift which Christ promised to His followers throughout the ages? Acts 2:38, 39; 5:32. Why don't we receive this gift more fully today?
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"I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, and He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 15.

"Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. But the promise is not appreciated as it should be; and therefore its fulfillment is not seen as it might be. The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plenitude."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 21.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did God recognize the 70 elders as His chosen messengers in the time of Moses?
2. Why did Christ breathe His Spirit upon the disciples? What significance does this have for us today?
3. What is necessary before God can pour out His Spirit upon His church today?
4. How does the Holy Spirit aid in the organization of the church?
5. Why doesn't the Spirit have a greater influence in the church today?

The Need to Heed

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

“When in the church of today it is seen that by the power of the Spirit the members have taken their affections from the things of the world, and that they are willing to make sacrifices in order that their fellow men may hear the gospel, the truths proclaimed will have a powerful influence upon the hearers.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 71.

Suggested Readings: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 70–76;
The Desire of Ages, pp. 321–327.

Sunday

November 18

1. A BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- a. What characteristic distinguished the early church? Acts 2:44, 45; 4:34–37.

“Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter.

“The record declares, ‘Neither was there any among them that lacked,’ and it tells how the need was filled. Those among the believers who had money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the emergency. Selling their houses or their lands, they brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet, ‘and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.’

“This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were ‘of one heart and of one soul.’ One common interest controlled them—the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused, was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 70, 71.

2. HYPOCRISY AND ITS SWIFT PUNISHMENT

- a. Alongside the unselfish spirit of many, what spiritual problem arose in the early church? Acts 5:1, 2.
-

“Deep conviction had rested upon all present, and under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, Ananias and Sapphira had made a pledge to give to the Lord the proceeds from the sale of certain property.

“Afterward, Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness. They began to regret their promise and soon lost the sweet influence of the blessing that had warmed their hearts with a desire to do large things in behalf of the cause of Christ. They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over, and decided not to fulfill their pledge.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 71, 72.

- b. What did Peter detect through the leading of the Holy Spirit? What was the real sin of Ananias? Acts 5:3, 4.
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“No undue influence had been brought to bear upon Ananias to compel him to sacrifice his possessions to the general good. He had acted from choice. But in attempting to deceive the disciples, he had lied to the Almighty.”—*Ibid.*, p. 73.

- c. What happened when the sin of Ananias became evident? Acts 5:5, 6.
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“Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. Their numbers were rapidly increasing. The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshipping mammon. This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and that He will not be mocked. It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 73, 74.

3. GOD'S VIEW OF HYPOCRISY

- a. **What question was later posed to the wife of Ananias, and how did she respond? Acts 5:7, 8.**
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“Not to the early church only, but to all future generations, this example of God’s hatred of covetousness, fraud, and hypocrisy, was given as a danger-signal. It was covetousness that Ananias and Sapphira had first cherished. The desire to retain for themselves a part of that which they had promised to the Lord, led them into fraud and hypocrisy.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 74.

- b. **What sin did Peter bring to Sapphira’s attention, and what was the tragic result? Acts 5:9, 10.**
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“God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment.”—*Ibid.*, p. 72.

- c. **How does God view all falsehood? Proverbs 12:22; Revelation 21:27.**
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“Exaggeration and fraud and falsehood are largely dealt in, in the world; but shall those who profess to believe the truth, do unrighteousness? Shall they gather the pollution that everywhere exists, and identify themselves with those who, although they are termed upright men, are evil-doers? He who looks upon the heart, and cannot behold sin with any degree of allowance, will not countenance hypocrisy in those who claim to be his children.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 19, 1893.

“He who utters untruths sells his soul in a cheap market. His falsehoods may seem to serve in emergencies; he may thus seem to make business advancement that he could not gain by fair dealing; but he finally reaches the place where he can trust no one. Himself a falsifier, he has no confidence in the word of others. . . .

“The same sin [of Ananias and Sapphira] was often repeated in the after history of the church and is committed by many in our time. But though it may not be attended by the visible manifestation of God’s displeasure, it is no less heinous in His sight now than in the apostles’ time.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 76.

4. THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. What is generally involved in the sin against the Holy Spirit? Jeremiah 29:19; Luke 13:34.
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“There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven’s invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

- b. What other sins can lead to the sin against the Holy Spirit? Matthew 12:34–37.
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“Closely connected with Christ’s warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. . . . It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit.”—*Ibid.*, p. 323.

- c. What should we remember in the battle against sin? Matthew 6:24.
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“We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. . . . We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome.”—*Ibid.*, p. 324.

5. CULTIVATING THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

- a. What character quality does God value and under what circumstances? 2 Corinthians 8:21; Hebrews 13:18.
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“Truthfulness and frankness should be ever cherished by all who claim to be followers of Christ. God and the right should be the motto. Deal honestly and righteously in this present evil world. Some will be honest when they see that honesty will not endanger their worldly interests, but all who act from this principle will have their names blotted out of the book of life.

“Strict honesty must be cultivated. We can go through the world but once; we cannot come back to rectify any mistakes; therefore every move made should be with godly fear and careful consideration.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1081.

- b. How does the Holy Spirit help us as we seek for truth? John 16:13.
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“True seekers for truth need not err; for not only is the Word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life therein revealed.”—*Early Writings*, p. 221.

“The Holy Spirit is called both the Comforter and the Spirit of truth, because there is comfort and hope in the truth. A falsehood cannot give genuine peace; but through the truth we become partakers of the peace that passeth understanding.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 310.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What effect did the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have upon the way the believers regarded one another?
2. How did Ananias and Sapphira grieve the Holy Spirit?
3. To what did their covetousness lead, and how is this a warning for us today?
4. How can criticism and doubt lead to the sin against the Holy Spirit?
5. How can we be strictly honest in this life, and what will be the result?

First Sabbath Offering for the Chapel in Maiden, NC, U.S.A.

Dear Brethren,

Christian greetings with Proverbs 3:5, 6, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

For some time, the church brethren in Charlotte, North Carolina, have sought to build another lighthouse for the honor of God—and we truly believe that the Lord directed our path to the town of Maiden. From the first moment we saw this building, the Lord opened doors and impressed hearts, and with much prayer and self-denial on the part of the brethren, they went forward with the purchase. We truly believe that the Lord touched the seller’s heart in order for us to be able to obtain this property at a price lower than first expected.

The brethren read the timely words found in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 281, in regard to this purchase:

“Properties . . . are being offered to us, and some of them we should purchase when it is plain that they are what we need, and when provision can be made for their acquisition without a burdensome debt. . . . The fact that, in many cases, the owners of these properties are anxious to dispose of them, and are therefore willing to sell at a low price, is greatly in our favor.”

This building is structurally sound, but needs remodeling to update and fit it to serve as a house of prayer. The changes, though not many, are costly. While we have made great sacrifices with our time and money, more funds are still needed. It has been estimated that with a total of \$50,000, all the expenses can be covered.

To help finish this project, we appeal to the generosity of our church family to join us in raising up a lighthouse of truth in this area. We invite you to be an instrument in God’s hand to aid in the salvation of souls in and around Maiden.

In advance, thank you! Thank you for your prayers and assistance.

The brethren and sisters in Charlotte



Be Ye Transformed

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“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.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

Suggested Reading: *The Upward Look*, pp. 236–241, 248, 345, 346.

Sunday

November 25

1. CHANGED BY THE SPIRIT

- a. What part does the Holy Spirit play in making us like Christ? 2 Corinthians 3:18.
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“Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1098.

- b. What does Jesus do for us by the Holy Spirit? 1 Corinthians 6:11.
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“The absence of devotion, piety, and sanctification of the outer man comes through denying Jesus Christ our righteousness. The love of God needs to be constantly cultivated.”—*The Faith and Works*, p. 15.

2. CONVICTING THE SOUL OF SIN

- a. In what ways does the Holy Spirit convict the soul? John 16:8–10.
-

“The heart is touched and made contrite. The penitential confession clears the moral atmosphere of the soul, and awakens holy principles. The subduing grace of Christ comes into the heart. . . . Sins are seen in the light in which God views them. They are confessed, they are forgiven.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 28, 1898.

- b. What is the godly response to reproof? Acts 2:37; Proverbs 9:8.
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“Those who are reproved by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 257.

“It is not pleasing to human nature to receive reproof, nor is it possible for the heart of man, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, to realize the necessity of reproof or the blessing it is designed to bring. As man yields to temptation, and indulges in sin, his mind becomes darkened. The moral sense is perverted. The warnings of conscience are disregarded, and its voice is less clearly heard. He gradually loses the power to distinguish between right and wrong, until he has no true sense of his standing before God. . . . God has given sufficient evidence, so that all who desire to do so may satisfy themselves as to the character of the *Testimonies*; and, having acknowledged them to be from God, it is their duty to accept reproof, even though they do not themselves see the sinfulness of their course. If they fully realized their condition, what would be the need of reproof? Because they know it not, God mercifully sets it before them, so that they may repent and reform before it shall be too late.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 682.

- c. As we are reproved of sin in our life and desire to change, what should we remember? Isaiah 55:7; Hosea 6:1; 1 John 1:9.
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“Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him. Whoever will in faith accept God’s promises, will find pardon. The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 726.

3. CREATING THE NEW HEART

- a. **What creative work is the Holy Spirit doing in every person?** John 16:8, 9; 12:32.
-

“The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 28.

- b. **What is the spiritual condition of the natural heart?** Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23.
-

“No man can of himself understand his errors. . . . In one way only can a true knowledge of self be obtained. We must behold Christ. It is ignorance of Him that makes men so uplifted in their own righteousness. When we contemplate His purity and excellence, we shall see our own weakness and poverty and defects as they really are. We shall see ourselves lost and hopeless, clad in garments of self-righteousness, like every other sinner. We shall see that if we are ever saved, it will not be through our own goodness, but through God’s infinite grace.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 159.

- c. **What does God desire to do for us as we see the true condition of our heart?** Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 18:31; 36:26.
-

“Will you let Him reason with you? Will you commit to Him the keeping of your soul as unto a faithful Creator? Come then, and let us live in the light of His countenance, and pray, as did David, ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow’ (Psalm 51:7). By faith apply the blood of Christ to your heart, for that alone can make you whiter than snow. But you say, ‘This surrender of all my idols will break my heart.’ This giving up of all for God is represented by your falling upon the Rock and being broken. Then give up all for Him; for unless you are broken, you are worthless.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 330.

4. WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT

- a. How is it possible to live a victorious life? Romans 8:1–4; Galatians 5:16.
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“Our future eternal happiness depends upon having our humanity, with all its capabilities and powers, brought into obedience to God and placed under the control of Divinity. . . .

“Through the moral power Christ has brought to man, we may give thanks unto God who hath made us meet for the inheritance with the saints in light. Through Jesus Christ every man may overcome in his own behalf and on his own account, standing in his own individuality of character.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 291.

- b. How will the Christian live while under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Galatians 2:20.
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“He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to reveal His grace. If His people will remove the obstructions, He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 250, 251.

- c. What is the essential agent the Spirit uses to purify our life? 1 Peter 1:22, 23.
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“The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.’ John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 100.

5. CHANGED HEARTS, CHANGED LIVES

- a. What change will be evident in the life of the converted person? How does the Holy Spirit influence the actions? Romans 8:13, 14; Ezekiel 36:27.
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“Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike. When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners.”—*Evangelism*, p. 288.

- b. What step does God desire us to take to show that we have accepted the new heart He has offered to us? Acts 2:38; 22:16.
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“Man was brought again into favor with God by the washing of regeneration. The washing was the burial with Christ in the water in the likeness of His death, representing that all who repent of the transgression of the law of God receive purification, cleansing, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Baptism represents true conversion by the renewing of the Holy Spirit.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 143.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When only can we give a true representation of God to others?
2. Why do we need reproof? If our heart is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, how will we react toward reproof?
3. What will happen to us as we behold Christ, in His purity and excellence?
4. What happens to us when our mind is renewed by the Holy Spirit?
5. How do we know that the Holy Spirit has been at work in someone's life?

A Lesson from the Vine

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8).

“God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 674–677.

Sunday

December 2

1. I AM THE TRUE VINE

- a. What figure did Jesus use to describe the spiritual relationship between Himself, the Father, and the disciples? John 15:1.

“[Christ] used the figure of the vine that as we look upon it, we may call to remembrance His precious lessons. Rightly interpreted, nature is the mirror of divinity.

“Christ pointed to the vine and its branches: I give you this lesson that you may understand My relationship to you, and your relationship to Me.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 182.

- b. What Biblical significance was associated with the vine? Psalm 80:8, 9.

“The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. Israel had been represented as a vine which God had planted in the Promised Land. The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 675.

2. MY FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN

- a. **What lesson of dependence does the vine teach us about Christ? John 5:19; 14:10.**
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“Instead of choosing the graceful palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So Christ in His humanity was dependent upon divine power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 674, 675.

- b. **How confident was Christ that His Father would supply all His needs? John 5:30; 1 Peter 5:7.**
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“So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God’s plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans.”—*Ibid.*, p. 208.

“When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the ‘Master of earth and sea and sky’ that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, ‘I can of Mine own self do nothing.’ John 5:30. He trusted in the Father’s might. It was in faith—faith in God’s love and care—that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 336.

- c. **What does the lesson of the vine teach us about the character of the Father? Isaiah 27:2, 3.**
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“On the hills of Palestine our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He Himself was the husbandman. Many were attracted by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its heavenly origin. But to the leaders in Israel it appeared as a root out of a dry ground. They took the plant, and bruised it, and trampled it under their unholy feet. Their thought was to destroy it forever. But the heavenly Husbandman never lost sight of His plant. After men thought they had killed it, He took it, and replanted it on the other side of the wall. The vine stock was to be no longer visible. It was hidden from the rude assaults of men. But the branches of the Vine hung over the wall. They were to represent the Vine.”—*Ibid.*, p. 675.

3. YOU ARE THE BRANCHES

- a. What is necessary for each branch to grow and bear fruit? John 15:5.
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“This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 229.

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.”—*Ibid.*, p. 231.

- b. How does Christ abide in us? John 15:7; 14:16–18, 23.
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“It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Matt. 4:4.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

“When thus united, the words of Christ abide in us, and we are not actuated by a spasmodic feeling, but by a living, abiding principle. The words of Christ must be meditated upon and cherished and enshrined in the heart.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 355.

4. PARTAKING OF THE DIVINE NATURE

- a. **As we feed upon the word of God, obeying its principles in our life, what will take place? John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:22, 23; 2 Peter 1:4.**
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“As they feed upon His word, [God’s people] find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.

“Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 267.

- b. **What will be the nature of a branch vitally connected with the vine? Romans 11:16; 6:22.**
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“The connection of the branch with the vine, [Christ] said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ’s strength, his emptiness to Christ’s fullness, his frailty to Christ’s enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 675.

“When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ; His righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 229.

5. BEARING MUCH FRUIT

- a. How constant must our connection to Christ through the Holy Spirit be? Hebrews 3:14.
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“This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

- b. What will naturally appear in the life of a branch vitally connected to the vine? John 15:8; Galatians 5:22, 23.
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“Abiding in Christ means a living, earnest, refreshing faith that works by love and purifies the soul. It means a constant receiving of the spirit of Christ, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. Where this union exists, good works will appear. The life of the vine will manifest itself in fragrant fruit on the branches. The continual supply of the grace of Christ will bless you and make you a blessing, till you can say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 132.

“When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our life; not one will be missing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How alone is our spiritual life received?
2. What does the vine teach us about the confidence we can have in God?
3. What is one reason why we may find the Christian life so hard?
4. How alone can we partake of the life of the vine?
5. What is essential for a Christian to bear much fruit?

The Former Rain Experience

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

“The Holy Spirit especially rested upon the apostles, who were witnesses of our Lord’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—important truths which were to be the hope of Israel.”—*Early Writings*, p. 197.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 35–46.

Sunday

December 9

1. A NEW STAGE IN THE LIFE OF THE DISCIPLES

- a. Describe the attitude of the believers after the ascension of Jesus. Acts 1:12; Luke 24:50–53.

“As the disciples returned from Olivet to Jerusalem, the people looked on them, expecting to see on their faces expressions of sorrow, confusion, and defeat; but they saw there gladness and triumph. The disciples did not now mourn over disappointed hopes. They had seen the risen Saviour, and the words of His parting promise echoed constantly in their ears.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 35.

- b. What did they earnestly await and how long were they to tarry in Jerusalem? Acts 1:4, 5.

“In obedience to Christ’s command, they waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Spirit. They did not wait in idleness. The record says that they were ‘continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.’ Luke 24:53. They also met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an Advocate at the throne of God.”—*Ibid.*

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE PREPARATION

- a. How did the disciples prepare themselves during this time of waiting? Acts 1:14.
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“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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 15.

“As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 36.

- b. What often prevents us from having true unity within the church? Proverbs 13:10; 1 John 2:16.
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“All self-sufficiency, egotism, and pride of opinion must be put away. We must come to the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 414.

“If pride and selfishness were laid aside, five minutes would remove most difficulties.”—*Early Writings*, p. 119.

- c. What took place when the disciples acted according to the instructions of Jesus, putting away all differences? Acts 2:1, 2.
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“The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit’s grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, ‘Herein is love.’ They grasped the imparted gift.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 38.

3. DIVINE CONFIRMATION

- a. What special ability did the Lord confer on the disciples? Acts 2:3, 4.
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“The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 39.

- b. What miracle showed that God was leading them? Acts 2:5–12.
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“Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40.

- c. What does God tell us about speaking in tongues? 1 Corinthians 14:27, 28, 33. What counterfeit of this gift can be found today?
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“Some . . . persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good. ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 412.

4. PROPHECY FULFILLED

- a. What event preceded the disciples' receiving the power of the Holy Spirit? How was this prophesied by David? Acts 2:32–36; Psalm 110:1.
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“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

- b. What was the effect of Peter’s dynamic preaching at Pentecost? Acts 2:37.
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“Some of those who listened to the apostles had taken an active part in the condemnation and death of Christ. Their voices had mingled with the rabble in calling for His crucifixion. When Jesus and Barabbas stood before them in the judgment hall and Pilate asked, ‘Whom will ye that I release unto you?’ they had shouted, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Matthew 27:17; John 18:40. When Pilate delivered Christ to them, saying, ‘Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him;’ ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person,’ they had cried, ‘His blood be on us, and on our children.’ John 19:6; Matthew 27:24, 25.

“Now they heard the disciples declaring that it was the Son of God who had been crucified. Priests and rulers trembled. Conviction and anguish seized the people. ‘They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Among those who listened to the disciples were devout Jews, who were sincere in their belief. The power that accompanied the words of the speaker convinced them that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.

5. AMAZING RESULTS

- a. How did Peter respond to the honest inquiry of the people? Acts 2:38, 40.
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“Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was, ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ Luke 13:5. And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent.”—*Evangelism*, p. 179.

- b. What overwhelming event did the disciples experience? Acts 2:41.
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“On that memorable occasion large numbers who had heretofore ridiculed the idea of so unpretending a person as Jesus being the Son of God, became thoroughly convinced of the truth and acknowledged Him as their Saviour. Three thousand souls were added to the church. The apostles spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost; and their words could not be controverted, for they were confirmed by mighty miracles, wrought by them through the outpouring of the Spirit of God.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 245.

“But the Holy Ghost sent those arguments home with divine power to their hearts. They were as sharp arrows of the Almighty, convicting them of their terrible guilt in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory.”—*Ibid.*

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much time did the disciples spend at the temple, waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit? What attitude did they have?
2. What did the disciples do for 10 days, as they waited for God to fulfil His promise? Why was this necessary? What can we learn from this?
3. How did speaking in tongues benefit the disciples?
4. Which group of people was especially convicted that Jesus was the Son of God? What did they ask?
5. As the disciples spoke to the crowd of people, how did the Holy Spirit convict their hearts?

The Promised Latter Rain

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

“The refreshing or power of God comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 619.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 506–512.

Sunday

December 16

1. A CONSTANT REMINDER TO WATCH

- a. In what time period of the world’s history are we living? 1 John 2:18; Matthew 24:4–14, 33.

“The day of test and purification is just upon us. Signs of a most startling character appear, in floods, in hurricanes, in tornadoes, in cloudbursts, in casualties by land and by sea, that proclaim the approach of the end of all things. The judgments of God are falling on the world, that men may be awakened to the fact that Christ will come speedily.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 8, 1892.

- b. To what signs does the apostle Paul point? 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

“Violence and crime of every description are filling our world, and Satan is using every means to make crime and debasing vice popular. . . . Minds are educated into familiarity with sin. The course pursued by the base and vile is kept before them [the youth] in the periodicals of the day, and everything which can excite curiosity and arouse the animal passions is brought before them in thrilling and exciting stories.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 471, 472.

2. CONDITIONS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE LATTER RAIN

- a. What special blessing has God promised for the last days? Joel 2:28, 29.
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“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.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

“The time has come when we must expect the Lord to do great things for us. Our efforts must not flag or weaken. We are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Before the work is closed up and the sealing of God’s people is finished, we shall receive the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Angels from heaven will be in our midst.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 111.

“If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness; and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1175.

- b. What is required in order to receive the latter rain? 1 Peter 1:13–17; 2 Peter 1:2–8.
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“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.

“There is to be ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.’ There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506.

“God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him. . . . May the Lord help His people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with Him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1055.

3. PREPARATION UNDER THE FORMER RAIN

a. What should the former rain work in every believer? Acts 3:19, 20.

“Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507.

“Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 67.

b. What earnest invitation does Jesus extend to us? Mark 13:33.

“I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 192.

“The third angel’s message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. . . . 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.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 701, 702.

4. THE TIME IS NOW!

- a. **What appeal is extended to us today? Hosea 10:12; Matthew 24:44; 1 John 3:3.**
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“The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. Oh, how glorious it will be to see Him and be welcomed as His redeemed ones!”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 253.

“The Lord is coming, and we must be ready! Every moment I want His grace—I want the robe of Christ’s righteousness. We must humble our souls before God as never before, come low to the foot of the cross, and He will put a word in our mouths to speak for Him, even praise unto our God. . . . Shall we not let Him abide in our hearts by faith? Shall we not consecrate ourselves to God without any reserve?”—*The Review and Herald*, March 4, 1890.

“Day by day we are to seek the enlightenment of the Spirit of God, that it may do its office work upon the soul and character. O, how much time has been wasted through giving attention to trifling things.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 192.

- b. **What can we learn from the early Christian church? Acts 1:14; 4:32.**
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“Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away. And the testimony borne of them after the Spirit had been given is the same. . . .

“So it may be now. Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was ‘the former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant. What is the promise to those living in these last days? ‘Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee.’ ‘Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.’ Zechariah 9:12; 10:1.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 20, 21.

5. GOD'S PEOPLE IN READINESS

- a. What urgent challenge does Paul give us? Romans 13:11, 12.

“It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. . . . We are in a most trying position, waiting, watching for our Lord’s appearing. The world is in darkness. ‘But ye, brethren,’ says Paul, ‘are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.’ It is ever God’s purpose to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and rest out of weariness for the waiting, longing soul.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 215, 216.

- b. What will distinguish the people of God in the last days? John 13:34, 35; 1 John 3:14.

“If Christ dwells in us, we shall reveal His unselfish love toward all with whom we have to do. As we see men and women in need of sympathy and help, we shall not ask, ‘Are they worthy?’ but ‘How can I benefit them?’ . . .

“He who gave His life to redeem man sees in every human being a value that exceeds finite computation. By the mystery and glory of the cross we are to discern His estimate of the value of the soul.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 162, 163.

“The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 401.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does God allow so many natural disasters to happen?
2. What is God’s purpose in pouring out His Spirit upon His people?
3. What does it mean to be receiving the former rain, and how does this prepare us to receive the latter rain?
4. How can we prepare to meet Jesus in peace?
5. What spiritual condition will reveal that we are ready for the latter rain?

The Earnest of our Inheritance

“In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

“Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, God works a moral change in the lives of His people, changing them into the likeness of Christ. Then, when the last trumpet call shall reach the ears of the dead who sleep in Christ, they will come forth to a new life, clothed with the garments of salvation.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 78.

Suggested Reading: *The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1908.

Sunday

December 23

1. THE FIRST HERITAGE

- a. What was our divine heritage at creation? Genesis 1:26, 27; Isaiah 43:7.

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. ‘God created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator.”—*Education*, p. 15.

- b. What was also included in our first heritage? Genesis 2:8.
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“The Creator gave [the holy pair] still another token of His love, by preparing a garden especially for their home. . . . In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, surpassing in glory all other trees. Its fruit appeared like apples of gold and silver, and had the power to perpetuate life. . . . Adam and Eve had free access to the tree of life. No taint of sin or shadow of death marred the fair creation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 46, 47.

2. THE PROMISED SEED

- a. **What were the consequences of sin, and what promise of grace did God make to redeem us? Romans 3:23; 8:7, 22; Genesis 3:15.**
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“Among the lower creatures Adam had stood as king, and so long as he remained loyal to God, all nature acknowledged his rule; but when he transgressed, this dominion was forfeited. The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation. Thus not only the life of man, but the nature of the beasts, the trees of the forest, the grass of the field, the very air he breathed, all told the sad lesson of the knowledge of evil.”—*Education*, pp. 26, 27.

“Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man’s physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death.”—*Ibid.*, p. 15.

“When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil. . . . Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 505.

- b. **Who is the promised seed (descendant) that would redeem mankind and recover our lost dominion? Galatians 3:16; Romans 6:23.**
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“Christ, by His sacrifice paying the penalty of sin, would not only redeem man, but recover the dominion which he had forfeited. All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 67.

- c. **How did the promised seed redeem humanity? Galatians 4:4–6; Hebrews 2:14.**
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“Christ did not make believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. ‘As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.’ He was the son of Mary; He was of the seed of David according to human descent.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906.

3. THE PROMISED INHERITANCE

- a. **What shows that the inheritance promised to Abraham and his descendants was to be an eternal one? Genesis 17:8; Hebrews 11:9, 10; 2 Peter 3:13.**
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“Language fails to express the value of the immortal inheritance.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 40.

- b. **What shows that the inheritance includes the entire earth made new? Romans 4:13 (first part); Psalm 37:29.**
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“The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever.”—*Early Writings*, p. 295.

- c. **Through whom alone may we claim this inheritance and how? Galatians 3:29; Romans 4:13 (last part); 1 Peter 1:3–5.**
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“Christ must be the ground of our hope; for only through Him can we be heirs to eternal life. An immortal inheritance is presented to us on certain conditions. We cannot inherit a possession in this world unless we have a title that is without a flaw, and our right to an inheritance in the world to come, must also be clearly proved through a faultless title. The line through which the heavenly inheritance is to come is plainly revealed in the Word of God. We must come under the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant, and the requirements are, ‘If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.’ If we are Christ’s, our title to the heavenly inheritance is without a flaw, and in harmony with the provisions of the covenant of grace. Through grace we shall be able to make our calling and election sure, putting on the excellency of Christ in spirit and character. No one will be entitled to the heavenly inheritance who has not been purified, refined, ennobled, and sanctified. Then let us be diligent to make our calling and election sure, that an entrance may be administered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—*The Messenger*, May 10, 1893.

4. THE PLEDGE OF OUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE

- a. How is the Holy Spirit a pledge of our eternal inheritance? Ephesians 1:13 (last part), 14; 2 Corinthians 1:22.
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“[Ephesians 1:13 quoted.] What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption. The intelligent mind has seen the sign of the cross of Calvary in the Lord’s adopted sons and daughters. The sin of the transgression of the law of God is taken away. They have on the wedding garment, and are obedient and faithful to all God’s commands.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 52.

“The apostle Paul points forward to the ‘redemption of the purchased possession.’ Ephesians 1:14. God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. . . . That purpose will be fulfilled, when, renewed by the power of God, and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal abode of the redeemed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 67.

- b. What is to be restored today in preparation for the eternal inheritance? Romans 8:29.
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“In assuming human nature that He might reach to the very depths of human woe and misery, and lift man up, Christ has shown what estimate He places upon the human race. . . . It was only by most desperate conflict with the powers of Satan that Christ could accomplish his purpose of restoring the almost obliterated image of God in man, and place his own signature upon his forehead.”—*The Paulson Collection*, p. 164.

“As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ.”—*Maranatha*, p. 227.

“Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God’s purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God,’ ‘conformed to the image of his Son.’ (Psalm 90:17; Romans 8:29).”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 377.

5. THE INHERITANCE RECEIVED

- a. **What will God and Christ do if we allow the Holy Spirit to dwell within us? Romans 8:11; John 6:40.**
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“Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 388.

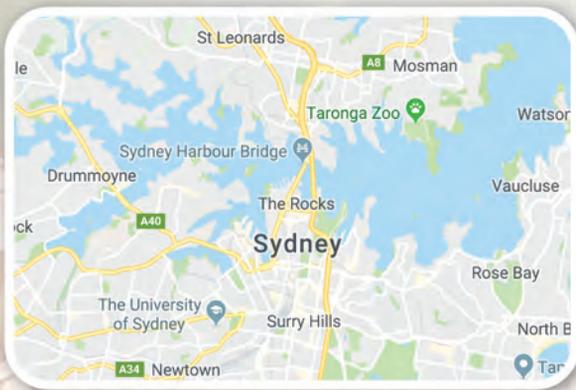
- b. **When will the redemption of our body from mortal to immortal take place? Romans 8:23; Luke 21:28.**
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“[Christ] will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will ‘grow up’ (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ’s faithful ones will appear in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God,’ in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord. Oh, wonderful redemption! long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 645.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In whose image were we first created, and what was our heritage?
2. Describe God’s plan to redeem mankind.
3. Through whom alone can we receive the immortal inheritance? How?
4. How is the Holy Spirit a pledge of our eternal inheritance?
5. What does the restoration of our inheritance include?

First Sabbath Offerings



OCTOBER 6
for Schofields Church Project,
NSW, Australia
(See p. 4.)

NOVEMBER 3
for Literature for
Mission Fields
(See p. 25.)



DECEMBER 1
for the chapel in Maiden,
NC, U.S.A.
(See p. 46.)