

The Holy Spirit's Moving

MEMORY VERSE: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15).

“Look, O look to Jesus and live!”—*Christian Education*, p. 76.

Suggested Reading: *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 95–102. (At the bottom of this page)

1. PROMPTING INQUIRY

Sunday, Feb 2

a. What question of Nicodemus shows that his heart was softening? John 3:9.

John 3:9

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

“Jesus virtually says to Nicodemus: It is not controversy that will help your case: it is not arguments that will bring light to the soul. You must have a new heart, or you cannot discern the kingdom of heaven. It is not greater evidence that will bring you into a right position, but new purposes, new springs of action. You must be born again. Until this change takes place, making all things new, the strongest evidences that could be presented would be useless. The want is in your own heart; everything must be changed, or you cannot see the kingdom of God.

“This was a very humiliating statement to Nicodemus. . . . He was not spiritually minded enough to discern the meaning of the words of Christ. But the Saviour did not meet argument with argument. . . .

“Some gleams of the truth were penetrating the ruler's mind. Christ's words filled him with awe, and led to the inquiry, ‘How can these things be?’ With deep earnestness Jesus answered, ‘Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?’ His words convey to Nicodemus the lesson that, instead of feeling irritated over the plain words of truth, and indulging irony, he should have a far more humble opinion of himself, because of his spiritual ignorance. Yet the words of Christ were spoken with such solemn dignity, and both look and tone expressed such earnest love to him, that he was not offended as he realized his humiliating position.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 368, 369.

2. CHANGING THE TYPICAL ATTITUDE

Monday, Feb 3

a. In what did the Pharisees pride themselves? Luke 18:9–12.

Luke 18:9–12

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: **10** Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. **11** The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,

God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. **12** I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

“The Jews had been first called into the Lord’s vineyard, and because of this they were proud and self-righteous. Their long years of service they regarded as entitling them to receive a larger reward than others. Nothing was more exasperating to them than an intimation that the Gentiles were to be admitted to equal privileges with themselves in the things of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 400.

b. How did Jesus illustrate the Holy Spirit’s work in the heart? John 3:8.

John 3:8

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

“The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

c. How are divine impressions fixed in the heart? Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 42:3; Matthew 16:17.

Isaiah 30:21

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Jeremiah 42:3

That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

Matthew 16:17

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

“Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God—a patient, protracted process.”—*Ibid.*

“Allow your hearts to be softened and subdued by the Spirit of God. Let icebound souls melt under the Holy Spirit’s working.”—*Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 12, Letter 53, 1897.

3. EVIDENCE OF NEW BIRTH

Tuesday, Feb 4

a. How are inner workings of the Holy Spirit revealed outwardly? Galatians 5:22–25.

Galatians 5:22–25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **23** Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. **24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

“While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

b. When does a person receive the blessing of transformation? Romans 10:9, 10; 1 John 1:9.

Romans 10:9, 10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.”—*Ibid.*

“If you have the Holy Spirit molding and fashioning your heart daily, then you will have divine insight to perceive the character of the kingdom of God. Nicodemus received the lesson of Christ and became a true believer.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 369, 370.

c. How does Christ illustrate this process? Matthew 13:33.

Matthew 13:33

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

“The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 98, 99.

4. A FAMILIAR ILLUSTRATION

Wednesday, Feb 5

a. How did Jesus illustrate His crucifixion soon to occur? John 3:14, 15.

John 3:14, 15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: **15** That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

“[John 3:14, 15 quoted.] Here was ground with which Nicodemus was familiar. The symbol of the uplifted serpent made plain to him the Saviour’s mission. When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass, and place it on high in the midst of the congregation. Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so One made ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ was to be their Redeemer. Romans 8:3. Many of the Israelites regarded the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to set them free from sin. God desired to teach them that it had no more value than that serpent of brass. It was to lead their minds to the Saviour. Whether for the healing of their wounds or the pardon of their sins, they could do nothing for themselves but show their faith in the Gift of God. They were to look and live.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 174, 175.

b. Despite the provision, why did some die? 1 Corinthians 10:9; Hebrews 3:12.

1 Corinthians 10:9

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Hebrews 3:12

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

“Many of the Israelites saw no help in the remedy which Heaven had appointed. The dead and dying were all around them, and they knew that, without divine aid, their own fate was certain; but they continued to lament their wounds, their pains, their sure death, until their strength was gone, and their eyes were glazed, when they might have had instant healing.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 432.

c. If we want to be saved, where must we look? Hebrews 6:19, 20.

Hebrews 6:19, 20

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; **20** Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

“The fatal effects of sin can be removed only by the provision that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God’s word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice. . . . Christ has power and virtue in Himself to heal the repenting sinner.”—*Ibid.*, p. 431.

a. What lesson later understood by Nicodemus do we need to assimilate—and always keep in mind? Ephesians 2:8; Luke 13:20, 21.

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Luke 13:20, 21

And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? **21** It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

“Often the question arises, Why, then, are there so many, claiming to believe God’s word, in whom there is not seen a reformation in words, in spirit, and in character? Why are there so many who cannot bear opposition to their purposes and plans, who manifest an unholy temper, and whose words are harsh, overbearing, and passionate? There is seen in their lives the same love of self, the same selfish indulgence, the same temper and hasty speech, that is seen in the life of the worldling. There is the same sensitive pride, the same yielding to natural inclination, the same perversity of character, as if the truth were wholly unknown to them. The reason is that they are not converted. They have not hidden the leaven of truth in the heart. It has not had opportunity to do its work. Their natural and cultivated tendencies to evil have not been submitted to its transforming power. Their lives reveal the absence of the grace of Christ, an unbelief in His power to transform the character.

“ ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’ Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.’ John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 99, 100.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Friday, Feb 7

- 1. What was the main characteristic of the Pharisees in the days of Christ?**
- 2. Explain how we are regenerated into the likeness of Christ.**
- 3. How is a transformation of the heart manifested?**
- 4. Explain the symbol of the lifted serpent.**
- 5. How does the parable of the leaven reveal growth in God’s grace?**

Suggested Reading: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 95–102.

Many educated and influential men had come to hear the Prophet of Galilee. Some of these looked with curious interest upon the multitude that had gathered about Christ as He taught by the sea. In this great throng all classes of society were represented. There were the poor, the illiterate, the ragged beggar, the robber with the seal of guilt upon his face, the maimed, the dissipated, the merchant and the man of leisure, high and low, rich and poor, all crowding upon one another for a place to stand and hear the words of Christ. As these cultured men gazed upon the strange assembly, they asked themselves, “Is the kingdom of God composed of such material as this?” Again the Saviour replied by a parable: **(COL 95.1)**

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” Matthew 13:33. **(COL 95.2)**

Among the Jews leaven was sometimes used as an emblem of sin. At the time of the Passover the people were directed to remove all the leaven from their houses as they were to put away sin from their hearts. Christ warned His disciples, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” Luke 12:1. And the apostle Paul speaks of the “leaven of malice and wickedness.” 1 Corinthians 5:8. But in the Saviour’s parable, leaven is used to represent the kingdom of heaven. It illustrates the quickening, assimilating power of the grace of God. **(COL 95.3)**

None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of this power. In all who will submit themselves to the Holy Spirit a new principle of life is to be implanted; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity. **(COL 96.1)**

But man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change can be effected. The leaven—something wholly from without—must be put into the meal before the desired change can be wrought in it. So the grace of God must be received by the sinner before he can be fitted for the kingdom of glory. All the culture and education which the world can give will fail of making a degraded child of sin a child of heaven. The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. All who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power. **(COL 96)**

As the leaven, when mingled with the meal, works from within outward, so it is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this or that bad habit, and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart. **(COL 97.1)**

A profession of faith and the possession of truth in the soul are two different things. The mere knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts may not be changed. The heart must be converted and sanctified. **(COL 97.2)**

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. **(COL 97)**

The great truth of the conversion of the heart by the Holy Spirit is presented in Christ’s words to Nicodemus: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he can not see the kingdom of God... That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not

tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.” John 3:3-8, margin. **(COL 98.1)**

The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, “God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:4-8. **(COL 98.2)**

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. **(COL 98)**

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“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.” John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us. **(COL 100.1) 2 I**

The truths of the word of God meet man’s great practical necessity—the conversion of the soul through faith. These grand principles are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. They are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, yet their vital influence is to be woven into human experience. They are to permeate all the great things and all the little things of life. **(COL 100)**

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving. **(COL 101.1) 2 I**

The world regards as a mystery the man who is imbued with this principle. The selfish, money-loving man lives only to secure for himself the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But with the follower of Christ these things will not be all-absorbing. For Christ's sake he will labor and deny self, that he may aid in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Such a man the world cannot understand; for he is keeping in view eternal realities. The love of Christ with its redeeming power has come into the heart. This love masters every other motive, and raises its possessor above the corrupting influence of the world. **(COL 101.2)**

The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ's purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God. **(COL 101)**

The apostle exhorts us, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15, 16. The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice. Its working will be seen in politeness and tender regard shown by brother for brother, in kind, encouraging words. An angel presence is in the home. The life breathes a sweet perfume, which ascends to God as holy incense. Love is manifested in kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering. **(COL 102.1) 2 I**

The countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the heart shines out in the faces of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Truth is written there. The sweet peace of heaven is revealed. There is expressed a habitual gentleness, a more than human love. **(COL 102.2)**

The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through its life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a partaker of divinity. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. **(COL 102.3)**