



Christian Character (II)

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

April-June 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

As we continue our studies this quarter on *Christian Character*, we will keep on building upon the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ, considering how we can cultivate a close relationship with Him. By virtue of His sacrificial death and resurrection in our behalf, we are raised up with Him to walk in newness of life. This is made possible through His own creative power—the same power that called the universe into existence. The fact that God was able to create our entire planet in six literal days out of nothing should inspire our hearts to realize what a powerful Lord we serve.

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. ‘All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens’ (Psalm 96:5). ‘To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.’ ‘Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else’ (Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18). Says the psalmist: ‘Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.’ ‘O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker’ (Psalms 100:3; 95:6). And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things’ (Revelation 4:11).”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 436, 437.

“Christ came to the earth to give to men the pattern of the perfect character that all must obtain who would be welcomed to the future heavenly world. He found His pleasure in unwearied works for the good of men. His object in coming to our world was to leave an example of what the human character must become in order to be fitted for the society of heaven.

“The Holy Spirit leaves no member of the church to develop a character that is without comeliness. He claims for every man and woman the privilege of becoming a child of light, an influence for righteousness, an example of a Christlike life. This is God’s way of helping the church. Satan is working in every way to thwart the purpose of God, and God desires that His professing people shall make no mistakes, but that every move may be a right move.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 184.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

for a chapel in Guyana

Guyana is a small, beautiful, tropical country on the northern portion of South America. It is the only country in that portion of the New World where English is the official language, as it is surrounded by Venezuela (Spanish), Brazil (Portuguese), Suriname (Dutch), and the close-by French Guiana (French).



Originally a Dutch colony, by 1815 it was firmly established as part of the British Empire. After the abolition of slavery, many plantations brought in workers from the Indian subcontinent to work the farms. In addition, workers and immigrants from across the world began to arrive from as far away as China, the Madeira Islands, and Pakistan. Today, Guyana boasts the most diversified population of any South American country.

The message of Reformation came to this country many years ago through the labors of a native of Guyana residing in Canada. But the work was slow and did not truly take root. In the 1990's interest in the message of Reformation increased. This was brought to the attention of the brethren of the East Canadian Field and, with the cooperation of the General Conference, a number of lay missionaries were sent to the country. This was followed shortly after with the visit of a Bible worker from Florida, USA. A minister from California was dispatched to perform the first baptism and has gone there from time to time to attend to the new members' spiritual needs.

Now that the Guyana Mission is in full operation, a proper headquarters and chapel are needed in Georgetown, the capital city. This lighthouse will provide a place for the missionary work to be coordinated throughout the river-networks of the country. In addition, it will assist with the new developments of the church in French Guiana and Suriname. Please remember Guyana as you dedicate your offering this Sabbath.

PROJECT 048

Your brethren and sisters from Guyana

Justification

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1).

“Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 373.

Suggested Reading: *Faith and Works*, pp. 103–109.

Sunday

March 27

1. DEFINED AND EXPLAINED

a. What is justification? Romans 5:18.

“Pardon and justification are one and the same thing.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

“Justification is the opposite of condemnation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 104.

b. What is the only acceptable way to be justified? Romans 3:21, 22; 5:1.

“The Lord does not save sinners by abolishing His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth. The punishment has been endured by the sinner's substitute. . . . In the councils of heaven, before the world was created, the Father and the Son covenanted together that if man proved disloyal to God, Christ, one with the Father, would take the place of the transgressor, and suffer the penalty of justice that must fall upon him.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1070.

“When the Spirit of God controls mind and heart, the converted soul breaks forth into a new song; for he realizes that in his experience the promise of God has been fulfilled, that his transgression has been forgiven, his sin covered.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 476.

2. JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

- a. How does Paul explain God's way to justify sinners? Romans 5:14–19.

“Christ, in the wilderness of temptation, stood in Adam's place to bear the test he failed to endure. Here Christ overcame in the sinner's behalf, four thousand years after Adam turned his back upon the light of his home. Separated from the presence of God, the human family had been departing every successive generation, farther from the original purity, wisdom, and knowledge which Adam possessed in Eden. Christ bore the sins and infirmities of the race as they existed when He came to the earth to help man. In behalf of the race, with the weaknesses of fallen man upon Him, He was to stand the temptations of Satan upon all points wherewith man would be assailed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1081.

“In what contrast is the second Adam as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan single-handed! Since the Fall the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and sinking lower in the scale of moral worth, up to the period of Christ's advent to the earth. And in order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 28, 1874.

- b. Since we all are sinners, what is our only hope and assurance? Romans 3:23–26; Titus 3:5–7.

“Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 101.

3. JUSTIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

- a. What is the role of the blood of Christ in our salvation? Romans 5:9.

“God calls for faith in Christ as our atoning sacrifice. His blood is the only remedy for sin.

“It is not God's will that you should be distrustful, and torture your soul with the fear that God will not accept you because you are sinful and unworthy. . . . You can say: ‘I know I am a sinner, and that is the reason I need a Saviour. . . . I have no merit or goodness whereby I may claim salvation, but I present before God the all-atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is my only plea.’—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 102.

- b. Why is the blood a key so essential in the plan of salvation? Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22.

“We are to have free access to the atoning blood of Christ. This we must regard as the most precious privilege, the greatest blessing, ever granted to sinful man. And how little is made of this great gift! How deep, how wide and continuous is this stream. To every soul thirsting after holiness there is repose, there is rest, there is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, and then the holy, happy, peaceful walk and precious communion with Christ. . . . Its cleansing virtue gives strength and vigor to faith, power to prayer, and happiness in cheerful obedience.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 224.

“Christ has made reconciliation for sin, and has borne all its ignominy, reproach, and punishment; and yet while bearing sin, He has brought in everlasting righteousness, so that the believer is spotless before God. . . .

“But there are many who claim to be children of God who are resting their hopes upon other dependencies, rather than on the blood of Christ alone. When urged to rest their faith wholly upon Christ as a complete Saviour, many reveal the fact that they have faith in something that they think they can do. . . . They imagine that they have a great deal to do themselves to save their own souls, and that Jesus will come in and piece out that part which is lacking, and give the finishing stroke to their salvation. These poor souls will not be strong in God until they accept Christ as a complete Saviour. They can add nothing to their salvation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 227.

4. BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS

- a. Among the Israelites, what was the only way of escape from destruction when they were about to leave Egypt? Exodus 12:13.

“The Israelites were required to sprinkle the doorposts with the blood of a slain lamb, in order that when the angel of death passed through the land, they might escape destruction. But if instead of doing this simple act of faith and obedience, they had barricaded the door, and taken every precaution to keep the destroying angel out, their pains would have been in vain. . . . When the blood was seen upon the doorpost, it was enough. The salvation of the house was assured. So it is in the work of salvation; it is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth from all sin.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 227.

- b. How can we be clean before God? 1 John 1:7–9. What attitude will this inspire in our heart?

“Thank God that He who spilled His blood for us, lives to plead it, lives to make intercession for every soul who receives Him. [1 John 1:9 quoted.] The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. It speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, for Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us. We need to keep ever before us the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. That life-cleansing, life-sustaining blood, appropriated by living faith, is our hope. We need to grow in appreciation of its inestimable value, for it speaks for us only as we by faith claim its virtue, keeping the conscience clean and at peace with God.

“This is represented as the pardoning blood, inseparably connected with the resurrection and life of our Redeemer, illustrated by the ever-flowing stream that proceeds from the throne of God, the water of the river of life.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, pp. 947, 948.

“None but God can subdue the pride of man’s heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

5. OVERCOMING

- a. How can we be overcomers over Satan and his devices? Revelation 12:11.

“We become overcomers by helping others to overcome, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. The keeping of the commandments of God will yield in us an obedient spirit, and the service that is the offspring of such a spirit, God can accept.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 974.

- b. What will be our song in heaven? Revelation 15:3.

“I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Day by day cast the love of the world out of your hearts. Understand by experience what it means to have fellowship with Christ. Prepare for the judgment, that when Christ shall come to be admired in all them that believe, you may be among those who will meet Him in peace. In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son. The angels, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King and His trophies of victory—those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. A song of triumph shall peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts, accompanied by His redeemed ones, the witnesses that His mission of suffering and sacrifice has not been in vain.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 550.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I be justified before God?
2. What is the meaning of grace?
3. What is the role of the blood of Christ in our salvation?
4. How can we be washed in the blood of Christ?
5. How can we be overcomers?

Christ's Death on the Cross

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

"For the purpose of redeeming a lost world, the divine Son of God had endured the cross, despising the shame, and had ascended to heaven triumphant over death and the grave."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 436.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 741–764.

Sunday

April 3

1. THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

- a. **When did Christ offer Himself to die for our salvation? Revelation 13:8.**

"The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of 'the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal' (Romans 16:25, R. V.). It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

- b. **When man sinned, what typical sacrifice was offered? Genesis 3:21.**

"To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

Monday

April 4

2. CHRIST—THE LAMB OF GOD

- a. **How did God reveal the plan of salvation to Abraham? Genesis 22:12, 13.**

"It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, 'It is enough.' To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God? 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' (Romans 8:32)."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

- b. **What prophetic description did Isaiah make about Christ? Isaiah 53:6, 7.**

"The Holy Spirit through Isaiah, taking up the illustration, prophesied of the Saviour, 'He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,' 'and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53:7, 6); but the people of Israel had not understood the lesson. Many of them regarded the sacrificial offerings much as the heathen looked upon their sacrifices—as gifts by which they themselves might propitiate the Deity. God desired to teach them that from His own love comes the gift which reconciles them to Himself."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 112, 113.

"The Majesty of heaven was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and amid scoffing and jeers, ridicule and false accusation, He was nailed to the cross. The crowd, in whose hearts humanity seemed to be dead, sought to aggravate the cruel sufferings of the Son of God by their revilings. But as a sheep before His shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was giving His life for the life of the world, that all who believed in Him should not perish."—*The Upward Look*, p. 90.

3. CHRIST, THE LAMB OF GOD (continued)

- a. How did John the Baptist introduce Christ to the people? John 1:29, 36.

“John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant, pleading with tears for the approval of the Father. As the glory of God encircled Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, John recognized the token which God had promised. He knew that it was the world’s Redeemer whom he had baptized. The Holy Spirit rested upon him, and with outstretched hand pointing to Jesus, he cried, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 112.

- b. How did Peter describe the price of our redemption? 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

“In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead. But the only way in which He could reach men was to veil His glory by a garb of humanity. The angels beheld the hiding of His glory, that divinity might touch humanity. Christ ever retained the utmost hatred for sin, but He loved the purchase of His blood. He suffered in the place of sinful men, taking them into union with Himself.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 904.

“Men need to understand that Deity suffered and sank under the agonies of Calvary. Yet Jesus Christ whom God gave for the ransom of the world purchased the church with His own blood. The Majesty of heaven was made to suffer at the hands of religious zealots, who claimed to be the most enlightened people upon the face of the earth. . . .

“We are not to praise the gospel, but praise Christ. We are not to worship the gospel, but the Lord of gospel. Christ is a perfect representation of God on the one hand, and a perfect specimen of sinless humanity on the other hand. Thus He has combined divinity and humanity.

“In Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This is why, although He was tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world, from His first entrance into it, untainted by corruption, though surrounded by it. Are we not also to become partakers of that fullness, and is it not thus, and thus only, that we can overcome as He overcame?”—*Ibid.*, p. 907.

4. THE CROSS OF CALVARY

- a. What did the cross mean to the apostle Paul? 1 Corinthians 1: 18.

- b. What was the main subject of Paul’s preaching? 1 Corinthians 1:22–24.

“To the minds of multitudes living at the present time, the cross of Calvary is surrounded by sacred memories. Hallowed associations are connected with the scenes of the crucifixion. But in Paul’s day the cross was regarded with feelings of repulsion and horror. To uphold as the Saviour of mankind one who had met death on the cross, would naturally call forth ridicule and opposition.

“Paul well knew how his message would be regarded by both the Jews and the Greeks of Corinth. ‘We preach Christ crucified,’ he admitted, ‘unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness’ (1 Corinthians 1:23). Among his Jewish hearers there were many who would be angered by the message he was about to proclaim. In the estimation of the Greeks his words would be absurd folly. He would be looked upon as weak-minded for attempting to show how the cross could have any connection with the elevation of the race or the salvation of mankind.

“But to Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene he had never ceased to glory in the cross. At that time there had been given him a revelation of the infinite love of God, as revealed in the death of Christ; and a marvelous transformation had been wrought in his life, bringing all his plans and purposes into harmony with heaven. From that hour he had been a new man in Christ. He knew by personal experience that when a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and yields to the divine influence, a change of heart takes place, and henceforth Christ is all and in all.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 245.

“Under the inspiration of the Spirit, the apostle Paul represents Christians as those who have purified their souls in obeying the truth. Just in accordance with the faith and love we bring into our work will be the power brought into it. No man can create faith. The Spirit operating upon and enlightening the human mind, creates faith in God. In the Scriptures faith is stated to be the gift of God, powerful unto salvation, enlightening the hearts of those who search for truth as for hidden treasure.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899.

5. GLORYING IN THE CROSS

- a. How can we glory in the cross? Galatians 6:14; Romans 7:18.

“The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

“The anguish and humiliation of God’s people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 590.

- b. What should be the center of our message? John 3:14–17.

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary, and in connection with the wondrous, central truth of the Saviour’s atonement. Those who study the Redeemer’s wonderful sacrifice grow in grace and knowledge.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1137.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How was our salvation made possible?
2. Why is the gospel called the everlasting gospel?
3. What price was paid for our redemption?
4. What is the only basis of our glorying?
5. What should be the center of our message?

Christ’s Resurrection

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

“Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, 779–795.
The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 3, pp. 198–206.

1. “HE IS RISEN”

- a. What happened after Christ had rested the Sabbath day in the tomb? Matthew 28:1–4.

“The [mightiest] angel [from heaven] approached the grave, and rolling away the stone as if it had been a pebble, he sat upon it. Then his voice was heard, Son of God, come forth; thy Father calls thee; and Jesus came forth from the grave with the step of a mighty conqueror.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, July 28, 1898.

“This was [the One] who had been nailed to the cross. . . . Mountains piled upon mountains over His sepulcher could not have prevented Him from coming forth.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 780, 781.

- b. What message did the women receive? Matthew 28:5–8.

“With combined wisdom and tenderness, the angels reminded the women of the words of Jesus, warning them beforehand of His crucifixion and resurrection. The women now fully comprehended the words of their Master, which at the time were veiled in mystery to them. They gathered fresh hope and courage.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 200.

2. CAPTIVES MADE FREE

- a. What took place at the death and resurrection of Christ? Matthew 27:51, 52.

“As Christ arose, He brought from the grave a multitude of captives. The earthquake at His death had rent open their graves, and when He arose, they came forth with Him. They were those who had been collaborators with God, and who at the cost of their lives had borne testimony to the truth. Now they were to be witnesses for Him who had raised them from the dead.

“During His ministry, Jesus had raised the dead to life. He had raised the son of the widow of Nain, and the ruler’s daughter and Lazarus. But these were not clothed with immortality. After they were raised, they were still subject to death. But those who came forth from the grave at Christ’s resurrection were raised to everlasting life. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. These, said Christ, are no longer the captives of Satan; I have redeemed them. I have brought them from the grave as the first fruits of My power, to be with Me where I am, nevermore to see death or experience sorrow.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 786.

“. . . In this scene of the resurrection of the Son of God is given a lively image of the glory that will be revealed at the general resurrection of the just at the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Then the dead that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth to life; and not only the earth, but the heavens themselves, shall be shaken. A few graves were opened at the resurrection of Christ; but at His second coming all the precious dead, from righteous Abel to the last saint that dies, shall awake to glorious, immortal life.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1110.

- b. What did the resurrected ones do? Matthew 27:53.

“These [resurrected ones] went into the city, and appeared unto many, declaring, Christ has risen from the dead, and we be risen with Him. Thus was immortalized the sacred truth of the resurrection. The risen saints bore witness to the truth of the words, ‘Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise.’ Their resurrection was an illustration of the fulfillment of the prophecy, ‘Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead’ (Isaiah 26:19).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 786.

3. THE ROMAN GUARDS’ REPORT

- a. What kind of report did the Roman guards take to the Jewish priests? Matthew 28:11.

“At sight of the angels and the glorified Saviour the Roman guard had fainted and become as dead men. When the heavenly train was hidden from their view, they arose to their feet, and as quickly as their trembling limbs could carry them, made their way to the gate of the garden. Staggering like drunken men, they hurried on to the city, telling those whom they met the wonderful news. They were making their way to Pilate, but their report had been carried to the Jewish authorities, and the chief priests and rulers sent for them to be brought first into their presence. A strange appearance those soldiers presented. Trembling with fear, their faces colorless, they bore testimony to the resurrection of Christ. The soldiers told all, just as they had seen it; they had not had time to think or speak anything but the truth. With painful utterance they said, It was the Son of God who was crucified; we have heard an angel proclaiming Him as the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 781.

- b. What was the attitude of the priests? Why did the priests fear the report in regard to Christ’s resurrection? Matthew 28:11–15.

“The priests overreached themselves. How could the soldiers say that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept? If they were asleep, how could they know? And if the disciples had been proved guilty of stealing Christ’s body, would not the priests have been first to condemn them? Or if the sentinels had slept at the tomb, would not the priests have been foremost in accusing them to Pilate?

“The soldiers were horrified at the thought of bringing upon themselves the charge of sleeping at their post. This was an offense punishable with death. Should they bear false witness, deceiving the people, and placing their own lives in peril? Had they not kept their weary watch with sleepless vigilance? How could they stand the trial, even for the sake of money, if they perjured themselves?

“In order to silence the testimony they feared, the priests promised to secure the safety of the guard, saying that Pilate would not desire to have such a report circulated any more than they did. The Roman soldiers sold their integrity to the Jews for money.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 782.

4. THE DISCIPLES AND CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

- a. How did the disciples react when they heard the good news of Christ's resurrection—and why? Luke 24:10–12; John 20:9.

“While the Saviour was in God's presence, receiving gifts for His church, the disciples thought upon His empty tomb, and mourned and wept. The day that was a day of rejoicing to all heaven was to the disciples a day of uncertainty, confusion, and perplexity. Their unbelief in the testimony of the women gives evidence of how low their faith had sunk. The news of Christ's resurrection was so different from what they had anticipated that they could not believe it. It was too good to be true, they thought.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 790.

“Trouble seemed crowding upon trouble. On the sixth day of the week they had seen their Master die; on the first day of the next week they found themselves deprived of His body, and they were accused of having stolen it away. . . .

“And all the time they might have been rejoicing in the knowledge of a risen Saviour. In the garden, Mary had stood weeping, when Jesus was close beside her. Her eyes were so blinded by tears that she did not discern Him. And the hearts of the disciples were so full of grief that they did not believe the angels' message or the words of Christ Himself.”—*Ibid.*, p. 794.

- b. How can our own attitude, often similar to Mary's, improve? John 20:11–13.

“How many are still doing what these disciples did! How many echo Mary's despairing cry, ‘They have taken away the Lord, . . . and we know not where they have laid Him!’ To how many might the Saviour's words be spoken, ‘Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?’ He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him. He speaks to them, but they do not understand.

“Oh that the bowed head might be lifted, that the eyes might be opened to behold Him, that the ears might listen to His voice! ‘Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen’ (Matthew 28:7). Bid them look not to Joseph's new tomb, that was closed with a great stone, and sealed with the Roman seal. Christ is not there. Look not to the empty sepulcher. Mourn not as those who are hopeless and helpless. Jesus lives, and because He lives, we shall live also. From grateful hearts, from lips touched with holy fire, let the glad song ring out, Christ is risen!”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 794.

5. THE BENEFIT OF THE RESURRECTION FOR US

- a. By what method did Christ unveil to His emotionally overwhelmed disciples key prophecies they needed to understand? Luke 24:13–27.

- b. What far-reaching results stem from the resurrection of Christ? 1 Corinthians 15:13–19, 51–58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

“We read in the Bible about the resurrection of Christ from the dead, but do we act as though we believed it? Do we believe that Jesus is a living Saviour, that He is not in Joseph's new tomb, with the great stone rolled before it, but that He has risen from the dead and ascended on high, to lead captivity captive, and to give good gifts unto men? He is there to plead our cases in the courts of heaven. He is there because we need a friend in the heavenly court, One who is to be our advocate and intercessor. Then let us rejoice in this. We have everything for which to praise God. Many judge of their religious state by their emotions; but these are not a safe criterion. Our Christian life does not depend upon our feelings, but upon our having a right hold from above. We must believe the words of God just as He has spoken them; we must take Christ at His word, believe that He came to represent the Father, and that the Father, as is represented in Christ, is our friend, and that He desires not that we should perish, or He would never have given His Son to die our sacrifice. The cross of Calvary is an eternal pledge to every one of us that God wants us to be happy, not only in the future life but in this life.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 8, 1892.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What impact did the news about the resurrection of Christ have upon the disciples?
2. Besides the women, who else helped to spread the good news?
3. What was the reaction of the Jewish leaders?
4. What is the role of Christ's resurrection in our salvation?
5. What is the meaning of Christ's resurrection to me?

Christ's Intercession

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

"God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins."—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 102.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 423–432; 479–491.

Sunday

April 17

1. CHRIST'S WORK RIGHT NOW

- a. **Since His resurrection and ascension, what has Christ been doing in behalf of His people? Hebrews 7:25.**

"Not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a Conqueror claiming His victory. . . .

"Christ has pledged Himself to be our substitute and surety, and He neglects no one. He who could not see human beings exposed to eternal ruin without pouring out His soul unto death in their behalf, will look with pity and compassion upon every soul who realizes that he cannot save himself.

"He will look upon no trembling suppliant without raising him up. He who through His own atonement provided for man an infinite fund of moral power, will not fail to employ this power in our behalf."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 156, 157.

"God cannot forgive sins at the expense of His justice, His holiness, and His truth. But He does forgive sins and that fully. There are no sins He will not forgive in and through the Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 102.

- b. **What should we realize in considering Christ's intercession for us? Hebrews 10:7–13.**

"The work of Christ in the sanctuary above, presenting His own blood each moment before the mercy seat, as He makes intercession for us, should have its full impression upon the heart, that we may realize the worth of each moment."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 111.

Monday

April 18

2. THE BASIS OF OUR REPENTANCE

- a. **How can we be sure of our acceptance before God? Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4.**

"As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so, while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are to remember that there is One who can take away sin, and who is willing and anxious to save the sinner. With His own blood He paid the penalty for all wrongdoers. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 970.

"That blood alone is efficacious. It alone can make propitiation for our sins. It is the blood of the only-begotten Son of God that is of value for us that we may draw nigh unto God, His blood alone that taketh 'away the sin of the world.' Morning and evening the heavenly universe behold every household that prays, and the angel with the incense, representing the blood of the atonement, finds access to God."—*Ibid.*, p. 971.

- b. **How can our prayers be answered? John 15:16.**

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 344.

3. THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS

- a. What are the conditions for our sins to be blotted out? Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9.

“Oh, let us live wholly for the Lord and show by a well-ordered life and godly conversation that we have been with Jesus and are His meek and lowly followers. We must work while the day lasts, for when the dark night of trouble and anguish comes, it will be too late to work for God. Jesus is in His holy temple and will now accept our sacrifices, our prayers, and our confessions of faults and sins and will pardon all the transgressions of Israel, that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still; for then there will be no Priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father’s throne. Therefore what is done to rescue souls from the coming storm of wrath must be done before Jesus leaves the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.”—*Early Writings*, p. 48.

- b. What is the role of repentance and confession in regard to the blotting out of sins? Proverbs 28:13; Acts 26:20.

“In the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins will have been blotted out by the atoning blood of Christ, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 202.

“There must be a reformation. The plowshare of truth must plow deep furrows in our proud hearts, and tear up the sod of our unsanctified natures, that the Spirit and love of Jesus may be planted in our hearts. Time is fast hastening on, and every work will soon be brought into judgment, and either our sins or our names will be blotted out of the Book of Life.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 13, 1898.

4. REPENTANCE

- a. What is true repentance? Give an example. Psalms 32:1–5; 51:1–7.

“Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life. . . .

“But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God’s holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. . . . Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.

“The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness—to be restored to harmony and communion with God. . . .

“A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 23–25.

- b. What is the sure result of true repentance? Give an example. Luke 19:9; Ezekiel 33:14, 15.

“Zacchaeus . . . felt that he was a sinner in the sight of God. Yet what he had heard of Jesus kindled hope in his heart. Repentance, reformation of life, was possible, even to him. . . . Zacchaeus began at once to follow the conviction that had taken hold upon him, and to make restitution to those whom he had wronged.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 553.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unfor-saken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” —*Ibid.*, pp. 555, 556.

5. ACCEPTABLE CONFESSION

- a. What is written about confession? Leviticus 5:5; Psalm 32:5; James 5:16.

“Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. . . .

“True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 38.

- b. Why will confessions after the close of probation be of no use or value? Luke 13:27, 28. Give examples. Joshua 7:20, 21; Matthew 27:3, 4.

“Confessions will be made by the guilty when they stand before the bar of God, after every case has been decided for life or death. The consequences to result to himself will draw from each an acknowledgment of his sin. It will be forced from the soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. But such confessions cannot save the sinner. . . .

“When the records of heaven shall be opened, the Judge will not in words declare to man his guilt, but will cast one penetrating, convicting glance, and every deed, every transaction of life, will be vividly impressed upon the memory of the wrongdoer.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 498.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What position does Christ hold while He is interceding in behalf of His people?
2. What is the only way our prayers can be answered?
3. What must we do so that our sins may be blotted out?
4. What is true repentance?
5. What confessions are acceptable before God?

Knowing God

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. This is the knowledge that works transformation of character. Received into the life, it will re-create the soul in the image of Christ. This is the knowledge that God invites His children to receive, beside which all else is vanity and nothingness.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 475.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 409–426.

1. WORLDLY WISDOM

- a. What is written about worldly wisdom? 1 Corinthians 1:19, 20.

“In their pride of intellect and human wisdom may be found the reason why the gospel message met with comparatively little success among the Athenians. The worldly-wise men who come to Christ as poor lost sinners, will become wise unto salvation; but those who come as distinguished men, extolling their own wisdom, will fail of receiving the light and knowledge that He alone can give.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 240.

“Many of the greatest scholars and statesmen, the world’s most eminent men, will in these last days turn from the light because the world by wisdom knows not God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 241, 242.

- b. What special effort should we make in behalf of learned men? Matthew 22:9.

“God’s servants are to improve every opportunity to communicate the truth to these [eminent] men. Some will acknowledge their ignorance of the things of God and will take their place as humble learners at the feet of Jesus, the Master Teacher.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 242.

2. TRUE WISDOM

- a. What does Scripture teach about true wisdom? Proverbs 1:2, 3, 5, 7; Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

- b. Where can we find this true wisdom? Isaiah 34:16; 1 Corinthians 1:22–25, 30.

“There is no branch of legitimate business for which the Bible does not afford an essential preparation. Its principles of diligence, honesty, thrift, temperance, and purity are the secret of true success. These principles, as set forth in the book of Proverbs, constitute a treasury of practical wisdom.”—*Education*, p. 135.

- c. As we seek such wisdom, what should we also bear in mind? Romans 11:33.

“We can never by searching find out God. We must not attempt to lift with presumptuous hand the curtain behind which He veils His majesty. . . . We can so far comprehend His dealings with us, and the motives by which He is actuated, that we may discern boundless love and mercy united to infinite power. Our Father in heaven orders everything in wisdom and righteousness, and we are not to be dissatisfied and distrustful, but to bow in reverent submission. He will reveal to us as much of His purposes as it is for our good to know, and beyond that we must trust the Hand that is omnipotent, the Heart that is full of love.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 527.

- d. What qualifies us to receive that wisdom which God intends for us to have? Psalm 25:9.

“The Bible is yet but dimly understood. A lifelong, prayerful study of its sacred revealings will leave still much unexplained. It is the deep movings of the Spirit of God that is needed to operate upon the heart to mold character, to open the communication between God and the soul, before the deep truths will be unraveled.”—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 82.

3. KNOWING THE FATHER

- a. What is essential for us in order to know God? Jeremiah 24:7; John 3:3, 5.

“The refining influence of the grace of God changes the natural disposition of man. Heaven would not be desirable to the carnal-minded; their natural, unsanctified hearts would feel no attraction toward that pure and holy place, and if it were possible for them to enter, they would find there nothing congenial. The propensities that control the natural heart must be subdued by the grace of Christ before fallen man is fitted to enter heaven and enjoy the society of the pure, holy angels. When man dies to sin and is quickened to new life in Christ, divine love fills his heart; his understanding is sanctified; he drinks from an inexhaustible fountain of joy and knowledge, and the light of an eternal day shines upon his path, for with him continually is the Light of life.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 273.

- b. How can we attain to a knowledge of God? Matthew 11:27; John 1:18.

“Only by knowing God here can we prepare to meet Him at His coming.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 250.

“The world by wisdom knows not God. Many have talked eloquently about Him, but their supposed sound reasoning, their subtle arguments, bring men no nearer to Him, because they themselves are not in vital connection with Him. . . . A correct knowledge of God is not a hearsay report, but an intelligent, experimental knowledge. . . . Only by knowing Christ can we know God.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 20, 1897.

“Christ is the perfect revelation of God. Let those who desire to know God, study the work and teaching of Christ. To those who receive Him and believe on Him, He gives power to become the sons of God.”—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 94.

“The heavens are full of rich blessings, and it is our privilege to have the joy of Christ in us that our joy may be full. We have not because we ask not, or because we do not pray in faith, believing that we shall be blessed with the special influence of the Holy Spirit. To the true seeker through the mediation of Christ the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit are imparted in order that the receiver may impart a knowledge of saving truth.”—*The Sabbath School Worker*, February 1, 1896.

4. KNOWING JESUS CHRIST

- a. Why is it vitally important to cultivate a knowledge of Christ? John 14:9.

“‘This is life eternal,’ Christ declared, ‘that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent’ (John 17:3). These words mean much. It is only by knowing Christ that we can know God. The Sent of God calls upon all to listen to these words. They are the words of God, and all should give heed to them; for by them they will be judged. To know Christ savingly is to be vitalized by spiritual knowledge, to practice His words. Without this, all else is valueless.

“Christ came to this world to reveal the Father. What patience, what pitying tenderness, what divine compassion, what strength of purpose, He manifested! He did not fail nor become discouraged. He was the embodiment of purity, and His love was without a parallel. At every step He practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice. In His death He was the revelation of the reconciliation between God and man. By taking our nature, He bound Himself to us through eternal ages. He is our representative and head. He represents our race before God, still and forever bearing the humanity of the race. He pleads before the Father the perfect righteousness of all who accept Him.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1898.

- b. What is our knowledge of Christ to involve? 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30.

“To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith, cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe *in* Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

5. DIVINE WISDOM VS. HUMAN WISDOM

- a. How does the apostle Paul compare divine wisdom with human wisdom? 1 Corinthians 1:18–21.

“To each of us God has committed sacred trusts, for which He holds us accountable. He designs that man shall be so educated as to develop his mental and moral powers, that he may have a well-balanced mind and a symmetrical character. But education alone will not prepare him to answer the object of his creation. He needs the grace of God, and divine aid awaits his demand. Divine power united with human effort will enable him to do good and glorify his Creator.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 3, 1884.

- b. Why do so few learned men accept the true gospel? 1 Corinthians 1:25–31; Matthew 11:25, 26.

“Because of the pride and ambition of the children of men, God has chosen to perform His mighty works by the most simple and humble means. It is not the men whom the world honors as great, talented, or brilliant, that God selects. He chooses those who will work in meekness and simplicity, acknowledging Him as their leader and their source of strength. He would have us make Him our protector and our guide in all the duties and affairs of life.

“The Majesty of heaven works by whom He will. His providence sometimes selects the humblest instruments to do the greatest work, for His power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard of reckoning, and by it we pronounce one thing great, and another small; but God estimates not according to the standard of men; He does not graduate His scale by theirs. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, and what is small to us must be small to Him.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 14, 1881.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the basis of false wisdom?
2. How can we be wise in the sight of God?
3. What kind of knowledge can we have about God?
4. How can we know God?
5. What is the main distinction between false and true wisdom?

First Sabbath Offering

for Saskatchewan, Canada

Saskatchewan is the breadbasket of Canada. This flat western province produces sufficient quantities of wheat and other grains each year to feed Canada many times over.

Prior to achieving provincial status in 1905, Saskatchewan was a territory that saw the influx of many European immigrants, especially from Scandinavia, Russia, and the Ukraine. These ethnic communities still play a large role in the development of Saskatchewan.

The work of Reformation has been established for many decades in the western provinces of Canada, but on a very small scale. Recently a great increase in interest has resulted in a need to further promote the gospel in this part of the world. Your offering will be used to develop the gospel work and the facilities necessary to reach new souls. After examining the various provinces in the West Canadian Mission Field, the Sabbath School Department decided that Saskatchewan is in the most need of development.

“God’s people have a mighty work before them, a work that must continually rise to greater prominence. Our efforts in missionary lines must become far more extensive. A more decided work than has been done must be done prior to the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. God’s people are not to cease their labors until they shall encircle the world.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 23, 24.

“The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth. Not all are called to personal labor in foreign fields, but all can do something by their prayers and their gifts to aid the missionary work.”—*Ibid.*, p. 29.

David Zic, *Sabbath School Department Director*



Grace

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. . . . And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:14, 16, 17).

“Those who labor for souls must attain to a deeper, fuller, clearer knowledge of God than can be gained by ordinary effort. They must throw all their energies into the work of the Master. They are engaged in a high and holy calling, and if they gain souls for their hire they must lay firm hold upon God, daily receiving grace and power from the Source of all blessing.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 205.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 167–177.

Sunday

May 1

1. UNDERSTANDING GRACE

a. What is grace? John 1:14–17.

“Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner’s substitute and surety.”—*Amazing Grace*, p. 182.

b. To whom is God’s grace offered? Titus 2:11.

“In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God, predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man’s ransom.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 157.

2. THE PURPOSE OF GRACE

- a. What is the main purpose of God's grace? Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11.

"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."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 347.

- b. Who needs grace? 1 Timothy 1:15.

"Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature and finally driven from the soul temple. It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with Him in the work of salvation. Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailling promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his Substitute and Surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness."—*Faith and Works*, p. 100.

- c. What poignant thought from a diary entry of Sister White relates to us all?

"This day has been a day of perplexity and trial. We feel deeply our need of the grace of God. These small trials are worse to bear than heavy afflictions. Shall I ever learn to be perfectly patient under minor trials? I know that I shall be tempted and proved until self shall be hid in Jesus. My earnest prayer to God daily is for divine grace to do His will."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 209.

3. GRACE—POWER FOR TRANSFORMATION

- a. How can we overcome sin? Romans 6:14.

"Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God's word declares he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord, and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help.

"The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 532.

- b. What is promised to all who surrender to Christ? Romans 8:37.

"The only safety for the youth in this age of pollution is to make God their trust. Without divine help they will be unable to control human passions and appetites. In Christ is the very help needed, but how few will come to Him for that help. Said Jesus when upon the earth, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.' In Christ all can conquer. You can say with the apostle, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.' Again, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection' (John 5:40; Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 9:27)."—*Child Guidance*, p. 467.

4. FRUITFUL CHRISTIANS

- a. What is the fruit of a Christian, and how is it borne? Galatians 5:22, 23; 2 Corinthians 9:8.

“The prayer of the living Christian will be ‘to be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness;’ ‘In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Colossians 1:9–11; 2:3).

“Here is the true knowledge which should be desired and possessed by every Christian. This knowledge will not lead to ungodliness. It will not break down the constitution, nor bring a gloomy cloud over the mind; but will impart substantial joys and true happiness. This wisdom is divine, and flows ceaselessly from a pure fountain which gives peace, joy, and health.”—*An Appeal to Mothers*, p. 32.

- b. What enables us to continuously bear fruit? John 15:5.

“As the graft receives life when united to the vine, so the sinner partakes of the divine nature when connected with Christ. Finite man is united with the infinite God. When thus united, the words of Christ *abide* in us, and we are not actuated by a spasmodic feeling, but by a living, abiding principle. The words of Christ must be meditated upon and cherished and enshrined in the heart. They should not be repeated, parrot-like, finding no place in the memory and having no influence over the heart and life.

“As the branch must abide in the vine to obtain the vital sap which causes it to flourish, so those who love God and keep all His sayings must abide in His love. Without Christ we cannot subdue a single sin or overcome the smallest temptation. Many need the Spirit of Christ and His power to enlighten their understanding, as much as blind Bartimaeus needed his natural sight. ‘As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me’ (John 15:5). All who are really in Christ will experience the benefit of this union. The Father accepts them in the Beloved, and they become objects of His solicitude and tender, loving care. This connection with Christ will result in the purification of the heart and in a circumspect life and faultless character.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 355.

5. GROWING IN GRACE

- a. How can believers grow in grace? 2 Peter 1:2, 3; 3:18.

“It is the Lord’s desire that His followers shall grow in grace, that their love shall abound more and more, that they shall be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God. . . .

“One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. ‘He that watereth shall be watered also himself’ (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 12, 1901.

- b. What do we need to do in order to grow in God’s grace? Psalm 119:105; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Proverbs 4:23.

“Diligent heart-keeping is essential to a healthy growth in grace.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 161.

“How is it possible that we may grow in grace? It is possible to us only as we empty our hearts of self, and present them to Heaven, to be molded after the divine Pattern. We may have a connection with the living channel of light; we may be refreshed with the heavenly dew, and have the showers of Heaven descend upon us. As we appropriate the blessing of God, we shall be able to receive greater measures of His grace. As we learn to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, we shall become changed into the image of Christ. The grace of Christ will not make us proud, cause us to be lifted up in self, but we shall become meek and lowly in heart.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1893.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is grace and to whom is it offered?
2. What is man’s condition without God’s grace?
3. How can we be overcomers?
4. What is the result of God’s grace in our life?
5. What is essential for us to grow in grace?

Faith

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16, 17).

“Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged; and the disciples were to show a faith of the same enduring nature. They were to work as He had worked, depending on Him for strength. Though their way would be obstructed by apparent impossibilities, yet by His grace they were to go forward, despairing of nothing and hoping for everything.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 23.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 253–261.

Sunday

May 8

1. SAVING FAITH

a. What is the Bible definition of faith? Hebrews 11:1.

“We can have the salvation of God in our families; but we must believe for it, live for it, and have a continual, abiding faith and trust in God.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 484.

“The prayer of the publican was heard because it showed dependence reaching forth to lay hold upon Omnipotence. Self to the publican appeared nothing but shame. Thus it must be seen by all who seek God. By faith—faith that renounces all self-trust—the needy suppliant is to lay hold upon infinite power.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 159.

b. What is written about the creation of the universe? Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:6, 9.

“God spoke, and His words created His works in the natural world. God’s creation is but a reservoir of means made ready for Him to employ instantly to do His pleasure.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1081.

Monday

May 9

2. OVERCOMERS BY FAITH

a. What is recorded about Abel? Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:4.

“In every offering to God we are to acknowledge the one great Gift; that alone can make our service acceptable to Him. When Abel offered the firstling of the flock, he acknowledged God, not only as the Giver of his temporal blessings, but also as the Giver of the Saviour. Abel’s gift was the very choicest he could bring; for it was the Lord’s specified claim. But Cain brought only of the fruit of the ground, and his offering was not accepted by the Lord. It did not express faith in Christ. All our offerings must be sprinkled with the blood of the atonement. As the purchased possession of the Son of God, we are to give the Lord our own individual lives.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 24, 1896.

“Fallen man, because of his guilt, could no longer come directly before God with his supplications; for his transgression of the divine law had placed an impassable barrier between the holy God and the transgressor. But a plan was devised that the sentence of death should rest upon a Substitute. In the plan of redemption there must be the shedding of blood, for death must come in consequence of man’s sin. The beasts for sacrificial offerings were to prefigure Christ. In the slain victim, man was to see the fulfillment for the time being of God’s word, ‘Thou shalt surely die’ (Genesis 2:17).”—*Ibid.*, March 3, 1874.

b. What was the main difference between Abel’s offering and that of Cain? Genesis 4:3–5.

“Cain thought himself righteous, and he came to God with a thank offering only. He made no confession of sin, and acknowledged no need of mercy. But Abel came with the blood that pointed to the Lamb of God. He came as a sinner, confessing himself lost; his only hope was the unmerited love of God. The Lord had respect to his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had not respect. The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 5:3).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 152.

3. OVERCOMERS BY FAITH (continued)

- a. Summarize the biography of Enoch. Genesis 5:21–24.

“Did [Enoch] see God by his side? Only by faith. He knew that the Lord was there, and he adhered steadfastly to the principles of truth. We, too, are to walk with God. When we do this, our faces will be lighted up by the brightness of His presence, and when we meet one another, we shall speak of His power, saying, Praise God. Good is the Lord, and good is the word of the Lord.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1087.

- b. What was the reward of Enoch? Hebrews 11:5.

- c. How can we be similar to Enoch?

“We can have what Enoch had. We can have Christ as our constant companion. Enoch walked with God, and when assailed by the tempter, he could talk with God about it. He had no ‘It is written’ as we have, but he had a knowledge of his heavenly Companion. He made God his Counselor, and was closely bound up with Jesus. And Enoch was honored in this course. He was translated to heaven without seeing death. And those who will be translated at the close of time, will be those who commune with God on earth. Those who make manifest that their life is hid with Christ in God will ever be representing Him in all their life practices. Selfishness will be cut out by the roots.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1087.

“Be ambitious, for the Master’s glory, to cultivate every grace of character. In every phase of your character building you are to please God. This you may do; for Enoch pleased Him though living in a degenerate age. And there are Enochs in this our day.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 332.

“If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 128.

4. OVERCOMERS BY FAITH (continued)

- a. What is written of Noah? Genesis 5:28, 29, 32; 6:8, 9, 13, 14, 22; Hebrews 11:7.

“The descendants of Seth were called the sons of God; the descendants of Cain, the sons of men. As the sons of God mingled with the sons of men, they became corrupt and, by intermarriage with them, lost, through the influence of their wives, their peculiar, holy character, and united with the sons of Cain in their idolatry. Many cast aside the fear of God and trampled upon His commandments. But there were a few that did righteousness, who feared and honored their Creator. Noah and his family were among the righteous few.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 66.

“While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. All that he possessed, he invested in the ark. As he began to construct that immense boat on dry ground, multitudes came from every direction to see the strange sight and to hear the earnest, fervent words of the singular preacher. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95.

- b. What title did God Himself apply to Noah? Genesis 7:1; 2 Peter 2:5. How and why should we seek to be distinguished in a similar manner?

“Of the vast population of the earth before the Flood, only eight souls believed and obeyed God’s word through Noah. For a hundred and twenty years the preacher of righteousness warned the world of the coming destruction, but his message was rejected and despised. So it will be now. Before the Lawgiver shall come to punish the disobedient, transgressors are warned to repent, and return to their allegiance; but with the majority these warnings will be in vain. Says the apostle Peter, ‘There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning’ (2 Peter 3:3, 4). Do we not hear these very words repeated, not merely by the openly ungodly, but by many who occupy the pulpits of our land?”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 102, 103.

5. ABRAHAM—A FRIEND OF GOD

- a. How was Abraham justified before God? Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:1–5.

“The first and the last are to be sharers in the great, eternal reward, and the first should gladly welcome the last. He who grudges the reward to another forgets that he himself is saved by grace alone.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 10, 1894.

- b. How was Abraham justified before the whole universe? James 2:18–26.

“In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart; and it is by obedience that faith itself is made perfect.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1890.

“The faith that does not produce good works does not justify the soul.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 397.

“Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. Where faith is, good works appear. The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed. Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, they love the children of God, and meekness and truth guide their footsteps. The expression of the countenance reveals their experience, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love.”—*Ibid.*, p. 398.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is faith?
2. Why did God accept Abel's offering?
3. How did Enoch walk with the Lord?
4. How was Noah considered by God and why?
5. What is the basic difference between faith and presumption?

Good Works

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

“The unselfish labor of Christians in the past should be to us an object lesson and an inspiration. The members of God's church are to be zealous of good works, separating from worldly ambition and walking in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

Suggested Reading: *Faith and Works*, pp. 47–50; 95–98.

1. SOLELY BY GRACE

- a. What is the sure foundation of our salvation? Ephesians 2:8, 9.

“Salvation is God's free gift to the believer, given to him for Christ's sake alone. The troubled soul may find peace through faith in Christ, and his peace will be in proportion to his faith and trust.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 29, 1895.

- b. What is the role of good works in our spiritual life? Ephesians 2:10.

“The Lord has ordained that good works shall be rewarded. We are accepted through Christ's merit alone; and the acts of mercy, the deeds of charity, which we perform, are the fruits of faith; and they become a blessing to us; for men are to be rewarded according to their works. It is the fragrance of the merit of Christ that makes our good works acceptable to God, and it is grace that enables us to do the works for which He rewards us. Our works in and of themselves have no merit. When we have done all that it is possible for us to do, we are to count ourselves as unprofitable servants. We deserve no thanks from God. We have only done what it was our duty to do, and our works could not have been performed in the strength of our own sinful natures.” —*The Review and Herald*, January 29, 1895.

2. DEAD WORKS

- a. What is the meaning of the expression “dead works”? Hebrews 9:14.

“True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 565.

“If God has chosen us from eternity, it is that we might be holy, our conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God. We must not in any way make self our god. God has given Himself to die for us, that He might purify us from all iniquity. The Lord will carry on this work of perfection for us if we will allow ourselves to be controlled by Him. He carries on this work for our good and His own name’s glory.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 201.

- b. How can we be purged from dead works? Isaiah 6:5–7.

“Let every soul who claims to be a son or a daughter of God examine himself in the light of Heaven; let him consider the polluted lips that make him ‘undone.’ They are the medium of communication. . . .

“How many words are spoken in lightness and foolishness, in jesting and joking! This would not be so did the followers of Christ realize the truth of the words, ‘Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned’ (Matthew 12:36, 37).

“Harsh and unkind words, words of censure and criticism of God’s work and His messengers, are indulged in by those who profess to be His children. When these careless souls discern the greatness of God’s character, they will not mingle their spirit and attributes with His service. When our eyes look by faith into the sanctuary, and take in the reality, the importance and holiness, of the work there being done, everything of a selfish nature will be abhorred by us. Sin will appear as it is—the transgression of God’s holy law. The atonement will be better understood; and by living, active faith, we shall see that whatever of virtue humanity possesses, it exists only in Jesus Christ, the world’s Redeemer.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 22, 1896.

3. DEAD WORKS (continued)

- a. What else can be considered “dead works”? Romans 14:23 (last part). Give an example. Luke 18:11, 12.

“We are not perfect, but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and go on unto perfection.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 99.

“The Pharisee goes up to the temple to worship, not because he feels that he is a sinner in need of pardon, but because he thinks himself righteous and hopes to win commendation. His worship he regards as an act of merit that will recommend him to God. At the same time it will give the people a high opinion of his piety. He hopes to secure favor with both God and man. His worship is prompted by self-interest.

“And he is full of self-praise. He looks it, he walks it, he prays it. Drawing apart from others as if to say, ‘Come not near to me; for I am holier than thou’ (Isaiah 65:5), he stands and prays ‘with himself.’ Wholly self-satisfied, he thinks that God and men regard him with the same complacency.

“ ‘God, I thank thee,’ he says, ‘that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican’ (Luke 18:11). He judges his character, not by the holy character of God, but by the character of other men. His mind is turned away from God to humanity. This is the secret of his self-satisfaction.

“He proceeds to recount his good deeds: ‘I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess’ (Verse 12). The religion of the Pharisee does not touch the soul. He is not seeking Godlikeness of character, a heart filled with love and mercy. He is satisfied with a religion that has to do only with the outward life. His righteousness is his own—the fruit of his own works—and judged by a human standard.

“Whoever trusts in himself that he is righteous, will despise others. As the Pharisee judges himself by other men, so he judges other men by himself. His righteousness is estimated by theirs, and the worse they are the more righteous by contrast he appears. His self-righteousness leads to accusing. ‘Other men’ he condemns as transgressors of God’s law. Thus he is making manifest the very spirit of Satan, the accuser of the brethren. With this spirit it is impossible for him to enter into communion with God. He goes down to his house destitute of the divine blessing.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 150, 151.

- b. What is the source of dead works? James 2:17, 26.

4. THE SOURCE OF TRUE GOOD WORKS

- a. How do true good works come into being? Isaiah 26:12; John 7:37–39.

“Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance.

“It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 384, 385.

- b. What did Paul say about the basis of his spiritual life? Galatians 2:20, 21.

“Paul realized that his sufficiency was not in himself, but in the presence of the Holy Spirit, whose gracious influence filled his heart, bringing every thought into subjection to Christ. He spoke of himself as ‘always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body’ (2 Corinthians 4:10). In the apostle’s teachings Christ was the central figure. ‘I live,’ he declared, ‘yet not I, but Christ liveth in me’ (Galatians 2:20). Self was hidden; Christ was revealed and exalted.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 251.

5. DIVINE PURPOSES FOR GOOD WORKS

- a. What did Christ say about the purpose of good works? Matthew 5:16.

“Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.

“God calls not only for our gifts for the needy, but for our cheerful countenance, our hopeful words, our kindly handclasp. When Christ healed the sick, He laid His hands upon them. So should we come in close touch with those whom we seek to benefit.

“There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 417, 418.

- b. What will be the result of faith which works by love and purifies the soul? Psalm 92:13–15; Habakkuk 2:14; Revelation 18:1, 4.

“In the night of spiritual darkness God’s glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 417.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the place of good works in Christian life?
2. What are dead works?
3. What is the relation between justification by faith and good works?
4. What is the source of all good works?
5. How can the world know that we really believe in Christ?

Peace

“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isaiah 54:13).

“[John 14:27 quoted.] This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity to the world. Christ never purchased peace by compromise with evil. The peace that Christ left His disciples is internal rather than external and was ever to remain with His witnesses through strife and contention.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 84.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 328–332; 377–382.

Sunday

May 22

1. THE SOURCE

- a. Where can we find peace? Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 4:6, 7.

“What can give you greater joy than to see children and youth following Christ, the great Shepherd, who calls, and the sheep and lambs hear His voice and follow Him? What can spread more sunshine through the soul of the interested, devoted worker than to know that his persevering, patient labor is not in vain in the Lord, and to see his pupils have the sunshine of joy in their souls because Christ has forgiven their sins? What can be more satisfying to the worker together with God, than to see children and youth receiving the impressions of the spirit of God in true nobility of character and in the restoration of the moral image of God—the children seeking the peace coming from the Prince of peace? The truth a bondage? Yes, in one sense; it binds the willing souls in captivity to Jesus Christ, bowing their hearts to the gentleness of Jesus Christ. O it means so much more than finite minds can comprehend, to present in every missionary effort Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”—*Christian Education*, p. 156.

- b. How only can we receive Jesus' peace? Ephesians 2:13, 14; Isaiah 26:3, 4.

Monday

May 23

2. PEACE THROUGH CHRIST'S BLOOD

- a. What can sinners have through the blood of Christ? Colossians 1:20; Isaiah 53:5.

“Without the cross, man could have no connection with the Father. On it hangs our every hope. In view of it the Christian may advance with the steps of a conqueror; for from it streams the light of the Saviour's love. When the sinner reaches the cross, and looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy; for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ; and the words of pardon are spoken: Live, O ye guilty sinners, live. Your repentance is accepted; for I have found a ransom.

“Through the cross we learn that our heavenly Father loves us with an infinite and everlasting love, and draws us to Him with more than a mother's yearning sympathy for a wayward child. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?’ (Galatians 6:14). It is our privilege also to glory in the cross of Calvary, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then with the light of love that shines from His face on ours, we shall go forth to reflect it to those in darkness.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 29, 1902.

- b. In accepting Christ as our righteousness, what do we possess? Romans 5:1.

“When the Spirit of God controls mind and heart, the converted soul breaks forth into a new song; for he realizes that in his experience the promise of God has been fulfilled, that his transgression has been forgiven, his sin covered. He has exercised repentance toward God for the violation of the divine law, and faith toward Christ, who died for man's justification.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 476.

“Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

“There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmising will find no room there; hatred cannot exist.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE

- a. What is the relationship between righteousness and peace? Isaiah 32:17.

“Dwell upon the marvelous plan of salvation, the great sacrifice made by the King of glory that you might be elevated through the merits of His blood and by obedience finally be exalted to the throne of Christ. This subject should engage the noblest contemplation of the mind. To be brought into favor with God—what a privilege! To commune with Him—what can more elevate, refine, and exalt us above the frivolous pleasures of earth? To have our corrupt natures renovated by grace, our lustful appetites and animal propensities in subjection, to stand forth with noble, moral independence, achieving victories every day, will give peace of conscience which can arise alone from rightdoing.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 504.

- b. What is the role of the Ten Commandments in this process? Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 48:18.

“In obedience to God’s law there is great gain. In conformity to the divine requirements there is a transforming power that brings peace and good will among men. If the teachings of God’s word were made the controlling influence in the life of every man and woman, if mind and heart were brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in national and in social life would find no place. From every home would go forth an influence that would make men and women strong in spiritual insight and in moral power, and thus nations and individuals would be placed on vantage ground.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 192.

“Blessed are the peacemakers’ (Matthew 5:9). The peace of Christ is born of truth. It is harmony with God. The world is at enmity with the law of God; sinners are at enmity with their Maker; and as a result they are at enmity with one another. But the psalmist declares, ‘Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them’ (Psalm 119:165). Men cannot manufacture peace. Human plans for the purification and uplifting of individuals or of society will fail of producing peace, because they do not reach the heart. The only power that can create or perpetuate true peace is the grace of Christ. When this is implanted in the heart, it will cast out the evil passions that cause strife and dissension.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 302–305.

4. ETERNAL PEACE

- a. How is the New Earth described? Isaiah 32:18; 33:24; Revelation 21:1–7.

“Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. There will be no more tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. . . .

“There, immortal minds will contemplate with neverfailing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 676, 677.

- b. What else is promised to the redeemed? Revelation 22:1, 5.

“Christ, the heavenly Teacher, will lead His people to the tree of life that grows on either side of the river of life, and He will explain to them the truths they could not in this life understand. In that future life His people will gain the higher education in its completeness. Those who enter the city of God will have the golden crowns placed upon their heads. That will be a joyful scene that none of us can afford to miss. We shall cast our crowns at the feet of Jesus, and again and again we will give Him the glory and praise His holy name. Angels will unite in the songs of triumph. Touching their golden harps, they will fill all heaven with rich music and songs to the Lamb.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 988.

5. OUR PRESENT DUTY

- a. While we are still on earth, what is our present duty? Matthew 5:9; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 4:7.

“Christ’s followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

“And ‘blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God’ (Matthew 5:9). The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 28.

- b. How does Isaiah describe the work of God’s messengers? Isaiah 52:7–9.

“All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 827.

“The greatest work, the noblest effort, in which men can engage, is to point sinners to the Lamb of God.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 18.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should we do to obtain peace?
2. Who is the Source of peace in our heart?
3. What is the relation between righteousness and peace?
4. What is the basis of our eternal peace?
5. How can I cultivate the qualities of a peacemaker?

First Sabbath Offering

for a chapel in Rwanda



Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in Africa. Squeezed between Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi, this former Belgian colony has undergone harsh circumstances over the last decade. An ethnic civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi groups resulted in mass tragedies in 1994. From April to July the Hutu perpetrated a genocide of at least 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu and the displacement of over 2 million refugees to neighboring countries, especially Burundi. Praise the Lord the conflict has ended, somewhat, and the gospel message is once more able to be given in this land.

A large rise in interest in the message of Reformation at the turn of the millennium has seen a need for a proper administrative center for the country of Rwanda. A property has been secured in the capital city of Kigali, and now we are asking your assistance to complete the construction of this lighthouse. From this place materials will be distributed, and workers will be able to coordinate their efforts across the country to bring the wonderful message of salvation to the people.

As part of the East-Central African Mission, Rwanda has been assisted by brethren from the surrounding countries, especially Kenya. In addition, generous brethren from Canada, Germany and the United States have aided in the development of the work here. On this special Sabbath day, all the world can come together to help us. While it is almost impossible for us to travel abroad and meet our brethren in other countries, we feel the connection we have with believers around the world and know that you will help us in our time of need.

Your brethren and sisters from Rwanda

Divine Power in Creation

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1, 2).

“Divine wisdom, infinite grace, were made plain by the things of God’s creation. Through nature and the experiences of life, men were taught of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 22.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44–51.

Sunday

May 29

1. THE GODHEAD PRESENT AT CREATION

- a. Who took an active part in the creation of the universe? Genesis 1:1, 2, 26; John 1:1–3.

- God, the Father — Hebrews 11:3
- Jesus Christ — Colossians 1: 16, 17
- The Holy Spirit — Psalm 104: 30

“If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity. God over all, blessed forevermore.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1126.

- b. As we contemplate creation, what do we realize? Psalm 19:1–6.

“God encourages us to contemplate His works in the natural world. He desires that we shall turn our mind from the study of the artificial to the natural. We shall understand this better as we lift up our eyes to the hills of God, and contemplate the works which His own hands have created. They are God’s work. His hand has molded the mountains and balances them in their position, that they shall not be moved except at His command. The wind, the sun, the rain, the snow, and the ice, are all His ministers to do His will.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, pp. 1144, 1145.

Monday

May 30

2. THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD

- a. How did the universe come into existence? Psalm 33:6–9.

“God spoke, and His words created His works in the natural world. God’s creation is but a reservoir of means made ready for Him to employ instantly to do His pleasure.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1081.

- b. What should cause us to truly marvel at God’s creation? Hebrews 11:3.

“In the creation of the earth, God was not indebted to preexisting matter. ‘He spake, and it was; . . . He commanded, and it stood fast’ (Psalm 33:9). All things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things therein, came into existence by the breath of His mouth.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 414, 415.

“Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a being who moves in all His works according to His will. It is not by an original power inherent in nature that year by year the earth yields its bounties and continues its march around the sun. The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God’s power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotation.

“The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention.

“The mechanism of the human body cannot be fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is a continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 260.

- c. What is revealed by God’s creation? Romans 1:20.

3. THE FIRST DAY

- a. What was created on the first day of creation? Genesis 1:3–5.

“[God] causes ‘the light to shine out of darkness’ (2 Corinthians 4:6). When ‘the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep,’ ‘the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light’ (Genesis 1:2, 3).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 415.

- b. What other light also comes from the same source? John 1:6–10; 8:12; 9:5.

“God is light; and in the words, ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12), Christ declared His oneness with God, and His relation to the whole human family. It was He who at the beginning had caused ‘the light to shine out of darkness’ (2 Corinthians 4:6). He is the light of sun and moon and star. He was the spiritual light that in symbol and type and prophecy had shone upon Israel. But not to the Jewish nation alone was the light given. As the sunbeams penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth, so does the light of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon every soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 464.

- c. How does this light affect all who accept it? Isaiah 60:1, 2.

“In the night of spiritual darkness, God’s word goes forth, ‘Let there be light.’ To His people He says, ‘Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee’ (Isaiah 60:1). . . .

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 415.

“It is the highest duty of every Christian to let the light God has given shine forth in steady rays.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 12, 1893.

4. THE SECOND DAY

- a. What did God create on the second day? Genesis 1:6–8. What do we learn from God’s work in the firmament? Psalm 19:1–3.

“Shall we not commit to memory the lessons nature teaches? Shall we not open the eyes of our senses; and take in the beautiful things of God? We would do well to read often the nineteenth psalm that we may understand how the Lord binds up His law with His created works. . . .

“We are to contemplate the wonderful works of God, and repeat the lessons learned from them to our children, that we may lead them to see His skill, His power, His grandeur in His created works.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1143.

- b. What was God’s main purpose in creating the world? Isaiah 45:18.

“In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space. . . . And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father’s love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, 20.

- c. Explain why the sky can be especially inspiring to the Christian. Job 37:14–18.

“Several years ago, while journeying from Christiania, Norway, to Goteborg, Sweden, I was favored with the sight of the most glorious sunset it was ever my privilege to behold. Language is inadequate to picture its beauty. The last beams of the setting sun, silver and gold, purple, amber, and crimson, shed their glories athwart the sky, growing brighter and brighter, rising higher and higher in the heavens, until it seemed that the gates of the city of God had been left ajar, and gleams of the inner glory were flashing through. For two hours the wondrous splendor continued to light up the cold northern sky—picture painted by the great Master Artist upon the shifting canvas of the heavens. Like the smile of God it seemed, above all earthly homes, above the rock-bound plains, the rugged mountains, the lonely forests, through which our journey lay.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 248.

5. THE THIRD DAY

- a. What was brought forth in the third day? Genesis 1:9–13.

“When God formed the earth, there were mountains, hills, and plains, and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains, were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger, and much more beautiful, than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 33.

“It is through the gift of Christ that we receive every blessing. Through that gift there comes to us day by day the unfailing flow of Jehovah’s goodness. Every flower, with its delicate tints and its fragrance, is given for our enjoyment through that one Gift.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 424.

- b. What relationship exists between creation and the first angel’s message? Revelation 14:6, 7.

“In the first angel’s message men are called upon to worship God, our Creator, who made the world and all things that are therein.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 106.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who took part in the creation of the universe?
2. How did God create everything in the universe?
3. What is the cause of the spiritual darkness in the whole world?
4. What do we learn from God’s power manifested in creation?
5. What is the relation between God’s creation and the first angel’s message?

Divine Power in Creation (continued)

“Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psalm 100:3).

“In God’s word alone we find an authentic account of creation. Here we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race, unsullied by human prejudice or human pride.”—*Christian Education*, p. 38.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 111–116.

1. THE FOURTH DAY

- a. What was God’s work on the fourth day? Genesis 1:14–19.

“The sun and the moon were made by [Christ]. There is not a star which beautifies the heavens that He did not make.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 424.

- b. What should the sun bring to our mind? Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2 (first part).

“The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, ‘His going forth is prepared as the morning’ (Hosea 6:3). Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness, and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, ‘with healing in His wings’ (Malachi 4:2).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 261.

“After association with the Son of God the humble follower of Christ is found to be a person of sound principle, clear perception, and reliable judgment. He has a connection with God, the Source of light and understanding. He who longed to be of service to the cause of Christ, has been so quickened by the life-giving rays of the Sun of Righteousness, that he has been enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.”—*Christian Education*, p. 199.

2. THE FIFTH DAY

- a. Describe the creative work on the fifth day. Genesis 1:20–22. What declaration is made about each day thus far? Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23.

“Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years.

“Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature. Of the first day employed in the work of creation is given the record, ‘The evening and the morning were the first day’ (Genesis 1:5). And the same in substance is said of each of the first six days of creation week. Each of these periods Inspiration declares to have been a day consisting of evening and morning, like every other day since that time. In regard to the work of creation itself the divine testimony is, ‘He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast’ (Psalm 33:9). With Him who could thus call into existence unnumbered worlds, how long a time would be required for the evolution of the earth from chaos? In order to account for His works, must we do violence to His word?”—*Education*, pp. 128, 129.

- b. Why is it so difficult for scientists to accept God’s word? Romans 1:18–21.

“A terrible picture of the condition of the world has been presented before me. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence.

“I was referred to Romans 1:18–32, as a true description of the world previous to the second appearing of Christ.

“It is sin, not trial and suffering, which separates God from His people and renders the soul incapable of enjoying and glorifying Him. It is sin that is destroying souls. Sin and vice exist in Sabbath-keeping families.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 440.

3. THE SIXTH DAY

- a. What was created during the first part of the sixth day? Genesis 1:24, 25. How does God regard all these creatures? Matthew 6:26; 10:29.

“Harsh treatment, even to the brutes, is offensive to God. Those who profess to love God do not always consider that abuse to animals, or suffering brought upon them by neglect, is a sin. The fruits of divine grace will be as truly revealed in men by the manner in which they treat their beasts, as by their service in the house of God. Those who allow themselves to become impatient or enraged with their animals are not Christians. . . .

“God, who created man, made the animals, also. They were to minister to man’s comfort and happiness, to serve him, and to be controlled by him.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 25, 1880.

- b. What was the crowning work of the Creator? Genesis 1:26–28.

“After the earth with its teeming animal and vegetable life had been called into existence, man, the crowning work of the Creator, and the one for whom the beautiful earth had been fitted up, was brought upon the stage of action. . . . ‘So God created man in His own image; . . . male and female created He them’ (Genesis 1:28). Here is clearly set forth the origin of the human race; and the divine record is so plainly stated that there is no occasion for erroneous conclusions. God created man in His own image. Here is no mystery. There is no ground for the supposition that man was evolved by slow degrees of development from the lower forms of animal or vegetable life. Such teaching lowers the great work of the Creator to the level of man’s narrow, earthly conceptions. Men are so intent upon excluding God from the sovereignty of the universe that they degrade man and defraud him of the dignity of his origin. He who set the starry worlds on high and tinted with delicate skill the flowers of the field, who filled the earth and the heavens with the wonders of His power, when He came to crown His glorious work, to place one in the midst to stand as ruler of the fair earth, did not fail to create a being worthy of the hand that gave him life. The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was ‘the son of God.’ ”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44, 45.

4. ORIGINAL INSTITUTIONS

- a. What institution did the Creator establish in the sixth day? Genesis 1:27, 28.

“Jesus pointed His hearers back to the marriage institution as ordained at creation. ‘Because of the hardness of your hearts,’ He said, Moses ‘suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so’ (Matthew 19:8). He referred them to the blessed days of Eden, when God pronounced all things ‘very good.’ . . . Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall ‘leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one’ (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. That which the Eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man.

“Like every other one of God’s good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 63, 64.

- b. What diet was provided for man at creation? Genesis 1:29.

“In order to know what are the best foods, we must study God’s original plan for man’s diet. He who created man and who understands his needs appointed Adam his food. ‘Behold,’ He said, ‘I have given you every herb yielding seed, . . . and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food’ (Genesis 1:29). Upon leaving Eden to gain his livelihood by tilling the earth under the curse of sin, man received permission to eat also ‘the herb of the field.’

“Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect, that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 81.

5. RESTORATION

- a. What did Malachi prophesy concerning these last days? Malachi 4:5, 6.

“Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ’s first advent. The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 62.

- b. What did the apostle Peter say, prophetically, about this work? Acts 3:19–21.

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are ‘the times of refreshing’ to which the apostle Peter looked forward’ (Acts 3:19).”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 678.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is the true source of light and how can we walk in it?
2. What does the Bible say about the days of creation?
3. What was the condition of man when he was created?
4. What relation exists between the family and the Sabbath?
5. What was prophesied about the restoration of all divine institutions?

The Sabbath

“Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. . . . And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

“Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God Himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and He then blessed this day and set it apart as a day of rest for man.”—*Christian Education*, p. 190.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 201–213.

Sunday

June 12

1. THE SEVENTH DAY

- a. What did the Creator do on the seventh day? Genesis 2:2.

“The weekly cycle of seven literal days, six for labor, and the seventh for rest, which has been preserved and brought down through Bible history, originated in the great facts of the first seven days.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 90.

“[God] rested, not as one weary, but as well pleased with the fruits of His wisdom and goodness and the manifestations of His glory.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 47.

- b. Besides resting on the seventh day, what else did the Lord do? Genesis 2:3.

“After resting upon the seventh day, God sanctified it, or set it apart, as a day of rest for man. Following the example of the Creator, man was to rest upon this sacred day, that as he should look upon the heavens and the earth, he might reflect upon God’s great work of creation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 47.

Monday

June 13

2. THE SABBATH IN THE WILDERNESS

- a. Before giving the Ten Commandments at Sinai, what specific instructions did the Lord give to His people? Exodus 16:22–30.

“God requires that His holy day be as sacredly observed now as in the time of Israel. The command given to the Hebrews should be regarded by all Christians as an injunction from Jehovah to them. The day before the Sabbath should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. In no case should our own business be allowed to encroach upon holy time. God has directed that the sick and suffering be cared for; the labor required to make them comfortable is a work of mercy, and no violation of the Sabbath; but all unnecessary work should be avoided. Many carelessly put off till the beginning of the Sabbath little things that might have been done on the day of preparation. This should not be. Work that is neglected until the beginning of the Sabbath should remain undone until it is past. This course might help the memory of these thoughtless ones, and make them careful to do their own work on the six working days.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296.

- b. What miracles did the Lord perform in connection with Sabbath observance? Exodus 16:16–27.

“Every week during their long sojourn in the wilderness the Israelites witnessed a threefold miracle, designed to impress their minds with the sacredness of the Sabbath: a double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none on the seventh, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time it became unfit for use.

“In the circumstances connected with the giving of the manna, we have conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was not instituted, as many claim, when the law was given at Sinai. Before the Israelites came to Sinai they understood the Sabbath to be obligatory upon them. In being obliged to gather every Friday a double portion of manna in preparation for the Sabbath, when none would fall, the sacred nature of the day of rest was continually impressed upon them. And when some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, the Lord asked, “How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 296, 297.

3. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

- a. In reference to God's example at the end of creation, what does He require of His people? Exodus 20:8–11.

"God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. He needed a Sabbath to remind him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator.

"God designs that the Sabbath shall direct the minds of men to the contemplation of His created works. Nature speaks to their senses, declaring that there is a living God, the Creator, the Supreme Ruler of all. . . . The beauty that clothes the earth is a token of God's love. We may behold it in the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in the opening buds and the delicate flowers. All speak to us of God. The Sabbath, ever pointing to Him who made them all, bids men open the great book of nature and trace therein the wisdom, the power, and the love of the Creator."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48.

- b. What is included in the fourth commandment? Isaiah 58:13, 14.

"All who keep the seventh day signify by this act that they are worshipers of Jehovah. Thus the Sabbath is the sign of man's allegiance to God as long as there are any upon the earth to serve Him. The fourth commandment is the only one of all the ten in which are found both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It is the only one that shows by whose authority the law is given. Thus it contains the seal of God, affixed to His law as evidence of its authenticity and binding force.

"God has given men six days wherein to labor, and He requires that their own work be done in the six working days. Acts of necessity and mercy are permitted on the Sabbath, the sick and suffering are at all times to be cared for; but unnecessary labor is to be strictly avoided. . . . Those who discuss business matters or lay plans on the Sabbath are regarded by God as though engaged in the actual transaction of business. To keep the Sabbath holy, we should not even allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

4. A SIGN BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

- a. What is the relation between creation and the Sabbath? Exodus 31:13–17.

"God's memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign of His work in creating the world, has been displaced by the man of sin. God's people have a special work to do in repairing the breach that has been made in His law; and the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work becomes. All who love God will show that they bear His sign by keeping His commandments. They are the restorers of paths to dwell in. . . . Genuine medical missionary work is bound up inseparably with the keeping of God's commandments, of which the Sabbath is especially mentioned, since it is the great memorial of God's creative work. Its observance is bound up with the work of restoring the moral image of God in man. This is the ministry which God's people are to carry forward at this time. This ministry, rightly performed, will bring rich blessings to the church."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 265, 266.

- b. How does sanctification relate to the Sabbath? Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

"The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.

"To us as to Israel the Sabbath is given 'for a perpetual covenant.' To those who reverence His holy day the Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as His chosen people. It is a pledge that He will fulfill to them His covenant. Every soul who accepts the sign of God's government places himself under the divine, everlasting covenant. He fastens himself to the golden chain of obedience, every link of which is a promise.

"The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Those who obey this commandment take upon themselves His name, and all the blessings it involves are theirs."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 350.

5. LESSONS FROM ANCIENT ISRAEL

- a. What reforms were needed before and after the captivity of Israel and Judah? Jeremiah 17:19–27; Nehemiah 13:15–22.

- b. What reformation is needed today? Isaiah 56:1–8.

“Far more sacredness is attached to the Sabbath than is given it by many professed Sabbathkeepers. The Lord has been greatly dishonored by those who have not kept the Sabbath according to the commandment, either in the letter or in the spirit. He calls for a reform in the observance of the Sabbath.

“At the very beginning of the fourth commandment the Lord said: ‘Remember.’ He knew that amid the multitude of cares and perplexities man would be tempted to excuse himself from meeting the full requirement of the law, or would forget its sacred importance. Therefore He said: ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy’ (Exodus 20:8).

“All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 353, 354.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What did the Lord do on the first Sabbath?
2. Describe the miracles related to the Sabbath in the wilderness.
3. What is the main purpose of the Sabbath?
4. How can we sanctify the Sabbath?
5. What must be included in our preparation for the Sabbath?

The Sabbath in the New Testament

“The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath” (Mark 2:27, 28).

“Jesus had come to ‘magnify the law, and make it honorable’ (Isaiah 42:21). He was not to lessen its dignity, but to exalt it. . . . He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 206.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 281–289.

1. JESUS AND THE LAW

- a. How did Christ define His mission regarding God’s law? Matthew 5:17–20.

“It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who declares that it is not His purpose to set aside its precepts. Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend. So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends. Before this earth was called into being, God’s law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes. To man in Eden Christ made known the precepts of the law. . . . The mission of Christ on earth was not to destroy the law, but by His grace to bring man back to obedience to its precepts.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48.

- b. How did John, the beloved disciple, define sin? 1 John 3:4.

“The beloved disciple, who listened to the words of Jesus on the mount, writing long afterward under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of the law as of perpetual obligation. . . . He makes it plain that the law to which he refers is ‘an old commandment which ye had from the beginning’ (1 John 2:7). He is speaking of the law that existed at the creation and was reiterated upon Mount Sinai.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48.

2. WORSHIPING ON THE SABBATH

- a. How did Christ identify Himself regarding the origin of the Sabbath? Luke 6:1–5.

“Upon one Sabbath day, as the Saviour and His disciples returned from the place of worship, they passed through a field of ripening grain. Jesus had continued His work to a late hour, and while passing through the fields, the disciples began to gather the heads of grain, and to eat the kernels after rubbing them in their hands. On any other day this act would have excited no comment, for one passing through a field of grain, an orchard, or a vineyard, was at liberty to gather what he desired to eat. See Deuteronomy 23:24, 25. But to do this on the Sabbath was held to be an act of desecration. Not only was the gathering of the grain a kind of reaping, but the rubbing of it in the hands was a kind of threshing. Thus, in the opinion of the rabbis, there was a double offense. . . .

“The Jewish teachers prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, and in the Saviour’s answer there was an implied rebuke for their ignorance of the Sacred Writings. ‘Have ye not read so much as this,’ He said, ‘what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him; how he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, . . . which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?’ ‘And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.’ ‘Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.’ ‘The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath’ (Luke 6:3, 4; Mark 2:27, 28; Matthew 12:5, 6).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 284, 285.

- b. What was Jesus’ custom on the Sabbath? Luke 4:16.

“During His childhood and youth, Jesus had worshiped among His brethren in the synagogue at Nazareth. Since the opening of His ministry He had been absent from them, but they had not been ignorant of what had befallen Him. As He again appeared among them, their interest and expectation were excited to the highest pitch. Here were the familiar forms and faces of those whom He had known from infancy. Here were His mother, His brothers and sisters, and all eyes were turned upon Him as He entered the synagogue upon the Sabbath day, and took His place among the worshipers.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 236.

3. HEALING ON THE SABBATH

- a. Besides worshiping on the Sabbath, what else did Christ do on that day? Luke 6:6–10.

“Upon another Sabbath, as Jesus entered a synagogue, He saw there a man who had a withered hand. The Pharisees watched Him, eager to see what He would do. The Saviour well knew that in healing on the Sabbath He would be regarded as a transgressor, but He did not hesitate to break down the wall of traditional requirements that barricaded the Sabbath. Jesus bade the afflicted man stand forth, and then asked, ‘Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?’ It was a maxim among the Jews that a failure to do good, when one had opportunity, was to do evil; to neglect to save life was to kill. Thus Jesus met the rabbis on their own ground. ‘But they held their peace. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other’ (Mark 3:4, 5).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 286.

- b. What purpose did Christ have in mind by healing on the Sabbath? Luke 14:1–5.

“As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them. Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to pervert the Sabbath, because it is the sign of the power of Christ. The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God’s rest day with burdensome requirements. In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men hard-hearted and cruel. It was the work of Christ to clear away these misconceptions. Although the rabbis followed Him with merciless hostility, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward, keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 283, 284.

4. RESTING ON THE SABBATH

- a. How did Christ spend the Sabbath after the crucifixion? Luke 23:44–47. What did the disciples do on that Sabbath? Luke 23:53–56.

“At last Jesus was at rest. The long day of shame and torture was ended. As the last rays of the setting sun ushered in the Sabbath, the Son of God lay in quietude in Joseph’s tomb. His work completed, His hands folded in peace, He rested through the sacred hours of the Sabbath day.

“In the beginning the Father and the Son had rested upon the Sabbath after Their work of creation. When ‘the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them’ (Genesis 2:1), the Creator and all heavenly beings rejoiced in contemplation of the glorious scene. ‘The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy’ (Job 38:7). Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption; and though there was grief among those who loved Him on earth, yet there was joy in heaven. Glorious to the eyes of heavenly beings was the promise of the future. A restored creation, a redeemed race, that having conquered sin could never fall—this, the result to flow from Christ’s completed work, God and angels saw. With this scene the day upon which Jesus rested is forever linked. For ‘His work is perfect;’ and ‘whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever’ (Deuteronomy 32:4; Ecclesiastes 3:14). When there shall be a ‘restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph’s tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as ‘from one Sabbath to another’ (Isaiah 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 769, 770.

- b. What is the meaning of the Sabbath for God’s people? Matthew 11:28–30; Hebrews 4:1–4, 9–11.

“To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 289.

5. THE PROMISED REST—HERE AND IN THE NEW EARTH

- a. How can we receive the promised rest? John 16:13; Hebrews 3: 7, 8; Isaiah 48:18; Jeremiah 6:16.

“[Hebrews 4:9, 11 quoted.] The rest here spoken of is the rest of grace, obtained by following the prescription, Labor diligently. Those who learn of Jesus His meekness and lowliness find rest in the experience of practicing His lessons. It is not in indolence, in selfish ease and pleasure-seeking, that rest is obtained. Those who are unwilling to give the Lord faithful, earnest, loving service will not find spiritual rest in this life or in the life to come. Only from earnest labor comes peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—happiness on earth and glory hereafter.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 928.

- b. How will the redeemed spend the Sabbath on the earth made new? Isaiah 66:23.

“The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.’ So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. ‘From one Sabbath to another’ the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up ‘to worship before Me, saith the Lord’ (Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Christ exalt God’s law?
2. What works, performed by Christ, were in full harmony with Sabbathkeeping?
3. Why did the Pharisees strongly oppose Christ’s humanitarian works on the Sabbath?
4. Describe Christ’s rest on the Sabbath.
5. How can I best prepare to worship the Lord in the new earth?

FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



APRIL 2
A chapel in
Guyana
(See p. 4.)

MAY 7
for Saskatchewan,
Canada
(See p. 30.)



JUNE 4
for a chapel
in Rwanda
(See p. 51.)