

Rivers of Living Water

SYMBOLS OF THE SPIRIT - WIND, WATER, FIRE, OIL

**A Companion Volume to
"The Coming of the Comforter"
1931**

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1. A Prefatory Word

THE matchless provision of the Holy Spirit's ministry to meet man's need is the last link in the chain of divine love with which our God in heaven has bound Himself to man on earth. Not only was the Spirit the instrument in the original creation of the world and of mankind, but it was through the Eternal Spirit that our precious Redeemer became incarnate in human flesh, and offered Himself for man's complete reconciliation and his full salvation. And it is by means of the selfsame Spirit of God that the miracle of regeneration of human hearts has been accomplished through the ages, and also that the indwelling Christ is made blessedly possible in these body temples of ours. So it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is the divinely appointed connecting link between heaven and earth.

Well may we pause before the thought. The majesty of HIS person, the power of His might, and the scope of His work, these will never be adequately set forth. But as the light of the word is focused anew in reverent contemplation upon fresh angles of His operations, we catch added gleams of God's glorious provision, and our hearts thrill in responsive adoration. Praise be to our Father for His boundless love and limitless provision for our every need.

The touchingly cordial reception given the author's volume entitled, "The Coming of the Comforter," which comprised studies on the coming and work of the Holy Spirit, and the many requests to make available, in the form of a companion volume, these studies on the wondrous symbols of the Spirit which have been presented orally in various parts of North America, have led to the preparation of this modest work which is now sent forth upon its mission of love. It constitutes a continuation of the studies on the promise and coming of, and the filling by, the Holy Spirit, and deals chiefly with His transforming work which is so essential in fitting us as candidates for service and for heaven.

The theme of the, office and work of the Holy Spirit is an exhaustless study, because it deals with a timeless and measureless personality, the third person of the Godhead. His stately stepping cannot be measured, but, thank God, they may be clearly recognized; they cannot be explained, but they can and must be personally accepted and experienced. Richer than all the fabled jewels of earth, are these symbolic gems from heaven's storehouse-presented under the figures of wind, water, fire and oil-which, as we gaze into their depths of meaning, disclose a charm and beauty scarcely discernible under unfigurative phraseology.

May the matchless Spirit of truth, to, whom these tributes are inscribed, guide our thought in study, illuminate our minds in meditation, and possess our souls for action so completely and exclusively that His holy work, portrayed under these illuminating figures chosen by Himself, shall be entirely wrought out in the life of each reader. So, blessed Spirit, meet Thou our souls' deep need; satisfy the longing of our hearts; fit us for sacred service, and then use us to the glory of the Father and the Son for the finishing of our committed task. Yea, possess us as Thy very own, both now and for evermore.

Leroy E. Froom
Washington, D. C.,
February 5, 1930.

2. Come, Holy Spirit

COME, Holy Spirit, save me from myself,
And speak to me each day as friend to friend.. My comfort be in sorrow, pain, and woe,
From hurtful, lurking foes defend.

Come, Holy Spirit, dwell within my heart;
Guide Thou my feet to unscaled heights above, And every impulse of my being thrill
With holy, pure, and matchless love.

Come, Holy Spirit, with Thy power entrust,
Else would my toil and labor be in vain; For whitening fields the reapers now invite,
As lowly bends the ripening grain.

Come, Holy Spirit, fire my soul with zeal,
Consuming every trace of selfish dross, That I may lead my brother lost in sin
To Calvary's bleeding, cleansing cross.

B. M. GRANDY.

3. The Breath of the Almighty

WONDROUS are the ways of God and matchless His provisions for the children of His love. By precept and promise, by fact and figure, He patiently discloses the plans and provisions of His grace-the Infinite meeting the limitations of our finite understanding. With unerring wisdom He uses symbols and types to make plain to the spiritually minded the deep things that are but inscrutable mysteries to, the natural mind. And the more important a truth or provision is for us, the greater the variety of approaches employed to clarify our understanding, to appeal to our minds, and to challenge our consciences.

God has expressly said of His methods: "I have used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets." Hosea 12:10. Similitudes afford comparisons that make the realities represented vivid and living to mankind. Indeed, the Bible is largely a book of varying metaphors, similes, types, symbols, parables, allegories, and emblems. Unfigurative words are often lame vehicles of truth; but with words clothed in the robes of symbol-these figures of human speech and earthly imagery-truth is made gripping and real.

Even thus are the majestic operations of the Holy Spirit strikingly portrayed under the luminous symbols of fire, water, oil, and wind, each with its special emphasis and unique lessons. To my that the Holy Spirit in like wind in its operations and effects, expresses more than a whole chapter of unfigurative words could convey. Now the simple truth is that the Hebrew word ruath and the Greek word pneuma are translated not only spirit, but wind, air, and breath. Context must determine the rendering. It is this curious fact of the language that unquestionably gave rise to this impressive symbolism, for wind is but air in motion, and breath is but a synonym for inbreathed life.

This expressive emblem of the wind, or breath, signifying the comings and goings of the Holy Spirit, was illustrated typically in connection with the inbreathing of the breath of life into the first man, Adam, in Genesis 2:7. Prophetically in the vision of the valley of dry bones and the vivifying wind in Ezekiel 37:1-10; and doctrinally in Christ's remarkable declaration to Nicodemus of the Spirit's operations in the new birth, recorded in John 3:3-8. These we will study. The possible deductions awaiting recognition are many, but let us search the more outstanding lessons, for like the Spirit, air is never idle.

Essential to Life

Fist air is essential to life. Surrounding the globe is a mighty ocean of air, or atmosphere, without which we could not live. Were it not for this, all would be desolation and death. It is absolutely necessary for all animal and vegetable life. The waves of this mighty ocean that envelops us, sometimes roll over us in the rush of the tempest, while at other times its murmurs lull us to sleep in its calm. But it is there, though invisible. The air we breathe is one of the most necessary elements of nature. We can live a lifetime without sight, hearing, or speech; we can live for weeks without food, for days without water, but only for a few minutes without air. It is so identified with life that when we cease to breathe, we cease to live. When a person drowns, the first aid measures are to restore respiration. The lonely aviator in his altitude, flights and the diver as lie plumbs, the depths, must each have their oxygen supply. The dying often have the same precious oxygen supplied as a last hope. Even fire refuses to burn without air.

This enveloping atmosphere is indispensable for the radiation of solar light and heat, and yet at the same time forms a curtain of defense. Even so does the blessed Holy Spirit, symbolized by the wind, air, or breath (as variously expressed), bring the breath of life to the soul. It creates the atmosphere in which Christians live and move and have their being; by which we see and hear the things of God, and are thus enabled to dwell in the warm radiance of His love.

Coming now to the direct spiritual parallel of this first point, note these scriptures: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty, hath given me life." Job 33:4. Again: "Thou sends forth Thy Spirit, they are created" (Psalm 104:30); and, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." Psalm 33:6. Once more: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3. Referring go the same facts and conditions, spirit and breath are thus used inter changeably, depending upon the literal or symbolic intent of the language. And mark well, it was the Spirit who was ever the divine agent in creation in giving life.

Allusion to the Spirit as the creative agency of the Godhead, carries us back logically and inevitably to the days of creation as a starting point. Note first the sharp distinction between the creation of the animals and that of man. The lower animals sprang instantly into being at the creative word. But man, the crowning handiwork of God, was first formed of the dust of the earth. Yea, we are but common clay,

and not gold dust, powdered pearls, or diamond dust. But man's frame was still lifeless until God kissed the cold lips with His own warm breath of life, and life was transmitted to the form of clay. Here is the inspired (which means God-breathed) record: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7. This is the second allusion to the work of the Holy Spirit in the beginning of Scripture, the first being in the second verse of the first chapter—the earliest possible moment: "The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The Spirit is ever and always the creative instrument. This fact, ever remembered, will explain His central relation to the universe, and will clarify a thousand mysteries.

Life came not to Adam as an animal impulse, but by the "breath of the Almighty," in Job 33:4 and elsewhere plainly attributed to the Holy Spirit. The act of material formation was succeeded by inspiration, animation, and quickening. Let us then learn the lesson that not the material but the spiritual is the source of life, and that the Holy Spirit's highest work is the communication of new and supernatural life, whether in creation or re-creation. Because of this we should sense the sacredness of the human body, and the value and importance of life, which is the direct result of the Holy Spirit's operation. Consequently murder and suicide constitute a blow struck at God's own bestowed life. That is why it is a capital offense. Our life is to be held as a sacred gift, and our talents and endowments, whether the genius of a Milton, the art of a Raphael, or the music of a Mozart, are to be cherished as a solemn trust.

But, alas, sin has made its devastating inroads upon these human lives. Sin has brought pollution, separation, and death. Here again the Holy Spirit's work becomes necessary for restoration. The provision for our re-creation or regeneration presented by the apostle John, is so like this original picture in Genesis that the one seems, as it is, but the complement of the other. Indeed, regeneration is divinely declared to be a "new creation." Note this series of expressions: "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation." 2 Corinthians 5:17, A.R.V., margin. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:10. Titus also speaks clearly of this renewing through the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5.

This new birth, as it is called, was disclosed impressively by the Master to, Nicodemus in John 3:5-8: "Jesus, answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . . The wind blows where it lists, and thou hears the sound thereof, but cannot not tell whence it comes, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Such regeneration alone restores to man his forfeited spiritual life, which is supernatural and divine in origin. Of this silent, imperceptible, but powerful work, we read:

"Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets, a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest." - "Steps to Christ," p. 61.

It was alone in the garden, as the soft night breezes laden with the, fragrance of far-off fields fanned their faces, that Jesus in converse with Nicodemus seized upon this familiar symbol of the wind to force home a mighty truth. As already stated, both in the Hebrew which Jesus used in His conversation with Nicodemus, and in the Greek in which John recorded it, the words for spirit, breath, and wind are similar in meaning. It is this that gives rise to the analogies of the text. But if Jesus wanted to use a symbol for Spirit here, why didn't He so state it! Now that is precisely what He did. In the original, the text reads, "born of water and of wind," a couplet of symbols. This usual meaning of wind is confirmed by the usual accompanying verb, "blows," and the explanatory expression, "sound." But by universal consent wind, or pneuma (from to breathe or, blow, and occurring 370 times in the New Testament), is here translated Spirit. In verse 8 we note the alternative rendering: "The Spirit breaths where it will." A. R. V., margin; also Rotherham. and Douay. In our common version the symbolic name, "the wind," occurs. So the operation of the Spirit is the one transcendent factor in regeneration, indispensable for every soul that shall ever see the kingdom of heaven. The Spirit is the begetter and sustainer of the new life. He is undeniably God's quickening agent.

The other symbol, "water," is at once a reference to water baptism, and to the cleansing, renewing power of the "word," which is the other instrument in regeneration. Thus we read: "Being born again . . . by the word of God." 1 Peter 1:23. "Of His own will made He us with the word of truth." James 1:18. Frequently in Scripture, water and its cleansing work is used to symbolize the word. So we read: "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26); "now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. Thus God works through the Holy Spirit, and

the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the word. It is the same combined interworking of word ("God said," Genesis 1:3,6,9 etc.) and Spirit (which "moved," Genesis 1:2), as in the original creation, that effects, the new birth.

Another remarkable counterpart of the Genesis record is presented in John 20:21-23: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose so ever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins you retain, they are retained." Jesus was about to invest them with their sacred commission, to equip them with the indispensable power, and to unfold to them the solemn issues of their work. When He first appeared unto them after His resurrection, He said, "Peace be unto you." Verse 19. That first bestowal of peace was for the restoration of their confidence. This second bestowal of "peace," in verse 21, is a preparation for their work. Solemnly He pronounces the charge, making them His envoys. His authority is here disclosed as equal with that of the Father.

It was not a new work to which they were called. As He was the light of the world, so were they to be; as He came to seek and to save the lost, so were they to go. As His meat was to do the Father's will, so theirs was to be; and as He was filled with the Spirit and spoke and wrought only through the Spirit, even so must they be and do. Only thus could they discharge their weighty trust. No man is qualified to minister, no matter what his earthly credentials, unless he has this endowment of the Holy Spirit. Much so-called Christian effort comes largely to naught simply because of this precise lack. It should be observed in passing that this investment did not make superfluous the further gift of the Holy Spirit in His fullness on the day of Pentecost; rather, it was anticipatory.

By the same authority which had been exercised in commissioning the disciples, Jesus now bequeathed to them the Holy Spirit. The act was symbolic, after the manner of the Hebrew prophets in ancient times. This symbolic action reminds one again instinctively of the creation record. "Breathed" is the same word used in Genesis 2:7. Indeed, Jesus was the same one who breathed life into Adam's nostrils, as we know. In both instances He inbreathed His own spirit, which was thus imparted to them. "Spirit of God" (Genesis 1:2), "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), and "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7, A.R.V.), are but alternative names for the Holy Spirit. They are synonymous, and are used interchangeably in Scripture. Thus Christ connects the Holy Spirit inseparably with Himself. Even so are we taught never to try to obtain the Holy Spirit apart from Jesus, but through fellowship with Him. May this basic truth be burned into our consciousness forever! Once more, we read from the Spirit of prophecy:

"Our people need the breath of life breathed into them, that they may arouse to spiritual action. Many have lost their vital energy; they are sluggish, dead, as it were. Let those who have been receiving the grace of Christ help these souls to arouse to action. Let us keep in the current of life that comes from Christ, that we may kindle life in some other soul." - Mrs. E. G. White, in the Review and Herald, April 28, 1904.

It will be observed also that the same word is found here—"breath" or "wind"—that was used by Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus. John 3: 8. "The wind blows where it lists," or "the Spirit breaths where it will." A.R.V. margin. This identity in language further identifies the Spirit's work. Another related point that should be observed here is that the word "receive" is otherwise rendered "take you" the Holy Gift. They were not to be wholly passive. Through this endowment, then, were they qualified for the work they were to do. Never are men equipped or authorized to represent Christ without first receiving the life-giving Spirit of Jesus.

The Spirit's coming may be quiet as an evening zephyr, as in this experience; or mighty as the tempest's power, as in its fullness at Pentecost. It may be as the murmuring whisper of the still small voice, or as the tornado's roar. The accompaniments matter little; it is the reality that counts. Think of the Aolian harp, with its strings arranged in musical harmony. As the wind passes over them, they seem touched as by unseen fingers, and notes almost divine float out over the air. It is as if a choir of angels touched the strings. Ah, let us keep our heartstrings open to the almost imperceptible, touch of the Spirit, that we, too may give forth the, music of heaven.

This Spirit of prophecy comment on John 20:22 will be pertinent here:

"The Holy Spirit was not yet fully manifested; for Christ had not yet been glorified. The more abundant impartation of the Spirit did not take place till after Christ's ascension. Not until this was received could the disciples fulfill the commission to preach the gospel to the world. But the Spirit was now given for a special purpose. 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.

May it never be forgotten that this was requisite before the disciples could fulfill their official duties. Only those today who have the Spirit breathed upon them are fitted and qualified for service in the church as we await the mighty fullness of power of the Spirit in the loud cry of the approaching last-day Pentecost.

Invisible in Its Essence

A second lesson from the wind is that it is invisible in its essence. But its invisibility does not do away with its actuality. The voiceless, unseen wind is known, not by visible perception, but by its powerful effects which are manifest. It turns the windmill. It propels the ship. In John 3:8 a comparison is established between the unseen presence of the wind and the invisible operations of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The “sound” that is heard is the only evidence in addition to its observable effects. An impenetrable veil of mystery is drawn about the Spirit's person and His visitations. His operations are always hidden; but His presence is discoverable by the results. And praise God, we can receive His life, love, purity, peace, power, and joy.

More than that, we can hear the sound of His “voice,” though His comings and goings are concealed. This comes within range of our own conscious experience. How oft He has spoken, directing the thought and conscience to the word and counsel of God. But have we always heeded? If we persist in ignoring or flouting His voice, then finally after sound comes silence. Clearly the Master tells it, speaking of the “Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you.” John 14:17. Where He is received, He is perceived. And to know Him is to be swayed by His will, to be inspired by His love, kept by His grace, led by His hand, sustained by His power, and used in His service. Blessed provision of the Spirit of God!

Mysterious in Its Action

The third lesson is that the wind is mysterious in its action. Its movements are beyond our direction or control. With incomparable majesty it chooses its own pathway. None can foresee with certainty its course. It drives the clouds of heaven hither and yon, and today the ocean waves into heaps. It rocks the bird in her nest. It bends the forest beneath the rushing wheels of the whirlwind's chariot. It sweeps the desert as with the burning blast of a furnace, and lashes with its cutting breath the fur-clad denizens of the North until they cry out with agony. The wind is constantly used as a symbol of freedom. “Free as the wind,” is a Common expression. Air in action is less trammled than any other force at work in the realm of nature. No Canute was ever mad enough to defy it.

The apostle John says it “blows where it lists.” Lists comes from the Greek *theleo*, meaning wills, or chooses. It is the same word that is used in 1 Corinthians 4:19, “If the Lord will,” and Philipians 2:13, “To will and to do.” The Holy Spirit, symbolized by the wind, acts in the sovereignty of His grace. Though we know many things about Him, we cannot anticipate nor regulate His operations. Rather, He divides “to every man severally as He will.” 1 Corinthians 12:11. It is for us to yield to His power and to come into harmony with His operations. Yes, the Spirit is mysterious in His action. He is not limited by human laws and expectations. The Spirit falls on an Augustinian monk, and shakes all Europe. He touches a tinker in Bedford jail, and “Pilgrim's Progress” springs forth. He lays His hand on a cobbler in Hackleton, and modern missions result. Aye, He is mysterious in His working.

We cannot escape from the presence of the Spirit of the Almighty. “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend tip into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.” Psalm 139:7-10. Terrifying to the sinner, how comforting to one who is seeking to do His will!

No more can the mystery of the new birth be explained than the mystery of the natural birth. Note

this reference to the Inscrutable ways of the wind in this connection: "As thou knew not what is the way of the wind, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. Even so thou knew not the work of God who does all." Ecclesiastes 11:5, A.R.V.

Think of Pentecost. The work of the Spirit, under the similitude of the "wind," was not a natural but a supernatural phenomenon. Forget not that it was "from heaven." Acts 2:2. Two symbols were used, one appealing to the hearing and the other to the sight, though the Spirit Himself was unseen and unheard. The wind would inevitably remind them of Jesus' well-known teaching to Nicodemus concerning the operation of the Spirit. It would also remind them of the Old Testament pledge of God's presence as indicated to David by "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees" (2 Samuel 5:24); and in the expression of the psalmist, "who makes winds His messengers." Psalm 104: 4, A. R. V. Yes, they instantly recognized the symbol and rejoiced in the reality.

How tremendous the power wrapped up in the winds of heaven! No more forceful figure could be used to represent the resistless energy of the Almighty Spirit. There are "diversities of operations," but the same Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:6. Sometimes they are manifest in gentleness; at other times in power. It was so at Pentecost. Like the roar of a mighty tempest rushing toward them it sweeps nearer until it bursts into the chamber. It was the old symbolism in vivid action, which lies in the very word "spirit." Thus were poor, ignorant, inexperienced, and distrustful men transformed into veritable giants for God.

And Pentecost reversed Babel. Then were they of "one heart." It reminds us of 2 Chronicles 5: 13: "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures forever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord." Yes, what we need is the Pentecostal Spirit, which alone will bring Pentecostal results. The breath of God converted a mechanical organization into a living organism, a congregation into a church. It transformed that disciple band, honeycombed with envy and jealousy, into a spiritual army that could not be checked; for the Spirit endues people with power that makes them irresistible in life and service. Note this:

"There is a great work to do; and the Spirit of the living God must enter into the living messenger, that the truth may go with power." - Mrs. E. G. White, in the Review and Herald, Dec. 3, 1908.

They were all "filled" with the Holy Spirit. But one must be emptied before he can be filled. Air always rushes in to fill a vacuum. We are filled when, by the abdication of self, we provide a vacuum. The infilling breath is dependent upon the previous exhalation. Note these impressive words:

"It is not enough to make the heart empty; we must have the vacuum filled with the love of God. The soul must be furnished with the graces of the Spirit of God. We may leave off bad habits, and yet not be truly sanctified, because we do not have a connection with God. We must unite with Christ. There is a reservoir of power at our command, and we are not to remain in the dark, cold, sunless cave of unbelief; or we shall not catch the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness." - Id., Jan. 04, 1893.

And let us also learn this golden secret: Pentecostal blessing is always preceded by Pentecostal prayer, Where the conditions have been met, the history of humanity ever since Pentecost has been one long, glorious commentary on the words of Acts 2. The mighty, melting, vivifying, purifying breath of God has swept like the warm south wind down upon a glacier in the spring, melting the thick-ribbed ice and wooing forth the fragrant flowers, even under its very shadows.

Varied in Its Effects

Fourth, the wind is varied in its effects. It refreshes the faint, and restores the consumptive; it heals and develops strength, on the one hand. Yet it also withers and blasts and brings destruction under other conditions. These strange anomalies will be reconciled as we study further its characteristics. It would take 800,000,000 horses working day and night to transport the water which the wind brings from the sea into the State of Pennsylvania alone-and all without the groaning of a wheel or the turning of a crank. Even so does the Holy Spirit minister to both the good and the evil. What a boon is this to both saint and sinner! How good God is! But, in the symbol, much depends upon man's relationship to the wind. In the Bahamas there are trade winds-months of a steady rush of wind that never varies. Likewise, there are the "trade

winds” of the ever-moving breath of the Holy Spirit. O soul, get into the trade winds of God's love. Let them regenerate you, or revive you, as the need may be. Seek salvation, seek power, seek strength. All that you need has been provided. Then there are circuits in the wind's sovereign course: “The wind goes toward the south, and turns about unto the north; it whirls about continually, and the wind returns again according to his circuits.” Ecclesiastes 1:6. And there are special circuits in the Holy Spirit's operations, including in His love, unfolding in His presence, and encompassing in His power those who so yield to Him. How are we relating ourselves to these currents? The question is vital and pertinent.

“One ship drives east and another drives west,
With the selfsame winds that blow, Ms the set of the sails And not the gales
That tell them the way to go.”

Then, wind cleanses. In Job 37:21 we read of how “the wind passes, and cleanses.” Yes, the Holy Spirit brings purity. And how we need it! The wind winnows and separates the chaff from the wheat, the false from the true. This searching, withering work of the Spirit is told in Isaiah 40:6,7: “The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?” Now comes the answer: “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withers, the flower fades: because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it: surely the people is grass.” It humbles and abases. The operation of the Spirit caused Job to say, “I am vile” (Job 40:4), and David to cry, “I am a worm.” Psalm 22:6. It led Isaiah to protest, “I am a man of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5), and Paul to say, “I am carnal” (Romans 7:14), and Peter to confess, “I am a sinful man.” Luke 5:8. But it blights and withers only that it may bless and ennoble. It humbles that it may exalt, and brings low that it may ultimately lift high.

Yes, the same blessed Spirit brings health and healing. Have you ever had the sensation of stifling or suffocating in a closed room? And have you then thrown open the windows and inhaled the fresh air? Ah, we need the open-air treatment for the suffocating, the sick, and the enfeebled. Come, you sin-sick souls, into the great open spaces! Yea, more than that. Have you ever stood on a mountain peak near some great city lying in the valley hard by? Have you looked down upon the murky lowland with its smoky haze, its polluted atmosphere, its poisonous gases, and its noxious odors? Have you reveled in the freedom, the freshness, and the invigoration of the mountain air? Oh the splendor of the highlands! Come up from the lowlands to where you can draw deep, full breaths of pure, vitalizing air. How it sends the lifeblood tingling through the entire circulatory system! All of which is a parable, for the air is a chosen emblem of the Spirit. We Christians need to practice deep breathing in the highlands of God. We need the Holy Spirit.

“We must rise above the frosty atmosphere in which we have hitherto lived, and with which Satan would surround our souls, and breathe in the hallowed atmosphere of heaven.”-Mrs. E. G. White, in the Review and Herald, May 6, 1890.

We must have the reality suggested by this symbolic wind. See a beautiful ship with sails all set and anchor weighed. But there is no ripple by its side, no foam at its bow, and no progress. Why? No, wind! Or, perhaps it is a becalmed ship caught on the mighty bosom of the ocean. There is a spot in the Atlantic called the Sargasso Sea, subject to long-continued calm and covered with thick, entangling weeds. Nothing used to strike the sailors with such dread as to be caught in that region. It was worse than any storm. Unable to proceed, water gone, food exhausted, hope departing, and death facing the crew-how they long and pray for wind! With what joy the becalmed sailors ace the ripple on the water in the distance and watch their lagging canvas, bulge in response to the rising breeze! Oh, do we sense our need, and welcome as eagerly the Spirit's approach? This intense thirst for the Spirit is one of the paramount needs of the church today.

The wind is varied in its direction and in its actions. After sin had entered Eden, our first parents soon heard the seeking voice of God borne by the evening wind calling, “Where art thou?” It was the voice of mercy, entreaty, and love. Just so in this our forfeited paradise. Oil the wings of the “wind” are borne to us the wooing overtures of God. And we can no more hide from Him now than could Adam then. Do we hear Him calling us now through the Holy Spirit? Then let us instantly heed.

Next, after the deluge God caused a mighty wind to blow upon the face of the flood, and the waters went back to the bed of the sea, and the ancient bounds were set again. The wind tore the misty veil from the mountains and dried the earth, preparing it for habitation. Even as in the days of Noah, so, before the coming of the Son of man, the mighty power of the Holy Spirit is to be exhibited in fitting and preparing these body temples of ours for His abode. How we need to understand and experience His work in the loud cry” of this message. It is absolutely indispensable to our fitness for our eternal habitations.

Again, when Moses led the emigrating host of Israel out of Egypt, God blew upon the sea (Exodus 15:8,10), and plowed a course for the deliverance of His people. Even so, by the work of the Spirit win our deliverance be wrought out of this world of sin. Our only hope lies in His miraculous work, and not in our genius or efforts. How tragic that we are so prone to forget this.

The Holy Spirit is varied in His operations. In Palestine there sometimes comes an east wind known as "siroeco," meaning poisoned wind, bringing calamity in its wake. It dries the throat, produces bronchial troubles, and creates oppressiveness. It was such an east wind that blasted Pharaoh's corn. Genesis 41:6,23,27. It was such that brought the locusts upon Egypt (Exodus 10:13) and that broke the ships of Tarshish. Psalm 48:7. Sometimes the Holy Spirit comes as an east wind, breaking and distressing. "Will you pray for me?" asked a woman. "Yes, what for?" responded her minister. "I want patience." "O Lord, send this sister a lot of trials and persecution-" he began. "Stop!" she cried, "I don't want tribulation." Yet tribulation works patience. We must be willing in the day of His power.

Then there is the west wind of deliverance which took the Egyptian locusts away. Exodus 10:19. Yes, at other times the Holy Spirit brings relief and grace and refreshing for our weariness. His name is the Comforter.

And there is the north wind for clearing (Proverbs 25:23) and fair weather. Job 37:22. After clouds and storm the Holy Spirit brings the fair weather and the blue skies of hallowed communion with God's presence.

The last of the four winds is the south wind of pleasantness that quiets the waters (Job 37:17), and brings forth fragrance. Song of Solomon 4:16. Felt at Joppa between nine and ten in the morning and reaching Jerusalem between two and three in the afternoon, there is a wind which subsides at sunset but rises again through the night, bathing, cooling, and refreshing the face of nature with vapors from the sea. Its fragrance is its distinctive feature. Yes, the Holy Spirit releases sweet, refreshing odors,-the frankincense of a consecrated life, the spikenard of love's devotion, the incense of grateful worship, the fragrance of adoring prayer, and the aroma of a holy character. Such are suggestions of His operations.

"Lord, let Thy love Fresh from above,
Soft as the south wind blow; Call forth its bloom, Wake its perfume,
And bid its spices flow."

Irresistible in Its Movements

Fifth, the wind is irresistible in its movements. Think of its matchless power. Who can stop it? See it stir and lash the ponderous ocean into violent fury until its crested waves are lifted into mountains. See it tear up the mighty giants of the forest like the tender plants of your garden. Watch it wreck the proudest monuments of man, bringing a great city to ruins, crushing its buildings like fragile toys. It is irresistible. Armies may seek in vain to stop its work. Lawmakers and jurists may pass their decrees against it. But though nations perish, senators die, and their decrees be soon forgotten, the majestic wind sweeps on!

The wind, though invisible, is as actual as the ground we tread. It can be compressed into liquid form until it becomes more powerful than dynamite. In the Orient it is still customary to speak of the winds as "God's messengers." A traveler and his Arab guide were riding their camels-across the trackless desert when the guide commanded his companion to dismount and meet "God's messengers." As the Occidental traveler turned, he saw a suffocating cloud of dust raised by the hot winds sweeping down upon them with the speed of a hurricane. They had barely time to dismount and prostrate themselves upon the earth, covering their heads, before the cloud of dust was upon them, sifting through their clothing, and even causing the camels to moan under the intolerable misery of suffocation.

Impressive and awful at times are the Holy Spirit's manifestations of His presence and power. He is sovereign in His operations. None can stand in His way. Saints are melted, sinners crushed; consciences are quickened, and holy feelings are stirred; bitterness is expelled, wrongs are righted, and restitutions made. Under the intensity of His humbling power, secret sins are confessed, and unholy ambition, impurity, prayerlessness, and neglect of the Bible are forsaken. He does not toss us about in unavailing contortions, but works glorious, intelligent results.

While the hurricane spreads devastation and death on the one hand, the workings of the Holy Spirit bring deliverance and life on the other hand, if we respond to His operations. Pentecost saw a "rushing mighty wind." Each word is significant. "Wind" is from the Greek word *pnoe*, from which we get respiration, breathe, and blow. Thus reference is clearly made to the act of a living Person, the same who at

creation breathed into the silent form and transformed it into a living soul, and who before His ascension breathed power upon the disciples as He commissioned them His representatives in the world.

“Mighty” is the next word, denoting vital activity, whirling, thundering, and moving in majesty. And “rushing” denotes carrying speed, as a ship is driven before a storm. So the Spirit has power to breathe, to move, to bring. As a result of His visitation at Pentecost, the disciples had power in utterance--”all . . . began to speak.” And their utterance produced profound conviction--their hearers were “Pricked in their heart.” Under the Spirit's same inspiration men of old spoke the words of God as they were “borne along” under the mighty impetus of His power. 2 Peter 1:21. Let us bow our heads in awe and reverence in the presence of Him who is omnipotent. There is nothing too hard for Him. May humble submission to Him not be too hard for us.

A Vision of the Spirit's Power

In closing this search into the treasures of the wind, let us study perhaps the most remarkable presentation of the life-giving power of the Spirit in the midst of utter hopelessness disclosed in the word. It is found in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. We read first the inspired record:

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about. And, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, Thou knowest. Again He said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus said the Lord God unto these bones. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live. And you shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and, lo, I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus said the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” Ezekiel 37:1-10.

The scene is laid in an ancient open valley, strewn with a disintegrating heap of human bones, the skeletons of a fallen army. Ezekiel's attention is engrossed by two facts--their number and their condition. These were not minimized. They were “very many” and “very dry.” Exposed to wind and rain, bleached and whitened, every vestige of life had disappeared. Gone was the marrow within as well as the flesh without. It was a spectacle of desolation. How hopeless all seemed. As far as natural resources were concerned, despair seemed rational, and reanimation an impossibility. But his own powerlessness did not make the prophet despondent, for “with God all things are possible.”

“Son of man, can these bones live?” was the question propounded to the prophet. At an earlier time in his life he might have rashly answered, “No, of course not!” But he had learned to know God's power. And his wise answer was, “Lord, You know.” No man could accomplish it, but God could. Then Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy unto the bones. He was taught the agency by which God will effect His purpose. He received not only an answer, but a message. To prophesy is to predict what is to come to pass, to declare the will of God. He was to preach the word of God to these dry bones. But how could these dry bones hear? Ah, because it was not the word of man, but the word of God, that he proclaimed. So he speaks over them the divine promises. His word pierces the ear of the dead. Observe, as we proceed, how the vision follows the precise order of the original creation--first the formation of the body, and afterward the inspiring breath of life. And note again the inseparable union of word and Spirit as in the original creation. God's laws of working are definitely defined.

And while Ezekiel was still speaking, he was sensible of the effect of his words. There was a commotion among the bones. Movement supplanted the morbid stillness. There was the noise of a shaking as bone moved toward bone, until complete skeletons were formed. Sinews appeared and tied the bones together. Flesh filled the hollows, and muscles came into place prepared to give action. The organs were all there, but life was wanting.

They have the forms of men, but there they lie prostrate--a host of corpses! And there the process of restoration in the first episode ends. Herein lies a lesson: Ezekiel's prophesying directly to the bones

brought a certain physical reconstruction and movement, but that was all. Man's teachings to man produce certain outward changes, reformations, and improvements; but man cannot give life. Such would be the effect of the word apart from the Spirit, were they to be separated. And this explains many an abortive evangelistic endeavor.

But in the second phase of the vision the prophet is commanded to address the wind, or "Spirit" (RV, margin). Then follows his great invocation, the entreaty of command, and under the living breath of the wind, or Spirit, there is an amazing spectacle. See the quivering movement as life passes into their frames, and they spring to their feet. It is the vivifying ministry of the Spirit here portrayed. The effect is not simply reformation, but transformation and animation. It is an impressive manifestation of the Spirit's divine presence and operation. The expression, "foul winds," recognizes, of course, His omnipresence in the world.

The Personal Application

The vision is figurative, but the actuality is real. While it applied nationally to Israel, its wider application is to men dead in trespasses and sins. Far worse than the death of a nation, as such, is the death of a soul. And God reckons us all as dead, separated from Him, until and unless reanimated by His Spirit. The figure is perfect. We are very many and very dry.

Hope lies prostrate---from a human viewpoint. But, bless God, even the dead hear the words of God. The human agency, too, is emphasized as essential. But its limitations must be recognized. And the breath of the Almighty is our hope.

There is here the same twofold agency. First, the word of God is the divine instrument in the conversion of souls. But the word alone does not put the breath of life into the soul. The great agent in living transformation and transfiguration from the death of sin to a life of righteousness is the Holy Spirit. "It is the Spirit that quickens." John 6:63. A union of the two is demanded. It is of "Water" and of "wind."

The Holy Spirit's highest office is to enkindle new life to the dead. Blessed power! A corpse may be subjected to a galvanic current, and so produce muscular movements. It may simulate life through motion, but it has no life, notwithstanding the familiar motions. The vital spark is lacking. It must have life-derived and bestowed life-from the Source of life, or it remains a corpse, and disintegration is inevitable. This is essential for us to remember along with our needful activities. There is no work of restoration too hard for God. How good that is! And as we have a resurrecting God, even so we need a resurrecting faith. We need, we want, we must have, life, the Spirit, the breath of the Almighty. Read, in closing, these gripping words from the Spirit of prophecy.

The Spirit of God, with its vivifying power, must be in every human agent, that every spiritual muscle and sinew may be in exercise. Without the Holy Spirit, without the breath of God, there is torpidity of conscience, loss of spiritual life. Many who are without spiritual life have their names on the church records but they are not written in the Lamb's book of life. They may be joined to the church, but they are not united to the Lord. They may be diligent in the performance of a certain act of duties, and may be regarded as living men; but many are among those who 'have a name that thou lives, and art dead.' Unless there is genuine conversion of the soul to God; unless the vital breath of God quickens the soul to spiritual life; unless the professors of truth are actuated by heaven-born principle, they are not born of the incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Unless they trust in the righteousness of Christ as their only security; unless they copy His character, labor in His spirit, they are naked, they have not on the robe of His righteousness. The dead are often made to pass for the living; for those who are working out what they term salvation after their own ideas, have not God working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. This class is well represented by the valley of dry bones Ezekiel saw in vision. Those who have had committed to them the treasures of truth, and yet who are dead in trespasses and sin, need to be created anew in Christ Jesus."- Mrs. E. G. White, in the Review and Herald, Jan. 17, 1893.

Go to a church. Perhaps it is handsomely appointed, with a fine choir, a gifted preacher, and a service well arranged-but all form; no spirit, no life. (For a church may be perfectly organized and perfectly dead.) Months pass. You return to the same church, but there is a new power in the singing, a new grip in the preaching. It throbs with life. Why? The breath of God has blown upon it.

And just such miracles do occur. The same is more often true with individuals. May God teach us from the treasures of the wind the indispensability of the Holy Spirit for life and service and victory. It is our sole hope of triumph. We must have His resurrection life in the midst of abounding death. And the

blessed work is under way. God's word will not return unto Him void; and His glorious provision will not fail.

Come, Breath of divine life and love, breathe into these barren, desert hearts of ours. Yea, we crave not simply a breath, but a "mighty rushing wind,"- Your energizing self. Grant it, Lord Jesus.

4. Spirit of Life

LOVELY as bright sunshine after rain. When birds sing blithe and gay;
Cool, refreshing as a mountain spring, When faint, at heat of day;

Richer than the cherry's tapestry Of pink against the blue;
Sweeter than love's tender lullaby Thy presence, Spirit true.

Precious Thy infilling, Spirit pure, For Thou does life impart.
Overflow my little cup, but first, O fill my thirsting heart!

ALFONSO N. ANDEMON

5. Rivers of Living Water

IN the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scriptures bath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” John 7:37-39.

The Feast of Tabernacles, at which these words were uttered, was the last of the three annual feasts of the Jews, and came toward the close of the year. Next to the Passover, it was the most impressive of the great national solemnities of the Hebrews. The inhabitants from far and near, and many from beyond the confines of Palestine, gathered at Jerusalem for this great convocation, which lasted eight days and was the memorial of God's protecting care and supplying grace during the days of their wanderings. It commemorated their tent life; so they dwelt in booths made from the green boughs or branches of trees, spending the week in the open air. The first seven days typified their life in the wilderness; but the eighth memorialized their entrance into the Promised Land, and hence upon that day they forsook these booths and returned to their own houses. The streets and courts, the housetops and lanes, the hills and vales, of Jerusalem and its environs were dotted with these picturesque booths. So thick were they that they gave the appearance of a veritable forest of palm and pine, olive and myrtle. Every Israelite was arrayed in his best attire and each carried a green palm branch. At night the city was illuminated by myriad lights. The temple court especially was a blaze of light, and the eyes of all were directed there. This lies back of Christ's clarion challenge, “I am the light of the world.” He would redirect their attention to Himself as the light “which lights every man that comes into the world.”

Each day at dawn, a vast procession wended its way to the Valley of the Kidron, headed by the officiating priest, who filled a golden pitcher from the Pool of Siloam, which is fed by living springs. This golden beaker he lifted to his shoulder, and keeping time to the choral music with slow, measured tread, he chanted, “Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:2), as he led the procession onward and upward. Climbing the steep ascent of Mt. Moriah, he passed through the Water Gate, up the broad stairs of the temple court, and stopped before the altar, at the base of which were silver funnels connected with conduit leading under the temple to the Kidron, and thence to the Dead Sea.

In the time of Christ, as the four hundred priests sang the great Hallel, the people prayed, “Save us, we beseech Thee, O God.” Then the officiating priest cried, “With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3), as he poured the consecrated water into one of the funnels, thus typifying the fount that gushed from the rock to quench, the thirst of the Israelites. At the close of the festive sacrifices the priests formed a procession and made a circuit of the altar, singing.

Now this ceremony was performed daily for the first seven days, visualizing the promise of living water that was to flow from Jerusalem. On the eighth day, called the last day or great day of the feast, the day of hosannas and the waving of branches, this libation of water was not offered. Instead, there was a simple ceremony of lifting the empty pitcher, raised to high heaven in mute appeal by the officiating priest. It was an eloquent expression of the unfulfilled promises and unsatisfied longings of the Jewish church and nation.

The seventh day, just preceding this great last day, was the climax of festivity and exhausting joy. The priests marched seven times instead of but once in connection with this final libation of water. By this time the people were worn out with singing and shouting. Joy had become wearisome. The reaction of faintness and exhaustion was overpowering. There was nothing more to interest or excite. The people were perplexed and bewildered. Their hearts were yearning and craving for something, though they did not understand what. For in it all there was nothing for the soul—nothing in the scenes of pomp, nothing in the rounds of festivity, the dazzling light, the tuneful music. And Jesus' great heart of love was touched with their need and their recognized feeling of want. That love comprehends our needs and longings today.

It was on that last day, just as the priest elevated the empty pitcher and a great hush of somber silence had fallen over the multitude, that Jesus stood and cried, in a clear, ringing voice, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believes on Me, as the scripture bath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive. John 7:37-39, A.R.V.

One can imagine the tremendous, almost electric effect. What an offer on such a day, in such a place, under such circumstances, and to such a congregation! Never did He make a greater appeal to man's sense of need. They knew the voice, and felt the strange power of the invitation. And in the nineteen

hundred years that have passed, those words have not lost their magnetic power.

The Thirst of the Human Spirit

The deep cravings of the human spirit are well expressed by the figure “thirst,” and their eternal satisfaction by the expression, “drink.” Hear Him: “If any man” - the poorest, the lowest, the worst; the richest, the highest, the best - all are invited. How good Jesus is to thirsty souls! Ah, there is an inner thirst as truly as there is an inner man, and that thirst is greater and deeper than the physical thirst of the body. The cry of the wounded soldier lying on the battlefield is not for relief from pain, but for water, water. The cry of the storm-tossed sailor after days of drifting in the lifeboat, is not for food, but for water, water. The cry of the martyr in his slow death is not for relief from anguish, but for water, water. Even the Christ Himself on the cross cried “I thirst”, And it was just after He had said, “My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?”

The thirst of the body is a fit symbol of the soul without God, a life devoid of the Holy Spirit. For “this spoke He of the Spirit.” No language can describe, no imagination conceive, the destitution of man without a Savior. The cry of the sin-scorched heart of humanity is for the water that is here held forth, that alone can quench the thirst of the soul. But how often the cry of weariness and woe is stifled by plunging into a thousand and one alleviating devices that, only aggravate the trouble.

I wonder if we really do, thirst? Do we feel a real drought of the soul? Do we recognize our imperative need? I solemnly affirm that if we think we can get along without the living water, we shall not receive it. But if we have reached the place where we realize that we must have it, no matter what the price, and are willing to pay the price, we shall never be disappointed. Is the world still a vast, and Sahara, without an oasis? Do the rays of the sun of despair burn with pitiless fervor down upon the soul, bringing throbbing to the brain? Are the hot winds of passion like the breath of a blast furnace, searing and scorching the inner life? Are the waste sands of failure and profitless endeavor like an ocean of flame completely enveloping us? Is there no relief as they glow and quiver? Does there seem no escape? Do the very pores of the soul cry out for water through the maddening thirst? Then the Man of Galilee will appear and say, “Come unto Me and drink.” Will we come today?

But notice to whom we are to come. Not to the ceremony of drawing the water, not to a doctrine about the water, not to a philosophy concerning the water, not to an orthodoxy of understanding of the water. Those are right and proper and necessary in their place! But they are no substitute for coming to Him. We are to come to Him as the fountain from whom we are to drink; not merely to the preacher, not simply to the baptismal pool, or to the church, but to Jesus. For “all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen.” 2 Corinthians 1:20.

What is it to come to Jesus? It is to believe and receive Him for what He offers Himself to be in this verse, a flowing fountain of divine life, love, and satisfaction, and the Holy Spirit as the bearer of those streams of love.

Now mark that to “drink” is to believe on Him. For “he that believes on Me shall never thirst.” John 6:35. So the incoming and the out flowing of the Holy Spirit are inseparably connected with a new and fuller recognition of, and faith in, Jesus as a person, to whom we come. And if we so come to Him, He will satisfy the burning thirst. He will bring relief to the burdened mind. He will make light the heavy heart. He will comfort the sorrowing soul. He will give hope to the despondent life. He will give cheer to the downcast spirit, and rest to the weary pilgrim. He will break the chains that shackle. He will emancipate us from the dominion and power of sin. He will solve the problem before us. He will equip us for service. He will put His Spirit within us. And there is no other way under heaven in which these things can be brought about.

In this last day of the feast, this last-day period in which we live, I ask, Has your heart been satisfied? Or is there still a thirst that has not been quenched? Is there still a load that has not been lifted? Is your heart like that empty pitcher elevated by that officiating priest in mute appeal to High Heaven, a testimony of unfulfilled, unsatisfied spiritual longings? In the Master's stead, I cry today saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Him and drink. He that believes on Him, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. And I pray that God will bring a message to your heart as we think deeply of the living water.

Living Water

In this connection the mind inevitably goes to the interview of Christ with the woman of Samaria recorded in John 4:10-14:

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to thee, Give Me to drink; thou would have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.

“The woman said unto Him, Sir, Thou has nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then has Thou that living water?

“Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Here is affirmed the fact of the provision of the living water, while in chapter 7 the affirmation is turned into a world-wide proclamation and invitation. In chapter 4 of John's Gospel the gift by Him of this living water is the most prominent thought; in chapter 7, He Himself is the gift, the wellspring of eternal life. It is Jehovah's ancient proclamation sounding forth in human flesh, “Ho, every one that thirsts, come you to the waters.” Isaiah 55:1.

Mark that even in chapter 4 the living water is connected with the Holy Spirit in verses 22-24. There are three groups of worshipers: First, the ignorant and blind worshipers, as the Samaritans; second, the intelligent, informed worshipers, as the Jews, but formalists, Worshipers of the letter; and third, the spiritual worshipers, not merely intellectual, orthodox, and with outward conformity. These last the Father seeks to worship Him. He is seeking such today. Are we ready to respond?

But to return to the living water mentioned in verse 14. From of old, men have sought the water of life. The only real and genuine is here set forth. All others are delusive frauds. But he who drinks this water possesses a “fountain,” an Artesian well, springing up or, as the Hebrew puts it, leaping up, from which plentiful streams pour forth, freer than any earthly fountain, which neither fail nor stagnate. He that drinks of this water shall “never thirst.” How good that is!

I passed through a water famine a few years ago in a little Western town. The water supply came from a reservoir up in the mountains behind the town, but there had been a drought, no snow had fallen in the winter season, the infilling stream had dwindled to a tiny ribbon, and the water in the reservoir sank to a low level. There was a resultant water famine that menaced the health and welfare of the community. The most rigid economy was enforced to guard the precious fluid. Sometimes in the evening as one would open a faucet, there was but a miserable dribble. The pressure was gone. At other times there was only a sputtering, a tantalizing noise, and scarcely a drop of water would come forth.

What a picture of some Spiritless lives! With the busy toil of the day, when the living water is supremely needed, it has dwindled to a tiny, insufficient stream; and this is not because the supply is low in the reservoir, but because the channel has become obstructed by worldliness. Oh, the tragedy of it!

But I went to another city where the water supply was from Artesian wells that never failed. And there the inhabitants never thirsted, for they constantly availed themselves of the abundant water supply afforded by the never-failing wells.

But while all recognize instantly the imperative need of a constant supply of water for the physical body, many are slow to realize that the spiritual nature is just as dependent upon a living connection with the Fountain of spiritual life. With some the indwelling Spirit has dwindled to a tiny stream with scarcely enough to refresh the soul in times of stress. Such never know what an abundance means, because they do not draw upon the Source. Jesus' provision was that we might have abounding life, as we read in John 10:10: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” May God help us to evaluate properly and to avail ourselves constantly of the river of living water which He has given us in Christ Jesus.

In chapter 7 the promise is given that out of the believer “shall flow rivers of living water.” But the Scripture also reveals the source, the Holy Spirit who dwells in the believer. The Rock that followed or went with ancient Israel (1 Corinthians 10:4) is to be within us through the, Spirit. The direct personal agency of the Holy Spirit first opens the living waters to the believer, and by His indwelling, perpetually renews the stream so that there is an unending flow, yes, even rivers.

Unlimited Flow

Let us notice that word “rivers.” It implies hugeness, vastness; not a trickling brook, a modest stream, nor even a single, river, but rivers, plural. This denotes constancy, copiousness, and digusiveness, increasing and deepening and widening. It signifies multiplicity, flowing and overflowing in many directions. We are to be like the mighty river of Eden. You will remember how it was divided into four heads. The first was Pison, which means extended or spreading; the second, Gilion, meaning impetuous or streaming; the third, Hiddekel, meaning swift flowing; and the fourth, Euphrates, which means fruitful. As I see what God designs for me to be, and then see my own shriveled, shrunken life, it humbles me completely in the dust. It crushes and lays all the glory of self at the Master's feet.

Yes, and it is to be living water, or, as the Hebrew puts it, running water. It is in motion. So the life is to be filled with plentiful streams of living, running water, imparting blessing and refreshing to others, bearing life and satisfaction and gladness in the midst of abounding death, dissatisfaction, and dreariness. O, do others feel a vivifying, fructifying, refreshing influence from your life, flowing in streams from you? In God's provision they may and should. May God search us and reveal our need and our lack, and lead us to the unfailing Source of supply.

Remember, too, the universality of the promise. It includes the weakest and the most obscure in its magnificent sweep. It is for you and me. I ask, Has God verified His promise to us? If not, why not? There must be a cause. And here is another question: Is there anything beyond being filled by the Spirit? Can anything that is full become fuller? Yes, so full that it overflows. Thus it becomes a double blessing, first in personal satisfaction for our own needs, we are never to thirst individually; and, second, in the grander, more glorious channel of blessing, these rivers of water are to quench the thirsty lives of others, to overflow in abundant out giving. That is the distinction between filled and fuller, so full that it overflows in streams of blessings.

Again, let us stress, “Out of him shall flow visible, actual currents. We may not be able to hold much, but here is a word of cheer and comfort: We can overflow a great deal. You may take a tin cup to the faucet, and it can overflow just as truly as a bucket or a tub.

Again, every river must have an outlet. Otherwise it ceases to be a river. The inflow depends upon and is gauged by the outflow. I believe profoundly that every redeemed person is a channel through which the Holy Spirit may reach other lives, or he becomes a barrier preventing the Holy Spirit from doing His work. God pity us if because of sin we have become barriers.

The provision is for us to be flowing streams, and we will be unless the obstruction of sin prevents. Again I ask, Do others see a freshness and freedom, a spontaneity of life and love, in our service? There is no force-pump work or hard labor presented here in John 7, but abounding, irresistible service. It is not a picture of a creaky old pump that has to be primed and coaxed. Its flow is not dependent upon prompting and spurring on. It is not increased by devices, equipment, paraphernalia. It is not developed by pleading, entreating, cajoling. This flow is not achieved by working up, drumming up, sloganing up. No, it is an Artesian flow, spontaneous and irresistible because the Holy Spirit is the spring of the life. It seeks an outlet. It is bound to flow. You, reader, may be a channel through which it shall flow. And service on any other basis is a miserable makeshift, an artificial substitute.

Now by the reference to the flow of rivers of living water, Jesus “spoke of the Spirit” which they that believe, on Him should receive. I am glad Jesus has made it so plain. Metaphors and figures are sometimes hard to explain. Different individuals often have differing interpretations. But here the Holy Spirit interprets the passage to be the river of His own life that flows through yours and mine. It is the Holy Spirit we need in our lives. It is the lack of this that is the secret of our spiritual failures.

It is this supply that is the secret of every mighty Christian character that has molded the spiritual life of the church since Pentecost. It is this that will prepare the remnant church for her Lord's return.

Characteristics of Water

But why does Jesus compare the Holy Spirit to water? Because there are certain processes and characteristics that are strikingly analogous:

First, water cleanses. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.” Ezekiel 36:25. It is merely a striking way of setting forth the purifying process of His cleansing from sin, self, and pollution. When we ask for the living water, we are first of all seeking for the cleansing that God alone can do for the soul. O, may He do His perfecting, purifying work in us!

Second, water satisfies. "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after Thee, O God." Psalm 42:1. What water is to the thirsty body, the Holy Spirit is to the thirsty soul. Here alone is eternal satisfaction. As nothing can take the place of the sparkling water, so nothing can take the place of the Holy Spirit. Longing heart, what you need is this proffered living water.

Third, water revives. It resuscitates the faint and weary.

"There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." Job 14:7-9.

When a person is faint, we bring water. When a plant is wilted, we apply water. Are we drooping trees with dying branches? Has some storm of life broken us down? Has the ax of failure felled the very trunk of our lives? Is the outlook discouraging, or even blank with despair! Here is hope! Through this living water we may sprout and bud and bring forth boughs again. Complete restoration is here promised.

Fourth, water makes to grow. Observe these two scriptures:

"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon your offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses." Isaiah 44:3,4.

"The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto an the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters?" Ezekiel 31:4-7.

Christians, do we want to grow? Then, we must sink the roots of our lives down into the living waters. John the Baptist was an example of one who grew to greatness in God's sight. Concerning him we read in Luke 1:15: "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord. . . . and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." That was the secret of his greatness. It is still the condition of true greatness.

But speaking specifically of the rivers, they are said, first, to make fruitful. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper." Psalm 1:3. Do you bemoan your fruitlessness? Is your life but a withered tree? Withered trees cannot bear good fruit. We must have water. It takes something more than cultivation, spraying, fertilizing, or pruning to produce fruit. We must have this living water. The secret of fruitage in the life is rootage in the Spirit.

Moreover, rivers pacify. "Then had thy peace been as a river." Isaiah 48:18. Have you seen the anguish of a soul under the conviction of the Holy Spirit? The same blessed Spirit that first brings conviction of sin to the guilty soul, brings the infinite peace of God when these sins have been cleansed away by His grace. This is the peace we need.

Again, rivers gladden. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the: city of God." Psalm 46:4. O, the breaking hearts! They are all about us in this world. Sometimes as I talk with individuals and learn of the problems that perplex and the cares that distress, and mark the stain of sin, I can sense to a faint degree the great burden that our Savior must have carried about as He read people's thoughts, and looked into hearts that were filled with anguish as the result of the curse and blight of sin. But these holy streams gladden the spirit, and give the needed comfort and succor to the saddened soul.

Then, too, rivers embody and furnish power. In far-away Switzerland there is a famous Alpine glacier, the lower end of which is a sheer perpendicular wall. But the warm winds and the summer sun have hollowed out a great cavern in its mighty side. One can enter the arch, and stand in this fantastic cave. But you are chilled with cold, for it is ice above, ice before, ice beneath, ice around, miles and miles and masses and masses of ice. Yet a crystal stream flows out of the heart of that giant glacier, and begins to journey down the valley. It becomes deep and large, a flowing river into which the birds dip their bills, the herds sink their nostrils, and trees slip their roots; and the water wheels of mills and factories are turned by its power. It enters a lake and seems lost for a time, but emerges, crosses France, and turns southward. At its mouth it is broad enough and deep enough for the fishing craft, and even the great ships of the sea, to sail upon its bosom.

How cold we are! How like that glacier! How frozen is our lack of love and fervor, how smug our Laodicean complacency and self-satisfaction! I am appalled at my own coldness in the face of a dying world. May God melt these icy hearts in us, so that His rivers of love, peace, and power can flow through

us to the world, as flows the stream from the frigid heart of that Alpine glacier.

The sole condition is to believe on Him. "This spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." John 7: 39. Shall we not take God at His word? And shall we not do it today? Many years ago a sailing vessel was delayed at sea as it was making for an eastern port of South America. The water was exhausted, and the crew were perishing from thirst. They sighted another vessel. They sent up the signal, "Send us water." Back came the message, "Throw over your buckets and draw." But they responded, "We don't want this salt water to madden our thirst." Again came the response, "Throw over your buckets and draw." With parched lips and burning throats they made a desperate plea, "For God's sake, send us water; we are perishing." And the answer came back the third time, "Throw over your buckets and draw; you are in the mouth of the Amazon River. For the mouth of the Amazon river is wide enough for a ship to be out of sight of land in mid-river, and it carries its stream of fresh, sweet water far out into the ocean.

I cannot give you this water, the water of life. You must draw for yourself, by asking Jesus. You must believe and receive His offer. How many are thirsting and crying and perishing for water, and there is fresh, sweet water all around them. They are in the very Amazon of God's infinite love and grace. How many are crying and longing and dying for the river of living water, while in its very midst! It is right here. We have only to believe and meet the conditions. We are to throw over our buckets and draw. "If any man thirst, let him come." Then he is to have the flowing rivers. What has obstructed the channel, the outflow of the Spirit?

I want the channel fully cleared, don't you? I want to be a humble medium for the transmission of life to others. It is my consuming passion to be a simple instrument for the Master's use, to move the hearts of men with the music of heaven and bring them to Him to drink.

At the end of old London Bridge, one hundred twenty-five years ago, a poor beggar was scraping away wretchedly on an old violin in a futile attempt to solicit pennies from the passers-by. But no one stopped or listened, and his heart went down into his toeless boots. A well-dressed stranger passed, but suddenly halted. Then he returned and listened to the old man, whose weary, wistful eyes searched his face for a trace of charity. But instead of the hoped-for penny, the stranger asked for his violin. He would help him out with a tune, he said. The stiff, numbed fingers gladly passed over the old instrument. The new hands put it in tune, and began to play a low, plaintive melody. The pedestrians stopped to listen. On the coarsened face of one man a tear stole down, and he dropped a coin into the old upturned hat. And thus with one after another, until a dense crowd thronged the end of London Bridge and stopped the traffic, while the gleam of silver was intermingled with the more somber heap of red coppers at the beggar's feet. Louder and louder, higher and higher, the melody came from the old violin, until it burst forth in a flood of melody such as the angels sing. And the word passed from lip to lip, "It is the hand of the master! It is Paganini playing on the old beggar's violin.

Oh, I want to respond as did that old violin in the hands of the master, bringing the music of heaven to the hearts of men.

Invitation of the Spirit

On every page of the Sacred Volume one finds the calls of God. The Book is full of them. They begin with Genesis and go clear through to Revelation. But one must go to the last chapter of the last book of the Bible to read God's final appeal and His crowning entreaty to men. Hear it: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life, freely." Revelation 22:17.

The Spirit says, "Come." Have we a desire to be better, a yearning to be holy, a purpose to be godlike, a resolution to be pure? If so, it was born of the wonderful touch of the Divine Spirit. Thank God for His Spirit. It is life to me. You may scoff at the church; you may defy God, and crucify the Savior afresh. But I warn you not to trifle with the Spirit of grace. It is a fearful thing to wound Him and drive Him away, for then one severs the only connecting link between heaven and the soul. I have seen people reject and quench the Spirit until one could almost hear the jar of the gates of mercy as they closed forever on a soul who had done despite to the Spirit of grace. God has no other agency for reaching us.

If in your bosom there is a desire for better things, nurse it, foster it, shield it, pray God to fan the spark into a living flame that will burn on when eternity has supplanted time, and night has been banished by endless day. The Spirit's message, is, "Come and drink, and come today."

And the bride says, "Come." The bride is the church. Would to God she had always been waiting in robes of white, faithful to the Bridegroom. He went into a far country to "prepare a place" for His bride, and He is coming back soon to take her to her heavenly home. I once read of a young man in an Eastern State who wooed and won a beautiful girl. After the marriage, he went out West to take up a homestead and to clear the land and build a little cottage. But he hadn't been gone very long before she began flirting with her former admirers, and associating with her husband's enemies. What shall we say of such conduct? I say, Shame on her infidelity to the sacred pledge! But O, in a sense is that not a picture of the church, the Lamb's bride? He hadn't been gone very long to prepare her heavenly home when she began flirting with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and intimately associating with His enemies. Is it not time for her to change completely her conduct and her life? Is it not time to order her steps, and to keep the eye and the heart's affections single?

There are three things that I know about the church. First, she has made mistakes. I do not believe in minimizing her wrongs, in excusing her mistakes, in covering her indiscretions, or apologizing for her blunders. But, weak and defective as she is, she is the object of God's supreme love on earth. I know too that she has within her ranks the best men and women in this old world.

And there is another thing that I know about the church. And that is, she still loves God and loves sinners. No matter what you may have said or done to the church, the church still loves you. If the vilest sinner or the most hardened saint (and they are the hardest of all to reach) should walk down the aisle and yield himself to God, the church would cry out, Blessed be God another sinner has returned to life. And a mighty chorus of angels would catch up the strain, and the echo of the house of God would ring through the vaults of heaven. The message of the church is, "Come and drink, and come today."

Let him that hears say, "Come." The figure is drawn from the caravan on the desert with water gone and men consumed with thirst and in peril of death. They string out one after the other, just so one can hear the call of the next man. At last the head man sights in the distance a clump of trees, and knows there is water. He turns and calls to the next in line, "Water, come," as he himself presses on. The next man hears, and cries, "Water, come," as he too presses on with speed to slake his own thirst and preserve his life. All the way from the gates of heaven down to the very portals of hell; God has stretched a line, and with His own lips has started the call, "Water, come." And let him that hears say, "Come." Have we heard? Then let us every one pass on the blessed word, and press on ourselves. If we have heard the invitation, "Come," let us echo, it down the line.

And let him that is athirst come. If the line has been broken, if you cannot hear the call of the church as relayed, or whether you have! heard or not, to such ad says, If in your soul there is thirst, if in your heart a desire, in your mind a longing, in your being a yearning, the divine call is, "Come and drink, and come today."

But His supreme appeal is to the will. God places the chief emphasis there. He does not play with our sentiments and emotions. He does not address Himself to our hopes and fears. He appeals to our sense of judgment. He reaches after the reason and the intellect. He addresses Himself to the faculties and the mind.

He asks us to choose. He who can create worlds, will not break over the will of the creature. That is the reason why so many remain thirsty, and so many are lost, It is because they will not come and drink. One of the saddest utterances that ever fell from the lips of the Son of God is this, "You will not come unto Me, that you might have life." O the heartbreak of those words! No one need be lost. Jesus tasted death for every man. He is not willing that any should perish. The provision has been made for all. He stands at the door of the will and knocks, saying, "If any man will open the door, I will come in." But the trouble is, so many will not. Over this issue our eternal destiny hangs. On this point the battle turns.

Reader, do not trifle with destiny, do not play with eternity. If you perish from thirst, you perish because you will not come. But you say, "I cannot come." Do not miss that little three-letter word, "let." It is a little word, but it is big with meaning. It is not a permission; it is a command. In the first chapter of the Bible God said, "Let there be light," and it appeared; "Let there be a firmament," and it was; "Let there be land," and it lifted its head above the waters. "Let there be vegetation," and it was there. "Let there be animals," and they came at His call. The word of God has not lost its power with the pawing of the years. In this last book He concludes His final invitation to men with this glorious, omnipotent "Let."

The complete surrender of your choice is the only thing that stands between you and coming. God looks upon thirsty souls yearning for the living water that alone can quench the drought of the soul, and says to all the powers of earth and hell, "Let that soul come." He clears the highway. There is no power in the universe that can stop the soul from coming who has made the choice to come. All heaven is back of

the promise. Thank God, the thirsty may drink. There is enough both now and forevermore for all who come, and power is provided for coming: the word "come" is an enabling act. And the power is abiding. This drinking is not merely once for all time. There is continual and unlimited access to Him. There is no need for ever thirsting in the presence of the unlimited supply. Let us come today.

6. Burn in Me

BURN in me, fire of God,
Burn till my heart is pure,
Burn till I love God fervently,
Burn till my faith is sure.

Burn in me, fire of God,
Burn deeper, deeper still;
Burn till my one and sole desire
Shall be the Father's will.

Burn in me, fire of God,
Burn though it cost me dear;
Burn till my wakened, quickened soul
God's smallest whisper hear.

Burn in me, fire of God,
Until within shall rise,
And out, and up to God's great throne
A pleasing sacrifice.

Burn in me, fire of God,
Yea, burn, and burn again,
Till all I am, by God consumed.
A flame of fire- remain.
Percy G. Parker

7. The Baptism With Fire

THERE are three scriptures that form the background for this study. The first is prophetic, predictive, and was uttered by John the Baptist: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matthew 3:11.

The second text is an acknowledgment or confirmation of John's prediction, in which Christ says of Himself "I am come to send fire, on the earth." Luke 12:49.

The third text refers to the initial fulfillment of this promise at Pentecost, and is the earnest of a larger fulfillment to come before the second advent:

"There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:3,4.

For a long time, the expression, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," has been burning in my soul. Someway I cannot get away from that expression, "with fire." From earliest ages the divine fire has been recognized by God's people as the symbol of His transcendent glory, presence, and power. What flaming figures, flash through the imagination and the memory at the mention of the word! From Eden's gate with its fiery sword, to the burning lamp of Abraham, Moses' burning bush at Horeb, the consuming fire that enshrouded Sinai at the giving of the law. The vivid pillar of fire in the wilderness, the holy Shekinah that hovered over the tabernacle with its perpetual ministration, the flash in answer to Elijah's prayer, the coals of fire of Isaiah's vision. The glowing symbols of Ezekiel's imagery, the Pentecostal flame upon the disciples, and on to the figurative language of the revelator.

We all know what the baptism with water is. We have either seen it or received it. But what is this baptism with fire? It is not something that is in contrast to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is not an alternative, an assertion that if you are not baptized with the Holy Spirit, then you must be baptized with fatal fire. The word does not say "or with fire," but instead, "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." It is an explanatory phrase, completing the idea. It is the Scriptural way of repetition to emphasize and enforce a single thought. We are to be baptized with divine fire now to save us from destruction by consuming fire later. That this is the correct interpretation is evident from these words in "The Desire of Ages," commenting on this scripture:

"The prophet Isaiah had declared that the Lord would cleanse His people from their iniquities by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. The word of the Lord to Israel was, I will turn My hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.' To sin, wherever found our God is a consuming fire.' In all who submit to His power, the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them . . . At the Second Advent of Christ, the wicked shall be consumed 'with the Spirit of His mouth,' and destroyed 'with the brightness of His coming.' The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked." - Pages 107, 108.

The meaning is plain when we consider, in the light of what happened at Pentecost, what fire is! said in Scripture to do. The reference is unquestionably to the fiery character of the work of the Holy Spirit and His purifying efficacy upon the soul,-searching, penetrating, consuming, purifying, energizing the life. When He takes possession of the soul, the effect is similar to the effect of fire in the natural world. For "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29), and His Spirit is the "spirit of burning." Isaiah 4:4. The expression, "our God is a consuming fire," is not an angry threat. Rather it is a revelation of His nature, His sanctifying grace and power. Remember He is "our God."

Let us now scan rapidly the things fire is said to do.

Fire Reveals

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Corinthians 3:13.

We will not study the exegesis of this text and its primary time of fulfillment, but simply try to catch that one thought, that fire reveals. The baptism with fire reveals a man as he really is. It throws the beams of holy light into the innermost recesses of the soul. It shows us ourselves as God sees us.

When Jesus baptizes a man with the Holy Spirit and with fire, there is revealed an amount of pride, selfishness, suspiciousness, love of position, touchiness, and downright meanness that will be an

amazement to him. When God baptizes my soul with fire, I come more and more to abhor myself. I sense increasingly that in me there is no good thing. All I have or am that is worth anything has been imputed and imparted to me from my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It brings me to my knees before God in contrite confession. And not only that, but it brings me to some of my brethren to tell them of grief over the un-Christ like things in my life, this tongue that speaks so quickly, the suspiciousness of my nature, and a hundred other things. The coming of a baptism with fire will result in a spirit of confession such as we have never known.

Remember the statement, by the Spirit of prophecy, depicting the assemblage in the auditorium of the Tabernacle at a General Conference in Battle Creek.

“Prayer was offered, a hymn was sung, and prayer was again offered. Most earnest supplication was made to God. The meeting was marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The work went deep, and some present were weeping aloud. One arose from his bowed position, and said that in the past he had not been in union with certain ones, and had felt no love for them, but that now he saw himself as he was. [Fire revealed] With great solemnity he repeated the message to the Laodicean church. . . . The speaker turned to those who had been praying, and said: 'We have something to do. We must confess our sins, and humble our hearts before God.' He made heartbroken confessions, and then stepped up to several of the brethren, one after another, and extended his hand, asking forgiveness. Those to whom he spoke sprang to their feet, making confession and asking forgiveness, and they fell upon one another's necks, weeping. The spirit of confession spread through the entire congregation. It was a Pentecostal season. God's praises were sung, and far 'into the night, until nearly morning, the work was carried on. . . . No one seemed to be too proud to make heartfelt confession, and those who led in this work were the ones who had influence, but had not before had courage to confess their sins.” Then comes that tragic closing paragraph:

“This might have been. All this the Lord was wanting to do for His people. All heaven was waiting to be gracious. I thought of where we might have been had thorough done at the last General Conference; and an agony of disappointment came over me as I realized that what I had witnessed was not a reality.” Testimonies, Volume 8, pages 104-106.

Shall we not pray for the baptism with fire, which will show us ourselves as we are? We are prone to judge by the outward appearance and conduct, but God looks into the heart. We must have that fire that teaches the inmost life, until every sin is disclosed and purged away.

Fire Consumes

Let us note Ezekiel's striking parable of the boiling pot, symbolic of Jerusalem:

“Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.” Ezekiel 24:11.

That is another thing that fire does, it consumes the scum, the dross. But observe this sad comment on Jerusalem of old:

“She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her.” Verse 12.

There was no separation between her filthiness and her gold. Mark well the sad judgment, that awaits her:

“Thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused My fury to rest upon thee.” Verse 13.

We have our choice of letting the purifying fire, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, consume the dross now, or be ourselves consumed in the fierce flames of the last day when He shall “burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:12.

Then there is this text:

“He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap [soap for the outside, fire for within] and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them an gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:2,3.

He “sits” to purify. He is not in a hurry, not impatient. He will bring the fire to the right heat. He will continue it until the process is complete. Yea, our God is a refiner's fire. Let us who are seeking for the righteousness of God, pray for the Holy Spirit; first, to reveal, and then to consume, that the great scum of sin in our lives may be burned out.

“O fire of God, burn on, burn on,

Till all my dross is burned away;
O fire of God, burn on, burn on,
Prepare me for the testing day.”

Fire Purifies

Water cleanses, but not as fire. Fire is pre-eminently the cleansing element. It purifies internally and intrinsically, filling every fiber and particle of matter with its own, element. The filth on the outside of the gold, water can remove. But that which is on the inside must be cleansed by fire. A nearsighted man was industriously engaged in washing a window. He rubbed and rubbed, and washed at the windowpane, but he could not get it clean. A friend, passing by, saw the situation, and said to him, “It is dirty on the inside!” That is the trouble with us. We are unclean on the inside, in the heart.

Fire permeates through and through, while the water of our cleansing reaches only the surface. The ore must needs be flung into the furnace, the fires lighted, and powerful drafts played upon it. As the rushing wind fans the flames, tongues of fire leap through the mass, which is brought up, to the smelting heat. Then the precious metal will be separated from its stony matrix, the dross parted from the gold. Having dwelt together through the ages, locked in tenacious embrace, they now flee repellantly from each other. Thus the Refiner is enabled to run off the golden stream into the mold of His own designing. Let us pray that God may do just that for us. It is the work of the divine Smelter we need.

It is the fire of the Holy Spirit that separates the precious from the vile. We cannot get sin out of the heart with the hammer and chisel of our own endeavor. The fire of God alone will do it. When that holy fire burns, it will consume the dross of our pride and vanity; the rags of our self-righteousness will perish, the leaves of empty profession will be consumed; the stubble of our questioning doubts will pass; the sham of unprofitable labor will go. The thorns of our prickly tempers will be taken away; the roots of bitterness, the straw of pretentious unreality, and the refuse of unprofitable talk will be devoured. All these unlovely things will be consumed by the Spirit of God, until the great Refiner can see His own image reflected in us, as the earthly refiner sees his own face in the glowing metal. We must go through the fire, either now or when He comes as a “consuming fire.”

“I will . . . refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”
Zechariah 13:9.

Fire purifies by consuming. Hear it in these words:

“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean Ups: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips. And your iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” ***Isaiah 6: 5-7.***

The sin of which Isaiah was conscious was lip sin. And, oh, my sin, too, and the sin of my people, is too often lip sin! You will note that in the reference to the translated company of Revelation 14:5, who shall follow the Lamb as His bodyguard through eternity, emphasis is placed upon the mouth: “In their mouth was found no guile.” May God cleanse and purify us from lip sin. For there is no member that sins so readily, and needs to be purified so completely, as the tongue. There is the thoughtless tongue of hasty speech. There is the proud tongue of self-inflation. There is the gossipy tongue of unholy exaggeration, and the unclean tongue of filthy allusion; the unkind tongue of unjust reflection, and the malicious tongue of prejudice and passion. All around us we can see the effect of lip sin. We need to have our lips cauterized, as were Isaiah's.

“You shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean,” we are told in Numbers 31:23. That is the way to be made clean, by the penetrating, consuming, purifying baptism of the “Holy Ghost, and with fire.” We need that cleansing by fire to pass over us and through us, to penetrate every fiber of our being, every chamber of the soul. That is what happened at Pentecost. You recall that before Pentecost the disciples were filled with selfish wrangling, striving for the supremacy, seeking for position, striving to exalt self, to derogate their brethren; but after Pentecost self was abased, and Christ alone had first place in thought, in action, and in life. Love, harmony, and the power of unity were seen. They actually became new men.

The baptism with fire does make a new thing under the sun. You put iron ore into the fire, and it

will come out pig iron. Put the pig iron through the fiery processes, and it will come out the highest quality of steel. O, we want God to make a new thing out of us! We want to be cast into the fire, and become the new men and women in Christ Jesus that He designs us to be.

Fire Frees

There is another thing about fire, it frees us. It emancipates, it snaps the cords that bind. In Judges 16:9, speaking of Samson, the Scripture says: "He brake the ropes, as a thread of tow is broken when it touches the fire."

Sin is binding some men tighter than poor Samson was bound with the cords of the Philistines; but the fire of the Holy Spirit snaps the cords of sin. And it snaps the cords of fear, the haunting fear of men, fear of failure, fear of the world's sneers, fear of the ridicule of friends, fear of loss of position and prestige in pursuit of the call of God. Think of Peter's craven cowardice before Pentecost, and his holy boldness afterward, in charging the murder of the Son of God upon priests and rulers. (See Acts 4:8-13.) The fire of God not only destroys the fear of man, but it implants the fear of God, fitting us for the hour of judgment as called for in the first angel's message. It will separate us from the sins and apostasies of fallen Babylon of the second message, and it will bind us to the commandments of the third angel's message. It is this that vitalizes the full threefold message.

Fire Softens

In Psalms 68:2 we are told of how "wax melts before the fire," and Isaiah (64:1-3) speaks of the mountains flowing down by consuming fire. O, how much we need the melting, softening influence of the Holy Spirit to subdue our hard, harsh, cold spirits, and to fuse us into heart unity with our brethren! This fusing, uniting flame makes us one, even as the volcanic stream rolling down the mountain side fuses into one current everything in its course. There are mountains of self-will that must be melted now, or we shall at last stand with those who will call for the material mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of the coming King. May the Lord melt our hearts, soften our wills' unite our hearts, and subdue all alienation, through the baptism of the "Holy Ghost, and with

Fire Warms

Speaking of fire, Isaiah says: "I am warm, I have seen the fire." Isaiah 44:16. You will remember that the morning after the resurrection, Jesus stood on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, as the disciples, weary and cold and hungry, approached the land after a night of fruitless toil. He knew they were cold and hungry, and He had prepared for them a fire to banish the chill, and had food in readiness to satisfy their hunger. All about us there are cold and hungry multitudes who need to be fed upon the word, and to be warmed by the fire of the Holy Spirit. That is the combination needed.

There is a tragic difference between the fire that warms and cheers and the devouring flame that consumes; between the lightning stroke of destruction, and the power carried in the wires to run factory and street car, illuminate home and street, or convey messages by air or wire. Just as wide is this difference between the fire of the Holy Spirit and the flames of fanaticism-that "strange fire" of the devil's kindling. The true is kindled from God above; the false is earth born, springing out of human emotion. It is stirred by "hum" endeavor, and is aided and abetted by the powers of evil to counterfeit the genuine and so to bring all into disrepute. The true is fed by the fuel of God's word. The strange fire is sustained by human reason and the revelations of man's own imaginations. The true purifies and sanctifies; the strange fire manifests itself in unhallowed forms of sinful indulgence and unseemly excesses. The true works along sane, rational channels; the false consumes eccentric, abnormal, extravagant lines.

The presence of the false in the world should but summon us to seek most earnestly for the fire of God. The devil is seeking by counterfeit to bring truth into disrepute; but we want, we must have, the fire of God to burn out the dross.

And then we need a ministry and a people that are on fire for God, as other men are on fire for success, money, distinction. Jesus said, "The zeal of Your house hath eaten Me up." He was on fire for God. O that we had a thousand Finneys, Moodys, Wesleys, and Whitefields, who would go forth to set the

world ablaze with the light of the glory of the final phase of this movement of God among men. The way to set the church on fire is for the ministry to get on fire. May the living, throbbing fire of the Holy Spirit clothe us as it did Elijah and Paul. It will shake this world from one end to the other, and finish the work.

Fire Illuminates

In Psalms 78:14 we read of how all through the night, Israel was led with the “light of fire.” Coming on a train through Pittsburgh, one night, I saw those great smelters and blast furnaces flaming in the darkness, lighting up the heavens. And as I was thinking along this line, my heart cried out, O Lord, give us luminous Christians, shining for Thee, telling the time of the night as the luminous face of a clock so designed. We need the light of a shining countenance, of a kindling heart, of a beaming hope, of a burning zest and a glowing message. All of which will come with the baptism with fire. And may God deliver us from painted fire, simulated, but false. We want real, genuine, shining fire. It is the fire of the Holy Spirit that will illuminate this final message of God to men and make it glow with an otherwise impossible brightness. It is this that lightens the earth with the glory of God, the last glory that will ever be seen in this, darkening world till the Lord of glory appears as a consuming fire to strike down the wicked.

Fire Makes Permanent

There is another thing about fire: it makes permanent, it inures, it hardens, makes durable. Here is the suggestive text.

“Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings, or with the devouring fire?” Isaiah 33:14.

The answer to this question is, Those upon whom the baptism with fire comes now, to burn away the dross. Such will be fitted to dwell eternally with our God, who is “a devouring fire!

Fire inures. While there are some things fire burns out, there are some things it burns in. For instance: Take a porcelain vase in process of construction, beautifully painted with rich colors and covered with a network of gold; exquisite in shape, showing the skill of a master hand. But the slightest touch would destroy its design and ruin its beauty. The vase must be “fired” or put into the fire, and then the colors will be made permanent, the shape will endure, and the maker's name, forever appear impressed into it.

In the “firing” process of the Holy Spirit, the beautiful colors of the holy life will become permanent and impervious to the attacks of evil. As Paul said, “None of these things move me.” Acts 20:24. He was not moved by the onslaughts of evil, the conflicts with the brethren, the persecution of the world, or apostasy in the church, from the fundamental principles of the gospel. He was not moved from the great platform of salvation in Christ only, with its inseparable corollary, the keeping of the commandments of God. He was never disobedient to the heavenly vision. We, too, must be vessels, inured, hardened, made permanent, having not only the dross burned out, but the great sign, seal, or mark of our Maker, and His name, burned into the life, that its impress may be retained forever. In time's last hour, the Sabbath seal of God and the Holy Spirit are inseparable. Those who contend otherwise are heralds of a counterfeit fire.

Fire Energizes

Fire generates power and motion. The mighty forces of steam and electricity are merely forms of fire. In Psalms 104:4 we read: “Who makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.” Is it not proper to ask, Are you a flame of fire for God? I went into a great locomotive shop one day, and as I was being shown through, I watched the making of the various parts - wheels, rods, pistons, valves, and all. Then I saw the assembling of a locomotive in the various stages of construction, part added to part until there came forth the completed engine, weighing scores of tons, and all ready to run. Then the guide led me up into the engineer's scat, and told me to sit down. He said, “You can pull the throttle if you wish.” So I gripped the throttle and gave it a pull; but there was not a wheel that moved. Every part of the gigantic machine was there, but with no fire in the fire box, no steam in the boiler, there was no motion.

Thank God for the power, the dynamic, the forward movement of this message, especially in the

foreign fields. But are we satisfied? We need the outpouring of the latter rain for greater impetus. We need the fire of the Holy Ghost to energize us fully. We need the promised heavenly fire that will speed up this heaven-designed machinery for the full accomplishment of God's work and the rapid finishing of His message upon the earth. That is the power we need. It is vastly more than the power of eloquence or business organization, important as they are. It was the fire of Pentecost that reached 3,000 souls with a single sermon. It is the one thing that will move the hearts of men and the church of God today. Jeremiah speaks of fire burning in the bones: "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones." Jeremiah 20:9. Not all heat is the heat of the Spirit. Sometimes there is the heat of friction, the flame of temper, the fire of passion. God has no dwelling place there. O, we must have that Spirit-illuminated word as a pent-up fire in our bones. That is the divine energy all heaven is waiting to bestow.

Fire Spreads

Yes, fire spreads, sometimes for evil, as when in 1871 the great Chicago fire destroyed in a few hours more than seventeen thousand buildings, making homeless nearly one hundred thousand people. But again for good, as when in the case of black death or other contagious or infectious disease it is used to wipe out the plague spots that could not otherwise be rendered innocuous.

As we have seen, in Matthew 3:10-12, fire is used as a symbol of the cleansing, refining power of the Holy Spirit, and in this sense we are thankful that fire does indeed spread; and this fact, I am persuaded, lies back of the expression, "Quench not the Spirit." The word "quench" presupposes the presence of fire, and carries us back to apostolic days:

"There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Acts 2:3.

This was in fulfillment of the eighth verse of the first chapter:

"You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The power of the fire of the Holy Spirit is for service and for witness; it purifies and cleanses our lives, thus preparing us to be channels through which the Holy Spirit may flow out in service to others. There is no use praying for the power of the Holy Spirit just for ourselves, just to consume its blessing upon our own lives. Ah, no! It is given for 'service. That is the ultimate purpose of the celestial fire. And when this fire of the Holy Spirit comes, to us and does not find expression in service, we quench the Holy Spirit. I believe in service with all my soul. But I believe in a service that is act on fire from heaven, and not with common fire.

The apostles needed and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Surely it is desirable, needful, imperative, for us today. How can we receive it? Just as the apostles received it, by recognizing our need, by believing it is for us just as they believed it was for them; by earnestly desiring it, and continuing steadfast in prayer; by being wholly surrendered to God's will, by coming into unity, and by expecting it.

One gets the baptism with fire very much as one gets the baptism of water. To be baptized in water, a person must first desire it. He must then go to one qualified to baptize with water, and submit, himself, put himself in his hands to be baptized. We must do the same to receive the baptism with fire. There is but one qualified to baptize us with fire. That person is Jesus Himself. It is His exclusive prerogative; He has never delegated it to another. He waits to baptize us with fire. Will we go to Him?

It is said that years ago, in old Dalmatia, the houses were made of bituminous limestone. It was soft, and easily cut and shaped. The whole house was made of it -walls, roof, floor, ceiling-inside and outside. But when it was finished, it was uninhabitable, for it reeked with the strong odor of bitumen. The structure was completed by setting it on fire. It burned and burned like coal, the fire sucking out the bitumen from the pores of the saturated stone, until everything combustible passed away in gas and smoke, and the fire flickered and died out from lack of fuel. Then the house was finished, and stood, having the appearance of white marble, sweet, clean, and habitable. And if later it was in the midst of a great fire, it would not burn, for there was nothing combustible left to burn. It was fireproof.

We, too, are by nature and by indulgence saturated with the combustible, reeking bitumen of sin. In the coming fires of the last great day, all such elements will be consumed in eternal destruction. The only way of escape is to be burned out now by the baptism with fire, and thus made fireproof, as it were, against that day that shall bum as an oven. So we may become beautiful temples for the eternal indwelling of our

God. If not, then we shall be ashes under the soles of the feet of the saints.

In pioneer days when, men camped out on the vast prairies, they would sometimes see a prairie fire coming over the plain, destroying everything in its resistless sweep. They knew that in an hour or so they would be engulfed in the flame. So they would start a fire and send it to meet the approaching wave, rolling and roaring across the plain. At length the fires would meet, and leap to the heavens in one wild outburst of fury, then expire because of lack of fuel. Thus by fire they were saved from the on-coming fire.

I want just that. I want to be purified from sin, and to be cleansed from the dross that is in my life. I want to be illuminated with God's full truth, and to be a luminous Christian for Him. I want my cold heart warmed, fired, by His Holy Spirit. I want the energizing power of God in my life, so that wherever I shall go, other men will catch fire, and the heavenly flame will spread.

May the prayer of each of us be, Blessed Lord, do Thou Thy wondrous work in my yielded life. Burn out the lurking sin that lingers. Purify from all the enslavement and pollution of self. Fill me and fit me with Your own glowing, glorious presence, and send me forth a flame of fire to illuminate and warm the sin-chilled lives of men.

8. Matthew 25:1-13

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes.

9. The All Essential Oil

JESUS was still seated with His disciples on the Mount of Olives. He had just given utterance to the marvelous prophecy of the twenty fourth of Matthew, which holds such a unique place in the affections, belief, and teachings of Seventh day Adventists. And now He launches into the parable of the wise and unwise virgins in chapter 25. It is essential to remember that the twenty-fourth chapter is part of the same discourse as the twenty fifth, though we do not always think of this, and so fail to connect the two. The, evident purpose of this parable is to enforce the practical spiritual lesson of the preceding prophetic section of the discourse, for Christ did not utter those striking prophecies merely that we might be intellectually informed. A spiritual understanding, therefore, of the parable of the ten virgins is of most vital importance to the remnant church.

Picture if you will that memorable scene: Below, to one side, is the Holy City. At Jesus' feet are the slopes of Olivet and the garden of Gethsemane. Opposite Him are the desolate hills of Judea, and beyond them the misty line of the mountains of Moab skirting the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

Soon the sinking sun has set behind the western hills, and the purple scarf of the brief twilight has been flung over the landscape. The golden lamps have been hung in the blue dome above, and earth below is curtained with the shades of night. From their point of vantage the little group sees in the distance an illuminated house where an Eastern wedding with its torchlight procession is in progress. It was customary for Eastern marriages to take place at night, and as in those days there were no lamps in the streets of the cities, each person was supposed to carry his own light.

Among the Jews it was customary for the bridegroom to leave his home to bring his bride from the house of her father, perhaps in another village, returning with her to his own home for the wedding feast. With a group of select young men, he started out on this eventful journey after the set of sun, going along through the darkness. Waiting for his appearance near the home of the bride, was a group of bridesmaids, usually ten in number, who met him with lighted lamps or torches. The nocturnal procession, with its burning, festal lamps, was always one of joyful expectation. And the bride was escorted to the bridegroom's home, where a great feast was in readiness.

Just such a lighted procession was in progress that eventful night of the Master's discourse on the Mount of Olives. As Jesus, and the disciples watched, some lamps flickered and went put. Jesus seized upon this familiar and impressive sight as the basis of a solemn spiritual lesson for the remnant church. The waiting, bridesmaids did not know the precise hour he would arrive, but they knew he would, come that night. While waiting they lay down because of weariness and drowsiness.

Suddenly, about midnight in the case under observation, the bridegroom is seen coming, to the joy of the prepared, but to the consternation of the unprepared. So Jesus uses the incident to illustrate what His coming will mean to those who profess to be looking for His appearing. Consequently, it is present truth of compelling proportions for the remnant church.

The parable is brief - only thirteen verses. But it is awful in its comprehensiveness. It opens with that adverb of time, "Then." This is the key word to its application. It points to the final consummation. Christ had just been admonishing the disciples to watch and be ready, for "in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes." Matthew 24:44. He had just spoken of two classes in the world of waiting servants, "wise" and "foolish," and how to the latter He will come suddenly, unexpectedly, disastrously. The time of application is therefore just before His Second Advent. Indisputably that is the period referred to. As confirmatory evidence I would submit this clear-cut statement from the writings of Mrs. E. G. White:

"I am of ten referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter, for it has a special application to this time, and like, the third angel's, message, has been fulfilled and will continue to be present truth till the close of time. In the parable, the ten virgins had lamps, but only five of them had the saving oil with which to keep their lamps burning. This represented the condition of the church. The wise and the foolish have their Bible and are provided with all the means of grace; but many do, not appreciate, the fact that they must have the heavenly unction. The name 'foolish virgins' represents the character of those who have not the genuine heart work wrought by the Spirit of God. The coming of Christ does not change the foolish virgins into wise ones. . . . The state of the church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state." Mrs. E. G. White, in the Review and Herald, Aug. 19, 1890.

It is a solemn and acknowledged fact that in the world there are just two classes, Christians and worldlings, the true and the false, the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares, the saved and the lost.

But this parable makes a still further division, now among professed Christians. It segregates them as wise and foolish, as prepared and unprepared, as watchful and unwatchful, as prudent and imprudent, as the real and the apparent, the genuine and the counterfeit. And the conclusion is unavoidable that we are and will be in either one class or the other. Christ recognizes only the two. There is no third group. And He has not changed since He gave this parable.

Both groups, profess to be waiting for their Lord's return. So they are all Adventists, in the broader meaning of the term. There is a prevailing similarity in externals. Both groups, are virgins, called to purity, and professing a pure faith. Both have lamps and light and vessels. Both have heard the call. All ten are expecting their Lord to return. All are apparently "waiting," in the night of earth's last hour. For a while no difference is seen by human eyes.

The "lamp" is clearly the word, for "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105. This, precious boon is shared in common by the two groups. Both have also the wick of profession. So all are members of the true church, with an illuminating knowledge of Scripture. And how we do need the light of the Scriptures! The story, is told, of a man in Carnarvon shire, Wales. Walking one stormy night on the mountain, he was so cold that he put his lantern under his cloak to get its warmth. The moon was shining dimly, and he thought he could trace his way without the lantern. Suddenly a gust of wind blew aside his cloak and the light revealed that he stood on the edge of a steep slate quarry. In another instant he would, have plunged over the precipice. He retraced his steps, and you may be sure he did not again cover his lantern. Thank God for the clear rays of the word. May they shine brighter and brighter, the darker the night and the more perilous the path.

These ten virgins have all heard and responded to the message like, and are essentially correct in doctrine. The two groups are not distinguished as good and bad, but "wise" and "foolish," And Christ says the foolishness of the foolish consisted in their lack of oil. They had their lamps and wicks, but there was insufficient oil. They bore the name, but lacked the one essential qualification for meeting the bridegroom. On the other hand, the wisdom of the wise consisted in having sufficient oil.

The solemn lessons that will unfold as we pursue the meaningful features of this parable, cannot be too seriously considered by the church living at this time.

The foolish think the wise are unduly worked up over this question of the oil. Are their lamps not burning brightly? And anyhow the bridegroom will soon come, they reason, and there will be an abundance of oil to last. Even if they should run short, they can easily get more later if necessary. But it is fallacious reasoning. I repeat: Everything aside from this oil is possessed by the foolish. And possession of this alone makes the wise ready, while because of its lack, the foolish are unready.

Symbolism of Oil

By the oil is signified the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit of God, the knowledge of the word is of no real or eternal avail, no matter how orthodox our understanding. One may be familiar with all its commands, its precepts, its promises and prophecies, but unless the Holy Spirit makes it actual life, the character is not transformed. The theory is useless without the reality.

We are not to despise nor depreciate externals, except as substitutes for internal realities. But the foolish looked at appearances and were deceived thereby. Remember, externals mean nothing with God, if unmatched by internal verities. Therein lies the peril. It is not enough to be waiting along with the church, or even within the church. Mere profession is but painted pageantry in which to go to perdition. It is like the plumes and trappings on the black horses of the old hearses of years ago, which dragged dead men to their graves.

So the decisive test is not that the foolish are without lamp or wick, but without sufficient oil. That was the nature of their folly. They had the external equipment, but neglected the heart of it all. They were content with superficialities. They met the requirements as to mechanics, but were lacking in spiritual dynamics. And in some ways that is more tragic than no profession.

The foolish virgins were not hypocrites. They were genuine, and earnest in their way. They were not profane nor ungodly. They unquestionably had a sincere regard for the truth. They were attracted to it, but had not addressed themselves to securing this all essential. How solemn the thought! There may be high profession and orthodox belief. One may have been baptized, may partake regularly of the Lord's supper, may be an officer in the Missionary Volunteer Society, the Sabbath school, or the church. Yes, may be an ordained minister, even holding an important official position, and yet be without the Holy Spirit, and thus

be among those divinely denominated “foolish,” because unprepared, and may be finally lost. It is possible for me to be among the foolish! The thought stirs me.

It is awful to have just enough Christianity to deceive the heart, just enough to lull to false security, just enough to prop one up with false confidence, just enough to lose the soul. But thus it was with the foolish virgins who lacked oil. Remember this: Intense Bible study is no substitute for the Holy Spirit; frenzied activity will never compensate for lack of the Spirit; the extremes of sacrifice will not suffice. We must have the heavenly oil, or all is vain. This is Christ's solemn dictum, not mine. The foolish virgins made a fair appearance, but because of lack of oil, they were left outside at last.

The “lamp” used in those ancient wedding processions was attached to the upper end of a wooden staff. It consisted of a vessel or round receptacle for the oil, into which the wick was inserted, the light being sustained by the oil. Suppose we should say to a lamp, “How do you manage to give out so much beautiful light?” If it were vocal, the lamp would surely respond, “Why, I am not giving anything. I am all the time sucking up oil through my thirsty wick. It is the oil that gives the light.” And that is it. Let the dry wick of our profession be immersed in the oil of the Spirit, and we cannot help shining. And only thus can we lighten the world in the time of the loud cry. God wants us to illuminate the night to welcome the Bridegroom. How true and pertinent are the words of the wise man, “Wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness.” Ecclesiastes 2: 13.

Significance of the Symbol

How apt is the figure of “oil,” as used to symbolize the Holy Spirit. First, oil is an illuminator. In eleven Scripture passages oil is connected with light; as, for example, in Exodus 25:6, “oil for the light.” You will recall the impressive figure in Zechariah 4, of the golden candlestick, with the bowl for oil upon the top, and the seven lamps, and the seven pipes perpetually bearing the oil from the living olive trees for the light of the candles. It was constantly flowing, and unceasingly imparted. And the symbolic intent is plainly and literally disclosed in verse six, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, said the Lord of hosts.” There is no mistaking the intent. The Holy Spirit is the source of the light. The Spirit is this oil we must have.

There must be constancy of supply, else darkness will come. The flow must be unhindered and continuous. It is sin that chokes the pipe line. Brother, Water, is your candlestick connected with the olive trees, so that the supply is unailing! God does not design that ours shall be an intermittent light, burning low, or going out, but bright and full and constant. Remember the solemn warning to the church, “Else I will come . . . and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.” Revelation 2:5. That means an inevitable and fatal break in the pipe line, so that the oil ceases to flow and the spiritual light goes out. God forbid such a catastrophe should come to, any of us. He designs His remnant people shall both have light for themselves and be an unwavering source of light to others. Of ancient Israel, just before the exodus from Egypt, it is written, “The children of Israel had light in their dwellings” (Exodus 10:23), and this in the midst of the abounding Egyptian darkness that covered the land, typical of the spiritual darkness of today. And it is light that we need—the light of the Holy Spirit's holiness, love, gentleness, righteousness, and faithfulness. Yes, what we need is “the, supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:19.

Again, oil is set forth also as the symbol of consecration. Two hundred and two times reference is made in Scripture to the anointing oil. Whatever was anointed therewith was set apart to a holy calling or use. The Mosaic ritual was replete with instruction upon this point. And the anointing oil for the priests and tabernacle reappears in the very name of Christ, which means “the Anointed;” also in His declaration, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He bath anointed Me to preach.” Luke 4:18. Paul informs us of the nature of that anointing of the Holy Spirit: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with, power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.” Acts 10:38. That was the oil.

It will be profitable for us to read briefly concerning the applying of the symbolic anointing oil in ancient times:

“Thou shall anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the layer and his foot. And thou shall sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever touches them shall be holy. And thou shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office.” Exodus 30: 26-30.

The tabernacle and all the articles therein were consecrated, and the priests also. Kings, too, were thus set apart. So we read in 1 Samuel 16: 13:

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him In the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”

Mark how it is inseparably connected with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And Christ's believers are likewise to be priests and kings. Revelation 1:6; 5:10. O, is the oil upon us! “Be filled with the Spirit,” is the divine command. “Received you the Holy Spirit?” is the divine interrogation. And let us not get away from the fact that this anointing was to sanctify them. We read it in Leviticus 8:10-12:

“Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the layer and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.”

In, the ancient ritual the head and hands and feet of the cleansed leper, as well as the consecrated priest, were touched with the anointing oil, in symbol of dedication to God. Mark it in Leviticus 14:17,18:

“The rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering. And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed.”

But note carefully from the context that the blood was first applied, then the oil. First, cleansing, then conversion - that is the divine order. The head is the seat of thought. It stands for the mind. The hand is a symbol of action and service. The foot indicates the walk of life. We are to “walk in the Spirit,” and live “in the Spirit.” And there was the anointed ear for obedience. It simply means, “Lord, I will hear for Thee, I will act for Thee, I will walk for Thee.” Then the rest of the oil was poured on the head, to run in copious streams over the person. And this oil was bruised or crushed out of the olives. Ah, it took the bruising of Calvary to secure the coming of the Spirit.

Mark also that there were very definite limitations and prohibitions regarding the use of this oil of consecration:

“Thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall you make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is, holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compounds any like it, or whosoever puts any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.” Exodus 30:31-33.

First, it was not to be used on the flesh. God does not anoint sin. Nor was it to be used upon the - stranger, those that are without hope and without God. Ephesians 2:12. He does not send the Spirit upon the unconverted, except to convince of sin. No one was to imitate this sacred oil. God abhors the human substitutions of the energy of the flesh that are but spurious imitations of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Let us beware.

This divine oil is the “oil of gladness.” Psalm 45:7. And it is also the oil of healing. Remember the good Samaritan: He had feet, of mercy, for he came; he had eyes of kindness, for he saw. He had a heart of love, for he had compassion; he had hands of helpfulness, for he lifted him; he had self-denial, for he set him on his own beast; he had supporting grace, for he brought him to an inn. And he had gracious forethought, for he provided for his needs. But first of all he applied the healing oil to the needy man's wounds. That is also the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. “Such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:11. Washed, justified, sanctified! Glorious provision of our God!

Such is the oil that the foolish virgins lacked that fatal night-the spirit of illumination, of consecration, of sanctification, of healing.

While the Bridegroom Tarry

Alas, the pity of it! Because the bridegroom tarry, they all, wise and foolish, “slumbered and slept.” Both were faulty, the foolish in false security, the wise in spiritual stupor. Thus the parable emphasizes the effect of the Bridegroom's delay, though it is but the secondary thought. Though He tarry He will come when they are not expecting or looking for Him. He will not tarry past the appointed time.

We have His unqualified promise:

“Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.” Isaiah 40:10.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” 2 Peter 3:9,10.

This is the slumber time of the world, when an irresistible desire for repose has fallen upon men. Spiritual relaxation and drowsiness, like an overmastering stupor, have stolen over the world. This sleepiness that has touched the remnant church, is not a repudiation of the faith, but rather the relaxation of, definite expectation of the speedy approach of Christ's return. It is in the time of waiting that the advent faith is, tried.

Observe that both wise and foolish “slumbered” and “slept.” These are different words in the Greek. “Slumbered” means, rather, that they nodded and became drowsy. It is; the initial stage. Doubtless the wise slumbered, while the foolish “slept. The first is a half involuntary, lethargy; the second is a conscious, deliberate yielding to it.

It was at midnight, late and dark, that hour of deep sleep and danger of fatal surprise that the bridegroom came. The delay and slumber and midnight coalesce. Then comes the warning of a faithful sentinel. The cry is raised by some one not asleep, “Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him.” It is sudden and unexpected, but it is heard by all the sleepers, and all are startled from their slumber. Both groups are taken by surprise, and the foolish wholly unwarned. It is the authoritative notice of his approach, and all must answer the summons. When Christ comes, we must be prepared to meet Him. The coming of the Lord will be the test of our profession. It is in that crisis that all character and inner experience are revealed.

All the virgins are now awake. All trim their lamps, foolish as well as wise. They make all the necessary human preparation possible, and all give forth light. Both look and act the same. The parable is designed to show how up to the very last the unprepared will be confounded with the prepared. But now the real distinction becomes apparent. Not conscious of their real condition, the foolish had a vain confidence in their readiness. But with dismay they suddenly see the flame of their lamps waning and flickering, and they cry, “Our lamps are going out” (verse 8, margin)-and that right at the crucial moment. It was this that discovered to them their fatal lack. It is not enough that any lamp give forth a gleam today. It must blaze forth during the time of trouble, when we stand without an Intercessor.

Christ within, through the Holy Spirit, is our only hope of glory. This is the moat essential truth that we as Seventh-day Adventists have yet to learn. With hearts lulled into security the foolish did not dream of their danger. They were startled from their lethargy, only to discern their dire destitution. It was a terrible discovery, a tragic awakening. They thought they were all right, but found with unspeakable horror that they were all wrong. And the radical difference was the lack of the oil of the Holy Spirit. The form was there, but the Spirit was lacking. The lamp was there, but the oil about exhausted. The Bible was still read, and prayer offered, religious movement was still kept up. There was a name to live but death! It is like the shriveled body of the Roman guard found in the excavated city of Pompei, with helmet and armor on, and bony fingers clasping his spear-but dead. Or like the ship of death, found floating in the Arctic, with a dead helmsman at the wheel, a dead officer with his log book before him, dead seamen in their bunks--a derelict ship of death.

What should these foolish virgins do? They burst into a fit of tears and rage. In a frenzy they entreat the wise to supply their lack. “For mercy's sake, give us of your oil! By our need, we appeal for a few drops,” they plead. Too late they see that the oil is the all essential. Too late they discover their tragic mistake. Yea, the day is coming when the unprepared will frantically seek help from the prepared. The hour is swiftly approaching when some in the church will turn to others, whom they now think are excited and extreme, in piteous appeal. But it will be utterly vain. Man can give the Imp and the wick. In other words, he can teach the Bible to another, but he cannot give the oil, the Holy Spirit. That is God's prerogative solely. There is no use looking to some friend or preacher for this heavenly gift. Each must go to the same Source. Every phase of salvation is a transaction between the individual soul and God. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” Psalm 49:7.

And when the wise respond in refusal, in this part of the parable that takes the form of a dialogue between the foolish and the wise, it simply means that no one has a superfluous amount which can be transferred to another. As relates to the Holy Spirit, none can supply another's lack. It is simply not transferable. The supply is direct from God to the soul. The reality of possessing the oil cannot be

externally transmitted. It must be internally experienced. The foolish had evidently believed in a community of supply, a common stock that would somehow see them through. But it was a false notion. No one will be swept into the harbor on the crest of a general wave. Some will be as dry as Gideon's fleece, with the dews, of the latter rain all about them.

All Essential Oil

We need oil. We want oil. We must have oil. We cannot do without it. Would we not better address ourselves now to our greatest need, remembering it is an individual matter? This holy necessity is not transferable, any more than one man can believe for another. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, said the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Ezekiel 14:20. The wise were not niggardly nor selfish. It was not, theirs to give. And all the lamps would have gone out, had the wise attempted to divide.

The foolish trimmed their wicks. They wanted to buy. They were desperately anxious to repair their irreparable loss. But midnight is, a most unfit time to obtain what they had omitted to secure in a favorable time. The holy oil may be secured by all, but it must be obtained in time. Through Christ a complete supply may be obtained. He alone is the source. But it was too late when they troubled themselves. It was their emptiness of spirit that brought the anguish of despondency. Ah, it is the Second Coming of Christ that will make this internal difference apparent. One, group lift up their heads, for their redemption draws nigh; the other is overwhelmed with unutterable consternation, for it is their undoing.

Where can they get the oil? Not from man, not from the church, not from books, not even from the Bible (I say it reverently), but from God. And then it became too late! While they frantically try to buy, the wise go in to the feast and the door is shut-yes, shut for eternity, never again to be opened. These unwise virgins were as bad off as the worldly young woman who turned away from a friend's appeal, saying, "I want only time enough when I die to say just two words, "Lord, save." But having neglected her soul's preparation, she was suddenly called, and her two words were a wail of despair, "Too late, too late."

They that were ready and had oil, went in. Theirs was a readiness that was internal, not external. It was not a mechanical preparation. The foolish did not realize the call would come so suddenly, and that there would be such a little interval before "the door was shut." Dreadful, fateful words! No hope beyond! They knocked, but there was no response. They pleaded, "Master, open to us," but He replied, "I know you not." Ponder well those words. They are the saddest of all sad words that can ever fall upon the human ear. He had never known them. There had been limited fellowship of Spirit with spirit, but no full abiding of Christ in the heart, no glorious indwelling of the Lord, the Spirit, and they didn't know Him. We may know ten thousand things about Jesus, and never know Him. We cannot live without Jesus here and expect to live with Him in heaven. This is no new principle. Heaven will not be populated with the doubtful.

The foolish virgins were left standing upon the chill and empty street, in the blackness of eternal night. All their labor was lost, all their preparation was useless, all their watching in the cold, dark hours was of no avail. Outside with the rejecters of God! The pity of it all! Why? No oil!

There will be many who will demand entrance and claim admission to the heavenly wedding feast upon the ground of profession of faith and earnest activity. Hear the Master's words: "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are." Luke 13:25. "Not every one that said unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21-23. They say: "Was I not a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?" "Did I not do my share in all our glorious campaigns?" "Was I not a teacher in the Sabbath school?" "Did I not sit on the front seat and fervently cry Amen?" Inexpressibly sad the disappointment! And all so needless! Saying, Lord, Lord, will not, open the door; nor will the recital of our good works unlock the portals of the kingdom. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. There is no admission to others. And that preparation will come only to those who submit to the work and filling and constant supply of the Holy Spirit.

This is the midnight of the world. Spiritual darkness as black as the pit has settled down upon the earth. We have already reached the hour foretold by the prophet, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the

earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee.” Isaiah 60:2. We are now in the slumbering time when the drowsiness of the flesh is joined to the dreadful anesthesia of sin. But it is also the time of the loud cry, centering around the preparation needful to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. Jesus is coming soon, coming suddenly, rapidly, unexpectedly. Are we prepared according to God's specification? How is your lamp today? Is it trimmed and burning bright? Ah, we zealously sing, “O brother, is your lamp trimmed and burning?” That is good, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. There may be a flame, yet the oil be about exhausted. “O brother, is there oil in your vessel?” That is the song that the remnant church needs to sing. That is the prayer we need to offer. That should be the burden of every heart.

How about the oil in the lamp vessel? If the line of demarcation were to fall today, this hour, this moment, on which side would you be found? It is the most important question in the world. May God in His infinite mercy awaken and arouse us each and all.

Murillo, the great Spanish artist, painted a wonderful picture of a monk in a cell writing. Something significant in the face and attitude of the monk strikes the beholder. He had been writing all his life, but before completing his work, death summoned him. He pleaded to be allowed time, to finish his work. He was granted a specified time. The artist depicts him just after he had seized his pen again and resumed his work. Intensity of feeling is thrown into every line of the wan, ghastly face. His were lips that had talked with death, and eyes that had looked on eternity. Convulsive energy marks his posture as he writes. The “powers of the world to come” had laid hold of his soul. God give to us just such intensity of purpose in seeking for the Holy Spirit. And that there is a very real and growing recognition of need, and a reaching after the provision, is blessedly true.

The counsel of the Master to us today is, “Watch you therefore,” lest through carelessness and worldly conformity we be content with the theory, glide along with the stream until it is too late, and be swept over the falls.

True wisdom consists in being always ready according to heaven's program and provisions. And, praise God, there is divine provision for our human infirmity.

We are face to face with eternity. Lord William Russell on his way to the scaffold took out his watch, and handed it to the physician who had attended him. “Will you kindly take my timepiece and keep it? I have no more use for it. I am now dealing with eternity.” Time with us is slipping away. Eternity is coming soon. Are we prepared for the change?

A few years ago I went by ship from Portland, Oregon to San Francisco. It was a stormy, foggy trip, but we safely reached and entered the Golden Gate into the San Francisco harbor. But another ship, following from another port, went down on the rocky coast not far from the desired haven. And the captain was among the missing. I shall never forget the words of the captain's wife, as reported in the newspapers. Instead of the familiar footfall, it was the bearer of the tragic tidings who came to the door of the captain's little cottage. And when she heard, she threw up her hands with the cry, “My God, lost! And so near home! Lost! And so near home!” Such was the fate of the foolish virgins.

But, thank God, the foolish can still become wise. It is not yet too late. This is God's hour to give transforming grace. Casting aside all figures, God is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to those who ask than to bestow any other gift, for in His train all other blessings flow. And without Him the soul is barren and forlorn. Christ withdrew His localized, physical, bodily presence from the earth, so that He might be universally present in each yielded life through the Holy Spirit. Let us buy of Him the oil in this day of opportunity, and permit Him to dwell in the life as the constant source of supply. Then we shall never know the anguish of despair by being left in darkness while others go in to the feast, and the door is shut.