

Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, **Why speakest thou unto them in parables?**

13:11 He answered and said unto them, **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.**

13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13:13 **Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.**

13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

13:16 But **blessed [are] your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.**

13:17 **For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous [men] have desired to see [those things] which ye see, and have not seen [them]; and to hear [those things] which ye hear, and have not heard [them].**

The announcement which had been made by the disciples in the name of the Lord was in every particular correct, and the events to which it pointed were even then taking place. "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand," had been their message. At the expiration of "the time"--the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel 9, which were to extend to the Messiah, "the Anointed One"--Christ had received the anointing of the Spirit after His baptism by John in Jordan. And the "kingdom of God" which they had declared to be at hand was established by the death of Christ. This kingdom was not, as they had been taught to believe, an earthly empire. Nor was it that future, immortal kingdom which shall be set up when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;" that everlasting kingdom, in which "all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Daniel 7:27. As used in the Bible, the expression "kingdom of God" is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is brought to view by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After pointing to Christ, the compassionate intercessor who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," the apostle says: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace." Hebrews 4:15, 16. The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace; for the existence of a throne implies the existence of a kingdom. **In many of His parables Christ uses the expression "the kingdom of heaven" to designate the work of divine grace upon the hearts of men.** {GC 346.4}

13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, **The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:**

13:31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, **The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:**

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.**

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}

13:44 Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.**

13:45 Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:**

Christ "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:11. The light of God shone into the darkness of the world, and "the darkness comprehended it not." John 1:5. But not all were found indifferent to the gift of heaven. The merchantman in the parable represents a class who were sincerely desiring truth. In different nations there were earnest and thoughtful men who had sought in literature and science and the religions of the heathen world for that which they could receive as the soul's treasure. Among the Jews there were those who were seeking for that which they had not. Dissatisfied with a formal religion, they longed for that which was spiritual and uplifting. Christ's chosen disciples belonged to the latter class, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch to the former. They had been longing and praying for light from heaven; and when Christ was revealed to them, they received Him with gladness. {COL 116.1}

13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

13:47 Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:**

13:48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

13:51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore **every scribe [which is] instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man [that is] an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure [things] new and old.**

If the teacher has learned his lessons from Jesus Christ, and has learned for the purpose of bringing these lessons fully into his own life, he can teach successfully. Those who are daily learners of the Great Teacher will have a most precious treasure house from which to draw things new and old. {CT 184.1}

In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. **Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar.** {COL 17.1}

The Scripture says, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matthew 13:34, 35. Natural things were the medium for the spiritual; the things of nature and the life-experience of His hearers were connected with the truths of the written word. Leading thus from the natural to the spiritual kingdom, **Christ's parables are links in the chain of truth that unites man with God, and earth with heaven.** {COL 17.2}

Chap. 8 - Hidden Treasure

"Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field.**" {COL 103.1}

In ancient times it was customary for men to hide their treasures in the earth. Thefts and robberies were frequent. And whenever there was a change in the ruling power, those who had large possessions were liable to be put under heavy tribute. Moreover the country was in constant danger of invasion by marauding armies. As a consequence, the rich endeavored to preserve their wealth by concealing it, and the earth was looked upon as a safe hiding place. But often the place of concealment was forgotten; death might claim the owner, imprisonment or exile might separate him from his treasure, and the wealth he had taken such pains to preserve was left for the fortunate finder. In Christ's day it was not uncommon to discover in neglected land old coins and ornaments of gold and silver. {COL 103.2}

A man hires land to cultivate, and as the oxen plow the soil, buried treasure is unearthed. As the man discovers this treasure, he sees that a fortune is within his reach. Restoring the gold to its hiding place, he returns to his home and sells all that he has, in order to purchase the field containing the treasure. **His family and his neighbors think that he is acting like a madman.** Looking on the field, they see no value in the neglected soil. **But the man knows what he is doing; and when he has a title to the field, he searches every part of it to find the treasure that he has secured.** {COL 103.3}

This parable illustrates the value of the heavenly treasure, and the effort that should be made to secure it. The finder of the treasure in the field was ready to part with all that he had, ready to put forth untiring labor, in order to secure the hidden riches. So the finder of heavenly treasure will count no labor too great and no sacrifice too dear, in order to gain the treasures of truth. {COL 104.1}

In the parable the field containing the treasure represents the Holy Scriptures. And the gospel is the treasure. The earth itself is not so interlaced with golden veins and filled with precious things as is the word of God. {COL 104.2}

Field = Holy Scriptures

Gospel = the treasure

How Hidden

The treasures of the gospel are said to be hidden. By those who are wise in their own estimation, who are puffed up by the teaching of vain philosophy, the beauty and power and mystery of the plan of redemption are not perceived. **Many have eyes, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; they have intellect, but they discern not the hidden treasure.** {COL 104.3}

A man might pass over the place where treasure had been concealed. In dire necessity he might sit down to rest at the foot of a tree, **not knowing of the riches hidden at its roots.** So it was with the Jews. As a golden treasure, truth had been intrusted to the Hebrew people. The Jewish economy, bearing the signature of Heaven, had been instituted by Christ Himself. **In types and symbols the great truths of redemption were veiled.** Yet when Christ came, the Jews did not recognize Him to whom all these symbols pointed. **They had the word of God in their hands; but the traditions which had been handed down from generation to generation, and the human interpretation of the Scriptures, hid from them the truth as it is in Jesus.** The spiritual import of the sacred writings was lost. The treasure house of all knowledge was open to them, but they knew it not. {COL 104.4}

God does not conceal His truth from men. By their own course of action they make it obscure to themselves. Christ gave the Jewish people abundant evidence that He was the Messiah; but His teaching called for a decided change in their lives. They saw that if they received Christ, they must give up their cherished maxims and traditions, their selfish, ungodly practices. It required a sacrifice to receive changeless, eternal truth. Therefore they would not admit the most conclusive evidence that God could give to establish faith in Christ. They professed to believe the Old Testament Scriptures, yet they refused to accept the testimony contained therein concerning Christ's life and character. They were afraid of being convinced lest they should be converted and be compelled to give up their preconceived opinions. The treasure of the gospel, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, was among them, but they rejected the greatest gift that Heaven could bestow. {COL 105.1}

"Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him," we read; "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." John 12:42. They were convinced; they believed Jesus to be the Son of God; but it was not in harmony with their ambitious desires to confess Him. **They had not the faith that would have secured for them the heavenly treasure.** They were seeking worldly treasure. {COL 105.2}

And today men are eagerly seeking for earthly treasure. Their minds are filled with selfish, ambitious thoughts. For the sake of gaining worldly riches, honor, or power, they place the maxims, traditions, and requirements of men above the requirements of God. From them the treasures of His word are hidden. {COL 106.1}

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Corinthians 2:14. {COL 106.2}

"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4. {COL 106.3}

Value of the Treasure

Laodicea = Covetousness

The Saviour saw that **men were absorbed in getting gain**, and were losing sight of eternal realities. He undertook to correct this evil. He sought to break the infatuating spell that was paralyzing the soul. Lifting up His voice He cried, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26. **He presents before fallen humanity the nobler world they have lost sight of, that they may behold eternal realities. He takes them to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the indescribable glory of God, and shows them the treasure there.** {COL 106.4}

The value of this treasure is above gold or silver. The riches of earth's mines cannot compare with it.

"The depth saith, It is not in me;
And the sea saith, It is not with me.
It can not be gotten for gold,
Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.
It can not be valued with the gold of Ophir,
With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.
The gold and the crystal can not equal it;
And the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.
No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls,
For the price of wisdom is above rubies."

Job 28:14-18. {COL 107.1}

This is the treasure that is found in the Scriptures. The Bible is God's great lesson book, His great educator. The foundation of all true science is contained in the Bible. **Every branch of knowledge may be found by searching the word of God. And above all else it contains the science of all sciences, the science of salvation. The Bible is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.** {COL 107.2}

The true higher education is gained by studying and obeying the word of God. But when God's word is laid aside for books that do not lead to God and the kingdom of heaven, the education acquired is a perversion of the name. {COL 107.3}

There are wonderful truths in nature. The earth, the sea, and the sky are full of truth. They are our teachers. Nature utters her voice in lessons of heavenly wisdom and eternal truth. But fallen man will not understand. Sin has obscured

his vision, and he cannot of himself interpret nature without placing it above God. **Correct lessons cannot impress the minds of those who reject the word of God.** The teaching of nature is by them so perverted that it turns the mind away from the Creator. {COL 107.4}

By many, man's wisdom is thought to be higher than the wisdom of the divine Teacher, and God's lesson book is looked upon as old-fashioned, stale, and uninteresting. But **by those who have been vivified by the Holy Spirit it is not so regarded. They see the priceless treasure, and would sell all to buy the field that contains it.** Instead of books containing the suppositions of reputedly great authors, they choose the word of Him who is the greatest author and the greatest teacher the world has ever known, who gave His life for us, that through Him we might have everlasting life. {COL 107.5}

Satan works on human minds

A Power for Good, a Power for Evil.--The influence of mind on mind, so strong a power for good when sanctified, is equally strong for evil in the hands of those opposed to God. This power Satan used in his work of instilling evil into the minds of the angels, and he made it appear that he was seeking the good of the universe. As the anointed cherub, Lucifer had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. Many of them listened to his suggestions and believed his words. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven" (Revelation 12:8).--Lt 114, 1903. (7BC 973.) {1MCP 23.3}

To a large degree Satan has succeeded in the execution of his plans. **Through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind,** he prevailed on Adam to sin. Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted. And **ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind.** Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin. {RH, April 16, 1901 par. 5}

Mutual dependence is a wonderful thing. Reciprocal influence should be carefully studied. We should find out without doubt on what side we are exerting our influence. **When placed on the side of right, influence is a power for God;** when placed on the side of evil, it is a power for Satan. One human being under Satan's control becomes a means of temptation to another human being. Thus evil grows into immense proportions. {RH, April 16, 1901 par. 6}

Satan Uses Influences of Mind on Mind.--Cast out of heaven, Satan set up his kingdom in this world, and ever since he has been untiringly striving to seduce human beings from their allegiance to God. He uses the same power that he used in heaven--the influence of mind on mind. Men become tempters of their fellowmen. The strong, corrupting sentiments of Satan are cherished, and they exert a masterly, compelling power. Under the influence of these sentiments, men bind up with one another in confederacies, in trade unions, and in secret societies. There are at work in the world agencies that God will not much longer tolerate.--Lt 114, 1903. {1MCP 28.3}

Satan's Studied Purpose to Employ Powers for Selfish Ends.--Satan has nets and snares, like the snares of the fowler, all prepared to entrap souls. **It is his studied purpose that men shall employ their God-given powers for selfish ends rather than yield them to glorify God. God would have men engage in a work that will bring them peace and joy and will render them eternal profit; but Satan wants us to concentrate our efforts for that which profiteth not, for the things that perish with the using.**--RH, Sept 1, 1910. (HC 200.) {1MCP 28.4}

sphere of influence (or interest)

plural noun: **spheres of influence**

1. a country or area in which another country has power to affect developments although it has no formal authority.

synonyms: area, field, compass, orbit; More

range, scope, extent;
jurisdiction, remit;
informal bailiwick, turf, patch
"Russia's sphere of influence"

- a field or area in which an individual or organization has power to affect events and developments.

Spheres of influence in the loose or nonlegal sense of the term date to the beginning of recorded history. As a tool of great power or imperial control, the assertion of spheres of influence can bring order to [peripheral](#) areas but can contribute to conflicts when rival powers seek exclusive influence in the same area or when secondary or client states resist subordination. In antiquity, conflicts between Rome and Carthage for exclusive influence in peripheral areas of the western Mediterranean led to the [Punic Wars](#) beginning in the 3rd century BCE. More recently, the [Monroe Doctrine](#) (1823) effectively asserted a [U.S.](#) sphere of influence in the "New World" by excluding further European colonization in the Americas, presaging later U.S. interventions in the internal affairs of smaller neighbours. **In the aftermath of [World War II](#), the [Soviet Union](#) created a sphere of influence as a political fact in the territories of the nations of eastern Europe.**

Results of Neglecting the Treasure

Satan works on human minds, leading them to think that there is wonderful knowledge to be gained apart from God. By deceptive reasoning he led Adam and Eve to doubt God's word, and to supply its place with a theory that led to disobedience. And his sophistry is doing today what it did in Eden. Teachers who mingle the sentiments of infidel authors with the education they are giving, plant in the minds of youth thoughts that will lead to distrust of God and transgression of His law. Little do they know what they are doing. Little do they realize what will be the result of their work. {COL 108.1}

A student may go through all the grades of the schools and colleges of today. He may devote all his powers to acquiring knowledge. **But unless he has a knowledge of God, unless he obeys the laws that govern his being, he will destroy himself.** By wrong habits he loses his power of self-appreciation. He loses self-control. He cannot reason correctly about matters that concern him most closely. He is reckless and irrational in his treatment of mind and body. By wrong habits he makes of himself a wreck. Happiness he cannot have; for his neglect to cultivate pure, healthful principles places him under the control of habits that ruin his peace. His years of taxing study are lost, for he has destroyed himself. He has misused his physical and mental powers, and the temple of the body is in ruins. He is ruined for this life and for the life to come. By acquiring earthly knowledge he thought to gain a treasure, but by laying his Bible aside he sacrificed a treasure worth everything else. {COL 108.2}

Search for the Treasure

The word of God is to be our study. We are to educate our children in the truths found therein. It is an inexhaustible treasure; but men fail to find this treasure because they do not search until it is within their possession. Very many are content with a supposition in regard to the truth. They are content with a surface work, taking for granted that they have all that is essential. They take the sayings of others for truth, being too indolent to put themselves to diligent, earnest labor, represented in the word as digging for hidden treasure. But man's inventions are not only unreliable, they are dangerous; for they place man where God should be. They place the sayings of men where a "Thus saith the Lord" should be. {COL 109.1}

Christ is the truth. His words are truth, and **they have a deeper significance than appears on the surface. All the sayings of Christ have a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy**

Spirit will discern the value of these sayings. They will discern the precious gems of truth, though these may be buried treasures. {COL 110.1}

Human theories and speculations will never lead to an understanding to God's word. Those who suppose that they understand philosophy think that their explanations are necessary to unlock the treasures of knowledge and to prevent heresies from coming into the church. But it is these explanations that have brought in false theories and heresies. Men have made desperate efforts to explain what they thought to be intricate scriptures; but too often their efforts have only darkened that which they tried to make clear. {COL 110.2}

The priests and Pharisees thought they were doing great things as teachers by putting their own interpretation upon the word of God, but Christ said of them, "Ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24. He charged them with the guilt of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Mark 7:7. Though they were the teachers of the oracles of God, though they were supposed to understand His word, they were not doers of the word. Satan had blinded their eyes that they should not see its true import. {COL 110.3}

This is the work of many in our day. Many churches are guilty of this sin. There is danger, great danger, that the supposed wise men of today will repeat the experience of the Jewish teachers. They falsely interpret the divine oracles, and souls are brought into perplexity and shrouded in darkness because of their misconception of divine truth. {COL 110.4}

The Scriptures need not be read by the dim light of tradition or human speculation. As well might we try to give light to the sun with a torch as to explain the Scriptures by human tradition or imagination. God's holy word needs not the torchlight glimmer of earth to make its glories distinguishable. It is light in itself--the glory of God revealed, and beside it every other light is dim. {COL 111.1}

But there must be earnest study and close investigation. **Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. No earthly blessing can be obtained without earnest, patient, persevering effort.** If men attain success in business, they must have a will to do and a faith to look for results. **And we cannot expect to gain spiritual knowledge without earnest toil. Those who desire to find the treasures of truth must dig for them as the miner digs for the treasure hidden in the earth. No halfhearted, indifferent work will avail. It is essential for old and young, not only to read God's word, but to study it with wholehearted earnestness, praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure. Those who do this will be rewarded, for Christ will quicken the understanding.** {COL 111.2}

Our salvation depends on a knowledge of the truth contained in the Scriptures. It is God's will that we should possess this. **Search, O search the precious Bible with hungry hearts. Explore God's word as the miner explores the earth to find veins of gold. Never give up the search until you have ascertained your relation to God and His will in regard to you. Christ declared, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."** John 14:13, 14. {COL 111.3}

Men of piety and talent catch views of eternal realities, **but often they fail of understanding, because the things that are seen eclipse the glory of the unseen. He who would seek successfully for the hidden treasure must rise to higher pursuits than the things of this world. His affections and all His capabilities must be consecrated to the search.** {COL 112.1}

Disobedience has closed the door to a vast amount of knowledge that might have been gained from the Scriptures. Understanding means obedience to God's commandments. The Scriptures are not to be adapted to meet the prejudice and jealousy of men. **They can be understood only by those who are humbly seeking for a knowledge of the truth that they may obey it.** {COL 112.2}

Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? **You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation. If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit**

your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God's word. {COL 112.3}

Faith in Christ as the world's Redeemer calls for an acknowledgment of the enlightened intellect controlled by a heart that can discern and appreciate the heavenly treasure. **This faith is inseparable from repentance and transformation of character. To have faith means to find and accept the gospel treasure, with all the obligations which it imposes.** {COL 112.4}

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. He may conjecture and imagine, but without the eye of faith he cannot see the treasure. Christ gave His life to secure for us this inestimable treasure; but without regeneration through faith in His blood, there is no remission of sins, no treasure for any perishing soul. {COL 112.5}

We need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in order to discern the truths in God's word. The lovely things of the natural world are not seen until the sun, dispelling the darkness, floods them with its light. **So the treasures in the word of God are not appreciated until they are revealed by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.** {COL 113.1}

The Holy Spirit, sent from heaven by the benevolence of infinite love, takes the things of God and reveals them to every soul that has an implicit faith in Christ. By His power the vital truths upon which the salvation of the soul depends are impressed upon the mind, and the way of life is made so plain that none need err therein. **As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God's Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures.** {COL 113.2}

Reward of Searching

Let none think that there is no more knowledge for them to gain. The depth of human intellect may be measured; the works of human authors may be mastered; but the highest, deepest, broadest flight of the imagination cannot find out God. There is infinity beyond all that we can comprehend. We have seen only the glimmering of divine glory and of the infinitude of knowledge and wisdom; we have, as it were, been working on the surface of the mine, when rich golden ore is beneath the surface, to reward the one who will dig for it. **The shaft must be sunk deeper and yet deeper in the mine, and the result will be glorious treasure. Through a correct faith, divine knowledge will become human knowledge.** {COL 113.3}

No one can search the Scriptures in the spirit of Christ without being rewarded. **When man is willing to be instructed as a little child, when he submits wholly to God, he will find the truth in His word.** If men would be obedient, they would understand the plan of God's government. The heavenly world would open its chambers of grace and glory for exploration. Human beings would be altogether different from what they now are, for **by exploring the mines of truth men would be ennobled. The mystery of redemption, the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice, would not be as they are now, vague in our minds. They would be not only better understood, but altogether more highly appreciated.** {COL 114.1}

In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. "This is life eternal," He said, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe. {COL 114.2}

This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it. {COL 114.3}

"If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Proverbs 2:3-5. {COL 114.4}

Chap. 9 - The Pearl

The blessings of redeeming love our Savior compared to a precious pearl. He illustrated His lesson by the parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Christ Himself is the pearl of great price. In Him is gathered all the glory of the Father, the fullness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in His character. Every page of the Holy Scriptures shines with His light. The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God. It is without a flaw. In Christ are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:3. He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Corinthians 1:30. All that can satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul, for this world and for the world to come, is found in Christ. Our Redeemer is the pearl so precious that in comparison all things else may be accounted loss. {COL 115.1}

Christ "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:11. The light of God shone into the darkness of the world, and "the darkness comprehended it not." John 1:5. But not all were found indifferent to the gift of heaven. The merchantman in the parable represents a class who were sincerely desiring truth. In different nations there were earnest and thoughtful men who had sought in literature and science and the religions of the heathen world for that which they could receive as the soul's treasure. Among the Jews there were those who were seeking for that which they had not. Dissatisfied with a formal religion, they longed for that which was spiritual and uplifting. Christ's chosen disciples belonged to the latter class, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch to the former. They had been longing and praying for light from heaven; and when Christ was revealed to them, they received Him with gladness. {COL 116.1}

In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the pearl of great price. {COL 116.2}

Salvation is a free gift, and yet it is to be bought and sold. In the market of which divine mercy has the management, the precious pearl is represented as being bought without money and without price. In this market all may obtain the goods of heaven. The treasury of the jewels of truth is open to all. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door," the Lord declares, "and no man can shut it." No sword guards the way through this door. Voices from within and at the door say, Come. The Saviour's voice earnestly and lovingly invites us: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." Revelation 3:8, 18. {COL 116.3}

The gospel of Christ is a blessing that all may possess. The poorest are as well able as the richest to purchase salvation; for no amount of worldly wealth can secure it. It is obtained by willing obedience, by giving ourselves to Christ as His own purchased possession. Education, even of the highest class, cannot of itself bring a man nearer to God. The Pharisees were favored with every temporal and every spiritual advantage, and they said with boastful pride, We are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"; yet they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind,

and naked." Revelation 3:17. Christ offered them the pearl of great price; but they disdained to accept it, and He said to them, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matthew 21:31. {COL 117.1}

We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it. {COL 117.2}

We are to seek for the pearl of great price, but not in worldly marts or in worldly ways. The price we are required to pay is not gold or silver, for this belongs to God. Abandon the idea that temporal or spiritual advantages will win for you salvation. God calls for your willing obedience. He asks you to give up your sins. "To him that overcometh," Christ declares, "will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Revelation 3:21. {COL 117.3}

There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost. {COL 118.1}

The parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls has a double significance: it applies not only to men as seeking the kingdom of heaven, but to Christ as seeking His lost inheritance. Christ, the heavenly merchantman seeking goodly pearls, saw in lost humanity the pearl of price. In man, defiled and ruined by sin, He saw the possibilities of redemption. Hearts that have been the battleground of the conflict with Satan, and that have been rescued by the power of love, are more precious to the Redeemer than are those who have never fallen. God looked upon humanity, not as vile and worthless; He looked upon it in Christ, saw it as it might become through redeeming love. He collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to buy the pearl. And Jesus, having found it, resets it in His own diadem. "For they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land." Zechariah 9:16. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Malachi 3:17. {COL 118.2}

But Christ as the precious pearl, and our privilege of possessing this heavenly treasure, is the theme on which we most need to dwell. It is the Holy Spirit that reveals to men the preciousness of the goodly pearl. The time of the Holy Spirit's power is the time when in a special sense the heavenly gift is sought and found. In Christ's day many heard the gospel, but their minds were darkened by false teaching, and they did not recognize in the humble Teacher of Galilee the Sent of God. But after Christ's ascension His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom was signalized by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit was given. Christ's witnesses proclaimed the power of the risen Saviour. The light of heaven penetrated the darkened minds of those who had been deceived by the enemies of Christ. They now saw Him exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. They saw Him encircled with the glory of heaven, with infinite treasures in His hands to bestow upon all who would turn from their rebellion. As the apostles set forth the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, three thousand souls were convicted. They were made to see themselves as they were, sinful and polluted, and Christ as their friend and Redeemer. Christ was lifted up, Christ was glorified, through the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon men. By faith these believers saw Him as the One who had borne humiliation, suffering, and death that they might not perish but have everlasting life. The revelation of Christ by the Spirit brought to them a realizing sense of His power and majesty, and they stretched forth their hands to Him by faith, saying, "I believe." {COL 118.3}

Then the glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost bounds of the inhabited world. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Believers were reconverted. Sinners united with Christians in seeking the pearl of great price. The prophecy was fulfilled, The weak shall be "as David," and the house of David "as the angel of the Lord." Zechariah 12:8. Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of benevolence and love. One interest prevailed. One object swallowed up all others. All hearts beat in harmony. The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character, and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. . . . With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the

Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:32, 33. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47. The Spirit of Christ animated the whole congregation; for they had found the pearl of great price. {COL 120.1}

These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fulness by the Holy Spirit's power. Men will discern the value of the precious pearl, and with the apostle Paul they will say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Philippians 3:7, 8. {COL 121.1}

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