

A photograph of several white iris flowers with yellow centers, growing in a garden. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a lush green garden with other plants and a small stream or pond visible in the lower right.

Christian Character (IV)

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

October-December 2005

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

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Foreword

This year, Sabbath school students around the world have been studying *Christian Character*, based on Peter's ladder of progress found in 2 Peter 1:5-7, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." We are reminded that these beautiful qualities of character are achieved in their purity only by our cooperating with the power of God, "according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (verses 3, 4).

In progressing up this ladder, examining all that is implied along the way, our studies during this last quarter will place great emphasis on the uppermost rungs —brotherly kindness and finally, charity. What a wonderful quality is charity! The people of the world may speak of love, but their love is usually based on some kind of selfish motives. The Greek language uses various words which are translated as love, including *phileo* which is love among family and friends, *eros*, romantic love between a husband and wife, and *agape*, which is totally unselfish love that one gives to others in service, expecting nothing in return. This *agape* love is what reigns in Heaven and is a sure sign of the moving of the Holy Spirit in human hearts—the most powerful testimony that can be made of our Lord's mission to this planet.

We need much more of this *agape* love known as charity. In fact, "the greatest cause of our inefficiency as a people is lack of faith and of love. These principles are essential for our prosperity as a people."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 14.

"The greatest of all gifts, all talents, is true, Christlike love. It is the brightest evidence of the power of religion. By it, a daily witness for Christ is borne to the world. The Lord calls upon His churches to manifest this love."—*The Signs of the Times*, October 2, 1901.

Brethren and sisters, let us each cultivate these choicest qualities of Christian character, that by God's grace we may indeed ascend to the uppermost rungs of this ladder in our daily life!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

for the Myanmar Sabbath School Development



The south Asian country of Myanmar, formerly Burma, is home to 43 million inhabitants. The vast majority of the population, upwards of 85%, are Buddhists. A land of wondrous beauty with majestic mountains and pristine coastlines along the Indian Ocean has often been overshadowed by internal ethnic and political conflict.

The message of Reformation reached Burma in the mid-twentieth century. Originally starting as a Mission, the work here has now been organized into a self-sustaining Field within the Asian Region. By the grace of God the believers here, though poor in the things of this world, have still been able to spread the gospel and even reach new interests in surrounding countries such as Thailand.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department has been analyzing the mission work in the Himalayan countries and has decided that Burma is an excellent location from which to develop the literature work throughout the Region. The offering collected today will be used to prepare literature in local languages that will be more accessible to people living in isolated mountain communities. By providing lessons in their own tribal languages we make it easier for missionaries to reach the hearts of people living far from Christian influences.

Please consider the literature work in Burma and the surrounding countries as you prepare your offering for this special collection.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

PROJECT GCSSD

Patience

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:36).

“Patience pours the balm of peace and love into the experiences of the home life. . . . Patience will seek for unity in the church, in the family, and in the community. This grace must be woven into our lives.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 21, 1888.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 723–739.

Sunday

September 25

1. TEMPERANCE BEFORE PATIENCE

a. Why does temperance precede patience? 2 Peter 1:6.

“Any habit or practice which will weaken the nerve and brain power or the physical strength disqualifies for the exercise of the next grace which comes in after temperance—patience.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 69.

“It is next to an impossibility for an intemperate person to be patient. Some of us have a nervous temperament, and are naturally as quick as a flash to think and to act; but let no one think that he cannot learn to become patient. Patience is a plant that will make rapid growth if carefully cultivated”—*My Life Today*, p. 97.

“When we lie down to rest, the stomach should have its work all done, that it, as well as the other organs of the body, may enjoy rest. For persons of sedentary habits, late suppers are particularly harmful. With them the disturbance created is often the beginning of disease that ends in death.

“In many cases the faintness that leads to a desire for food is felt because the digestive organs have been too severely taxed during the day. After disposing of one meal, the digestive organs need rest. At least five or six hours should intervene between the meals, and most persons who give the plan a trial will find that two meals a day are better than three.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 304.

2. HELPING THE LITTLE ONES BE PATIENT

- a. How can temperance help children develop sweet tempers? Proverbs 22:6.
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“The first education children should receive from the mother in infancy should be in regard to their physical health. They should be allowed only plain food, of that quality that would preserve to them the best condition of health, and that should be partaken of only at regular periods, not oftener than three times a day, and two meals would be better than three. If children are disciplined aright, they will soon learn that they can receive nothing by crying or fretting. A judicious mother will act in training her children, not merely in regard to her own present comfort, but for their future good.”—*A Solemn Appeal*, p. 137.

- b. What did Sister White confirm in her own experience with helping various children in her home? 1 Corinthians 10:31.
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“For more than twelve years we have taken only two meals each day, of plain, unstimulating food. During that time, we have had almost constantly the care of children, varying in age from three to thirteen years. We worked gradually and carefully to change their habit of eating three times a day to two; we also worked cautiously to change their diet from stimulating food, as meat, rich gravies, pies, cakes, butter, spices, etc., to simple, wholesome fruits, vegetables, and grains. The consequence has been that our children have not been troubled with the various maladies to which children are more or less subject. They occasionally take cold by reason of carelessness, but this seldom makes them sick. . . .

“Children reared in this way are much more easily controlled than those who are indulged in eating everything their appetite craves, and at all times. They are usually cheerful, contented, and healthy. Even the most stubborn, passionate, and wayward, have become submissive, patient, and possessed of self-control by persistently following up this order of diet, united with a firm but kind management in regard to other matters.”—*The Health Reformer*, May 1, 1877.

3. EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE

- a. What did God say about Job’s character? Job 1:1, 8.
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- b. What should we learn from Job’s reaction to Satan’s first devastating attack against his children and properties? Job 1:13–22.
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“Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment. It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 460.

- c. Having destroyed Job’s children and their possessions, how did Satan further try to discourage the patriarch? Job 2:3–8.
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“[Job 1:12; 2:6 quoted.] Thus permitted, Satan swept away all that Job possessed—flocks and herds, menservants and maidens, sons and daughters; and he ‘smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown’ (chapter 2:7).”—*Education*, p. 155.

- d. What did Job’s wife suggest he should do and what was his response? Job 2:9, 10.
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“Job was deprived of his worldly possessions, and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives and friends; yet he maintained his integrity.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 575.

- e. How does Isaiah’s prophecy describe Christ’s attitude before His enemies? Isaiah 53:7. What should we learn from the way this prophecy was fulfilled? Mark 14:60–62.
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4. ARRAIGNMENT AND CRUCIFIXION

- a. What was Christ's procedure before Pilate's and Herod's courts? Matthew 27:11–14; Luke 23:6–9.

“Standing behind Pilate, in view of all in the court, Christ heard the abuse; but to all the false charges against Him He answered not a word. His whole bearing gave evidence of conscious innocence. He stood unmoved by the fury of the waves that beat about Him. It was as if the heavy surges of wrath, rising higher and higher, like the waves of the boisterous ocean, broke about Him, but did not touch Him. He stood silent, but His silence was eloquence. It was as a light shining from the inner to the outer man. Pilate was astonished at His bearing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 726.

- b. How did Christ react during His crucifixion? Luke 23:33–47.

“Arriving at the place of execution, the prisoners were bound to the instruments of torture. The two thieves wrestled in the hands of those who placed them on the cross; but Jesus made no resistance. The mother of Jesus, supported by John the beloved disciple, had followed the steps of her Son to Calvary. She had seen Him fainting under the burden of the cross, and had longed to place a supporting hand beneath His wounded head, and to bathe that brow which had once been pillowed upon her bosom. But she was not permitted this mournful privilege. . . .

“The Saviour made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34). His mind passed from His own suffering to the sin of His persecutors, and the terrible retribution that would be theirs. No curses were called down upon the soldiers who were handling Him so roughly. No vengeance was invoked upon the priests and rulers, who were gloating over the accomplishment of their purpose. Christ pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. He breathed only a plea for their forgiveness—‘for they know not what they do.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 744.

5. PATIENCE—THE RESULT OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

- a. What is the only way we can develop patience? Romans 5:1–5.

“All who stand unshrinkingly in the forefront of the battle must feel the special warfare of Satan against them. As they realize his attacks, they will flee to the Stronghold. They feel their need of special strength from God, and they labor in His strength; therefore the victories they gain do not exalt them, but lead them in faith to lean more securely upon the Mighty One. Deep and fervent gratitude to God is awakened in their hearts, and they are joyful in the tribulation which they experience while pressed by the enemy. These willing servants are gaining an experience and forming a character which will do honor to the cause of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 510.

- b. How does patience promote our missionary efforts? 2 Corinthians 6:3–10.

“Patience as well as courage has its victories. By meekness under trial, no less than by boldness in enterprise, souls may be won to Christ. The Christian who manifests patience and cheerfulness under bereavement and suffering, who meets even death itself with the peace and calmness of an unwavering faith, may accomplish for the gospel more than he could have effected by a long life of faithful labor.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 465.

- c. What is one identification of God's remnant people? Revelation 14:12.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you define patience according to the Bible?
2. Why is temperance necessary in developing patience?
3. Summarize the experience of Job.
4. What is written about Christ's patience?
5. Is patience the cause or the result of justification before God?

Brotherly Kindness

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).

“One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 262.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 677, 678.

Sunday

October 2

1. BROTHERLY LOVE

- a. **What is written about the early Christian church? Acts 4:32–35. When was this love manifested?**

“After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth’s sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts.

“Such a love the believers were ever to cherish. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment. So closely were they to be united with Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill all His requirements. Their lives were to magnify the power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 547, 548.

- b. **How did Paul exhort the Thessalonian believers in this regard? 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 10.**

“One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 262.

Monday

October 3

2. EXHORTATIONS TO THE HEBREWS

- a. **What essential theme is included in Paul’s message to the believing Jews? Hebrews 13:1–3; Matthew 25:40.**

“Paul exhorts the Hebrews: ‘Let brotherly love continue.’ Do not flatter yourselves that there is a time when this exhortation will not be needed; when brotherly love may cease. He continues: ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares’ [Hebrews 13:1, 2]. Please read Matthew 25:31 and onward. Read it, brethren, the next time you take the Bible at your morning or evening family devotions. The good works performed by those who are to be welcomed to the kingdom were done to Christ in the person of His suffering people. Those who had done these good works did not see that they had done anything for Christ. They had done no more than their duty to suffering humanity. Those on the left hand could not see that they had abused Christ in neglecting the wants of His people. But they had neglected to do for Jesus in the person of His saints, and for this neglect they were to go away into everlasting punishment. And one definite point of their neglect is thus stated: ‘I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 679, 680.

“It is the will of God that union and brotherly love should exist among His people. The prayer of Christ just before His crucifixion was that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father, that the world might believe that God had sent Him. This most touching and wonderful prayer reaches down the ages, even to our day; for His words were, ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.’ While we are not to sacrifice one principle of truth, it should be our constant aim to reach this state of unity. This is the evidence of our discipleship. Said Jesus, ‘By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another’ (John 17:20; 13:35).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 520.

- b. **How only can we climb the Christian ladder successfully? Hebrews 12:1–4.**

“All [the] successive steps [in Peter’s ladder] are not to be kept before the mind’s eye, and counted as you start; but fixing the eye upon Jesus, with an eye single to the glory of God, you will make advancement.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 5, 1893.

3. THE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH

- a. What special promise is included in the prophecy given to the church of Philadelphia? Revelation 3:7–12.

“The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love—love that ‘vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil’ (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5)—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 549.

- b. How can we who live in the period of Laodicea partake of the wonderful promise given to the Philadelphia church? Revelation 3:21; 20:4.

“Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai.

“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another's feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.”—*Early Writings*, p. 15.

4. BUILDING ON A NEW COMMANDMENT

- a. What position does brotherly kindness hold in the ladder of Christian perfection? 2 Peter 1:7.

“We should have that love for others that Christ has had for us. A man is estimated at his true value by the Lord of heaven. If he is unkind in his earthly home, he is unfit for the heavenly home. If he will have his own way, no matter whom it grieves, he would not be content in heaven, unless he could rule there. The love of Christ must control our hearts.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 21, 1888.

- b. What key point did Christ emphasize before His crucifixion, and why was this called “a new commandment”? John 13:34; 15:10, 12, 13, 17.

“[John 15:17; 13:34 quoted.] To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

“Such a love the believers were ever to cherish. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 547.

- c. How does John explain the “new commandment”? 1 John 2:7–11.

“It is not the opposition of the world that most endangers the church of Christ. It is the evil cherished in the hearts of believers that works their most grievous disaster and most surely retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening spirituality than by cherishing envy, suspicion, faultfinding, and evil surmising. On the other hand, the strongest witness that God has sent His Son into the world is the existence of harmony and union among men of varied dispositions who form His church.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 549.

5. FULFILLING THE LAW

- a. How can we fulfill God's law in our life? Romans 13:8–10.

“Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 18.

- b. How can we receive this love in our heart? Romans 5:1–5; John 16:13.

“Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, . . . without money and without price.’ ‘Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord,’ and, ‘This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness’ (Isaiah 55:1; 54:17; Jeremiah 23:6).

“No human agent can supply that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. But Jesus says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.’ ‘I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst’ (Revelation 3:20; John 6:35).

“As we need food to sustain our physical strength, so do we need Christ, the Bread from heaven, to sustain spiritual life and impart strength to work the works of God. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigor, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ, submitting to Him and depending wholly upon Him.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 18, 19.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the main characteristic of the early Christian church?
2. Explain the relationship between the Philadelphian church and the 144,000.
3. How can we climb the Christian ladder?
4. Why is “loving one another” called “a new commandment”?
5. What will God's love enable us to do?

Brotherly Kindness (continued)

“By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned” (2 Corinthians 6:6).

“[Paul] clung to the cross of Christ as his only guaranty of success. The love of the Saviour was the undying motive that upheld him in his conflicts with self and in his struggle against evil, as in the service of Christ he pressed forward against the unfriendliness of the world and the opposition of his enemies.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 61.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 211, 212, 230–233.
The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 255–268.

1. JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

- a. How was Joseph treated at the hands of his brothers? Genesis 37:18–28.

“In an agony of terror [Joseph] appealed to one and another of his brothers, but in vain.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 211.

- b. What should we learn from the way Joseph dealt with his brothers in spite of their past cruelties? Genesis 45:3–8.

“The life of Joseph illustrates the life of Christ. It was envy that moved the brothers of Joseph to sell him as a slave; they hoped to prevent him from becoming greater than themselves. And when he was carried to Egypt, they flattered themselves that they were to be no more troubled with his dreams, that they had removed all possibility of their fulfillment. But their own course was overruled by God to bring about the very event that they designed to hinder. So the Jewish priests and elders were jealous of Christ, fearing that He would attract the attention of the people from them. They put Him to death, to prevent Him from becoming king, but they were thus bringing about this very result.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 239.

2. ELISHA AND THE SYRIANS

- a. After the king of Syria had made plans against Israel, how did God intervene in behalf of His people? 2 Kings 6:8–12.

“On one occasion, during a Syrian invasion, the king of Syria sought to destroy Elisha because of his activity in apprising the king of Israel of the plans of the enemy. The Syrian king had taken counsel with his servants, saying, ‘In such and such a place shall be my camp’ (2 Kings 6:8). This plan was revealed by the Lord to Elisha.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 255, 256.

- b. What did the king decide to do with Elisha? 2 Kings 6:13, 14.

- c. How did God intervene to protect His messenger? 2 Kings 6:15–20.

“‘The Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha’ (2 Kings 6:20). Between the servant of God and the hosts of armed foemen was an encircling band of heavenly angels. They had come down in mighty power, not to destroy, not to exact homage, but to encamp round about and minister to the Lord’s weak and helpless ones.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 256, 257.

- d. How did Elisha behave toward his enemies? 2 Kings 6:21–23.

- e. In what sense is this attitude of Elisha to be an added inspiration to those seeking to present the Elijah message of today? Romans 12:21.

“‘In every age, the call of the hour is answered by the coming of the man. The Lord is gracious. He understands the situation. His will today is that for the present time the lamblike kindness of Elisha shall exceed the severity of Elijah. . . .

“‘Elisha received a double portion of the spirit that had rested on Elijah. In him the power of Elijah’s spirit was united with the gentleness, mercy, and tender compassion of the spirit of Christ.’ ”—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 231.

3. CHRIST, OUR MASTER AND EXAMPLE

- a. With what essential theme does Christ introduce His renowned call, “Be ye therefore perfect”? Matthew 5:43–48.

“The Saviour’s lesson, ‘Resist not him that is evil,’ was a hard saying for the revengeful Jews, and they murmured against it among themselves. But Jesus now made a still stronger declaration:

“‘Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.’

“Such was the spirit of the law which the rabbis had misinterpreted as a cold and rigid code of exactions. They regarded themselves as better than other men, and as entitled to the special favor of God by virtue of their birth as Israelites; but Jesus pointed to the spirit of forgiving love as that which would give evidence that they were actuated by any higher motives than even the publicans and sinners, whom they despised.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 73, 74.

- b. How did God deal with us when we were far from Him, and what should be our response? Romans 5:6–10; Titus 3:3–5.

“God’s love for the fallen race is a peculiar manifestation of love—a love born of mercy; for human beings are all undeserving. Mercy implies the imperfection of the object toward which it is shown. It was because of sin that mercy was brought into active exercise.

“Sin is not the object of God’s love, but of His hatred. But He loves and pities the sinner.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 21, 1902.

“All legalism, all the sorrow and woe by which you may encompass yourself, will not give you one moment of relief. You cannot rightly estimate sin. You must accept God’s estimate, and it is heavy indeed. If you bore the guilt of your sin, it would crush you; but the sinless One has taken your place, and, though, undeserving, He has borne your guilt. By accepting the provision God has made, you may stand free before God in the merit and virtue of your Substitute. You will then have a proper estimate of sin, and the godly sorrow of true repentance will take the place of hopeless discouragement and grief, for you will turn from sin with grief and abhorrence.”—*Ibid.*, April 9, 1894.

4. AMIDST FRIENDS OR FOES

- a. What does Paul reveal as our duty to all people? Romans 1:14, 15; 12:4–13.

“[Christ’s] love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.

“The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God’s Spirit, will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 75.

- b. How should we deal with those who consider us enemies? Romans 12:14–20.

“We may never know until the judgment the influence of a kind, considerate course of action to the inconsistent, the unreasonable, and unworthy. If, after a course of provocation and injustice on their part, you treat them as you would an innocent person, you even take pains to show them special acts of kindness, then you have acted the part of a Christian; and they become surprised and ashamed, and see their course of action and meanness more clearly than if you plainly stated their aggravated acts to rebuke them. . . .

“A few words spoken in a hasty manner, under provocation, and which seemed but a little thing—just what they deserved—often cut the cords of influence that should have bound the soul to your soul. The very idea of their being in darkness, under the temptation of Satan and blinded by his bewitching power, should make you feel deep sympathy for them, the same that you would feel for a diseased, sick patient who suffers, but on account of his disease is not aware of his danger.”—*Medical Ministry*, pp. 209, 210.

5. DEALING WITH ENEMIES

- a. How did Christ deal with Satan when disputing over the body of Moses? Jude 9.

“Christ Himself, when contending with Satan about the body of Moses, ‘durst not bring against him a railing accusation’ (Jude 9). Had He done this, He would have placed Himself on Satan’s ground, for accusation is the weapon of the evil one. He is called in Scripture, ‘the accuser of our brethren’ (Revelation 12:10). Jesus would employ none of Satan’s weapons. He met him with the words, ‘The Lord rebuke thee’ (Jude 9).”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 57.

- b. When in the presence of Christ’s enemies, how should we behave? James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:6–9.

“[Christ’s] example is for us. When we are brought in conflict with the enemies of Christ, we should say nothing in a spirit of retaliation or that would bear even the appearance of a railing accusation. He who stands as a mouthpiece for God should not utter words which even the Majesty of heaven would not use when contending with Satan. We are to leave with God the work of judging and condemning.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 57, 58.

“Never should you enter a discussion where so much is at stake, relying upon your aptness to handle strong arguments. If it cannot be well avoided, enter the conflict, but enter upon it with firm trust in God and in the spirit of humility, in the spirit of Jesus, who has bidden you learn of Him, who is meek and lowly in heart. And then in order to glorify God and exemplify the character of Christ, you should never take unlawful advantage of your opponent. Lay aside sarcasm and playing upon words. Remember that you are in a combat with Satan and his angels, as well as with the man.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 626.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does Joseph’s life illustrate the life of Christ?
2. Summarize the experience of Elisha with the Syrian army.
3. How can we “heap coals of fire” on the heads of our enemies?
4. How should we behave when defending present truth?

God's Love

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:9).

“What had Christ not done to win the hearts of Israel and to inspire them with unwavering confidence in Himself? For ages He had visited His people with manifestations of the most condescending kindness and unexampled love.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 455.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 9–15.

Sunday

October 16

1. EVERLASTING LOVE

a. **Mention one of the characteristics of God's love. Jeremiah 31:3.**

“God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our griefs, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness compassed us about. We may keep the heart stayed upon Him and meditate upon His loving-kindness all the day. He will lift the soul above the daily sorrow and perplexity, into a realm of peace.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 12.

b. **What is the simplest definition of God's love? 1 John 4:8, 16.**

“The love that the Lord has for His children passeth knowledge. No science can define or explain it. No human wisdom can fathom it. The more we feel the influence of this love, the more meek and humble shall we be.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1141.

Monday

October 17

2. THE GREATEST MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE

a. **How does Christ Himself describe God's love? John 3:16, 17.**

“If those who today are teaching the word of God, would uplift the cross of Christ higher and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God's compassion and the sinfulness of sin.

“Christ's death proves God's great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.

“Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 209, 210.

b. **What evidence does John show to prove God's love? 1 John 4:10; 3:1.**

“When we study the divine character in the light of the cross we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice. We see in the midst of the throne One bearing in hands and feet and side the marks of the suffering endured to reconcile man to God. We see a Father, infinite, dwelling in light unapproachable, yet receiving us to Himself through the merits of His Son. The cloud of vengeance that threatened only misery and despair, in the light reflected from the cross reveals the writing of God: Live, sinner, live! ye penitent, believing souls, live! I have paid a ransom.

“In the contemplation of Christ we linger on the shore of a love that is measureless. We endeavor to tell of this love, and language fails us. We consider His life on earth, His sacrifice for us, His work in heaven as our advocate, and the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him, and we can only exclaim, O the height and depth of the love of Christ!”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 333, 334.

3. GOD'S CHARACTER (HIS GLORY)

- a. When Moses begged to see God's glory, what was the first and most important thing God revealed to him? Exodus 33:18, 19. What did He explain further? Exodus 33:20–23.

"Never before had fallen man been thus favored of God. As He laid upon Moses the great work of leading His people through to the promised land, He condescended to manifest to him His glory as He never had to any others upon the earth."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 256.

"Reach up higher and still higher for clearer views of the character of Christ. When Moses prayed, 'I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory,' the Lord did not rebuke him, but He granted his prayer. God declared to His servant: 'I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee' (Exodus 33:18, 19). We keep apart from God, and this is why we do not see the revealings of His power."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 652, 653.

- b. What else did God reveal about Himself to Moses? Exodus 34:6, 7.

- c. How can God's glory be revealed even in us? Romans 8:18.

"Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The believers in Christ, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. On earth they walk in narrow paths; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but thus they learn the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they can look beyond the gloom to the glory."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 576, 577.

"Study not how to please self. Lose sight of self, and behold the multitudes perishing in their sins. Gather to your souls the courage that can come only from the Light of the world. Forgetting self, help the many who are within reach around you. Talk faith, and your faith will increase. Cease lamenting. Work in Christ's lines. With loving endeavor strive to please Him. His excellence will help you to be Christlike. Ever stand ready to lift up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees. Shine as lights in the world, attracting others by the brightness of Christ's glory revealed through your good works."—*The Signs of the Times*, June 3, 1903.

4. GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE

- a. What appeals to our heart as we consider God's abundant mercy? Psalm 136.

"When selfishness is striving for the victory over you, bear in mind One who left the glorious courts of heaven and laid aside the robes of royalty for your sakes, becoming poor that through His poverty you might be made rich. Will you, then, disregard this great love and boundless mercy by refusing to be inconvenienced and to deny yourselves for His dear sake? Will you cling to the treasures of this life and neglect to aid in carrying forward the great work of truth?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 120.

- b. How is this great mercy further explained? Micah 7:18, 19.

"Jesus might have remained at His Father's right hand, wearing His kingly crown and royal robes. But He chose to exchange all the riches, honor, and glory of heaven for the poverty of humanity, and His station of high command for the horrors of Gethsemane and the humiliation and agony of Calvary. He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that by His baptism of suffering and blood He might purify and redeem a guilty world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 121.

- c. Why is God's grace offered so freely? Romans 3:24–26; Titus 2:11; 3:4–7.

"The Lord saw our fallen condition; He saw our need of grace, and because He loved our souls, He has given us grace and peace. Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved."—*The Signs of the Times*, June 5, 1893.

"The Lord has enriched the world with a gift so large, so valuable, that there is nothing more held in reserve to give. Christ has linked His interest with that of humanity, and He asks that humanity become one with Him for the saving of humanity. He took the nature of man, suffered the inconvenience that humanity is subject to, endured our temptations, and became a partaker of the sorrows, griefs, and disappointments of men. He united divinity with humanity, in order that humanity might become a partaker of the divine nature."—*The Home Missionary*, December 1, 1894.

5. GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. How does God consider the time of ignorance? Acts 17:30.

“The days of ignorance God winked at. But increased light is shining; the light and privileges of understanding Bible truth are abundant, if workers will only open the eyes of their understanding. The truth must be diffusive. Foreign and home missions call for thorough Christian characters to engage in missionary enterprises. The missions in our cities at home and abroad call for men who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ, who will work as Christ worked.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 14, 1887.

- b. On the other hand, what is our duty before God and humanity after we have received the light of the truth? 1 John 1:7; John 12:35, 36.

“There is need of constant watchfulness, and of earnest, loving devotion; but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves nor to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 353, 354.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would we define God's love?
2. What was the greatest manifestation of God's love?
3. What is God's glory?
4. What is the only way sinners can be saved?
5. How can I know if I am walking in the light?

God's Love (continued)

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38, 39).

“Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 553.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 546–556.

1. THE LORD IS GOOD

- a. What else is written about God's character? Psalm 100:5; Lamentations 3:25; Nahum 1:7.

“Ministers and all the church, let this be our language, from hearts that respond to the great goodness and love of God to us as a people and to us individually, ‘Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever.’”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 15.

- b. How should we respond to His wonderful love? 1 John 4:19.

“Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another —this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. . . . It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennoble the affections.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.

2. ONLY GOD IS GOOD

- a. When the young ruler came to Jesus calling Him “Good Master,” how did Christ answer him? Matthew 19:16, 17.

“The ruler had addressed Christ merely as an honored rabbi, not discerning in Him the Son of God. The Saviour said, ‘Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.’ On what ground do you call *Me* good? God is the one good. If you recognize Me as such, you must receive Me as His Son and representative.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 390, 391 (italics in the original).

- b. What is written about humanity when separated from God? Romans 3:10–18.

“In the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God’s seeking after us. . . . We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 189.

“Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.

“We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is, Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard? Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?”

“The human family have all transgressed the law of God, and as transgressors of the law, man is hopelessly ruined; for he is the enemy of God, without strength to do any good thing. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Romans 8:7). Looking into the moral mirror—God’s holy law—man sees himself a sinner, and is convicted of his state of evil, his hopeless doom under the just penalty of the law. But he has not been left in a state of hopeless distress in which sin has plunged him; for it was to save the transgressor from ruin that He who was equal with God offered up His life on Calvary.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 320, 321.

3. GOD LOVES ALL HIS CREATURES

- a. According to the Bible, how many people are included in God’s love? John 3:16; Psalm 145:9.

“Christ by His human relationship to men drew them close to God. He clothed His divine nature with the garb of humanity, and demonstrated before the heavenly universe, before the unfallen worlds, how much God loves the children of men.

“The gift of God to man is beyond all computation. Nothing was withheld. God would not permit it to be said that He could have done more or revealed to humanity a greater measure of love. In the gift of Christ He gave all heaven.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 11.

- b. What did Christ declare about God’s love, and what should this cause us to pause and consider? Matthew 5:44, 45.

“There is a narrowness in human comprehension that is dishonoring to God. Let not him who claims Christ as his Saviour entertain the thought that God’s mercies are confined to him and to the few in whom he is interested. The love and mercy of God are for everyone. Let us gather up the divine tokens of His favor, and return praise and thanksgiving to Him for His goodness, which is bestowed upon us, not to be hoarded, but to be passed along to others. . . . God expects everyone who enjoys His grace to diffuse this grace as freely as Christ bestows His mercies. As the sun shines upon the just and the unjust, so the Sun of Righteousness reflects light to the whole world.

“God’s blessings, sunshine and showers, heat and cold, and every natural blessing, are given to the world. Exclusiveness is not to be maintained by any people. ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12), Christ said. Light is a blessing, a universal blessing, which pours forth its treasures on a world unthankful, unholy, demoralized. The Lord Jesus came to demolish every wall of exclusion, to throw open every wall in the temple where God presides, that every ear may hear, that every eye may see, that every thirsty soul may drink of the water of life freely.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 245.

4. GOD LOVES HIS CHURCH

- a. With what words does God express His love for His people? Deuteronomy 32:9, 10; Zechariah 2:8.

“The Lord has a people, a chosen people, His church, to be His own, His own fortress, which He holds in a sin-stricken, revolted world.

“The church is the property of God, and God constantly remembers her as she stands in the world, subject to the temptations of Satan. . . . He forgets not His representative people who are striving to uphold His downtrodden law. . . .

“The church, soon to enter upon her most severe conflict, will be the object most dear to God upon earth.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 284.

- b. On what condition will God acknowledge a people as His true church? Exodus 19:5, 6; Revelation 14:12; Titus 2:11–14.

“The Lord Jesus will always have a chosen people to serve Him. When the Jewish people rejected Christ, the Prince of life, He took from them the kingdom of God and gave it unto the Gentiles. God will continue to work on this principle with every branch of His work. When a church proves unfaithful to the word of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities. But if these in turn do not purify their lives from every wrong action; if they do not establish pure and holy principles in all their borders, then the Lord will grievously afflict and humble them and, unless they repent, will remove them from their place and make them a reproach.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 131.

- c. How can we, sinners, be sure that we love the Lord and His truth? Matthew 11:28–30; 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2.

“The carnal mind finds no pleasure in contemplating the word of God, but he who is renewed in the spirit of his mind, sees new charms in the living oracles; for divine beauty and celestial light seem to shine in every passage. That which was to the carnal mind a desolate wilderness, to the spiritual mind becomes a land of living streams. That which to the unrenewed heart appeared a barren waste, to the converted soul becomes the garden of God, covered with fragrant buds and blooming flowers.”—*Christian Education*, pp. 79, 80.

5. GOD LOVES HIS CHILDREN

- a. How can we become God’s children? John 1:12, 13; 3:3, 5; Galatians 3:26–29; 1 John 3:10.

“God loves His obedient children. He has a kingdom prepared, not for disloyal subjects, but for His children whom He has tested and tried in a world marred and corrupted by sin. As obedient children, we have the privilege of relationship with God. ‘If children,’ He says, ‘then heirs’ to an immortal inheritance. . . . Christ and His people are one.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1077.

- b. What is the evidence that we love God and are His children? John 14:14–17.

“There is a great work to be done by every son and daughter of God. Jesus says, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever’ (John 14:15, 16). In His prayer for His disciples, He says that He not only prayed for those in His immediate presence, but ‘for them also which shall believe on me through their word’ (John 17:20). Again He said, ‘Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I’ (John 14:28). Thus we see that Christ has prayed for His people, and made them abundant promises to ensure success to them as His colaborers. He said, ‘Greater works than these [those He did] shall he do; because I go unto my Father’ (John 14:12).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 263, 264.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the best gift we receive from God?
2. What did Christ mean when He said that “only God is good”?
3. What classes of people are the object of God’s love?
4. Why does God love His church so much?
5. What privileges are to be enjoyed by God’s church?

First Sabbath Offering

Literature for poor countries

Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

“God works by means of instruments, or second causes. He uses the gospel ministry, medical missionary work, and the publications containing present truth to impress hearts. All are made effectual by means of faith. As the truth is heard or read, the Holy Spirit sends it home to those who hear and read with an earnest desire to know what is right.”—*Evangelism*, p. 547.

“Papers and books are the Lord’s means of keeping the message for this time continually before the people. In enlightening and confirming souls in the truth, the publications will do a far greater work than can be accomplished by the ministry of the Word alone. The silent messengers that are placed in the homes of the people through the work of the canvasser, will strengthen the gospel ministry in every way; for the Holy Spirit will impress minds as they read the books, just as He impresses the minds of those who listen to the preaching of the Word.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 161, 162.

“Our publications should be printed in different languages and sent to every civilized country, at any cost. What is the value of money at this time, in comparison with the value of souls? Every dollar of our means should be considered as the Lord’s, not ours; and as a precious trust from God to us; not to be wasted for needless indulgences, but carefully used in the cause of God, in the work of saving men and women from ruin.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 214.

Dear brethren, sisters, and friends: In light of these inspired statements, please remember the urgent need of means to spread the light of present truth to souls starving for the bread of life in poor countries around the world. When the First Sabbath Offering is collected on November 5, 2005, let us stretch forth our hands with open hearts for this timely work. May the Lord richly bless each gift and giver!

PROJECT 00X

Daniel Lee, GC Publishing Secretary



God’s Love in the Family

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

“Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God’s plan, are a wonderful help in forming Christian character. . . . Parents and children should unite in offering loving service to Him who alone can keep human love pure and noble.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 19.

Suggested Reading: *Child Guidance*, pp. 482–485.

Sunday

October 30

1. THE HUSBAND—A HOUSE-BAND

- a. How does the Bible depict the Christian home? Psalm 128:1–6.

- b. Describe the position and duty of the husband. Ephesians 5:25–31; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7.

“The husband should manifest great interest in his family. Especially should he be very tender of the feelings of a feeble wife. He can shut the door against much disease. Kind, cheerful, and encouraging words will prove more effective than the most healing medicines. These will bring courage to the heart of the desponding and discouraged, and the happiness and sunshine brought into the family by kind acts and encouraging words will repay the effort tenfold. The husband should remember that much of the burden of training his children rests upon the mother, that she has much to do with molding their minds. This should call into exercise his tenderest feelings, and with care should he lighten her burdens. He should encourage her to lean upon his large affections, and direct her mind to heaven, where there is strength and peace, and a final rest for the weary. He should not come to his home with a clouded brow, but should with his presence bring sunlight into the family, and should encourage his wife to look up and believe in God. Unitedly they can claim the promises of God and bring His rich blessing into the family.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 306, 307.

2. WINSOME WIVES

- a. How could many wives be inspired to higher ground by contemplating the sacredness of their trust? Ephesians 5:22–24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1–6.

“There is often a great failure on the part of the wife. She does not put forth strong efforts to control her own spirit and make home happy. There is often fretfulness and unnecessary complaining on her part. The husband comes home from his labor weary and perplexed, and meets a clouded brow instead of cheerful, encouraging words. He is but human, and his affections become weaned from his wife, he loses the love of his home, his pathway is darkened, and his courage destroyed. He yields his self-respect and that dignity which God requires him to maintain. The husband is the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the Church; and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that dignified, responsible position is displeasing to God. It is the duty of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but the word of God gives preference to the judgment of the husband. And it will not detract from the dignity of the wife to yield to him whom she has chosen to be her counselor, adviser, and protector.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 307.

- b. Why is the work of the wife and mother so important? Proverbs 31:10–31.

“The most elevated work for woman is the molding of the character of her children after the divine pattern. . . . If Christian mothers had always done their work with fidelity, there would not now be so many church trials on account of disorderly members. Mothers are forming the characters which compose the church of God. When I see a church in trial, its members self-willed, heady, high-minded, self-sufficient, not subject to the voice of the church, I am led to fear that their mothers were unfaithful in their early training.”—*The Health Reformer*, April 1, 1880.

3. THE DUTY OF BOTH PARENTS

- a. What should parents take into serious consideration? Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21.

“Great care should be exercised by parents lest they treat their children in such a way as to provoke obstinacy, disobedience, and rebellion. Parents often stir up the worst passions of the human heart, because of their lack of self-control. They correct them in a spirit of anger, and rather confirm them in their evil ways and defiant spirit, than influence them in the way of right. By their own arbitrary spirit they thrust their children under Satanic influences, instead of rescuing them from the snares of Satan by gentleness and love. How sad it is that many parents who profess to be Christians are not converted! Christ does not abide in their hearts by faith. While professing to be followers of Jesus, they disgust their children, and by their violent, unforgiving temper, make them averse to all religion. It is little wonder that the children become cold and rebellious toward their parents.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 15, 1892.

- b. Describe the educational method of Abraham. Genesis 18:19.

“That which gave power to Abraham’s teaching was the influence of his own life. His great household consisted of more than a thousand souls, many of them heads of families, and not a few but newly converted from heathenism. Such a household required a firm hand at the helm. No weak, vacillating methods would suffice.”—*Education*, p. 187.

- c. What was the weak legacy of Eli which is a warning to us? 1 Samuel 2:12–17, 22–25.

“The neglect of Eli is brought plainly before every father and mother in the land. As the result of his unsanctified affection or his unwillingness to do a disagreeable duty, he reaped a harvest of iniquity in his perverse sons. Both the parent who permitted the wickedness and the children who practiced it were guilty before God, and he would accept no sacrifice or offering for their transgression. There are many lessons in the Bible calculated to impress fathers and mothers with the sin of neglecting their duty to their children; and yet how silent are the voices of the teachers in Israel on these important subjects! Parents allow the defects in their children to pass uncorrected, until the curse of God rests upon both their children and themselves. Like Eli, they do not show decision in repressing the first appearance of evil.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1886.

4. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN

- a. What does the fifth commandment say? Exodus 20:12.

“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

- b. How does the apostle Paul stress the importance of the fifth commandment? Ephesians 6:1–3; Colossians 3:20.

“This, says the apostle, ‘is the first commandment with promise’ (Ephesians 6:2). To Israel, expecting soon to enter Canaan, it was a pledge to the obedient, of long life in that good land; but it has a wider meaning, including all the Israel of God, and promising eternal life upon the earth when it shall be freed from the curse of sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

“Children who dishonor and disobey their parents, and disregard their advice and instructions, can have no part in the earth made new. The purified new earth will be no place for the rebellious, the disobedient, the ungrateful, son or daughter. Unless such learn obedience and submission here, they will never learn it; the peace of the ransomed will not be marred by disobedient, unruly, unsubmitive children. No commandment breaker can inherit the kingdom of heaven. Will all the youth please read the fifth commandment of the law spoken by Jehovah from Sinai and engraven with His own finger upon tables of stone? ‘Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee’ (Exodus 20:12).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 497, 498.

- c. Why is this commandment specially important to remember in the last days, as we seek to stand together with our children as overcomers? 2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

5. THE EXAMPLE OF ISAAC

- a. How did Isaac respond to his father when told he was to be a sacrifice for God? Genesis 22:9–12.

“It was with terror and amazement that Isaac learned his fate, but he offered no resistance. He could have escaped his doom, had he chosen to do so; the grief-stricken old man, exhausted with the struggle of those three terrible days, could not have opposed the will of the vigorous youth. But Isaac had been trained from childhood to ready, trusting obedience, and as the purpose of God was opened before him, he yielded a willing submission. He was a sharer in Abraham’s faith, and he felt that he was honored in being called to give his life as an offering to God. He tenderly seeks to lighten the father’s grief, and encourages his nerveless hands to bind the cords that confine him to the altar.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 152.

- b. In what other matter did Isaac show submission to his father? Genesis 24:1–4.

“In ancient times marriage engagements were generally made by the parents, and this was the custom among those who worshiped God. None were required to marry those whom they could not love; but in the bestowal of their affections the youth were guided by the judgment of their experienced, God-fearing parents. It was regarded as a dishonor to parents, and even a crime, to pursue a course contrary to this.

“Isaac, trusting to his father’s wisdom and affection, was satisfied to commit the matter to him, believing also that God Himself would direct in the choice made.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 171.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does the Bible describe a Christian home?
2. Summarize Proverbs 31:10–31.
3. How should parents behave toward their children?
4. Explain the difference in the methods of education adopted by Abraham and Eli.
5. What is included in the fifth commandment?

God's Love in the Church

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34, 35).

“Christ had bidden the first disciples love one another as He had loved them. Thus they were to bear testimony to the world that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 547.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 9–16.

Sunday

November 6

1. WALKING IN THE LIGHT

- a. What does John say about the condition on which we can have fellowship with one another? 1 John 1:7.

“Heaven is watching to see how those occupying positions of influence fulfill their stewardship. The demands upon them as stewards are measured by the extent of their influence. In their treatment of their fellowmen, they should be as fathers—just, tender, true. They should be Christlike in character, uniting with their brethren in the closest bonds of unity and fellowship.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 495.

“Some had been bringing in false tests, and had made their own ideas and notions a criterion, magnifying matters of little importance into tests of Christian fellowship, and binding heavy burdens upon others. Thus a spirit of criticism, fault-finding, and dissension had come in, which had been a great injury to the church. And the impression was given to unbelievers that Sabbathkeeping Adventists were a set of fanatics and extremists, and that their peculiar faith rendered them unkind, uncourteous, and really unchristian in character. Thus the course of a few extremists prevented the influence of the truth from reaching the people.”—*Evangelism*, p. 215.

- b. What is the evidence that we are walking in the light? 1 John 2:9–11.

Monday

November 7

2. LOVE NOT THE WORLD

- a. What happens when we try to love God and the world at the same time? James 4:4; Matthew 6:24.

“It is not safe for Christians to choose the society of those who have no connection with God, and whose course is displeasing to Him. Yet how many professed Christians venture upon the forbidden ground. Many invite to their homes relatives who are vain, trifling, and ungodly; and often the example and influence of these irreligious visitors produce lasting impressions upon the minds of the children in the household. The influence thus exerted is similar to that which resulted from the association of the Hebrews with the godless Canaanites.

“God holds the parents accountable for disregarding His command to separate themselves and their families from these unholy influences. While we must live in the world, we are not to be of the world. We are forbidden to conform to its practices and fashions. The friendship of the ungodly is more dangerous than their enmity. It misleads and destroys thousands who might, by proper and holy example, be led to become children of God. The minds of the young are thus made familiar with irreligion, vanity, ungodliness, pride, and immorality; and the heart not shielded by divine grace, gradually becomes corrupted. Almost imperceptibly, the youth learn to love the tainted atmosphere surrounding the ungodly. Evil angels gather about them, and they lose their relish for that which is pure, refined, and ennobling.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1001.

- b. What is the result of loving the world? 1 John 2:15–17.

“As the lovers of the world make religion subservient to the world, God requires His worshipers to subordinate the world to religion. The things of the world, that perish with the using, are not to be made the first consideration; these are not the golden currency of heaven. God has not stamped upon them His image and superscription.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 949.

3. CHILDREN OF ONE OR THE OTHER

a. How does John define our sonship? 1 John 3:10, 11.

“‘A new commandment I give unto you,’ Christ said, ‘That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another’ (John 13:34). What a wonderful statement; but, oh, how poorly practiced! In the church of God today brotherly love is sadly lacking. Many who profess to love the Saviour do not love one another. Unbelievers are watching to see if the faith of professed Christians is exerting a sanctifying influence upon their lives; and they are quick to discern the defects in character, the inconsistencies in action. Let Christians not make it possible for the enemy to point to them and say, Behold how these people, standing under the banner of Christ, hate one another. Christians are all members of one family, all children of the same heavenly Father, with the same blessed hope of immortality. Very close and tender should be the tie that binds them together.

“Divine love makes its most touching appeals to the heart when it calls upon us to manifest the same tender compassion that Christ manifested. That man only who has unselfish love for his brother has true love for God. The true Christian will not willingly permit the soul in peril and need to go unwarned, uncared for. He will not hold himself aloof from the erring, leaving them to plunge farther into unhappiness and discouragement or to fall on Satan’s battleground.

“Those who have never experienced the tender, winning love of Christ cannot lead others to the fountain of life. His love in the heart is a constraining power, which leads men to reveal Him in the conversation, in the tender, pitiful spirit, in the uplifting of the lives of those with whom they associate. Christian workers who succeed in their efforts must know Christ; and in order to know Him, they must know His love. In heaven their fitness as workers is measured by their ability to love as Christ loved and to work as He worked.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 550, 551.

b. What is seen by making a comparison between Cain and Abel? 1 John 3:12; Genesis 4:8–10.

“In all ages the wicked have hated those who were better than themselves. Abel’s life of obedience and unswerving faith was to Cain a perpetual reproof. [John 3:20 quoted.] The brighter the heavenly light that is reflected from the character of God’s faithful servants, the more clearly the sins of the ungodly are revealed, and the more determined will be their efforts to destroy those who disturb their peace.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 74.

4. FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE

a. What is the evidence that we have changed direction in life? 1 John 3:14–16.

“Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another —this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. ‘We love Him, because He first loved us’ (1 John 4:19). In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.

b. What actions does the true Christian love to produce? 1 John 3:17, 18; James 2:14–17.

“Oh, how important it is that faithfulness in little things characterize our lives, that true integrity mark all our course of action, and that we ever bear in mind that angels of God are taking cognizance of every act! That which we mete to others shall be meted to us again. A fearfulness should ever attend you lest you should deal unjustly, selfishly. By sickness and adversity the Lord will remove from us much more than we obtain by grinding the face of the poor. A just God truly estimates all our motives and actions.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 158.

“You may believe all the truth; yet if its principles are not carried out in your lives, your profession will not save you. Satan believes and trembles. He works. He knows his time is short, and he has come down in great power to do his evil works according to his faith. But God’s professed people do not support their faith by their works. They believe in the shortness of time, yet grasp just as eagerly after this world’s goods as though the world were to stand a thousand years as it now is. Selfishness marks the course of many. . . .

“Divest yourselves of selfishness and make thorough work for eternity. Redeem the past and do not represent the holy truth you profess where you now live as you have where you have lived hitherto. Let your light so shine that others by seeing your good works may be led to glorify our Father in heaven. Stand upon the elevated platform of eternal truth. Regulate all your business transactions in this life in strict accordance with the word of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 161.

5. CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYERS

- a. What are the two basic conditions for receiving answers to prayers? 1 John 3:22–24.

“To pray in Christ’s name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour’s promise is given on condition. ‘If ye love Me,’ He says, ‘keep My commandments’ (John 14:15). He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

- b. When and how can we have confidence that our prayers will be answered? 1 John 5:14, 15.

“We have sinned against [God], and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas, ‘Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us’ (Jeremiah 14:21). When we come to him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 148.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is necessary in order to have fellowship with our brethren?
2. Why is it not possible to love God and the world at the same time?
3. What is the evidence that we are God’s children?
4. What is the result of Christian love?
5. Mention the conditions to have answers to our prayers.

God’s Love in the Church (continued)

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7).

“Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh, than the amount he doeth. Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly origin, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 312.

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

1. LIFE ETERNAL DEFINED

- a. In His intercessory prayer, how did Christ define life eternal? John 17:3.

“It is only by knowing Christ that we can know God. . . . To know Christ savingly is to be vitalized by spiritual knowledge, to practice His words. Without this, all else is valueless.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1898.

- b. What evidences will show that we know God? 1 John 4:7, 8.

“Pure love is simple in its operations, and is distinct from any other principle of action. The love of influence, and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life, and, frequently, a blameless conversation. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions, acknowledge the present truth, and express humility and affection in an outward manner, yet the motives may be deceptive and impure; the actions that flow from such a heart may be destitute of the savor of life and the fruits of true holiness, being destitute of the principles of pure love. Love should be cherished and cultivated; for its influence is divine.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 313.

2. LOVE MANIFESTED

- a. What should the manifestation of God's love cause us to consider? 1 John 4:9, 10.

"The love of our heavenly Father in the gift of His only begotten Son to the world, is enough to inspire every soul, to melt every hard, loveless heart into contrition and tenderness; and yet shall heavenly intelligences see in those for whom Christ died, insensibility to His love, hardness of heart, and no response of gratitude and affection to the Giver of all good things? Shall affairs of minor importance absorb the whole power of the being, and the love of God meet no return?"—*Christian Education*, p. 96.

- b. How does the law of God go hand in hand with true love? Matthew 22:35–40; Romans 13:10.

"We have full faith in the scripture that says, 'God is love' (1 John 4:8); and yet many have shamefully perverted this word, and have fallen into dangerous error because of a false interpretation of its meaning. God's holy law is the only standard by which we can estimate divine affection. If we do not accept the law of God as our standard, we set up a standard of our own. God has given us precious promises of His love, but we are not to ascribe to Jehovah a tenderness that will lead Him to pass over guilt and wink at iniquity."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 311.

- c. Since God has manifested such a great love for us, how should we act toward our neighbors? 1 John 4:11. Whereby will the world see that God dwells in us? 1 John 4:12.

- d. What must we realize as we seek to develop this love in our heart? Jeremiah 17:9.

"God considers more with how much love we work, than the amount we do. Love is a heavenly attribute. The natural heart cannot originate it. This heavenly plant only flourishes where Christ reigns supreme. Where love exists, there is power and truth in the life. Love does good and nothing but good. Those who have love bear fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life."—*The Youth's Instructor*, January 13, 1898.

3. LOVE WITHOUT FEAR

- a. What are the main characteristics of perfect love? 1 John 4:17, 18.

"There are many who desire to love and serve God, and yet when affliction comes upon them, they do not discern the love of God in it, but the hand of the enemy. They mourn and murmur and complain; but this is not the fruit of love to God in the soul. If we have perfect love, we shall know that God is not seeking to injure us, but that in the midst of trials, and griefs, and pains, he is seeking to make us perfect, and to test the quality of our faith. When we cease to worry about the future, and begin to believe that God loves us, and means to do us good, we shall trust him as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, and our will will be swallowed up in the will of God."—*The Youth's Instructor*, January 6, 1898.

- b. How should we deal with those who fall in sin? Matthew 18:14–17.

"In dealing with erring church members, God's people are carefully to follow the instruction given by the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

"Human beings are Christ's property, purchased by Him at an infinite price, bound to Him by the love that He and His Father have manifested for them. How careful, then, we should be in our dealing with one another! Men have no right to surmise evil in regard to their fellowmen. Church members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. Reports unfavorable to a brother or sister in the church are communicated from one to another of the church members. Mistakes are made and injustice is done because of an unwillingness on the part of someone to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 260.

"Divine love makes its most touching appeals to the heart when it calls upon us to manifest the same tender compassion that Christ manifested. That man only who has unselfish love for his brother has true love for God. The true Christian will not willingly permit the soul in peril and need to go unwarned, uncared for. He will not hold himself aloof from the erring, leaving them to plunge farther into unhappiness and discouragement or to fall on Satan's battleground."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 550.

4. TWO DEBTORS

- a. How did Christ answer Peter's question about forgiveness? Matthew 18:21, 22.

"The rabbis limited the exercise of forgiveness to three offenses. Peter, carrying out, as he supposed, the teaching of Christ, thought to extend it to seven, the number signifying perfection. But Christ taught that we are never to become weary of forgiving."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 243.

- b. What parable did Christ present to clarify the issue of forgiveness? Matthew 18:23–34.

"The pardon granted by this king represents a divine forgiveness of all sin. Christ is represented by the king, who, moved with compassion, forgave the debt of his servant. Man was under the condemnation of the broken law. He could not save himself, and for this reason Christ came to this world, clothed His divinity with humanity, and gave His life, the just for the unjust. He gave Himself for our sins, and to every soul He freely offers the blood-bought pardon. 'With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption' (Psalm 130:7)."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 244, 245.

- c. Since we have received pardon from the Lord, how should we deal with our fellow sinners? Matthew 18:32, 33.

"In the parable, when the debtor pleaded for delay, with the promise, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all' (Matthew 18:26), the sentence was revoked. The whole debt was canceled. And he was soon given an opportunity to follow the example of the master who had forgiven him. Going out, he met a fellow servant who owed him a small sum. He had been forgiven ten thousand talents; the debtor owed him a hundred pence. But he who had been so mercifully treated, dealt with his fellow laborer in an altogether different manner. His debtor made an appeal similar to that which he himself had made to the king, but without a similar result. He who had so recently been forgiven was not tenderhearted and pitiful. The mercy shown him he did not exercise in dealing with his fellowservant. He heeded not the request to be patient. The small sum owed to him was all that the ungrateful servant would keep in mind. He demanded all that he thought his due, and carried into effect a sentence similar to that which had been so graciously revoked for him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 245.

5. OVERCOMING INGRATITUDE

- a. What admonition is given us when we are tempted to act like the forgiven debtor who was unforgiving? Colossians 3:13.

"There are many who hope by their own works to merit God's favor. They do not realize their helplessness. They do not accept the grace of God as a free gift, but are trying to build themselves up in self-righteousness. Their own hearts are not broken and humbled on account of sin, and they are exacting and unforgiving toward others. Their own sins against God, compared with their brother's sins against them, are as ten thousand talents to one hundred pence—nearly one million to one; yet they dare to be unforgiving."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 245–247.

- b. If we are unforgiving, how will God deal with us? Matthew 18:35; 6:14, 15.

"Jesus teaches that we can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren.

"After completing the Lord's Prayer, Jesus added: 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses' (Matthew 6:14, 15). He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God we are to pardon all who have done evil to us."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 113, 114.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does Christ define life eternal?
2. What is the main evidence that we know God?
3. When we love God, how do we deal with the erring ones?
4. Explain the parable of the two debtors.
5. Can we forgive without being forgiven?

God's Love in the Church—Hospitality

“Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Peter 4:9).

“The Bible lays much stress upon the practice of hospitality. Not only does it enjoin hospitality as a duty, but it presents many beautiful pictures of the exercise of this grace and the blessings which it brings.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 341.

Suggested Reading: *Christian Service*, pp. 191–193.

Sunday

November 20

1. ENTERTAINING STRANGERS

- a. What blessing does Paul mention regarding hospitality? Hebrews 13:2.

“[Hebrews 13:2 quoted.] These words have lost none of their force through the lapse of time. Our heavenly Father still continues to place in the pathway of His children opportunities that are blessings in disguise; and those who improve these opportunities find great joy. ‘If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not’ (Isaiah 58:10, 11).”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 132.

- b. How else does Scripture promote hospitality? Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:9.

“All acts of injustice that tend to shorten life; the spirit of hatred and revenge, or the indulgence of any passion that leads to injurious acts toward others, or causes us even to wish them harm (for ‘whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer’); a **selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering**; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health—all these are, to a greater or less degree, violations of the sixth commandment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308 (emphasis supplied).

Monday

November 21

2. ABRAHAM AND LOT

- a. At his home how did Abraham receive “three men” who were strangers? Genesis 18:2–8. Who was among them? Genesis 18:1.

“It was Christ who spoke with Abraham under the oaks at Mamre.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 290, 291.

“Angels have appeared in human form to men of God. They have rested, as if weary, under the oaks at noon. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 631.

- b. What unique experience did Lot have with “two men”? Genesis 19:2–11. Who were those “men”? Genesis 19:1.

“In the twilight two strangers drew near to the city gate. They were apparently travelers coming in to tarry for the night. None could discern in those humble wayfarers the mighty heralds of divine judgment, and little dreamed the gay, careless multitude that in their treatment of these heavenly messengers that very night they would reach the climax of the guilt which doomed their proud city. But there was one man who manifested kindly attention toward the strangers and invited them to his home. Lot did not know their true character, but politeness and hospitality were habitual with him; they were a part of his religion—lessons that he had learned from the example of Abraham. Had he not cultivated a spirit of courtesy, he might have been left to perish with the rest of Sodom. Many a household, in closing its doors against a stranger, has shut out God’s messenger, who would have brought blessing and hope and peace.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 158.

- c. How does the experience of these patriarchs apply to us today?

“The privilege granted Abraham and Lot is not denied to us. By showing hospitality to God’s children we, too, may receive His angels into our dwellings. Even in our day, angels in human form enter the homes of men and are entertained by them. And Christians who live in the light of God’s countenance are always accompanied by unseen angels, and these holy beings leave behind them a blessing in our homes.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 342.

3. JOSEPH AND PHARAOH

- a. How did Joseph receive his brothers in spite of their past cruelty toward him? Genesis 45:1–5.

“[Joseph] had seen in his brothers the fruits of true repentance. Upon hearing Judah’s noble offer he gave orders that all but these men should withdraw; then, weeping aloud, he cried, ‘I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?’

“His brothers stood motionless, dumb with fear and amazement. The ruler of Egypt their brother Joseph, whom they had envied and would have murdered, and finally sold as a slave! All their ill treatment of him passed before them. They remembered how they had despised his dreams and had labored to prevent their fulfillment. Yet they had acted their part in fulfilling these dreams; and now that they were completely in his power he would, no doubt, avenge the wrong that he had suffered.

“Seeing their confusion, he said kindly, ‘Come near to me, I pray you;’ and as they came near, he continued, ‘I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.’ Feeling that they had already suffered enough for their cruelty toward him, he nobly sought to banish their fears and lessen the bitterness of their self-reproach. . . .

“The news of what had taken place was quickly carried to the king, who, eager to manifest his gratitude to Joseph, confirmed the governor’s invitation to his family, saying, ‘The good of all the land of Egypt is yours’ (Genesis 45:20). The brothers were sent away abundantly supplied with provision and carriages and everything necessary for the removal of all their families and attendants to Egypt.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 230, 231.

- b. How did Pharaoh deal with Jacob and his family at their arrival in Egypt? Genesis 45:16–20; 47:5–7. How was Pharaoh rewarded?

“Joseph brought his father also to be presented to the king. The patriarch was a stranger in royal courts; but amid the sublime scenes of nature he had communed with a mightier Monarch; and now, in conscious superiority, he raised his hands and blessed Pharaoh.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

4. RAHAB

- a. Who was Rahab, and what kindness did she show to the Israelite spies? Joshua 2:1–7.

“A few miles beyond the river, just opposite the place where the Israelites were encamped, was the large and strongly fortified city of Jericho. This city was virtually the key to the whole country, and it would present a formidable obstacle to the success of Israel. Joshua therefore sent two young men as spies to visit this city and ascertain something as to its population, its resources, and the strength of its fortifications. The inhabitants of the city, terrified and suspicious, were constantly on the alert, and the messengers were in great danger. They were, however, preserved by Rahab, a woman of Jericho, at the peril of her own life. In return for her kindness they gave her a promise of protection when the city should be taken.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 482, 483.

- b. How was Rahab’s faith rewarded? Joshua 2:8–13; 6:25; Hebrews 11:31.

“God’s judgments were awakened against Jericho. It was a stronghold. But the Captain of the Lord’s host Himself came from heaven to lead the armies of heaven in an attack upon the city. Angels of God laid hold of the massive walls and brought them to the ground. God had said that the city of Jericho should be accursed and that all should perish except Rahab and her household. These should be saved because of the favor that Rahab showed the messengers of the Lord.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 264.

“All the inhabitants of the city, with every living thing that it contained, ‘both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass’ (Joshua 6:21), were put to the sword. Only faithful Rahab, with her household, was spared, in fulfillment of the promise of the spies. The city itself was burned.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 491.

“Through the teaching of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God were to unite themselves with His chosen people.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 19.

5. JOB—AND US

- a. How did Job treat the poor and the strangers, and how was his faith rewarded? Job 29:12–16; 31:32; 42:10–17.

- b. Why is hospitality required even of those who are not especially rich in this world's goods? Deuteronomy 26:12, 13.

“[Deuteronomy 14:23, 29; 16:11–14 quoted.] Every third year, however, this second tithe was to be used at home, in entertaining the Levite and the poor, as Moses said, ‘That they may eat within thy gates, and be filled’ (chapter 26:12). This tithe would provide a fund for the uses of charity and hospitality.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 530.

“‘A lover of hospitality’ is among the specifications given by the Holy Spirit as marking one who is to bear responsibility in the church. And to the whole church is given the injunction: ‘Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God’ (1 Peter 4:9, 10).

“These admonitions have been strangely neglected. Even among those who profess to be Christians, true hospitality is little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board, without embarrassment or parade. Some plead that ‘it is too much trouble.’ It would not be if you would say: ‘We have made no special preparation, but you are welcome to what we have.’ By the unexpected guest a welcome is appreciated far more than is the most elaborate preparation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 342, 343.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you define hospitality?
2. Mention two examples of hospitality in the Old Testament.
3. Explain the experience of Joseph with his brothers.
4. Who were the only survivors of Jericho, and why?
5. Summarize Job's experience in the welfare work and explain how many more can imitate his example.

First Sabbath Offering

for the Vanuatu Mission Headquarters



Vanuatu is located about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to Australia in the Pacific Region. The population of just over 200,000 live on a Y-shaped chain of four main islands and 80 smaller islands. Some of the islands are not permanently inhabited and there are a number of active volcanoes in the country.

Formerly known as the New Hebrides, the islands were colonized by both the French and the British. The influence of these early settlers remains strong in the country today so that Christianity is the dominant religious group. Independence was achieved in 1980.

The message of Reformation reached these islands in the later part of the last century through visitors from Australia. By the grace of God the people of these islands accepted the good news of salvation and the message is today firmly established here. The Vanuatu Mission is part of the Australasian Union.

Now it is necessary to establish a permanent mission headquarters to serve as the central lighthouse not only for these islands, but for the many tourists from around the world who visit Vanuatu each year. Your offering will go towards the construction of a main chapel and headquarters in Vanuatu.

Your brethren and sisters from the Australasian Union

God's Love in the Church—Hospitality (continued)

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13).

“Our work in this world is to live for others’ good, to bless others, to be hospitable; and frequently it may be only at some inconvenience that we can entertain those who really need our care and the benefit of our society and our homes.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 645.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 524–536.
Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 376–389.

Sunday

November 27

1. THE FAMILY AT BETHANY

- a. When weary of His labors, where did Jesus often find rest? Luke 10:38–42.

“At the home of Lazarus, Jesus had often found rest. The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples, and often, when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, He had been glad to escape to this peaceful household, away from the suspicion and jealousy of the angry Pharisees. Here He found a sincere welcome, and pure, holy friendship. Here He could speak with simplicity and perfect freedom, knowing that His words would be understood and treasured.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 524.

- b. How was Lazarus benefited by the greatest miracle of Jesus? John 11:1–5; 38–44.

“It was for Lazarus that the greatest of Christ’s miracles was performed. The Saviour blessed all who sought His help; He loves all the human family, but to some He is bound by peculiarly tender associations. His heart was knit by a strong bond of affection to the family at Bethany, and for one of them His most wonderful work was wrought.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 524.

Monday

November 28

2. LYDIA

- a. Once Lydia had received the truth, how did she put her home to the service of the Lord? Acts 16:14, 15.

“God opened the ears of Lydia, so that she attended to the message spoken by Paul. To declare the whole counsel of God and all that was essential for Lydia to receive—this was the part Paul was to act in her conversion; and then the God of all grace exercised His power, leading the soul in the right way.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1062.

- b. After having suffered cruel persecution, where did Paul and Silas find relief? Acts 16:40.

“Acting upon the instruction given by Christ, the apostles would not urge their presence where it was not desired. ‘They went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed’ (Acts 16:40).” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 218.

- c. Lydia warmly welcomed the apostles. Whom else should we welcome as God’s heritage in need of refuge? 1 Timothy 4:12 (first part); Jude 21–23.

“Our homes should be a place of refuge for the tempted youth. Many there are who stand at the parting of the ways. Every influence, every impression, is determining the choice that shapes their destiny both here and hereafter. Evil invites them. Its resorts are made bright and attractive. They have a welcome for every comer. All about us are youth who have no home, and many whose homes have no helpful, uplifting power, and the youth drift into evil. They are going down to ruin within the very shadow of our own doors.

“These youth need a hand stretched out to them in sympathy. Kind words simply spoken, little attentions simply bestowed, will sweep away the clouds of temptation which gather over the soul. The true expression of heaven-born sympathy has power to open the door of hearts that need the fragrance of Christlike words, and the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ’s love. If we would show an interest in the youth, invite them to our homes, and surround them with cheering, helpful influences, there are many who would gladly turn their steps into the upward path.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 354, 355.

3. EXEMPLARY BARBARIANS

- a. Being persecuted by his own countrymen, where did Paul find hospitality? Acts 28:1, 2, 7.

“The shipwrecked crew were kindly received by the barbarous people of Melita. . . . Paul was among those who were active in ministering to the comfort of others.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 445.

- b. How were all the company at Melita blessed by Paul’s stay? Acts 28:8–10.

“During the three months that the ship’s company remained at Melita, Paul and his fellow laborers improved many opportunities to preach the gospel. In a remarkable manner the Lord wrought through them. For Paul’s sake the entire shipwrecked company were treated with great kindness; all their wants were supplied, and upon leaving Melita they were liberally provided with everything needful for their voyage.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 446.

- c. How useful is hospitality for spreading the gospel? Luke 14:12–14.

“Our social entertainments should not be governed by the dictates of worldly custom, but by the Spirit of Christ and the teaching of His word. . . . How much such a welcome might do to cheer and encourage the missionary nurse or the teacher, the care-burdened, hard-working mother, or the feeble and aged, so often without a home, and struggling with poverty and many discouragements. . . .

“These are guests whom it will lay on you no great burden to receive. You will not need to provide for them elaborate or expensive entertainment. You will need to make no effort at display. The warmth of a genial welcome, a place at your fireside, a seat at your home table, the privilege of sharing the blessing of the hour of prayer, would to many of these be like a glimpse of heaven.

“Our sympathies are to overflow the boundaries of self and the enclosure of family walls. There are precious opportunities for those who will make their homes a blessing to others. Social influence is a wonderful power. We can use it if we will as a means of helping those about us.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 352–354.

4. THE GOOD SAMARITAN

- a. How did Christ answer a lawyer’s question about how to inherit eternal life? Luke 10:25–28.

“The lawyer was not satisfied with the position and works of the Pharisees. He had been studying the scriptures with a desire to learn their real meaning. He had a vital interest in the matter, and he asked in sincerity, ‘What shall I do?’ In his answer as to the requirements of the law, he passed by all the mass of ceremonial and ritualistic precepts. For these he claimed no value, but presented the two great principles on which hang all the law and the prophets. The Saviour’s commendation of this answer placed Him on vantage ground with the rabbis. They could not condemn Him for sanctioning that which had been advanced by an expositor of the law.

“ ‘This do, and thou shalt live,’ Christ said (Luke 10:28). In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man’s destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 377, 378.

- b. What was the next question the lawyer presented to Jesus, and what answer did he receive? Luke 10:29–37.

“The lawyer knew that he had kept neither the first four nor the last six commandments. He was convicted under Christ’s searching words, but instead of confessing his sin he tried to excuse it. Rather than acknowledge the truth, he endeavored to show how difficult of fulfillment the commandment is. Thus he hoped both to parry conviction and to vindicate himself in the eyes of the people. The Saviour’s words had shown that his question was needless, since he was able to answer it himself. Yet he put another question, saying, ‘Who is my neighbour?’

“Again Christ refused to be drawn into controversy. He answered the question by relating an incident, the memory of which was fresh in the minds of His hearers. . . .

“The priest and the Levite both professed piety, but the Samaritan showed that he was truly converted. It was no more agreeable for him to do the work than for the priest and the Levite, but in spirit and works he proved himself to be in harmony with God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 378–380.

5. CHRIST, THE GOOD SAMARITAN

- a. In what sense does the story of the good Samaritan illustrate the work of Christ on earth? Acts 10:38.

“In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Saviour had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and made complete provision for us at His own charges.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 503, 504.

- b. How will the true followers of Christ act toward those who need help? Galatians 6:1, 2.

“Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. There are many who err, and who feel their shame and their folly. They are hungry for words of encouragement. They look upon their mistakes and errors, until they are driven almost to desperation. These souls we are not to neglect. If we are Christians, we shall not pass by on the other side, keeping as far as possible from the very ones who most need our help. When we see human beings in distress, whether through affliction or through sin, we shall never say, This does not concern me.

“ [Galatians 6:1 quoted.] By faith and prayer press back the power of the enemy. Speak words of faith and courage that will be as a healing balsam to the bruised and wounded one. Many, many, have fainted and become discouraged in the great struggle of life, when one word of kindly cheer would have strengthened them to overcome. Never should we pass by one suffering soul without seeking to impart to him of the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 504, 505.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was Lydia?
2. In the parable of the good Samaritan, how did the Levite and the priest act?
3. How did the good Samaritan deal with the wounded stranger?
4. Whom does the good Samaritan represent and in what practical ways can we follow His example?

The Greatest Gift

“Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

“True love for God carries with it true, reverential trust. And he who loves God will love his brother also.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 193.

Suggested Readings: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 309–312.
Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 411–418.

1. GIFTS WITHOUT LOVE

- a. What is the value of various gifts without love? 1 Corinthians 13:1–3.

- b. What is the first characteristic of true love? 1 Corinthians 13:4.

“The Christian who manifests patience and cheerfulness under bereavement and suffering, who meets even death itself with the peace and calmness of an unwavering faith, may accomplish for the gospel more than he could have effected by a long life of faithful labor.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 465.

- c. What will kindness do when associated with true love? Ephesians 4:32.

“Love should be revealed in action. It should flow out in all home intercourse, showing itself in thoughtful kindness, in gentle, unselfish courtesy. From a worldly point of view, money is power; but from a Christian standpoint, love is power. Wealth is often an influence to corrupt and destroy; force is strong to do hurt; but pure love has special efficacy. It prevents discord and misery, and brings the truest happiness. It gives intellectual and spiritual strength, and truth and goodness are its properties.”—*The Bible Echo*, December 15, 1893.

2. LOVE DOES NOT ENVY

- a. What are the fruits of envy? Job 5:2; Proverbs 14:30; 27:4.

“Envy, malice, evil thinking, evilspeaking, covetousness—these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality. Every habit or practice that leads into sin and brings dishonor upon Christ must be put away, whatever the sacrifice. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. One sin cherished is sufficient to work degradation of character and to mislead others (Isaiah 11:13).”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 312.

- b. What condition will the remnant people of God reach before they can receive the latter rain? Isaiah 11:13.

“The cross of Christ is the pledge of our fellowship and union. The time must come when the watchmen shall see eye to eye; when the trumpet shall give a certain sound; when ‘Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim’ any more.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 3, 1899.

“Oh, that all might repent and do their first works. When the churches do this they will love God supremely and their neighbors as themselves. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. Divisions will then be healed, the harsh sounds of strife will no more be heard in the borders of Israel. Through the grace freely given them of God, all will seek to answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples shall be one, even as He and the Father are one. Peace, love, mercy, and benevolence will be the abiding principles of the soul. The love of Christ will be the theme of every tongue, and it will no more be said by the True Witness, ‘I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love’ (Revelation 2:4). The people of God will be abiding in Christ, and the love of Jesus will be revealed, and one Spirit will animate all hearts, regenerating and renewing in the image of Christ, fashioning all hearts alike. As living branches of the True Vine, all will be united to Christ the living Head. Christ will abide in every heart, guiding, comforting, sanctifying, and presenting to the world the unity of the followers of Jesus, thus bearing testimony that the heavenly credentials are supplied to the remnant church. In the oneness of Christ’s church it will be proved that God sent His only begotten Son into the world.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, pp. 51, 52.

3. LOVE IS NOT BOASTFUL

- a. How does God consider human pride and arrogance? Proverbs 8:13; 11:2; 16:18. In what sense did Cain show a proud heart?

“Cain was willing to offer the fruit of his ground, but refused to connect with his offering the blood of beasts. His heart refused to show his repentance for sin, and his faith in a Saviour, by offering the blood of beasts. He refused to acknowledge his need of a Redeemer. This, to his proud heart, was dependence and humiliation.”—*Confrontation*, pp. 22, 23.

- b. What was King David’s attitude toward a proud heart? Psalm 101:3–5.

“The vows of David, recorded in the 101st psalm, should be the vows of all upon whom rest the responsibilities of guarding the influences of the home.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 119.

- c. What quality must we be especially careful to cultivate in these last days? Matthew 11:29; 1 Peter 5:6.

“Humility is a characteristic of those who have true wisdom, and no matter what may be their attainments, they will not be self-confident and boastful.”—*The Sabbath School Worker*, March 1, 1892.

“Truly great men are invariably modest. Humility is a grace which sits naturally upon them as a garment. Those who have stored their minds with useful knowledge, and who possess genuine attainments and refinement, are the ones who will be most willing to admit the weakness of their own understanding. They are not self-confident nor boastful; but in view of the higher attainments to which they might rise in intellectual greatness, they seem to themselves to have but just begun the ascent. It is the superficial thinker, the one who has but a beginning or smattering of knowledge, who deems himself wise and who takes on disgusting airs of importance.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 338, 339.

“It is the superficial thinker who deems himself wise. Men of solid worth, of high attainments, are the most ready to admit the weakness of their own understanding. God wants everyone who claims to be His disciple to be a learner, to be more inclined to learn than to teach.”—*Ibid.*, p. 361.

4. LOVE IS NOT RUDE

- a. What is the effect of grievous words? On the other hand, what will kind words do? Proverbs 15:1; 16:24; 25:15.

“Love, lifted out of the realm of passion and impulse, becomes spiritualized, and is revealed in words and acts. A Christian must have a sanctified tenderness and love in which there is no impatience of fretfulness; the rude, harsh manners must be softened by the grace of Christ.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 51.

“Courtesy, even in little things, should be manifested by the parents toward each other. Universal kindness should be the law of the house. No rude language should be indulged; no bitter words should be spoken.

“All may possess a cheerful countenance, a gentle voice, a courteous manner; and these are elements of power. Children are attracted by a cheerful, sunny demeanor. Show them kindness and courtesy, and they will manifest the same spirit toward you and toward one another.”—*Ibid.*, p. 421.

- b. What should we learn from the way kind words settled a great difficulty in the time of Joshua? Joshua 22:10–31; 1 Corinthians 13:5.

“Had the men of Gad and Reuben retorted in the same spirit, war would have been the result. While it is important on the one hand that laxness in dealing with sin be avoided, it is equally important on the other to shun harsh judgment and groundless suspicion.

“While very sensitive to the least blame in regard to their own course, many are too severe in dealing with those whom they suppose to be in error. No one was ever reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many are thus driven further from the right path and led to harden their hearts against conviction. A spirit of kindness, a courteous, forbearing deportment may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins.

“The wisdom displayed by the Reubenites and their companions is worthy of imitation. While honestly seeking to promote the cause of true religion, they were misjudged and severely censured; yet they manifested no resentment. They listened with courtesy and patience to the charges of their brethren before attempting to make their defense, and then fully explained their motives and showed their innocence. Thus the difficulty which had threatened such serious consequences was amicably settled.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 519, 520.

5. LOVE “SEEKETH NOT HER OWN” ADVANTAGE

- a. What is included in the eighth commandment? Exodus 20:15.

“Both public and private sins are included in this prohibition. The eighth commandment condemns manstealing and slave dealing, and forbids wars of conquest. It condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

- b. What will characterize the life of true Christians, and why? Matthew 5:37; Hebrews 13:5.

“Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 68.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much are our gifts worth without love?
2. How do you explain envy?
3. How does God deal with spiritually proud people?
4. Explain Christian courtesy.
5. Explain the eighth commandment.

The Greatest Gift

(continued)

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

“The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God (Ephesians 3:10).”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 303–314.

Sunday

December 11

1. LOVE IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED

- a. What is the only way to control our temper? James 4:7, 8.

“In the daily life you will meet with sudden surprises, disappointments, and temptations. What saith the word? [James 4:7, 8 quoted.] ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me’ (Isaiah 27:5). Look unto Jesus at all times and in all places, offering a silent prayer from a sincere heart that you may know how to do His will. Then when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard for you against the enemy. When you are almost ready to yield, to lose patience and self-control, to be hard and denunciatory, to find fault and accuse—this is the time for you to send to heaven the prayer, ‘Help me, O God, to resist temptation, to put all bitterness and wrath and evilspeaking out of my heart. Give me Thy meekness, Thy lowliness, Thy long-suffering, and Thy love. Leave me not to dishonor my Redeemer, to misinterpret the words and motives of my wife, my children, and my brethren and sisters in the faith. Help me that I may be kind, pitiful, tenderhearted, forgiving. Help me to be a real house-band in my home and to represent the character of Christ to others.’ ”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 214, 215.

- b. How can we subdue our sinful inclinations? John 15:5; Philippians 4:13.

Monday

December 12

2. LOVE THINKS NO EVIL

- a. Where do evil thoughts originate? Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19, 20.

“As a man thinketh, so is he. From within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts inspired by Satan. He begins to quibble at technicalities and manners. The spirit of Satan links him up with the enemy to bear a word of criticism on less important themes. The truth becomes of less and still less value to him. He becomes an accuser of his brethren, etc., and changes leaders. The outside world has a greater weight with him than has the flood of light that God has poured in upon the world in messages that he has given, and which he once rejoiced in.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 408, 409.

- b. What things should be kept in mind if we will ever see God? Matthew 5:8; Psalms 15:1–5; 24:3, 4.

“Charity ‘doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil’ (1 Corinthians 13:5). Christlike love places the most favorable construction on the motives and acts of others. It does not needlessly expose their faults; it does not listen eagerly to unfavorable reports, but seeks rather to bring to mind the good qualities of others.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 319.

“Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 24, 25.

- c. How can we attain to purity in heart? Psalm 119:9–11.

“The words of Jesus, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ have a deeper meaning—not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul, free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, childlike.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 25.

3. SEEING THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY

- a. According to Isaiah, who will see the King in His beauty? Isaiah 33:14–17.

“The darkest hour of the church’s struggle with the powers of evil is that which immediately precedes the day of her final deliverance. But none who trust in God need fear; for ‘when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall,’ God will be to His church ‘a refuge from the storm’ (Isaiah 25:4).

“In that day only the righteous are promised deliverance.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.

- b. What example must parents set so that their children may not be lost? Psalm 101:1–3.

“From their infancy the youth need to have a firm barrier built up between them and the world, that its corrupting influence may not affect them. Parents must exercise unceasing watchfulness, that their children be not lost to God. The vows of David, recorded in the 101st psalm, should be the vows of all upon whom rest the responsibilities of guarding the influences of the home. . . .

“The youth should not be left to learn good and evil indiscriminately, the parents thinking that at some future time the good will predominate and the evil lose its influence. The evil will increase faster than the good. It is possible that the evil which children learn may be eradicated after many years, but who would trust to this? Whatever else they neglect, parents should never leave their children free to wander in the paths of sin.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 119.

- c. Instead of fig leaves, what kind of dress should we seek to obtain? Genesis 3:7, 21; Isaiah 61:10.

“Mothers, as well as youth and children, need to pray, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me’ (Psalm 51:10). This purity of heart and loveliness of spirit are more precious than gold, both for time and for eternity. Only the pure in heart shall see God.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 418.

4. PROMISES TO THE FAITHFUL

- a. What is promised to Christ’s faithful followers? Psalm 91:1; Isaiah 26:20, 21.

“When tempted to sin, let us remember that Jesus is pleading for us in the heavenly sanctuary. When we put away our sins and come to Him in faith, He takes our names on His lips and presents them to His Father, saying, ‘I have graven them upon the palms of my hands; I know them by name.’ And the command goes forth to the angels to protect them. Then in the day of fierce trial He will say, ‘Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast’ (Isaiah 26:20). What are the chambers in which they are to hide? They are the protection of Christ and holy angels. The people of God are not at this time all in one place. They are in different companies and in all parts of the earth, and they will be tried singly, not in groups. Everyone must stand the test for himself.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 19, 1908.

- b. What promise belongs to the overcomers in the Laodicean period? Revelation 3:21. In what sense is this also an appeal to us?

“The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who has drunk most deeply of His spirit of self-sacrificing love—love that ‘vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil’ (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5)—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice even unto death, for the saving of humanity.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 543.

“Are you ready to make the surrender now? You are to put away your sin right now when you see it, but do not make leeway [that] you are going to overcome by degrees; you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation and harden not your hearts.

“Oh my soul, why not leave the cursed thing today? Sin crucified my Lord. Why not turn from it with loathing? Why not love the things that Christ loved, and hate the things that Christ hated? He has made provision ample enough for you that you can through Him be more—yea, more—than overcomers. Then what do you want? Do you want a second crucifixion of Christ? You cannot have that. You must look to Calvary. You must take the blood by faith and apply it. You must wash in it. You must be cleansed by the already shed blood of Jesus Christ. It can cleanse you to the utmost.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 188.

5. LOVE “REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY”

- a. What will be avoided by those who possess true love? 1 Corinthians 13:6.

“‘Rejoiceth not in iniquity’ (1 Corinthians 13:6). Mark it. The apostle meant where there is a cultivation of genuine love for precious souls, it will be exhibited for those most in need of that patience which suffereth long and is kind, and will not be ready to magnify a small indiscretion or direct wrong into large unpardonable offenses, and will not make capital of others’ misdoings.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 279.

- b. What spirit should control those who sit in church administrative meetings? 1 Corinthians 13:5–7.

“Our every thought, word, and action should be subject to the will of Christ. Levity is not appropriate in meetings where the solemn work and word of God are under consideration. The prayer has been offered that Christ shall preside in the assembly, and impart His wisdom, His grace, and righteousness. Is it consistent to take a course that will be grievous to His Spirit and contrary to His work? Let us bear in mind that Jesus is in our midst. Then an elevating, controlling influence from the Spirit of God will pervade the assembly. There will be manifested that wisdom which is from above, that is first pure, then peaceable, full of mercy and good fruits, which cannot err. In all the plans and decisions there will be that charity that ‘seeketh not her own;’ which is ‘not easily provoked,’ that ‘thinketh no evil,’ that ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;’ that ‘beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things (1 Corinthians 13:5–7). Self must be hid in Jesus, then the judgment will not be one-sided and warped, so that there can be no dispassionate and righteous decisions.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 231.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What fundamental principle do we need to understand about self-control?
2. How can we obtain clean hearts?
3. Who will see “the King in His beauty”?
4. What is promised to the remnant of Laodicea?
5. How do we feel when our enemies suffer?

“I Will Come Again”

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matthew 16:27).

“Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 299–316.

1. PROPHECIES OF THE SECOND COMING

- a. What prophetic hope was expressed by both Job and Enoch? Job 19:25–27; Jude 14, 15.
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- b. How does the psalmist describe the Lord’s return, and what should it make us pause to consider? Psalms 50:1–6; 96:11, 13.
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“The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 300.

“Do we believe with all the heart that Christ is soon coming and that we are now having the last message of mercy that is ever to be given to a guilty world? Is our example what it should be? Do we, by our lives and holy conversation, show to those around us that we are looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change these vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body? I fear that we do not believe and realize these things as we should. Those who believe the important truths that we profess, should act out their faith. There is too much seeking after amusements and things to take the attention in this world; the mind is left to run too much upon dress, and the tongue is engaged too often in light and trifling conversation, which gives the lie to our profession, for our conversation is not in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour.”—*Early Writings*, p. 111.

2. “THY DEAD MEN SHALL LIVE”

- a. In Old Testament times, what was the hope of the true believers in connection with the second coming of Jesus? Isaiah 26:19; 25:8, 9.
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- b. What did Paul write about the same hope? 1 Corinthians 15: 51–55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.
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“When the Thessalonian Christians were filled with grief as they buried their loved ones, who had hoped to live to witness the coming of the Lord, Paul, their teacher, pointed them to the resurrection, to take place at the Saviour’s advent.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

- c. What did Paul call the hope of Christ’s return, and what appeal is included with it? Titus 2:11–14.
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“The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour’s parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the ‘appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ’ was the ‘blessed hope’ (Titus 2:13).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

“We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world.”—*Evangelism*, p. 220.

“The church of God is required to fulfill her night watch, however perilous, whether long or short. Sorrow is no excuse for her to be less watchful. Tribulation should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by His own example to the Source of their strength in times of need, distress, and peril. The attitude of watching is to designate the church as God’s people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 205.

3. BEAMS OF GLORY

- a. With what words does Habakkuk describe the second coming of Christ? Habakkuk 3:3–13. What does he say about the marks of Christ’s crucifixion in connection with His coming? Habakkuk 3:4 (margin).
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“Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: ‘**He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power**’ (Habakkuk 3:4, margin). That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour’s glory, there ‘the hiding of His power.’ ‘Mighty to save,’ through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God’s mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honor; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 674 [emphasis supplied].

“What a joy it will be to recognize in Him our Teacher and Redeemer, **bearing still the marks of the crucifixion, from which shine beams of glory**, giving additional value to the crowns which the redeemed receive from His hands, the very hands outstretched in blessing over His disciples as He ascended. The very voice which said, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,’ bids His ransomed ones welcome to His presence.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 349 [emphasis supplied].

- b. How important will these “beams of glory” be throughout eternity? Zechariah 13:6.
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“The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore—humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father’s face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary’s cross.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 651.

4. THE MANNER OF HIS COMING

- a. With what message did the angels comfort the disciples at Christ's ascension, and how is this confirmed in other Scriptures? Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
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- b. What further descriptions do we have of Christ's return? Matthew 24:27; Mark 13:26; Revelation 1:7.
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"Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, 'Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?' Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: 'Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.' At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.

"Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven, and cried, 'Awake! awake! awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise.' Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, 'Alleluia!' as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

"We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square."—*Early Writings*, pp. 15, 16.

5. THE WORK TAKING PLACE NOW

- a. Whom did John see holding the seal of the living God, and for what purpose? Revelation 7:2–4.
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- b. Who will—and who will not—be ready for Christ's appearing? Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.
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"We are not to rest in the idea that because we are church members we are saved, while we give no evidence that we are conformed to the image of Christ, while we cling to our old habits, and weave our fabric with the threads of worldly ideas and customs."—*Maranatha*, p. 54.

"We need a thorough reformation in all our churches. The converting power of God must come into the church. Seek the Lord most earnestly, put away your sins, and tarry in Jerusalem till ye be endowed with power from on high."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 443.

"If you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vain-glory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil speaking, lying, deception, slandering, you have not Christ abiding in your heart, and the evidence shows that you have the mind and character of Satan, not of Jesus Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. You must have a Christian character that will stand. . . .

"There must be thorough conversions among those who claim to believe the truth, or they will fall in the day of trial. God's people must reach a high standard. They must be a holy nation, a peculiar people, a chosen generation—zealous of good works."—*Ibid.*, p. 441.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was the first to prophesy about the second coming of Jesus?
2. Who will take part in the first resurrection?
3. Who will see Christ at His glorious return?
4. How is the manner of Christ's return described?
5. How can I get ready for Christ's return?

The Reward of the Faithful

“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away” (1 Corinthians 13:8).

“This love ‘never faileth.’ It can never lose its value; it is a heavenly attribute. As a precious treasure, it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 319.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 662–678.

Sunday

December 25

1. LOVE NEVER FAILS

- a. What is written about love compared to other gifts, and what is one of its basic qualities? 1 Corinthians 13:8; Romans 12:9.

“Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to that which is good, at the sacrifice of association or friendship with the ungodly. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 171.

- b. Mention a few more characteristics of Christian love. Romans 12:10, 11.

“Religion is not designed merely to prepare us for admission into heaven; one object is to fit us for the proper discharge of the duties of daily life.”—*The Bible Echo*, June 1, 1887.

Monday

December 26

2. “REJOICE IN THE LORD”

- a. How are we to “rejoice in the Lord”? Philippians 4:4; Psalm 31:7.

“Whatever your disposition may be, God is able so to mold it that it will be sweet and Christlike. By the exercise of living faith you can separate from everything that is not in accordance with the mind of God, and thus bring heaven into your life here below. Doing this, you will have sunshine at every step. When the enemy seeks to enshroud the soul with darkness, sing faith and talk faith, and you will find that you have sung and talked yourself into the light.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 233, 234.

- b. What are we admonished to do amid trials and persecutions? Romans 12:12.

“In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace.

“It is the love of self that brings unrest. When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus, the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. Then we shall not be seeking the highest place. We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 330, 331.

3. "LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"

- a. How should Christians treat their enemies? Matthew 5:43-47; Romans 12:14.

- b. When tempted to avenge ourselves, what should we bear in mind? Romans 12:17-21.

"We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.

"We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. 'What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God' (1 Peter 2:20).

"Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all cause for misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others. 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift' (Matthew 5:23, 24).

"If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath' (Proverbs 15:1). And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away.

"Under a storm of stinging, faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises: 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good' (Romans 12:21)." —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 485, 486.

4. NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

- a. What admonition comes to us in view of what is soon to come upon this earth? 2 Peter 3:10-13.

"Knowing this, what manner of persons ought we to be? Shall we exalt human wisdom and point to finite, changeable, erring men as a dependence in time of trouble? or shall we exemplify our faith by our trust in God's power, revealing the net of false theories, religions, and philosophies which Satan has spread to catch unwary souls? By thus doing the word of God, we shall be lights in the world; for if the word of God is practiced, we show to all those who come within the sphere of our influence that we reverence and respect God, and that we are working under His administration. By a humble, circumspect walk, by love, forbearance, long-suffering, and gentleness, God expects His servants to manifest Him to the world.

"God requires those to whom He has given sacred trusts to rise to the full height of their responsibilities. Man is placed here in the world on test and trial, and those who are given positions of trust must decide whether they will exalt self, or their Maker; whether they will use their power to oppress their fellowmen, or to exalt and glorify God." —*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 281, 282.

- b. How does the Bible describe the new heavens and the new earth? Revelation 21:1-5; Isaiah 65:17.

"'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him' (1 Corinthians 2:9). Only through His word can a knowledge of these things be gained; and even this affords but a partial revelation. . . .

"No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation [in the Holy City]. No tempter is there, no possibility of wrong. Every character has withstood the testing of evil, and none are longer susceptible to its power.

"'To him that overcometh,' Christ says, 'will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God' (Revelation 2:7). The giving of the tree of life in Eden was conditional, and it was finally withdrawn. But the gifts of the future life are absolute and eternal." —*Education*, pp. 301, 302.

5. THE NEW JERUSALEM

- a. How does John describe the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:9–26.
- b. Who will be there and who will not be there? Revelation 21:27; 22:14, 15.

“The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. . . .

“It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was despised when offered them; but how desirable it now appears. ‘All this,’ cries the lost soul, ‘I might have had; but I chose to put these things far from me. Oh, strange infatuation! I have exchanged peace, happiness, and honor for wretchedness, infamy, and despair.’ All see that their exclusion from heaven is just. By their lives they have declared: ‘We will not have this Man [Jesus] to reign over us’ (Luke 19:14).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 668.

- c. What should be our constant prayer in view of Christ’s promise to come again soon to gather His faithful, final remnant? Revelation 22:16–20.

“[Revelation 22:16–18, 20 quoted.] We see from these words the necessity of sacredly cherishing every ray of light that the Lord Jesus sends to His church on the earth. The efficiency of any church depends upon its entire consecration. The church is not to conform to any one man’s mind or judgment or will, or depart in the slightest particular from the teachings of the Word.”—*Australasian Union Conference Record*, October 7, 1907.

“On rocky Patmos the beloved disciple hears the promise, ‘Surely I come quickly,’ and his longing response voices the prayer of the church in all her pilgrimage, ‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus’ (Revelation 22:20).”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 348.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the difference between human love and God’s love.
2. What is the true source of Christian happiness?
3. How can we love our enemies?
4. What kind of people should we be as we await our Lord’s return?
5. Describe the New Jerusalem and explain how we can be there.

Local Mission Support Network

In 2002 the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference Treasury Department in conjunction with the Sabbath School Department began supporting local missions around the world more actively. Since the beginning of this year, the Local Mission Support Network (LMSN) has been expanded its support to be under the direct supervision of the General Conference, thus becoming a more efficient channel to spread the gospel in its fullness in different areas.

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