

A scenic mountain landscape featuring a river flowing through a valley. The foreground shows a rocky riverbank with green grass and a small waterfall. The middle ground is filled with dense evergreen trees and large boulders. In the background, majestic mountains rise under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Christian Character (III)

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

July-September 2005

Foreword

Throughout this entire year, Sabbath school students around the world are studying *Christian Character*. As we continue this course of study, we will consider various factors for a victorious experience in Christ, with special emphasis on some spiritual ramifications of the first rounds of “Peter’s ladder,” as found in 2 Peter 1:5–7, by which we are to become partakers of the divine nature of our blessed Lord and Saviour. The climbing of this ladder by faith is a blessed, ennobling experience.

“In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. He reads: ‘Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward;’ ‘that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory’ (Hebrews 10:35; 1 Peter 1:7, 8). The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness. They must endure with fortitude the taunts and attacks of enemies, and overcome all obstacles that Satan may place in their path to hedge up the way. He will try to lead them to neglect prayer and to discourage them in the study of the Scriptures, and he will throw his hateful shadow athwart their path to hide Christ and the heavenly attractions from their view.

“None should go along shrinking and trembling, under continual doubt, sowing their path with complainings; but all should look up to God and see His goodness and rejoice in His love. Summon all your powers to look up, not down at your difficulties; then you will never faint by the way. You will soon see Jesus behind the cloud, reaching out His hand to help you; and all you have to do is to give Him your hand in simple faith and let Him lead you. As you become trustful you will, through faith in Jesus, become hopeful. The light shining from the cross of Calvary will reveal to you God’s estimate of the soul, and, appreciating that estimate, you will seek to reflect the light to the world.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 578, 579.

Dear brethren and sisters, let us prepare for that glorious goal!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

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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First Sabbath Offering

for Zagreb, Croatia



Located in southeastern Europe, Croatia is now an independent state of more than 5.5 million people. The country's beautiful coastline along the eastern edge of the Adriatic Sea brings in countless tourists from around the world each year. The population is primarily Roman Catholic (87.8%) with significant Orthodox (4.4%), Muslim (1.3%), Protestant and other (6.5%) religious groups.

As part of the former Yugoslavia, Croatia was one of the very first countries that comprised the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement. The experiences of the pioneers of the church in this country have been recounted in *The History of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement*. Through times of war and persecution our brethren and sisters have remained faithful to the cause of God. An extensive publishing work has made possible the distribution of many Spirit of Prophecy materials in our native language.

Today Croatia is one of the Field Conferences of the South Slavonic Union. The headquarters of the Field is in the capital city of Zagreb. It is from here that the work of spreading the gospel is directed throughout the country. By the grace of God the interest in the message in this large city has blossomed and flourished. Now the small chapel located in the headquarters is too small to accommodate the interests. A proper chapel is needed to serve as a lighthouse in this city.

Your help is kindly requested to make possible this project. We would ask you to consider us in your prayers that the Lord's work may be done in this country.

Your brethren and sisters from the Croatian Field

PROJECT 04B

Divine Power in Redemption

“Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption” (Psalm 130:7).

“In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 552, 553.

Suggested Reading: *Lift Him Up*, p. 152.

Sunday

June 26

1. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

- a. **Who was involved in the plan of redemption? 2 Corinthians 13:14; Isaiah 48:16.**

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man's uplifting.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

- b. **When was this plan established? Romans 16:25.**

“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.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

2. THE INCARNATION

- a. With what words did John and Paul explain the incarnation of Christ? John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16.

“The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries.

“Christ was one with the Father, yet . . . He was willing to step down from the exaltation of one who was equal with God.

“That He might accomplish His purpose of love for the fallen race, He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

“How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem’s manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one.

“It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 48.

- b. When was the prophecy of the incarnation fulfilled? Hebrews 10:5–7; Galatians 4:4.

“[Over] two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, ‘Lo, I come.’ ‘Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God’ (Hebrews 10:5–7). In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, ‘A body hast Thou prepared Me.’ Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 23.

3. THE REASONS FOR THE INCARNATION

- a. What are the main purposes of Christ’s incarnation? Matthew 18:11; John 17:4, 26.

“The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: ‘Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me’ (John 12:31, 32). The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69.

- b. What did Christ declare at the end of His earthly mission? John 17:4–6.

“In the intercessory prayer of Jesus with His Father, He claimed that He had fulfilled the conditions which made it obligatory upon the Father to fulfill His part of the contract made in heaven, with regard to fallen man. He prayed: ‘I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. [That is, He had wrought out a righteous character on earth as an example for men to follow.] And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was’ (John 17:4, 5). In this prayer He further goes on to state what is comprehended by the work which He has accomplished, and which has given Him all those who believe on His name. He values this recompense so highly that He forgets the anguish it has cost Him to redeem fallen man. He declares Himself glorified in those who believe on Him. The church, in His name, is to carry to glorious perfection the work which He has commenced; and when that church shall be finally ransomed in the Paradise of God, He will look upon the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Through all eternity the ransomed host will be His chief glory.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 260, 261 [comments in brackets are in the original].

4. DIVINE POWER

- a. How does Paul define the gospel? Romans 1:16, 17.

“Christ should be uplifted by those whom He has redeemed by dying on the cross a death of shame. He who has felt the power of the grace of Christ has a story to tell. He seeks to put in operation methods of work which will diffuse the gospel of Christ. Humanity, drawing its efficiency from the great source of wisdom, is made the instrumentality, the working agency, through which the gospel exercises its transforming power on mind and heart.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 230.

- b. What did the angel reveal to Joseph about Christ’s mission? Matthew 1:21.

“God is as powerful to save from sin today as He was in the times of the patriarchs, of David, and of the prophets and apostles. The multitude of cases recorded in sacred history where God has delivered His people from their own iniquities should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the judgment.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 15.

“We are all sinful, and of ourselves are unable to do the words of Christ. But God has made provision whereby the condemned sinner may be freed from spot and stain. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;’ ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (1 John 2:1; 1:9). But while Christ saves the sinner, He does not do away with the law which condemns the sinner. It is the work of redemption to exalt that law, and Christ’s great sacrifice was made in order that man might be a doer of that law. The law shows us our sins, as a mirror shows us that our face is not clean. The mirror has no power to cleanse the face; that is not its office. So it is with the law. It points out our defects, and condemns us, but it has no power to save us. We must come to Christ for pardon. He will take our guilt upon His own soul, and will justify us before God. And not only will He free us from sin, but He will give us power to render obedience to God’s will.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 24, 1896.

5. COMPLETE REDEMPTION

- a. What is amply provided through the plan of redemption? Matthew 11:28–30; Hebrew 7:25.

“We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 330.

- b. On which main condition can we have complete redemption? Jeremiah 29:12, 13.

“In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 330.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was decided by the Godhead regarding the plan of redemption?
2. What was revealed by Christ’s incarnation?
3. Besides saving the human race, what else did Christ have in view through His incarnation?
4. What is the biblical definition of the gospel?
5. How can we find true rest?

The Power of God's Word

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

"The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us how to reach the abodes of eternal happiness. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all—the knowledge of Christ."—*The Signs of the Times*, June 25, 1902.

Suggested Readings: *Child Guidance*, pp. 505–510.
The Desire of Ages, pp. 660, 661.

Sunday

July 3

1. THE TREE OF LIFE

- a. What was the most important tree in the Garden of Eden? Genesis 2:9. What property made it so important? Genesis 3:22–24.

"In the midst of Eden grew the tree of life, whose fruit had the power of perpetuating life. Had Adam remained obedient to God, he would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree and would have lived forever."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 532, 533.

- b. What was promised to the faithful of the period of Ephesus? Revelation 2:7.

"Not all the conditions of that first school of Eden will be found in the school of the future life. No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation. No tempter is there, no possibility of wrong. Every character has withstood the testing of evil, and none are longer susceptible to its power.

"[Revelation 2:7 quoted.] The giving of the tree of life in Eden was conditional, and it was finally withdrawn. But the gifts of the future life are absolute and eternal."—*Education*, p. 302.

Monday

July 4

2. THE TREE OF LIFE NOW

- a. To what does God's word compare heavenly wisdom? Proverbs 3:13–18.

"The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is an exaltation above everything else that is esteemed on earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the key that opens the portals of the heavenly city. This knowledge it is God's purpose that all who put on Christ shall possess."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 457.

- b. What is said about the tree of life in the New Earth? Revelation 22:2, 14. How can we enjoy it even now?

"In his efforts to reach God's ideal for him, the Christian is to despair of nothing. Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all. Jesus is the source of power, the fountain of life. He brings us to His word, and from the tree of life presents to us leaves for the healing of sin-sick souls. He leads us to the throne of God, and puts into our mouth a prayer through which we are brought into close contact with Himself. In our behalf He sets in operation the all-powerful agencies of heaven. At every step we touch His living power."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 478.

"Teachers need an intimate acquaintance with the word of God. The Bible, and the Bible alone, should be their counselor. The word of God is as the leaves of the tree of life. Here is met every want of those who love its teachings and bring them into the practical life. Many of the students who come to our schools are unconverted, though they may have been baptized. They do not know what it means to be sanctified through a belief of the truth. They should be taught to search and understand the Bible, to receive its truths into the heart and carry them out in the daily life. Thus they will become strong in the Lord; for spiritual sinew and muscle are nourished by the bread of life."—*Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students*, pp. 352, 353.

"The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be the rule of our faith. It is a leaf from the tree of life, and by eating it, by receiving it into our minds, we shall grow strong to do the will of God. By our Christlike characters we shall show that we believe the word, that we cleave to the Bible as the only guide to heaven."—*The Review and Herald*, May 4, 1897.

3. CHRIST AND GOD'S WORD

- a. What is written about Christ and God's word? John 1:14; 2 Timothy 3:16.

"The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God' (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.

"The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (John 1:14)."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. v, vi.

- b. What are we instructed to do? Hebrews 12:1, 2. What will be the result?

"No man is so high in power and authority but that Satan will assail him with temptation. And the more responsible the position a man occupies, the fiercer and more determined are the assaults of the enemy. Let God's servants in every place study His word, looking constantly to Jesus, that they may be changed into His image. The inexhaustible fullness and the all-sufficiency of Christ are at our command if we walk before God in humility and contrition."—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 281.

"In the epistle to the Hebrews is pointed out the single-hearted purpose that should characterize the Christian's race for eternal life: 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith' (Hebrews 12:1, 2). Envy, malice, evil thinking, evilspeaking, covetousness—these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 312.

4. THE BREAD OF LIFE

- a. What special provision was granted to the Israelites in the wilderness, and what reveals its superiority over any other food? Exodus 16:14, 15.

"The education of the Israelites included all their habits of life. Everything that concerned their well-being was the subject of divine solicitude, and came within the province of divine law. Even in providing their food, God sought their highest good. The manna with which He fed them in the wilderness was of a nature to promote physical, mental, and moral strength. Though so many of them rebelled against the restriction of their diet, and longed to return to the days when, they said, 'We sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full' (Exodus 16:3), yet the wisdom of God's choice for them was vindicated in a manner they could not gainsay. Notwithstanding the hardships of their wilderness life, there was not a feeble one in all their tribes."—*Education*, p. 38.

- b. What comparison did Christ make between the manna and Himself? John 6:48–51.

"[The Jews] had referred [Jesus] to the manna which their fathers ate in the wilderness, as if the furnishing of that food was a greater miracle than Jesus had wrought; but He now declared unto them that the temporal food then given from heaven was but a meager gift compared with the blessing of eternal life which He now offered them. The food eaten then sustained the strength, but did not prevent the approach of death, nor insure immortal life. The bread that the Son of God offered to man was death-destroying, giving in the end immortal life to the body."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 281.

"As the human agent presses forward in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, as he receives Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, he will feed on the bread of life. The word is spirit and life, and if it is brought into the daily practice it will ennoble the whole nature of man. There will be opened to his soul such a view of the Saviour's love as portrayed by the pen of Inspiration that his heart will be melted into tenderness and contrition."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 124.

5. THE BREAD OF LIFE (continued)

- a. What timeless explanation did Christ provide for our benefit? John 6:63.

“When men submit entirely to God, eating the bread of life and drinking the water of salvation, they will grow up into Christ. Their characters are composed of that which the mind eats and drinks. Through the Word of life, which they receive and obey, they become partakers of the divine nature.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1135.

- b. What else is included in this figurative language? John 6:56–58.

“To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament. . . .

“[John 6:54, 56, 57 quoted.] To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord’s great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 660, 661.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was God’s purpose through the tree of life?
2. Can we enjoy now the properties of the tree of life?
3. What relationship exists between Christ and the Bible?
4. How frequently should we partake of the Bread of Life, and how do we do so?

The Power of God’s Word (continued)

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11).

“We must search the Scriptures, not merely rush through a chapter and repeat it, taking no pains to understand it, but we must dig for the jewel of truth which will enrich the mind, and fortify the soul against the wiles and temptations of the archdeceiver.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 19.

Suggested Reading: *Child Guidance*, pp. 511–515.

1. BUILDING ON THE ROCK

1. How did Christ illustrate belief in Him as the personal Saviour? Matthew 7:24, 25.

“It is not enough, [Christ] says, for you to hear My words. By obedience you must make them the foundation of your character. Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall. By the winds of temptation, the tempests of trial, it will be swept away. But these principles that I have given will endure. Receive Me; build on My words.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

2. On the other hand, how did He illustrate the theoretical religion without practice? Matthew 7:26, 27.

“The reason why our people have not more power is that they profess the truth, but do not practice it. . . . The service of God is made a secondary matter, while worldly interests receive prompt attention. . . . If we realize the importance of the truth which we profess to believe we should feel that we have a sacred mission to fulfill, a responsibility involving eternal results. All temporal interests would yield to this.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 613, 614.

2. THE TRUTH

- a. In His interview with the Jews, what promise did Jesus make? John 8:31, 32.

“The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame—the power of the word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ ‘If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching’ (John 8:32; 7:17, R. V.). Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 258.

- b. In His intercessory prayer, how did Christ define the truth? John 17:17. How does it work in our sanctification?

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

“You need to be sanctified by the truth, having your mind elevated above every personal consideration and every selfish interest.

“I point you to the life of Jesus as a perfect pattern. His life was characterized by disinterested benevolence. Precious Saviour! What sacrifices has He made for us that we should not perish, but have everlasting life! Heaven will be cheap enough if we resign every selfish interest to obtain it. Can we afford to have our own way, and take ourselves out of the hands of God, because it is more pleasing to the natural heart? God requires perfect submission and perfect obedience. Eternal life is worth everything to us. You may come in close connection with God if you will agonize to enter in at the strait gate.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 218.

3. PURE WATER

- a. What figure of speech is used to illustrate God’s word? Ephesians 5:26, 27.

“In giving us His word, God has put us in possession of every truth essential for our salvation. Thousands have drawn water from these wells of life, yet there is no diminishing of the supply. Thousands have set the Lord before them, and by beholding have been changed into the same image. Their spirit burns within them as they speak of His character, telling what Christ is to them, and what they are to Christ. But these searchers have not exhausted these grand and holy themes. Thousands more may engage in the work of searching out the mysteries of salvation. As the life of Christ and the character of His mission are dwelt upon, rays of light will shine forth more distinctly at every attempt to discover truth. Each fresh search will reveal something more deeply interesting than has yet been unfolded. The subject is inexhaustible. The study of the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice and mediatorial work, will employ the mind of the diligent student as long as time shall last.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 133, 134.

“Trust in its fullness comes to us through constant communion with God. By eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ we gain spiritual strength. Christ supplies the lifeblood of the heart, and Christ and the Holy Spirit give nerve power. Begotten again unto a lively hope, imbued with the quickening power of a new nature, the soul is enabled to rise higher and still higher.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 593.

- b. How does Jeremiah depict God’s word and our feeble appreciation of it? Jeremiah 2:13.

“The many contradictory opinions in regard to what the Bible teaches do not arise from any obscurity in the book itself, but from blindness and prejudice on the part of interpreters. Men ignore the plain statements of the Bible to follow their own perverted reason. Priding themselves on their intellectual attainments, they overlook the simplicity of truth; they forsake the fountain of living waters to drink of the poisonous stream of error.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 27, 1885.

“There is far too much self-complacency among those who engage in Sabbath school work, too much machinery and routine, and all this tends to lead the soul away from the Fountain of living water.”—*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 74.

4. LIGHT

- a. What must we realize and appreciate about God's word? Psalm 12:6.

"There are professed Christians who read the Bible without a fine perception of the gems they are handling. There are portions of Scripture that they are not sure are inspired, and they think that in God's word there are errors and human reasoning. With the lamp of life in their very hands, they stumble. They interpret the Scriptures to suit themselves; they cannot appreciate the wisdom of God, and their own human wisdom is the light that guides them."—*The Bible Echo*, August 26, 1895.

- b. What inspired symbolism is used to refer to God's word? Psalm 119:105.

"Those who study the word of God with hearts open to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, will not remain in darkness as to the meaning of the word. 'If any man willeth to do His will,' Christ said, 'he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself' (John 7:17, R.V.). All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 36.

- c. How does Zechariah employ a similar comparison? Zechariah 4:1–6, 12–14.

"From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God's people that heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 408.

5. THE TWO WITNESSES

- a. How does Revelation 11:1–4 parallel with Zechariah's prophecy?

"The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 267.

- b. What does it mean to "prophecy clothed in sackcloth"? Revelation 11:3.

"[Revelation 11:3 quoted.] During the greater part of this period, God's witnesses remained in a state of obscurity. The papal power sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony. When the Bible was proscribed by religious and secular authority; when its testimony was perverted, and every effort made that men and demons could invent to turn the minds of the people from it; when those who dared proclaim its sacred truths were hunted, betrayed, tortured, buried in dungeon cells, martyred for their faith, or compelled to flee to mountain fastnesses, and to dens and caves of the earth—then the faithful witnesses prophesied in sackcloth. Yet they continued their testimony throughout the entire period of 1260 years. In the darkest times there were faithful men who loved God's word and were jealous for His honor. To these loyal servants were given wisdom, power, and authority to declare His truth during the whole of this time."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 267, 268.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we build on the Rock?
2. How did Christ define the truth?
3. What symbols are used to illustrate the importance of studying the Bible?
4. Describe the picture presented by Zechariah.
5. Explain the prophecy about the two witnesses.

Life

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4).

“Jesus came to ‘destroy the works of the devil.’ ‘In Him was life,’ and He says, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly’ (1 John 3:8; John 1:4; 10:10).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 270.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 463–475.
Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 369–379.

Sunday

July 17

1. IN THE BEGINNING

- a. **How was Adam brought into existence, and when? Genesis 2:7; 1:26–28, 31.**

“The Lord created man out of the dust of the earth. He made Adam a partaker of His life, His nature. There was breathed into him the breath of the Almighty, and he became a living soul. Adam was perfect in form—strong, comely, pure, bearing the image of his Maker.

“Man came from the hand of his Creator perfect in organization and beautiful in form. The fact that he has for six thousand years withstood the ever-increasing weight of disease and crime is conclusive proof of the power of endurance with which he was first endowed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1082.

- b. **Who were involved in the creation of Adam and Eve? Genesis 1:2, 26; 2:7; Colossians 1:16, 17. By what power is all things sustained? Psalm 93:1.**

“The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.”—*Education*, p. 132.

Monday

July 18

2. LIFE FOREVER

- a. **What is God’s plan for every human being? John 10:10.**

“Jesus came to ‘destroy the works of the devil.’ ‘In Him was life,’ and He says, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly;’ He is ‘a quickening spirit’ (1 John 3:8; John 1:4; 10:10; 1 Corinthians 15:45). And He still has the same life-giving power as when on earth He healed the sick, and spoke forgiveness to the sinner. He ‘forgiveth all thine iniquities,’ He ‘healeth all thy diseases’ (Psalm 103:3).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 270.

- b. **What did Christ say about His mission on earth? John 3:16, 17.**

“Christ does not weigh character in scales of human judgment. He says, ‘I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me’ (John 12:32). Every soul who responds to this drawing will turn from iniquity. Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. He who comes to Jesus is setting his feet upon a ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. Teach it by pen, by voice, that God is above the ladder; the bright rays of His glory are shining upon every round of the ladder. He is looking graciously upon all who are climbing painfully upward, that He may send them help, divine help, when the hand seems to be relaxing and the foot trembling. Yes, tell it, tell it in words that will melt the heart, that not one who shall perseveringly climb the ladder will fail of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; those who believe in Christ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

“Tell the people in clear, hopeful language how they may escape the heritage of shame which is our deserved portion. But for Christ’s sake do not present before them ideas that will discourage them, that will make the way to heaven seem very difficult. Keep all these overstrained ideas to yourself.

“While we must often impress the mind with the fact that the Christian life is a life of warfare, that we must watch and pray and toil, that there is peril to the soul in relaxing the spiritual vigilance for one moment, the completeness of the salvation proffered us from Jesus who loves us and gave Himself that we should not perish but have everlasting life, is to be the theme.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 181, 182.

3. ABUNDANT LIFE

a. What is God's plan for our physical life? 3 John 2.

"The body must be kept in a healthy condition in order that the soul may be in health. The condition of the body affects the condition of the soul. He who would have physical and spiritual strength must educate his appetite in right lines. He must be careful not to burden the soul by overtaxing his physical or spiritual powers. Faithful adherence to right principles in eating, drinking, and dressing is a duty that God has laid upon human beings.

"The Lord desires us to obey the laws of health and life. He holds each one responsible to care properly for his body, that it may be kept in health."—*Evangelism*, p. 261.

b. What is the basic condition for a healthy life? Deuteronomy 7:9, 11, 15.

"Our bodies are Christ's purchased possession, and we are not at liberty to do with them as we please. All who understand the laws of health should realize their obligation to obey these laws, which God has established in their being. Obedience to the laws of health is to be made a matter of personal duty. We ourselves must suffer the results of violated law. We must individually answer to God for our habits and practices. Therefore the question with us is not, 'What is the world's practice?' but, 'How shall I as an individual treat the habitation that God has given me?' "—*Child Guidance*, pp. 367, 368.

"Whether they acknowledge it or not, God lays upon all human beings the duty of taking care of the soul temple. The body is to be kept clean and pure. The soul is to be sanctified and ennobled. Then, God says, I will come unto him and take up My abode with him. We are responsible for our own salvation, and God holds us accountable for the influence we exert on those connected with us. We should stand in such a position, physically and spiritually, that we can recommend the religion of Christ. We are to dedicate our bodies to God."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 295.

"When speaking to persons on the subject of health, they often say, 'We know a great deal better than we do.' They do not realize that they are accountable for every ray of light in regard to their physical well-being, and that their every habit bears the inspection of God. He made the human being. We are His property, bought with a price—and what a price!"—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 8.

4. LIVING UP TO THE LIGHT

a. What instruction did Christ give to those whom He healed? John 5:14; 8:11.

"If, after so much light has been given, God's people will cherish wrong habits, indulging self and refusing to reform, they will suffer the sure consequences of transgression. If they are determined to gratify perverted appetite at any cost, God will not miraculously save them from the consequences of their indulgence. They 'shall lie down in sorrow' (Isaiah 50:11).

"Those who choose to be presumptuous, saying, 'The Lord has healed me, and I need not restrict my diet; I can eat and drink as I please,' will ere long need, in body and soul, the restoring power of God. Because the Lord has graciously healed you, you must not think you can link yourselves up with the self-indulgent practices of the world. Do as Christ commanded after His work of healing—'go, and sin no more' (John 8:11). Appetite must not be your god."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 25.

b. How are we bidden not to hurt ourselves by failing to practice health reform? Exodus 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. What do we do to others when we are unfaithful in health reform?

"There are many expensive indulgences that are at the same time very injurious. They derange the digestive organs, and destroy the appetite for simple, wholesome food; and sickness and suffering are the result. With dyspepsia and its attendant evils comes the loss of a sweet disposition. There is irritability, fretfulness, and impatience, often resulting in harsh, unkind words and wrong acts."—*The Health Reformer*, December 1, 1887.

"If the churches expect strength, they must live the truth which God has given them. If the members of our churches disregard the light on this subject, they will reap the sure result in both spiritual and physical degeneracy. And the influence of these older church members will leaven those newly come to the faith. The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden. What influence would these unconsecrated members have on new converts? Would they not make of no effect the God-given message which His people are to bear?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 370, 371.

5. STRENGTH ASSURED

- a. What is the only way to be faithful both to physical and spiritual laws? John 14:15, 23.

“The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. . . .

“That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, ‘This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.’ There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live. . . .

“The love of Jesus in the soul will banish all hatred, selfishness, and envy; for the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. There is health in obedience to God’s law. The affections of the obedient are drawn out after God. Looking unto the Lord Jesus, we may encourage and serve one another. The love of Christ is shed abroad in our souls, and there is no dissension and strife among us.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1105.

- b. What is God’s plan for our whole life? 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; Philippians 2:12, 13.

“The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ’s help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, ‘Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 15:57).”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 469, 470.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe God’s work on the sixth day of creation, and His desire regarding human life.
2. How can we be a healthy people, according to Deuteronomy chapter 7?
3. Why is it so important to live up to the light we have?
4. What is God’s purpose for His people according to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24?

Life (continued)

“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

“The cross stands where two roads diverge. One is the path of obedience leading to heaven. The other leads into the broad road, where man can easily go with his burden of sin and corruption, but it leads to perdition.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1095, 1096.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652–661.

1. ABUNDANT SPIRITUAL LIFE

- a. What basic principle for spiritual life was taught by Christ? John 6:54, 56, 57.

“It is by receiving the life for us poured out on Calvary’s cross, that we can live the life of holiness. And this life we receive by receiving His word, by doing those things which He has commanded.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

- b. What is the meaning of the expression “[whoever] eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life”? John 6:63.

“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 389.

2. SHARPER THAN A SURGEON'S SCALPEL

- a. How does Paul describe God's word? Hebrews 4:12.
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"The truth is the truth. It is not to be wrapped up in beautiful adornings, that the outside appearance may be admired. The teacher is to make the truth clear and forcible to the understanding and to the conscience. The word is a two-edged sword, that cuts both ways. It does not tread as with soft, slippered feet."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1147.

- b. How does Christ identify Himself to the church of Pergamos? Revelation 2:12.
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"When Christ preached, His message was like a sharp, two-edged sword, piercing the consciences of men and revealing their inmost thoughts. The work that Christ did His faithful messengers will have to do. In simplicity, purity, and the strictest integrity they are to preach the Word."—*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 159.

- c. How is this powerful sword to operate in our own life? 2 Corinthians 13:5.
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"You should humbly and carefully examine your own hearts, your own individual characters. You need to open your hearts that light may shine upon your darkness, that you may see and understand your motives. . . . What is the character of your thoughts, your spirit, your purposes, your words and actions? Compare them with the Scripture, and see whether you represent the character of Christ. Go to Jesus humbly, and break your hearts hardened by feelings of bitterness and hatred. Let the grace of Christ soften and melt you that you may put away everything that is destructive of your peace. If you do not see your hearts in the light of Jesus Christ, self love will prompt you to have a much better opinion of yourselves than you deserve; for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 87.

3. THE BREAD OF LIFE

- a. How does Jeremiah describe his relish for God's word? Jeremiah 15:16.
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- b. What must we likewise cultivate in order to obtain real spiritual strength from the Word? Matthew 5:6.
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"All pampering of self must be at an end. There must be an earnest longing, a soul-hunger, for the presence of the Lord. [Matthew 5:6 quoted.]

"It is a case of life or death with us. We have been stricken with spiritual paralysis, and everyone needs the help of the Great Physician. He alone can reach our case. He is only waiting to be invited by us with earnest heart, with sincere desire. Nothing is wanting but a preparation of heart, and earnest, believing prayer, to bring Jesus to our side as a mighty helper. He longs to come. If we will but listen to His voice and open the door, He will come in."—*Gospel Workers* (1892), pp. 225, 226.

- c. What factors are important to consider when spiritually feeding our young? Proverbs 22:6.
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"Do not encourage a superficial manner of investigating the truth. Make every point of truth clear and distinct to the minds of the children. Do not crowd upon their minds an accumulated amount of matter at one time. The precious word of God is to be a lamp to their path, and a light to their feet. Impress upon their minds that it is their privilege to walk in the light. It is the path of peace, of purity, of holiness, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. Christ has led the way in this path; He is the true Shepherd; in following Him, they avoid the bypaths and dangerous pitfalls.

"In the word of God they are to learn that all who enter heaven must have a perfect character; for then they will meet their Lord in peace. Many children and youth have their characters imprinted on their countenances. Their life's history they carry in the features of the face. The true workers should impress upon the minds of the children a beautiful, pure, Christlike character, which will transfigure the countenance."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 112, 113.

4. GOD'S WORD, A LIGHTHOUSE

- a. What are we to realize about the inspiration of Scripture, and how the Bible came into being? Habakkuk 2:2; 2 Peter 1:19–21.

“The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth. . . . [Habakkuk 2:2 quoted.] The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 521.

- b. What admonition did Paul send to Timothy? 2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2:15.

“The law is a wall of protection to those who are obedient to God’s precepts. From what other source can we gather such strength, or learn such noble science? What other book will teach men to love, fear, and obey God as does the Bible? What other book presents to students more ennobling science, more wonderful history? It clearly portrays righteousness, and foretells the consequence of disloyalty to the law of Jehovah. No one is left in darkness as to that which God approves or disapproves. In studying the Scriptures we become acquainted with God, and are led to understand our relation to Christ, who is the sin-bearer, the surety, the substitute, for our fallen race. These truths concern our present and eternal interests. The Bible stands the highest among books, and its study is valuable above the study of other literature in giving strength and expansion to the mind. . . .

“The word of God is the most perfect educational book in our world. Yet in our colleges and schools, books produced by human intellect have been presented for the study of our students, and the Book of books, which God has given to men to be an infallible guide, has been made a secondary matter. Human productions have been used as most essential and the word of God has been studied simply to give flavor to other studies. Isaiah describes the scenes of heaven’s glory that were presented to him, in most vivid language. All through this book he pictures glorious things that are to be revealed to others.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 394, 395.

5. HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

- a. Since the Bible is a divine book, how should we approach it? Isaiah 28:10.

“Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 91.

“Observe system in the study of the Scriptures in your families. Neglect anything of a temporal nature, . . . but be sure that the soul is fed with the bread of life. It is impossible to estimate the good results of one hour or even half an hour each day devoted in a cheerful, social manner to the Word of God. Make the Bible its own expositor, bringing together all that is said concerning a given subject at different times and under varied circumstances.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 511.

- b. How could we be really benefited by studying God's word? Matthew 4:4.

“We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know ‘what saith the Lord.’

“In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. . . . The experiences related in God’s word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. [Galatians 2:20 quoted.] As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 390, 391.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we “eat” the flesh and “drink” the blood of Christ?
2. In what sense is God's word a “two-edged sword”?
3. What is the difference between reading the Bible and studying the Bible?

First Sabbath Offering

for the missionary schools

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”—*Education*, p. 57.

Even before the organization of the Reform Movement in 1925, missionary schools were a fundamental aspect in the completion of the gospel commission for this church. As early as 1920 a small missionary school was opened in Rama (near Würzburg), Germany.

In 1931 the General Conference decided to open an international missionary school with the aim of sending missionaries to foreign lands. On April 1, 1932, this school began operations in Schwaebisch Hall, Germany.

Today, missionary schools continue to be an important part of spreading the present truth. Workers for the Lord’s cause need to be trained to complete the commission given to them by the Saviour of souls.

On August 6, please remember this important work. Your offerings will be used to support our missionary schools around the globe.

M. Natarajan,
GC Education
Secretary

PROJECT 00X



Godliness

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness” (2 Peter 1:5, 6).

“Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of the ladder. We are saved by climbing round after round, mounting step after step, to the height of Christ’s ideal for us.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530.

Suggested Reading: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 272–283.

Sunday

July 31

1. BEWARE OF THE COUNTERFEIT

- a. Against what class of professed believers are we warned? 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

“Since the second angel proclaimed the fall of the churches, they have been growing more and more corrupt. They bear the name of being Christ’s followers; yet it is impossible to distinguish them from the world. Ministers take their texts from the Word of God, but preach smooth things. To this the natural heart feels no objection. It is only the spirit and power of the truth and the salvation of Christ that are hateful to the carnal heart. There is nothing in the popular ministry that stirs the wrath of Satan, makes the sinner tremble, or applies to the heart and conscience the fearful realities of a judgment soon to come. Wicked men are generally pleased with a form of piety without true godliness, and they will aid and support such a religion.”—*Early Writings*, p. 273.

- b. Why are false believers worse than unbelievers? Revelation 3:15, 16.

“Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian”—*Our High Calling*, p. 348.

2. FERVENT BELIEVERS

a. What is the ideal Christian life? Romans 12:9–14.

“We are to compare our characters with the infallible standard of God’s law. In order to do this, we must search the Scriptures, measuring our attainments by the word of God. Through the grace of Christ, the highest attainments in character are possible; for every soul who comes under the molding influence of the Spirit of God, may be transformed in mind and heart. In order to understand your condition, it is necessary to study the Bible, and to watch unto prayer. The apostle says, ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates’ (2 Corinthians 13:5)? Let not those who are ignorant remain in ignorance. They cannot remain in ignorance, and meet the mind of God. They are to look to the cross of Calvary, and estimate the soul by the value of the offering there made. Jesus says to all believers, ‘Ye are My witnesses.’ ‘Ye are laborers together with God.’ This being true, how earnestly should each one strive to make use of every power to improve every opportunity for becoming efficient that he may be ‘not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord’ (Romans 12:11).”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 214.

b. What example do we have from the early Christians? Acts 2:42–47.

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

“The believers were ever to cherish the love that filled the hearts of the apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment: ‘As I have loved you, that ye also love one another’ (John 13:34). So closely were they to be united to Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill His requirements. The power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness was to be magnified.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 241.

3. GOD’S PLAN FOR US

a. Since we are living in the Laodicean era, in what situation may we find ourselves—and what hope does Christ offer? Revelation 3:18–20.

“Love of self excludes the love of Christ. Those who live for self are ranged under the head of the Laodicean church who are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. The ardor of the first love has lapsed into a selfish egotism. . . . Let us thank the Lord that while this class is so numerous, there is still time for repentance.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 348.

b. What is God’s ideal for each one of us? Ephesians 6:10.

“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ; and what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him? ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48). As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 365.

c. How can this ideal be accomplished? Matthew 7:13, 14; John 15:4, 5.

“Without the divine working, man can do no good thing. God calls every man to repentance, yet man cannot even repent unless the Holy Spirit works upon his heart. But the Lord wants no man to wait until he thinks he has repented before he takes steps toward Jesus. The Saviour is continually drawing men to repentance; they need only to submit to be drawn, and their hearts will be melted in penitence.

“To man is allotted a part in this great struggle for everlasting life—he must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, and the Spirit works in him to accomplish this. But man is no passive being, to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle and exercise every faculty in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency. No human being can be saved in indolence.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 365, 366.

4. THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR

- a. How can we be overcomers in our spiritual struggle? Ephesians 6:11–13.

“In the Word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being. Those who are under God’s control and who are influenced by the heavenly angels will be able to discern the crafty workings of the unseen powers of darkness. Those who desire to be in harmony with the heavenly agencies should be intensely in earnest to do God’s will. They must give no place whatever to Satan and his angels.

“But unless we are constantly on guard, we shall be overcome by the enemy. Although a solemn revelation of God’s will concerning us has been revealed to all, yet a knowledge of His will does not set aside the necessity of offering earnest supplications to Him for help, and of diligently seeking to cooperate with Him in answering the prayers offered. He accomplishes His purposes through human instrumentalities.

“God wants every one to stand with the whole armor on, ready for the great review.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1119.

- b. What is the meaning of the “breastplate of righteousness”? Ephesians 6:14.

“We must put on every piece of the armor, and then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 12, 1901.

5. THE CHRISTIAN ARMOR (continued)

- a. What are the other parts of our armor? Ephesians 6:15, 16.

“Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace’ (Ephesians 6:15), you will be prepared to walk from house to house, carrying the truth to the people. Sometimes you will find it very trying to do work of this kind; but if you go forth in faith, the Lord will go before you, and His light will shine upon your pathway. As you enter the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven. Learn to sing the simplest of songs. These will help you in house-to-house labor, and hearts will be touched by the influence of the Holy Spirit.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 11, 1902.

- b. Mention two essential weapons with which Christian should continually be armed. Ephesians 6:18.

“Men and women may reach a high standard, if they will but acknowledge Christ as their personal Saviour. Watch and pray, making a surrender of all to God. The knowledge that you are striving for eternal life will strengthen and comfort you both. In thought, in word, in action, you are to be lights in the world. Discipline yourselves in the Lord; for He has committed to you sacred trusts, which you cannot properly fulfill without this discipline. By believing in Jesus, you are not only to save your own souls, but by precept and example you are to seek to save other souls.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 96.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you define a Laodicean believer?
2. What do we understand by the expression “hot”?
3. What is my goal as a Christian?
4. Mention the parts of the Christian armor.
5. How can we reach a higher standard in spiritual, cultural, and physical education?

Glory

“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

“Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The believers in Christ, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. On earth they walk in narrow paths; they are purified in the furnace of affliction.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 576.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 202–210.

Sunday

August 7

1. HUMAN GLORY

- a. **What should we realize about the futility of human glory? Jeremiah 9:23.**

“God is the source of all wisdom. He is infinitely wise and just and good. Apart from Christ, the wisest men that ever lived cannot comprehend Him. They may profess to be wise; they may glory in their attainments; but mere intellectual knowledge, aside from the great truths that center in Christ, is as nothingness.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 66.

“It was a very intellectual being, one who occupied a high position among the angelic throng, that finally became a rebel; and many a mind of superior intellectual attainments is now being led captive by his power.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 422.

- b. **What is written about loving worldly riches? 1 Timothy 6:9, 10. Give one example. Matthew 26:14–16.**

“Worldly policy plans were constantly cherished by Judas. There was no outbreking sin on his part, but his sharp scheming, the selfish, parsimonious spirit that took possession of him, finally led him to sell his Lord for a small sum of money.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1101.

Monday

August 8

2. TWO KINDS OF WISDOM

- a. **What is worldly wisdom in the sight of God? 1 Corinthians 1:19–21. What miracle will yet be seen even in some who have been blinded by worldly wisdom?**

“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. Yet God’s servants are to improve every opportunity to communicate the truth to these 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*, pp. 241, 242.

- b. **Rather than becoming spiritually dwarfed by the temporal scope of worldly knowledge, how are we to make the most of our intellectual endowments? 2 Timothy 2:15.**

“Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God.

“We are indebted to Him who gave us existence, for all the talents which have been entrusted to us; and it is a duty we owe to our Creator to cultivate and improve upon the talents He has committed to our trust. Education will discipline the mind, develop its powers, and understandingly direct them, that we may be useful in advancing the glory of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 160.

“Whatever may be your calling, it is essential that you improve your abilities by diligent study. Young men and women should be urged to appreciate the heaven-sent blessings of opportunities to become well disciplined and intelligent. They should take advantage of the schools that have been established for the purpose of imparting the best of knowledge. It is sinful to be indolent and negligent in regard to obtaining an education. Time is short, and therefore because the Lord is soon to come to close the scenes of earth’s history, there is all the greater necessity of improving present opportunities and privileges.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 216.

3. DIVINE WISDOM

- a. Where is true wisdom to be found? 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24, 30.
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- b. In what kind of knowledge should God's children glory? 1 Corinthians 1:31; Jeremiah 9:24.
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"If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God's compassion and the sinfulness of sin.

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

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

- c. What will be the result in our life if we partake of that in which the apostle Paul gloried? Galatians 6:14.
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"Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. 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, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 210.

4. HUMAN POWER

- a. What is the value of human power in God's plan? Psalm 20: 7, 8.
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"[Ephesians 6:12 (margin) quoted.] It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain the conflict; and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow. The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717.

- b. What warnings should we heed when considering, for example, the tragic episode in David's life at a moment when he was trusting in his own strength? 2 Samuel 11:1–4; 1 Corinthians 10:12.
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"David was surrounded by the fruits of victory and the honors of his wise and able rule. It was now, while he was at ease and unguarded, that the tempter seized the opportunity to occupy his mind. . . . When in ease and self-security he let go his hold upon God, David yielded to Satan and brought upon his soul the stain of guilt."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 718.

"It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall. Flattery and the subtle allurements of power and luxury were not without effect upon him. . . . Instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he began to trust to his own wisdom and might. As soon as Satan can separate the soul from God, the only Source of strength, he will seek to arouse the unholy desires of man's carnal nature. The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It begins in apparently small things—the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world."—*Ibid.*, pp. 717, 718.

- c. Describe an example of how divine power can readily outstrip human strength. Isaiah 36:18–20; 37:33–38.
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"The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian [king]. . . . Their earnest entreaties for deliverance had been mingled with confession of sin and with many tears. In their great need they had trusted wholly in the power of God to save, and He had not failed them."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 361, 362.

5. GOD'S POWER

- a. What is the only way by which God's people should defend the truth? Zechariah 4:6, 7, 10.

"The very same difficulties which were created to hinder the restoration and upbuilding of the work of God, the great mountains of difficulty which loomed in Zerubbabel's way, will be met by all who today are loyal to God and to His work. Many human inventions are used to carry out plans after the mind and will of men with whom God is not working. But it is not boastful words nor a multitude of ceremonies that show that the Lord is working with His people. The assumed power of the human agent does not decide this question. Those who place themselves in opposition to the Lord's work may hinder for a time, but the same Spirit that has guided the Lord's work all the way through will guide it today. [Zechariah 4:6 quoted.] . . .

"The Lord would have every soul strong in His strength. He would have us look to Him, receiving our directions from Him."—*The Review and Herald*, May 16, 1899.

- b. What promise should encourage us in these last days? Joel 2:28, 29.

"If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness; and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1175.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain why "reasons" for human glory are empty according to Jeremiah 9:23.
2. What is the basic difference between human wisdom and divine wisdom?
3. What role does the cross of Calvary play in our Christian life?
4. Relate the victories of God's people over the Assyrians.

Precious Promises

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4.)

"The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul of the child with a spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the receptive mind a familiarity with divine things which will be as a barricade against the temptations of the enemy."—*Child Guidance*, p. 496.

Suggested Reading: *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 307–319.

1. GOD'S PROMISES

- a. After the Fall, in what words was the work of redemption promised? Genesis 3:15.

"Ever since the first promise of redemption was spoken in Eden, the life, the character, and the mediatorial work of Christ have been the study of human minds. Yet every mind through whom the Holy Spirit has worked has presented these themes in a light that is fresh and new. The truths of redemption are capable of constant development and expansion. Though old, they are ever new, constantly revealing to the seeker for truth a greater glory and a mightier power."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 127.

- b. How sure can we be about God's promises? 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13.

"The apostle adjured the Corinthians, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (1 Corinthians 10:12). Should they become boastful and self-confident, neglecting to watch and pray, they would fall into grievous sin, calling down upon themselves the wrath of God. Yet Paul would not have them yield to despondency or discouragement. . . . [verse 13 quoted.]—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 316.

2. FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING

- a. What is promised to us if we fulfill some basic conditions? 1 John 1:9.

“Thank God that He who spilled His blood for us, lives to plead it, lives to make intercession for every soul who receives Him. ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (1 John 1:9). 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.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 47.

- b. What are the conditions upon which we are forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Christ? Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13.

“The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression. He that ‘confesseth and forsaketh’ his sin ‘shall have mercy’ (Proverbs 28:13).

“In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 552, 553.

3. FREEDOM AND POWER

- a. How can we be free from sinning? Matthew 1:21.

“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48). This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

“The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

- b. What is promised to those who accept the gospel? Romans 1:16, 17.

“United with Christ, all the power you require will be given you. Abiding in Him, you can fight manfully. The more you believe and trust as a child in the Lord Jesus, the greater will be your capacity for believing. By faith you stand. Only by exercising faith can you conquer self. . . . Self is the ground where Satan always meets and manages those whom he wishes to deceive and conquer. But if the righteousness of Christ is revealed in you, you become strong. Looking beyond yourself to a crucified Saviour, a risen and ascended Lord, who is, as your Advocate, making intercession for you, taking hold of Christ’s power and efficiency, you can conquer.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 126.

- c. How long did it take for Christ to cleanse the leper? Matthew 8:2, 3. How long will it take for Christ to forgive and cleanse us?

“In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 266.

4. POWER TO OVERCOME

- a. What is promised to overcomers in the Laodicean period? Revelation 3:21.

“If Jesus resisted Satan’s temptations, He will help us to resist. He came to bring divine power to combine with human effort.

“Jesus was free from all sin and error; there was not a trace of imperfection in His life or character. He maintained spotless purity under circumstances the most trying. . . .

“Christ’s overcoming and obedience is that of a true human being. In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of our erroneous views of the human nature of our Lord. When we give to His human nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, we destroy the completeness of His humanity. His imputed grace and power He gives to all who receive Him by faith.

“The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan’s temptations without divine power to combine with his instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ; He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God’s holy law, and in this way He is our example. The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God’s power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset.

“The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam, through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in human nature which we now have. . . . Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, could only keep the commandments of God in the same way that humanity can keep them.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 929.

- b. What is the only way we can be overcomers? 1 Corinthians 15:57.

“The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.

“This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 469.

5. PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

- a. In accepting God’s written promises, what happens to our life? 2 Peter 1:4.

“Through belief in [Christ] it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. . . .

“As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 24, 1900.

“It is God who gives us power to overcome. Those who hear His voice and obey His commandments are enabled to form righteous characters.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 943.

- b. What does Revelation 12:11 say of the faithful believers?

“All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day.

“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.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the first gospel message ever preached?
2. How can we be sure that our sins are forgiven?
3. Explain the expression: “He shall save His people from their sins.”
4. What is the only way we can be overcomers?
5. How many of us can be overcomers?

Human Nature

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:26, 27).

“Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. . . . Man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 52–62.

Sunday

August 21

1. THE DIVINE IMAGE

- a. What was the condition of man at creation? Genesis 1:27.

“All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made ‘in the image of God,’ and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 11, 1902.

“When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. [Genesis 1:27 quoted], and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator.”—*Education*, p. 15.

- b. What kind of garment did Adam and Eve wear? Genesis 2:25.

“The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 310, 311.

Monday

August 22

2. PERFECT HEALTH

- a. What did God say about man on the sixth day? Genesis 1:26–28, 31.

“Man came from the hand of God perfect in every faculty of mind and body; in perfect soundness, therefore in perfect health.”—*My Life Today*, p. 126.

- b. What kind of food was provided for our first parents? 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, A.R.V). 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’ (Genesis 3:18).

“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.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 295, 296.

- c. How can we best describe the Eden lifestyle? Genesis 2:8–10, 15.

“In this garden [in Eden] were trees of every variety, many of them laden with fragrant and delicious fruit. There were lovely vines, growing upright, yet presenting a most graceful appearance, with their branches drooping under their load of tempting fruit of the richest and most varied hues. It was the work of Adam and Eve to train the branches of the vine to form bowers, thus making for themselves a dwelling from living trees covered with foliage and fruit.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 47.

3. MARRIAGE—A DIVINE INSTITUTION

- a. What else was provided for man's happiness on the sixth day? Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 21–24.

"[Jesus] referred [the Pharisees] to the blessed days of Eden, when God pronounced all things 'very good.' Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. 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)."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 63.

- b. What is God's purpose in the marriage institution? Genesis 1:28; 2:18.

"[The Creator] 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."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 63, 64.

"God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman's heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband's character and give it completeness—fulfill God's purpose for them.

"Christ came not to destroy this institution, but to restore it to its original sanctity and elevation. He came to restore the moral image of God in man, and He began His work by sanctioning the marriage relation.

"He who gave Eve to Adam as a helpmeet performed His first miracle at a marriage festival. In the festal hall where friends and kindred rejoiced together, Christ began His public ministry. Thus He sanctioned marriage, recognizing it as an institution that He Himself had established. He ordained that men and women should be united in holy wedlock, to rear families whose members, crowned with honor, should be recognized as members of the family above.

"The divine love emanating from Christ never destroys human love, but includes it. By it human love is refined and purified, elevated and ennobled. Human love can never bear its precious fruit until it is united with the divine nature and trained to grow heavenward. Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 99.

4. HUMAN NATURE PERVERTED

- a. As a result of Adam's and Eve's disobedience, what happened to human nature? Romans 5:12, 17, 19.

"After their sin Adam and Eve were no longer to dwell in Eden. They earnestly entreated that they might remain in the home of their innocence and joy. They confessed that they had forfeited all right to that happy abode, but pledged themselves for the future to yield strict obedience to God. But they were told that their nature had become depraved by sin; they had lessened their strength to resist evil and had opened the way for Satan to gain more ready access to them. In their innocence they had yielded to temptation; and now, in a state of conscious guilt, they would have less power to maintain their integrity."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 61.

- b. What is the condition of humanity today? Psalm 51:5; Romans 7:14–20.

"A perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Cooperation with that power is man's greatest need."—*Education*, p. 29.

"The strongest evidence of man's fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, hour by hour. In one moment, by a hasty, unguarded act, we may place ourselves in the power of evil; but it requires more than a moment to break the fetters and attain to a holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, perseverance, patience, and sacrifice. . . .

"The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, 'I die daily' (1 Corinthians 15:31). His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 452, 453.

5. THE WAGES OF SIN

a. What is the final consequence of sin? Romans 6:21, 23.

“Adam, in transgressing the law of Jehovah, had opened the door for Satan, who had planted his banner in the midst of the first family. He was made to feel, indeed, that the wages of sin was death.”—*Confrontation*, p. 23.

“He who chooses a course of disobedience to God’s law is deciding his future destiny; he is sowing to the flesh, earning the wages of sin, even eternal destruction, the opposite of life eternal. Submission to God and obedience to His holy law bring the sure result. ‘This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent’ (John 17:3).”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 71.

b. Since man is free to choose either eternal life or eternal death, what advice does the Lord give us? Deuteronomy 30:15–19.

“We need to be active, working Christians, unselfish in heart and life, having an eye single to the glory of God. Oh, what wrecks we meet everywhere! what silent lips and fruitless lives! ‘This,’ said the angel, ‘is because of falling under temptation. Nothing mars the peace of the soul like sinful unbelief.’

“You should not give up in despair, thinking you must live and die in the bondage of doubt and unbelief. In the Lord we have righteousness and strength. Lean upon Him; and through His power you may quench all the fiery darts of the adversary and come off more than conqueror. You may yet become sanctified through the truth; or you may, if you choose, walk in the darkness of unbelief, lose heaven, and lose all. By walking in the light and working out the will of God, you may overcome your selfish nature.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 213, 214.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the garment of Adam and Eve before the Fall?
2. Explain the original diet designed for humanity.
3. Summarize God’s plan for marriage according to Genesis 2:18–24.
4. What happened to man’s nature after the Fall?
5. What kind of death is the result of the wages of sin?

First Sabbath Offering for Yekaterinburg, Russia



The region of Siberia in Russia has long been associated with its harsh arctic climate. What many people forget is that this Region is home to millions upon millions of souls eager to hear the message of salvation. From the Ural Mountains to the Bering Straight the message of salvation has been spreading like lightning since the fall of Communism in the early 1990’s. With missionary and ministerial assistance coming from the surrounding countries of Ukraine, Moldova and Kazakhstan, the work has been spreading at a great speed.

Yekaterinburg serves as the gateway between the West and Siberia. This city of roughly 2 million inhabitants is located in the eastern foothills of the central Urals on the Iset River. It is a major transit point both by rail and air.

The believers here have been meeting together in homes and rented facilities for a number of years. They are in great need of a chapel that can serve as a lighthouse not only for this city, but for the entire region. Your generous donations will make this project possible.

Your brethren and sisters from the East European Union

PROJECT 00K

A New Creation

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“Through the power of Christ, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have become transformed into the image of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 476.

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

Sunday

August 28

1. THE NEW BIRTH

- a. What basic truth did Christ tell Nicodemus? John 3:3, 5.

“Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

- b. When does this new birth take place, and what should be our immediate response to it? John 1:12, 13.

“[1 Peter 1:18, 19 quoted.] Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

“Jesus leads the way. Do not wait and continue in disobedience, hoping circumstances may change, making it easier for you to obey. Go forward, for you know the will of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 10, 1893.

Monday

August 29

2. FORGIVENESS—THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE

- a. What happens when the repentant sinner is justified or forgiven? 1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:10.

“God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 114.

- b. How will forgiven sinners deal with others? Matthew 6:12, 14, 15.

“He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God we are to pardon all who have done evil to us.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 113, 114.

- c. What is essential for us so that we may forgive others? 1 Corinthians 13:1–8; 1 John 4:16.

“The one thing essential for us in order that we may receive and impart the forgiving love of God is to know and believe the love that He has to us. . . . Satan is working by every deception he can command, in order that we may not discern that love. He will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous that the Lord will not have respect unto our prayers and will not bless and save us. In ourselves we can see nothing but weakness, nothing to recommend us to God, and Satan tells us that it is of no use; we cannot remedy our defects of character. When we try to come to God, the enemy will whisper, It is of no use for you to pray; did not you do that evil thing? . . . When we feel that we have sinned and cannot pray, it is then the time to pray. Ashamed we may be and deeply humbled, but we must pray and believe.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 115.

3. WALKING WITH CHRIST

- a. Besides accepting Christ as our Saviour, what is essential for us to begin a new life? Colossians 2:6; 1 John 1:7.

“Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, ‘I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him;’ and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. . . . [Colossians 2:6 quoted.]”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

“As the flower turns to the sun, that the bright beams may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that heaven’s light may shine upon us, that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ. . . .

“You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness. Apart from Him you have no life. You have no power to resist temptation or to grow in grace and holiness. Abiding in Him, you may flourish. Drawing your life from Him, you will not wither nor be fruitless. You will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

“Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, ‘Without Me ye can do nothing’ (John 15:5). Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly—by abiding in Him—that we are to grow in grace.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 68, 69.

- b. How did Enoch walk with God? Genesis 5:22–24; Hebrews 11:5.

“Enoch’s walk with God was not in a trance or a vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had a work to do for God in the world. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant of the Lord. . . .

“There are few Christians who would not be far more earnest and devoted if they knew that they had but a short time to live, or that the coming of Christ was about to take place. But Enoch’s faith waxed the stronger, his love became more ardent, with the lapse of centuries.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 85.

4. WALKING WITH CHRIST (continued)

- a. What message did God Himself convey to Abraham? Genesis 17:1–5; John 8:56.

“There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today, through which we have hope. Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the Author and the Finisher of our faith.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 22, 1892.

- b. What are the various ways by which today’s true children of Abraham will reflect the character of that patriarch of old? Hebrews 11:8–10; Galatians 3:6–9.

“The ten holy precepts had not been written upon the tables of stone by the finger of God in Abraham’s day. But Abraham was acquainted with them. They had been handed down from generation to generation; parents had taught their children the will of the Creator. Having educated himself to obey the law of God, the spirit of the commandments given in Eden was woven into the character of Abraham, fashioning his life after the divine pattern; and as a result his family was enlightened. He feared the Lord with all his house; for God’s standard of holiness was made known by Abraham to both masters and servants. He who combines faith and works will command his household after him, and like Abraham, will fear the Lord with all his house.”—*The Gospel Herald*, August 1, 1906.

“The faith of Abraham should be our example, yet how few will patiently endure a simple test of reproof for the sins which imperil their eternal welfare. How few receive reproof with humility, and profit by it. God’s claim upon our faith, our services, our affections, should meet with a cheerful response. We are infinite debtors to the Lord and should unhesitatingly comply with the least of His requirements.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 253.

“We must dwell as pilgrims and strangers here if we would gain ‘a better country, that is, an heavenly.’ Those who are children of Abraham will be seeking the city which he looked for, ‘whose builder and maker is God’ (Hebrews 11:16, 10).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 170.

5. NEW CREATURES IN THE NEW EARTH

- a. What will be realized by all who will inhabit the New Earth? Matthew 5:5; Revelation 21:1–7; 22:14.

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely’ (Revelation 21:6). This promise is only to those that thirst. None but those who feel their need of the water of life, and seek it at the loss of all things else, will be supplied. ‘He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son’ (verse 7). Here, also, conditions are specified. In order to inherit all things, we must resist and overcome sin.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 540.

“An infinite price has been paid to bring us into connection with Christ. Self-indulgence must cease. We must come into right relations with God, and we must be cleansed from all iniquity, and walk worthy of the vocation whereunto we are called.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 29, 1889.

- b. What will be the reward of the wicked, and how will God’s good name be vindicated? Revelation 21:8; 22:15; Psalm 37:9.

“Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished ‘according to their deeds’ (Jeremiah 25:14). The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch—Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 673.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When are we really born again?
2. What is included in God’s forgiveness?
3. What does it mean to “walk with Christ”?
4. How can we become children of Abraham in a spiritual sense?
5. Who will live in the New Earth?

The True Vine

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

“Do not disappoint Him who so loved you that He gave His own life to cancel your sins. . . . Remember this. If you have made mistakes, you certainly gain a victory if you see these mistakes and regard them as beacons of warning. Thus you turn defeat into victory, disappointing the enemy and honoring your Redeemer.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 332.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 674–678.
Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 139–149.

1. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

- a. How can one profess to be “in Christ,” yet bear no fruit? John 15:1, 2 (first part), 6.

“If we stand in a position of perfect indifference, without acknowledging [Christ] as our Saviour, we bear no fruit. If by failing to be a partaker of His divine nature we bear no fruit, we are taken away. Worldly influences take us away from Christ, and our portion is the same as that of the unfruitful branch.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1143.

- b. What is the work of Christ in behalf of those who bear fruit? John 15:2 (last part).

“If we do not bear any fruit, the powers of darkness take possession of our minds, our affections, our service, and we are of the world, though we profess to be children of God. This is neither a safe nor a pleasant position, because we lose all the beauty and the glory and the satisfaction that it is our privilege to have. By abiding in Christ, we may have His sweetness, His fragrance, His light. Christ is the Light of the world. He shines in our hearts. His light in our hearts shines forth from our faces. By beholding the beauty and the glory of Christ, we become changed into the same image.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1143.

2. CLEANSED BY THE WORD

a. How can we have our character purified? John 15:3.

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

“Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 100, 101.

b. What changes will be revealed in the life of true believers? Isaiah 1:16, 17.

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

“The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ’s purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 101, 102.

3. MUTUAL CONNECTION

a. How can we live a fruitful spiritual life? John 15:4, 5.

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 231.

b. How is it possible to preserve our union with Christ? Hebrews 12:1, 2.

“After the union with Christ has been formed, it can be preserved only by earnest prayer and untiring effort. We must resist, we must deny, we must conquer self. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, by watchfulness, we may gain the victory.

“Believers become one in Christ, but one branch cannot be sustained by another. The nourishment must be obtained through the vital connection with the vine. We must feel our utter dependence on Christ. We must live by faith on the Son of God. That is the meaning of the injunction: ‘Abide in Me.’ The life we live in the flesh is not to the will of men, not to please our Lord’s enemies, but to serve and honor Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. A mere assent to this union, while the affections are not detached from the world, its pleasures and its dissipation, only emboldens the heart in disobedience.

“As a people we are sadly destitute of faith and love. Our efforts are altogether too feeble for the time of peril in which we live. The pride and self-indulgence, the impiety and iniquity, by which we are surrounded have an influence upon us. Few realize the importance of shunning, so far as possible, all associations unfriendly to religious life.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 231, 232.

4. PRAYERS ANSWERED

- a. What are the key conditions for obtaining answers to our prayers? John 15:7; 1 John 2:3–5.

“Many are forfeiting the condition of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us. We present to God His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by so doing He would dishonor His own name. . . .

“One of Christ’s last commands to His disciples was ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (John 13:34). Do we obey this command, or are we indulging sharp, unchristlike traits of character? If we have in any way grieved or wounded others, it is our duty to confess our fault and seek for reconciliation. This is an essential preparation that we may come before God in faith, to ask His blessing.

“There is another matter too often neglected by those who seek the Lord in prayer. Have you been honest with God? By the prophet Malachi the Lord declares, ‘Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings’ (Malachi 3:7, 8).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 143, 144.

- b. With what other conditions must we comply before God can answer our prayers? Psalm 66:18; Mark 11:24.

“If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 95.

“The beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks with great plainness and assurance: ‘If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him’ (1 John 5:14, 15). Then press your petition to the Father in the name of Jesus. God will honor that name.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 148.

5. ABIDING IN CHRIST’S LOVE

- a. On what condition can we abide in Christ’s love? John 15:9, 10.

“Always kind, courteous, ever taking the part of the oppressed, whether Jew or Gentile, Christ was beloved by all. By His perfect life and character, He answered the question asked in the fifteenth Psalm: ‘Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart’ (verses 1, 2). In childhood and youth His course was such that when engaged in work as a teacher, He could say to His disciples, [John 15:10 quoted].”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 402.

- b. How did Christ summarize the law and reveal its essence? John 15:12, 13.

“Christ has given us an example of pure, disinterested love. You have not as yet seen your deficiency in this respect, and your great need of this heavenly attainment, without which all your good purposes, and your zeal, even if it be of that nature that you could give your goods to feed the poor and your body to be burned, is nothing. You need that charity which suffereth long, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Without the spirit of love, no one can be like Christ. With this living principle in the soul, no one can be like the world.

“The conduct of Christians is like that of their Lord. He erected the standard, and it is left for us to say whether or not we will rally around it. Our Lord and Saviour laid aside His dominion, His riches and glory, and sought after us, that He might save us from misery and make us like Himself.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 169, 170.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we be fruitful Christians?
2. What does it mean to be connected with the Vine?
3. Mention some basic conditions for receiving answers to prayers.
4. What is the evidence that we are connected with the Vine?

Warning Against Disobedience

“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

“The basis of a right character in the future man is made firm by habits of strict temperance in the mother prior to the birth of her child.”—*The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1880.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 309–322.

Sunday

September 11

1. POOR EXCUSES

- a. **By disobeying God's instruction, what sin, among others, did Adam and Eve commit? Genesis 3:6.**

“Adam and Eve lost Eden through the indulgence of appetite, and we only regain it by the denial of the same.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 21, 1884.

- b. **After transgressing, whom did they blame for their fall? Genesis 3:11–13.**

“[Adam] who, from love to Eve, had deliberately chosen to forfeit the approval of God, his home in Paradise, and an eternal life of joy, could now, after his fall, endeavor to make his companion, and even the Creator Himself, responsible for the transgression. So terrible is the power of sin. . . .

“Like Adam, [Eve] charged God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies; it was indulged by our first parents as soon as they yielded to the influence of Satan, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Instead of humbly confessing their sins, they try to shield themselves by casting the blame upon others, upon circumstances, or upon God—making even His blessings an occasion of murmuring against Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 57, 58.

Monday

September 12

2. MORE THOROUGH PRENATAL CARE

- a. **What specific instructions did God give Manoah and his wife? Judges 13:3, 4, 13, 14.**

“God had an important work for the promised child of Manoah to do, and it was to secure for him the qualifications necessary for this work that the habits of both the mother and the child were to be carefully regulated. ‘Neither let her drink wine or strong drink,’ was the Angel's instruction for the wife of Manoah, ‘nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe’ (Judges 13:14). The child will be affected for good or for evil by the habits of the mother. She must herself be controlled by principle and must practice temperance and self-denial, if she would seek the welfare of her child. Unwise advisers will urge upon the mother the necessity of gratifying every wish and impulse, but such teaching is false and mischievous. The mother is by the command of God Himself placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 561.

- b. **What will be the consequences of disobeying the divine instructions on temperance? Galatians 6:7.**

“Fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility [to exercise self-control]. Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their children. As the result of parental intemperance children often lack physical strength and mental and moral power. Liquor drinkers and tobacco users may, and do, transmit their insatiable craving, their inflamed blood and irritable nerves, to their children. The licentious often bequeath their unholy desires, and even loathsome diseases, as a legacy to their offspring. And as the children have less power to resist temptation than had the parents, the tendency is for each generation to fall lower and lower. To a great degree parents are responsible not only for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf, blind, diseased, or idiotic.

“The inquiry of every father and mother should be, ‘What shall we do unto the child that shall be born unto us?’ The effect of prenatal influences has been by many lightly regarded; but the instruction sent from heaven to those Hebrew parents, and twice repeated in the most explicit and solemn manner, shows how this matter is looked upon by our Creator.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 561.

3. SAMSON'S FOLLY

- a. What was the first big mistake of Samson? How did he ignore God's commands? Judges 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 6:15, 16.

"Association with idolaters corrupted [Samson]. The town of Zorah being near the country of the Philistines, Samson came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus in his youth intimacies sprang up, the influence of which darkened his whole life. A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnath engaged Samson's affections, and he determined to make her his wife. To his God-fearing parents, who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, his only answer was, 'She pleaseth me well' (Judges 14:3). The parents at last yielded to his wishes, and the marriage took place.

"Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute his divine mission—the time above all others when he should have been true to God—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life. To all who seek first to honor Him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who are bent upon self-pleasing.

"How many are pursuing the same course as did Samson! How often marriages are formed between the godly and the ungodly, because inclination governs in the selection of husband or wife! The parties do not ask counsel of God, nor have His glory in view. Christianity ought to have a controlling influence upon the marriage relation, but it is too often the case that the motives which lead to this union are not in keeping with Christian principles."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 562, 563.

- b. What was the end of Samson's wrong step? Judges 14:20.

"The wife, to obtain whom Samson had transgressed the command of God, proved treacherous to her husband before the close of the marriage feast. Incensed at her perfidy, Samson forsook her for the time, and went alone to his home at Zorah. When, afterward relenting, he returned for his bride, he found her the wife of another."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 563.

4. BROKEN VOWS

- a. What other commandment did Samson break? Judges 16:1.

"The Philistines were well acquainted with the divine law, and its condemnation of sensual indulgence. They kept a vigilant watch over all the movements of their enemy, and when he degraded himself by this new attachment, and they saw the bewitching power of the enchantress, they determined, through her, to accomplish his ruin.—*The Signs of the Times*, October 13, 1881.

"Samson, that mighty man of valor, was under a solemn vow to be a Nazarite during the period of his life; but becoming infatuated by the charms of a lewd woman, he rashly broke that sacred pledge. Satan worked through his agents to destroy this ruler of Israel, that the mysterious power which he possessed might no longer intimidate the enemies of God's people. It was the influence of this bold woman that separated him from God, her artifices that proved his ruin. The love and service which God claims, Samson gave to this woman. This was idolatry. He lost all sense of the sacred character and work of God, and sacrificed honor, conscience, and every valuable interest, to base passion."—*Ibid.*, July 1, 1903.

- b. What was the final result of his temerarious actions? Judges 16:20, 21.

"When he had been shaven, Delilah began to annoy him and cause him pain, thus making a trial of his strength; for the Philistines dared not approach him till fully convinced that his power was gone. Then they seized him and, having put out both his eyes, they took him to Gaza. Here he was bound with fetters in their prison house and confined to hard labor.

"What a change to him who had been the judge and champion of Israel!—now weak, blind, imprisoned, degraded to the most menial service! Little by little he had violated the conditions of his sacred calling. God had borne long with him; but when he had so yielded himself to the power of sin as to betray his secret, the Lord departed from him. There was no virtue in his long hair merely, but it was a token of his loyalty to God; and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 566.

5. REPENTANCE AND MERCY

- a. What is the evidence that, by God's mercy, Samson found repentance, and how is his final exercise of faith enshrined in Scripture? Judges 16:28–30; Hebrews 11:32.

"In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance. As his hair grew, his power gradually returned; but his enemies, regarding him as a fettered and helpless prisoner, felt no apprehensions.

"The Philistines ascribed their victory to their gods; and, exulting, they defied the God of Israel. A feast was appointed in honor of Dagon, the fish god, 'the protector of the sea.' From town and country throughout the Philistine plain the people and their lords assembled. Throngs of worshipers filled the vast temple and crowded the galleries about the roof. It was a scene of festivity and rejoicing. There was the pomp of the sacrificial service, followed by music and feasting. Then, as the crowning trophy of Dagon's power, Samson was brought in. Shouts of exultation greeted his appearance. People and rulers mocked his misery and adored the god who had overthrown 'the destroyer of their country.' After a time, as if weary, Samson asked permission to rest against the two central pillars which supported the temple roof. Then he silently uttered the prayer, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines.' With these words he encircled the pillars with his mighty arms; and crying, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' he bowed himself, and the roof fell, destroying at one crash all that vast multitude. 'So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life' (Judges 16:30).

"The idol and its worshipers, priest and peasant, warrior and noble, were buried together beneath the ruins of Dagon's temple. And among them was the giant form of him whom God had chosen to be the deliverer of His people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 566, 567.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. After the fall, whom did Adam and Eve try to blame?
2. How did God instruct Samson's mother in prenatal care?
3. What was Samson's first great mistake and what results followed?
4. Describe God's victory over Dagon and its worshipers.

Victorious Temperance

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

"As the youth are educated, and as their characters are molded in their childhood to virtuous habits, self-control, and temperance, so will their influence be upon society."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 15.

Suggested Readings: *Child Guidance*, pp. 394–400.
The Desire of Ages, pp. 114–123.

1. APPETITES AND PASSIONS

- a. How do our appetites and passions affect our ability to perform noble service? Ecclesiastes 10:17.

"You need to exercise temperance in all things. Cultivate the higher powers of the mind, and there will be less strength of growth of the animal. It is impossible for you to increase in spiritual strength while your appetite and passions are not under perfect control."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 63.

- b. What effect do appetite and passions have upon spiritual life? Luke 21:34.

"Every true Christian will have control of his appetite and passions. Unless he is free from the bondage and slavery of appetite, he cannot be a true, obedient servant of Christ. It is the indulgence of appetite and passion which makes the truth of none effect upon the heart. It is impossible for the spirit and power of the truth to sanctify a man, soul, body, and spirit, when he is controlled by appetite and passion."—*Counsels on Health*, p. 86.

- c. What does the Bible say about the bodies of true Christians? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

2. THE CHRISTIAN RACE

- a. What practical illustration did Paul use in regard to the Christian life? 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25.

“In the hope of impressing vividly upon the minds of the Corinthian believers the importance of firm self-control, strict temperance, and unflagging zeal in the service of Christ, Paul in his letter to them made a striking comparison between the Christian warfare and the celebrated foot races held at stated intervals near Corinth. . . . Young men of rank and wealth took part in them and shrank from no effort or discipline necessary to obtain the prize.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 309.

- b. What testimony did the apostle give about his own struggle? 1 Corinthians 9:26, 27.

“In referring to these races as a figure of the Christian warfare, Paul emphasized the preparation necessary to the success of the contestants in the race—the preliminary discipline, the abstemious diet, the necessity for temperance. . . . How much more important that the Christian, whose eternal interests are at stake, bring appetite and passion under subjection to reason and the will of God! Never must he allow his attention to be diverted by amusements, luxuries, or ease. All his habits and passions must be brought under the strictest discipline. Reason, enlightened by the teachings of God’s word and guided by His Spirit, must hold the reins of control.

“And after this has been done, the Christian must put forth the utmost exertion in order to gain the victory. In the Corinthian games the last few strides of the contestants in the race were made with agonizing effort to keep up undiminished speed. So the Christian, as he nears the goal, will press onward with even more zeal and determination than at the first of his course. . . .

“To win a perishable prize, the Grecian runners spared themselves no toil or discipline. We are striving for a prize infinitely more valuable, even the crown of everlasting life. How much more careful should be our striving, how much more willing our sacrifice and self-denial!”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 311, 312.

“That he might not run uncertainly or at random in the Christian race, Paul subjected himself to severe training. The words, ‘I keep under my body,’ literally mean to beat back by severe discipline the desires, impulses, and passions.”—*Ibid.*, p. 314.

3. DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS

- a. From what history had Daniel and his fellow captives been warned early in youth? Leviticus 10:1, 2.

“From the fate of the sons of Aaron, [the four Hebrew youth] knew that the use of wine would confuse their senses, that the indulgence of appetite would becloud their powers of discernment; and as wine had been prohibited to all who should engage in the service of God, they resolved that they would not partake of it.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, October 29, 1907.

- b. Besides refusing strong drink, what further stand did they maintain even under the pressure facing them in the Babylonian court? Daniel 1:8.

“As [the Hebrew worthies] were brought to the test, they placed themselves fully on the side of truth and righteousness. By earnest prayer and study of the Scriptures, they were prepared to act intelligently in the matter. Flesh meat had not composed their diet in the past, and they determined that it should not come into their diet in the future.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, October 29, 1907.

“Daniel and his companions knew not what would be the result of their decision; they knew not but that it would cost them their lives; but they determined to keep the straight path of strict temperance even when in the courts of licentious Babylon.”—*Ibid.*, August 18, 1898.

- c. How did these young men distinguish themselves—both initially and then after a three-year period of training? Daniel 1:11–15, 18–20.

“[The four Hebrew youth] did not feel that the blessing of the Lord was a substitute for the taxing effort required of them. They were diligent in study; for they discerned that through the grace of God their destiny depended upon their own will and action. . . .

“Here are revealed the conditions of success. To make God’s grace our own, we must act our part. The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, August 20, 1903.

“Their keen apprehension, their choice and exact language, their extensive knowledge, testified to the unimpaired strength and vigor of their mental power.”—*My Life Today*, p. 147.

4. JESUS—OUR EXAMPLE

- a. After His baptism, how did Christ prepare Himself for the imminent temptation? Luke 4:1, 2; Matthew 4:1, 2.

“When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel. But Satan knew that the Saviour had gone into the wilderness, and he thought this the best time to approach Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 114.

- b. What was Christ’s first temptation and how did He face it? Matthew 4:3, 4.

“From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man’s behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death. And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

- c. What should we learn from the second temptation? Matthew 4:5–7.

“The wily foe himself presents words that proceeded from the mouth of God. He still appears as an angel of light, and he makes it evident that he is acquainted with the Scriptures, and understands the import of what is written. As Jesus before used the word of God to sustain His faith, the tempter now uses it to countenance his deception.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 124.

- d. What strategy did Satan use in the third temptation, and what did Jesus answer? Matthew 4:8–10.

5. POWER TO OVERCOME

- a. How did Christ overcome? Hebrews 5:7–9.

“The Captain of our salvation was perfected through suffering. His soul was made an offering for sin. It was necessary for the awful darkness to gather about His soul because of the withdrawal of the Father’s love and favor; for He was standing in the sinner’s place, and this darkness every sinner must experience. The righteous One must suffer the condemnation and wrath of God, not in vindictiveness; for the heart of God yearned with greatest sorrow when His Son, the guiltless, was suffering the penalty of sin. This sundering of the divine powers will never again occur throughout the eternal ages.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 924.

- b. What is expected from His followers? 1 Peter 2:21.

“The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armor, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish. Heavenly angels conduct this search, and spiritual activity is demanded of all who believe present truth, that they may join the angels in their work.

“We need not wait till we are translated to follow Christ. God’s people may do this here below. We shall follow the Lamb of God in the courts above only if we follow Him here. Following Him in heaven depends on our keeping His commandments now. We are not to follow Christ fitfully or capriciously, only when it is for our advantage. We must choose to follow Him. In daily life we must follow His example, as a flock trustfully follows its shepherd. We are to follow Him by suffering for His sake, saying, at every step, ‘Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him.’ His life practice must be our life practice.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 12, 1898.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is temperance?
2. How is our experience reflecting that of Daniel in the courts of Babylon?
3. How are we strengthened to overcome sin, even as Christ overcame?

FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



July 2
for Zagreb,
Croatia
(See p. 4.)

August 6
for the missionary
schools
(See p. 30.)



September 3
for Yekaterinburg,
Russia
(See p. 51.)