

Ask and You Shall Receive

By Ellen White

It seems so sad that we praise God so little. Gratitude, praise, and thanksgiving need now to be searched for, and cultivated as lost arts. They are more precious to the Lord Jesus than all the treasures of gold and silver which the earth contains. Every human being should appreciate the kindness and love wherewith God has loved us. When we were yet enemies, Christ gave His life that we might be saved. How much have we appreciated this gift? {ST August 7, 1901, par. 1}

The All-comprehending Gift of the Spirit

In His instruction to His disciples, Christ dwelt upon the great gift of the Spirit, declaring that nothing was too great to be expected from the coming of the divine Spirit. He longed to quicken and enlarge the conception of His disciples by communicating to them His own complete appreciation of God's love, that they might be able to comprehend the value of the gift of all gifts, given by God with the giving of His beloved Son,—the gift of the Holy Spirit. On all who love and serve God this gift has been bestowed. Christ has made provision for all to receive His Spirit; for He desires to see human nature released from the bondage of sin, and, by the power which God gives, renewed, restored, raised to a holy rivalry with the angels. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 2}

To the woman at the well Christ said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.... Whosoever drinketh 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." {ST August 7, 1901, par. 3}

Yes; in giving the Holy Spirit, it was impossible for God to give more. To this gift nothing could be added. By it all needs are supplied. The Holy Spirit is the vital presence of God, and if appreciated will call forth praise and thanksgiving, and will ever be springing up unto everlasting life. The restoration of the Spirit is the covenant of grace. Yet how few appreciate this great gift, so costly, yet so free to all who will accept it? When faith takes hold of the blessing, there comes rich spiritual good. But too often the blessing is not appreciated. We need an enlarged conception in order to comprehend its value. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 4}

A Divine Encouragement to Faith

Christ declared, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish will he for a fish give

him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" {ST August 7, 1901, par. 5}

O what amazing love and condescension! The Lord Jesus encourages His believing ones to ask for the Holy Spirit. By presenting the parental tenderness of God, He seeks to encourage faith in the reception of the gift. The heavenly Parent is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 6}

What greater thing could be promised? What more is necessary to awaken a response in every soul, to inspire us with a longing for the great gift? Shall not our half-hearted supplications be turned into petitions of intense desire for this great blessing? {ST August 7, 1901, par. 7}

We do not ask for enough of the good things God has promised. If we would reach up higher and expect more, our petitions would reveal the quickening influence that comes to every soul who asks with the full expectation of being heard and answered. The Lord is not glorified by the tame supplications which show that nothing is expected. He desires every one who believes, to approach the throne of grace with earnestness and assurance. Do we realize the magnitude of the work in which we are engaged? If we did, there would be more fervency in our prayers. Our entreaties would rise before God with convincing earnestness. We would plead for power as a hungry child pleads for bread. If we realized the greatness of the gift, if we desired the attainment of the blessing, our petitions would ascend with earnestness, importunity, urgency. It would be as if we were at the gate of heaven, soliciting entrance. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 8}

I do not understand the tameness in the requests offered to God. We are to urge our way into the very presence of God, into the Holy Place of the Most High. We are to plead for that which we most need,—the bread of life, the leaf from the tree of life. As Jacob wrestled with the angel, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," so we are to wrestle in prayer until we prevail. We are to ask with an urgency that will not be turned away, that expects God to bestow His blessings with a liberality that is an assurance to all fear. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 9}

"Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and His Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." This is the Word of the Lord, which is Yea and Amen. Then let your prayers be more fervent, more heavily weighted with faith and hope. Let the intensity of your desire be proportionate to the value of the object you wish to obtain. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 10}

The greatness of the gift and our need of it should fill us with a hungering desire for it. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 11}

Have we reason to believe that an earnest application to the Source of all power for the deep moving of the Holy Spirit upon hearts will be crowned with success? Certainly; but before we talk to others in regard to this, let us first talk with God. Plead with Him as if your life was depending upon the gift you desire. Remember that the blessing is promised unconditionally, absolutely, certainly. If you ask in faith, presenting the name of God's Son as your indorsement, your prayer will be heard and answered. God's goodness makes this promise unchangeable. The infallibility of the promise is to inspire faith in the one who asks. "Ask, and ye shall receive." {ST August 7, 1901, par. 12}

We should ask with an earnestness that will not be denied. The Lord has an intense desire that every one should take advance steps in absolute certainty, relying upon God. He is the light and life of all who seek Him. The measure which we receive of the holy influence of His Spirit is proportionate to the measure of our desire to receive, of our faith to grasp, and of our capacity to enjoy the great goodness of the blessing, and to impart it to others. {ST August 7, 1901, par. 13}

Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth." Christ is here presenting a law of the divine government. Asking for the Holy Spirit is connected with receiving this gift. The Lord reads the hearts of all men. He selects from His subjects those He can use, choosing material which can be worked. He selects the most unpromising subjects, and through them magnifies His own wisdom and power by causing them to sit among princes. In all ages He has used human beings to carry out His purposes. He chooses subjects who will not be perverted, who in all righteousness and faith will honor His name. He passes by the men who have perverted the capabilities He has given them, and selects men of His own wisdom, who make Him their trust, their dependence, their efficiency. He hews and polishes the rough stones He has quarried out of the world. He works through men who realize that they must submit to the ax, the chisel, and the hammer, lying passive under the divine hand. Through those who voluntarily submit themselves to Him in all matters, who seek Him in faith and hope, He works out His plans. {ST August 14, 1901, par. 1}

Rightly Asking

Those who ask because they wish to impart to others will not be disappointed. God will reward those who come to Him in earnest faith. He assures us that the thought of His majesty and sovereignty should not keep us in fear. He will do much more graciously than we suppose if we will come to the footstool of His mercy. He urges His sovereignty as a reason for His great and merciful bountifulness in supplying the demands upon Him. He pledges Himself to hear our prayers, declaring that He will hear them. He condescends to appeal from the instinct of parental tenderness to the infinite benevolence of Him whose we are by creation and redemption. He says, "If

ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” The needy and soul-hungry never plead with God in vain. {ST August 14, 1901, par. 2}

Humanity and divinity must be linked together in the experience of every overcomer. In our weakness we are to accept Christ’s power. He gives us the assurance, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” {ST August 14, 1901, par. 3}

In view of this tell me who should wear countenances more bright and cheerful, more full of sunshine, than those who live by faith in the Son of God. In Him the needy and hungry find all their wants supplied. But let us not forget that those whom God has blessed with the good things of this life are to be His helping hand, to supply the necessities of His needy ones. They are to be laborers together with Him. They are—His stewards in trust, and are to use their goods for the advancement of His work, that His name may be glorified. The Lord desires to employ the church as a channel through which to communicate His bounties. If His people would keep the channel open, receiving the spiritual and temporal gifts of His grace, and imparting them to the needy, there would be no sick ones neglected, no orphans crying for food. The hearts of the widow and the fatherless would sing for joy. {ST August 14, 1901, par. 4}

God has given man the richest of His gifts. This He has done that man may dispense His bounties. Medical missionary work and the Gospel ministry are the channels through which God seeks to pour a constant supply of His goodness. They are to be as the river of life for the irrigation of His church. There is not the semblance of an excuse for the lifeless condition of a people who know the plain “Thus saith the Lord.” God calls their attention to the words, “Ye are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” He reminds us that we have only to ask, and we shall receive; to seek, and we shall find; to knock, and it shall be opened unto us. {ST August 14, 1901, par. 5}

Throw open the windows of the soul heavenward, and close them earthward. The Lord has made His church the repository of divine influence. The heavenly universe is waiting for the members to become channels through which the current of life shall flow to the world, that many may be converted, and in their turn become channels through which the grace of Christ shall flow to the desert portions of the Lord’s vineyard. {ST August 14, 1901, par. 6}

The heavenly universe is burdened with the magnitude of the divine gifts which it has to impart. Angels are longing for the great joy of imparting the grace of God to men who will impart it to their fellow-men. The commission is, “Go ye therefore, and

teach all nations." All who belong to the church are commanded to shine. Every receiver of divine grace is held accountable for the souls of those within his reach who are in the darkness of unbelief, ignorant of the rich blessings God is waiting to bestow upon them. {ST August 14, 1901, par. 7}

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Those who take part in the solemn rite of baptism, in the name of the highest authorities of heaven, pledge themselves to come out from the world, to separate themselves from its idolatrous practises. God places His sign upon them, making them members of the royal family. And they on their part pledge themselves before angels and before men to live for Christ. They are buried with Him in baptism in the likeness of His death and raised in the likeness of His resurrection. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on this earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." {ST August 14, 1901, par. 8}

In the day of final accounts, what will the church give as a reason for her strange indifference to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth? My brethren and sisters, keep the temple of God pure and holy, that He may use it to the glory of His name. God will enlarge His faculties and multiply His gifts to you, as you make use of them to gather souls under the blood-stained banner of the Redeemer. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. By yielding to the temptations of the enemy, by losing sight of God, you have lost the sense of what a child of God ought to be. Your powers of perception are clouded. But the way is open for your spiritual life to be reinforced with new power. "Ask, and ye shall receive." {ST August 14, 1901, par. 9}

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