

A photograph of a small waterfall cascading over moss-covered rocks in a forest. The water is blurred, creating a soft, white flow. The rocks are dark and covered in vibrant green moss. The background is a dense forest with tall trees and more moss-covered logs.

The Gospel According to John (I)

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

July–September 2004

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

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Out of modesty, the author of the Fourth Gospel does not identify himself, nor does he make any reference to himself as one of the two disciples who first followed Jesus (John 1:37). Rather, he alludes to “another disciple,” “the disciple,” “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” “that disciple,” and “the disciple which testifieth these things” (John 18:15; 19:26; 21:20, 23, 24). The fact that other prominent disciples are mentioned by name, while the name of John is omitted, seems to indicate that he must have been the author of that Gospel.

Tradition ascribes the Fourth Gospel to John the Beloved. In one of his writings (*Against Heresies*, 3:1, 1), Irenaeus claims to have received it from Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who was a disciple of the apostle John. Polycarp quotes the first epistle of John, which—due to its resemblance to the Fourth Gospel in the prologue, ideas, as well as vocabulary and style—shows that both the epistle and the Gospel almost certainly came from the same hand.

“John clung to Christ as the vine clings to the stately pillar. For his Master's sake he braved the dangers of the judgment hall and lingered about the cross, and at the tidings that Christ had risen, he hastened to the sepulcher, in his zeal outstripping even the impetuous Peter.

“The confiding love and unselfish devotion manifested in the life and character of John present lessons of untold value to the Christian church. John did not naturally possess the loveliness of character that his later experience revealed. By nature he had serious defects. He was not only proud, self-assertive, and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injury. He and his brother were called ‘sons of thunder.’ Evil temper, the desire for revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. But beneath all this the divine Teacher discerned the ardent, sincere, loving heart. Jesus rebuked this self-seeking, disappointed his ambitions, tested his faith. But He revealed to him that for which his soul longed—the beauty of holiness, the transforming power of love.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 539, 540.

May the spirit of Christ guide our studies this quarter, and touch our hearts in response to His love!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

NOTE: This quarter all the First Sabbath Offerings have been dedicated to the educational work. Two primary education facilities (one in the Philippines and one in Brazil) and a missionary school (in the United States) are featured. Please give generously to the educational work so vital for our time.

First Sabbath Offering

Philippine Union

“When properly conducted, church schools will be the means of lifting the standard of truth in the places where they are established; for children who are receiving a Christian education will be witnesses for Christ. As Jesus in the temple solved mysteries which priests and rulers had not discerned, so in the closing work of this earth, children who have been rightly educated will in their simplicity speak words which will be an astonishment to men who now talk of ‘higher education.’”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 176.

The Luzon Field of the Philippine Union has established a successful church school program. Through donations from parents and local churches, construction is under way for a permanent school building and educational headquarters. Now we are appealing to brethren and sisters around the world to share with us in the completion of this church school work. We pray that as you donate to this project the Lord will repay your benevolence and bless you more.

The school program has been a great blessing to the church. An education can now be provided to the youth which is not only academic, but has a strong spiritual basis. In completing this school project you will be helping countless children come to a better knowledge of the Lord and Saviour.

“As the children sang in the temple courts, ‘Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord’ (Mark 11:9), so in these last days children’s voices will be raised to give the last message of warning to a perishing world. When heavenly intelligences see that men are no longer permitted to present the truth, the Spirit of God will come upon the children, and they will do a work in the proclamation of the truth which the older workers cannot do, because their way will be hedged up.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 176.

PROJECT 003

Your brethren and sisters from the Philippine Union



The Word Was God

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

“From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk 1, p. 228.

Suggested Readings: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 113, 114.
The Faith I Live By, p. 46.

Sunday

June 27

1. JESUS, ONE WITH THE FATHER

a. **What does the Word of God say about Jesus before His incarnation? John 1:1, 2.**

“From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was ‘the image of God,’ the image of His greatness and majesty, ‘the outshining of His glory.’ It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

“In speaking of His preexistence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900.

“Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

b. **How is Jesus regarded by the Father and the angels? Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:6–8.**

“Angels are God’s ministers, radiant with the light ever flowing from His presence and speeding on rapid wing to execute His will. But the Son, the anointed of God, the ‘express image of His person,’ ‘the brightness of His glory,’ ‘upholding all things by the word of His power,’ holds supremacy over them all (Hebrews 1:3).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

2. JESUS, THE CREATOR

a. Who created all things? John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:1–17.

“In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. ‘His strength setteth fast the mountains.’ ‘The sea is His, and He made it’ (Psalms 65:6; 95:5). It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father’s love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20.

b. How were the worlds and the universe created? Psalms 33:6, 9; 104:1–6. What was our world like when it was created?

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

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.’ ‘For He spake, and it was;’ ‘He commanded, and it stood fast.’ He ‘laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever’ (Psalms 33:6, 9; 104:5).

“As the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, hills, and plains, interspersed with noble rivers and lovely lakes; but the hills and mountains were not abrupt and rugged, abounding in terrific steep and frightful chasms, as they now do; the sharp, ragged edges of earth’s rocky framework were buried beneath the fruitful soil, which everywhere produced a luxuriant growth of verdure. There were no loathsome swamps or barren deserts. Graceful shrubs and delicate flowers greeted the eye at every turn. The heights were crowned with trees more majestic than any that now exist. The air, untainted by foul miasma, was clear and healthful. The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace. The angelic host viewed the scene with delight, and rejoiced at the wonderful works of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 44.

3. THE LIGHT OF THE UNIVERSE

a. Who is the Author of all life and light? John 1:4–9; Acts 17:28.

“Christ is the ‘Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (John 1:9). As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light.”—*Education*, p. 29.

“Through Christ had been communicated every ray of divine light that had ever reached our fallen world. It was He who had spoken through everyone that throughout the ages had declared God’s word to man. Of Him all the excellences manifest in the earth’s greatest and noblest souls were reflections. The purity and beneficence of Joseph, the faith and meekness and long-suffering of Moses, the steadfastness of Elisha, the noble integrity and firmness of Daniel, the ardor and self-sacrifice of Paul, the mental and spiritual power manifest in all these men, and in all others who had ever dwelt on the earth, were but gleams from the shining of His glory. In Him was found the perfect ideal.”—*Ibid.* p. 73.

b. What does Jesus say concerning Himself and what does He promise us? John 10:28; 8:12; 12:46.

“In the words, ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12), Jesus declared Himself the Messiah. The aged Simeon, in the temple where Christ was now teaching, had spoken of Him as ‘a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel’ (Luke 2:32). In these words he was applying to Him a prophecy familiar to all Israel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 465.

“Only through Christ can immortality be obtained. Said Jesus: ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life’ (John 3:36). Every man may come into possession of this priceless blessing if he will comply with the conditions. All ‘who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,’ will receive ‘eternal life’ (Romans 2:7).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 533.

“That which had been revealed in His words was revealed also in His character. He was the embodiment of the truths He taught.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 465.

4. GOD WITH US

- a. What did Isaiah prophesy about Christ's name? Isaiah 7:14.
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- b. When was this prophecy fulfilled and what does it mean to us? Matthew 1:20-23.
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“Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see ‘God with us’ (Matthew 1:23).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

- c. What did Jesus do to reach us in our fallen state? John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:14-18.
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“In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar.

“The Scripture says, ‘All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world’ (Matthew 13:34, 35). Natural things were the medium for the spiritual; the things of nature and the life-experience of His hearers were connected with the truths of the written word. Leading thus from the natural to the spiritual kingdom, Christ's parables are links in the chain of truth that unites man with God, and earth with heaven.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 17, 18.

5. THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

- a. What did Jesus come to do for humanity? John 1:14; 3:16, 17; Luke 19:10.
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“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:5).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

- b. How is the sinner considered by the Father when he believes in Jesus, His only begotten Son? John 1:12, 13; 1 John 3:1, 2.
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- c. What relationship is restored between the sinner and the Father through Christ? Galatians 4:5-7; Hebrews 2:10.
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“Christ is the uniting link in the golden chain which binds believers together in God. There must be no separating in this great testing time. The people of God are, ‘fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord’ (Ephesians 2:19-21). The children of God constitute one united whole in Christ, who presents His cross as the center of attraction. All who believe are one in Him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk 3, p. 21.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What nature has Jesus possessed since eternity?
2. Who spread the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth?
3. From whom does all true life and light emanate?
4. What is Jesus called in Isaiah 7:14?
5. What did Jesus become upon assuming our human nature?

The Lamb of God

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“In order to enter into His joy—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice—we must participate in His labors for their redemption.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 142.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 132–143.
The Faith I Live By, p. 17.

Sunday

July 4

1. THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

a. What did John the Baptist declare concerning Jesus? John 1:15–18.

b. How did John identify himself to the priests and Levites when they asked him who he was? John 1:19–23.

c. What prophecy did John fulfill? Isaiah 40:3–5.

“In every stage of this earth's history God has had His agencies to carry forward His work, which must be done in His appointed way. John the Baptist had a special work, for which he was born and to which he was appointed—the work of preparing the way of the Lord. . . . His wilderness ministry was a most striking, literal fulfillment of prophecy.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1115.

“The childhood, youth, and manhood of John, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to do a special work in preparing the way for the world's Redeemer, was marked with firmness and moral power. Satan could not move him from his integrity.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 3, 1874.

Monday

July 5

2. THE LAMB OF GOD

a. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, how did John identify Him in public? John 1:29.

b. What prophecy did John fulfill at the baptism of Jesus? Isaiah 61:1; John 1:34.

“The word of God includes the Scriptures of the Old Testament as well as of the New. One is not complete without the other. Christ declared that the truths of the Old Testament are as valuable as those of the New. Christ was as much man's Redeemer in the beginning of the world as He is today. Before He clothed His divinity with humanity and came to our world, the gospel message was given by Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, and Noah. Abraham in Canaan and Lot in Sodom bore the message, and from generation to generation faithful messengers proclaimed the Coming One. The rites of the Jewish economy were instituted by Christ Himself. He was the foundation of their system of sacrificial offerings, the great antitype of all their religious service. The blood shed as the sacrifices were offered pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. All the typical offerings were fulfilled in Him.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 126.

c. How did John introduce Jesus to his own disciples? John 1:35, 36.

d. What effect did the words of John have on his disciples? John 1:37.

“On the following day, while two disciples were standing near, John again saw Jesus among the people. Again the face of the prophet was lighted up with glory from the Unseen, as he cried, ‘Behold the Lamb of God (John 1:29)!’ The words thrilled the hearts of the disciples. They did not fully understand them. What meant the name that John had given Him—‘the Lamb of God’? John himself had not explained it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 138.

“Those who are true to their calling as messengers of God, will not seek honor for themselves. Love for self will be swallowed up in love for Christ. They will recognize that it is their work to proclaim, as did John the Baptist, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29).”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 56.

3. JESUS' FIRST DISCIPLES

- a. **Who were some of Jesus' first disciples? Matthew 4:18, 21; John 1:37, 40.**

“Leaving John, [the two disciples] went to seek Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, the brother of Simon; the other was John the evangelist. These were Christ's first disciples. Moved by an irresistible impulse, they followed Jesus—anxious to speak with Him, yet awed and silent, lost in the overwhelming significance of the thought, ‘Is this the Messiah?’

“Jesus knew that the disciples were following Him. They were the first fruits of His ministry, and there was joy in the heart of the divine Teacher as these souls responded to His grace. Yet turning, He asked only, ‘What seek ye?’ He would leave them free to turn back or to speak of their desire.

“Of one purpose only were they conscious. One presence filled their thought. They exclaimed, ‘Rabbi, . . . where dwellest *Thou*? (John 1:38).’ In a brief interview by the wayside they could not receive that for which they longed. They desired to be alone with Jesus, to sit at His feet, and hear His words.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 138 (author's italics).

- b. **What interest did the first disciples manifest, and how long did they stay with Him during their first meeting? John 1:38, 39.**

“[Andrew and John] came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

- c. **What did the first disciples do soon after meeting Jesus? John 1:41, 42.**

“Andrew sought to impart the joy that filled his heart. Going in search of his brother Simon, he cried, ‘We have found the Messias.’ Simon waited for no second bidding. He also had heard the preaching of John the Baptist, and he hastened to the Saviour. The eye of Christ rested upon him, reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all, and He said, ‘Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone’ (John 1:41, 42).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

4. MORE DISCIPLES

- a. **Whom did Jesus invite to follow Him? John 1:43, 44.**

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- b. **As soon as Phillip heard the call of Christ, what did he become?**

“Philip obeyed the command, and straightway he also became a worker for Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

- c. **Whom did Phillip reach? John 1:45.**

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- d. **When Nathanael manifested prejudice towards Jesus, what other invitation did Phillip make? John 1:46–49.**

“The inhabitants of Nazareth were proverbial for their wickedness. The low estimate in which they were generally held is shown by Nathanael's question.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 71.

“Philip called Nathanael. The latter had been among the throng when the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God. As Nathanael looked upon Jesus, he was disappointed. Could this man, who bore the marks of toil and poverty, be the Messiah? Yet Nathanael could not decide to reject Jesus, for the message of John had brought conviction to his heart. . . .

“Philip entered into no controversy. He said, ‘Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!’ In surprise Nathanael exclaimed, ‘Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee’ (John 1:46–48).

“It was enough. The divine Spirit that had borne witness to Nathanael in his solitary prayer under the fig tree now spoke to him in the words of Jesus. Though in doubt, and yielding somewhat to prejudice, Nathanael had come to Christ with an honest desire for truth, and now his desire was met. His faith went beyond that of the one who had brought him to Jesus. He answered and said, ‘Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel’ (Verse 49).”—*Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140.

5. AN OPEN HEAVEN

- a. What promise did Christ make to Nathanael? John 1:50, 51.
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- b. What is the significance of Christ's promise?

“[John 1:50, 51 quoted.] Here Christ virtually says, On the bank of the Jordan the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Me. That scene was but a token that I am the Son of God. If you believe on Me as such, your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that the heavens are opened, and are never to be closed. I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 142, 143.

- c. What is available to those who accept Jesus as their Saviour, and what becomes their burden? John 4:14, 15; Revelation 22:17.
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“When one has received the truth in the love of it, he will make this manifest in the persuasion of his manner and the tones of his voice. He makes known that which he himself has heard, seen, and handled of the word of life, that others may have fellowship with him through the knowledge of Christ. His testimony, from lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, is truth to the receptive heart, and works sanctification upon the character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 142.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to prophecy, what was the mission of John the Baptist?
2. How did prophecy predict the birth and mission of Jesus?
3. What commendable qualities did the first disciples reveal?
4. Describe the conversion of Nathanael.
5. What does the expression “hereafter ye shall see heaven open” mean?

The Marriage at Cana

“His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5).

“Jesus began the work of reformation by coming into close sympathy with humanity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 150.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 144–153.
Temperance, pp. 97, 98.

1. THE BEGINNING OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

- a. Where did Jesus begin His ministry on the earth? John 2:1, 2.
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“Jesus did not begin His ministry by some great work before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. At a household gathering in a little Galilean village His power was put forth to add to the joy of a wedding feast. Thus He showed His sympathy with men, and His desire to minister to their happiness. In the wilderness of temptation He Himself had drunk the cup of woe. He came forth to give to men the cup of blessing, by His benediction to hallow the relations of human life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 144.

- b. What happened long before the end of the wedding feast? John 2:3.
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“It was the custom of the times for marriage festivities to continue several days. On this occasion, before the feast ended it was found that the supply of wine had failed. This discovery caused much perplexity and regret. It was unusual to dispense with wine on festive occasions, and its absence would seem to indicate a want of hospitality.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 145, 146.

2. CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER**a. What was the answer of Christ to His mother? John 2:4.**

“As a relative of the parties, Mary had assisted in the arrangements for the feast, and she now spoke to Jesus, saying, ‘They have no wine.’ These words were a suggestion that He might supply their need. But Jesus answered, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come’ (John 2:3, 4).

“This answer, abrupt as it seems to us, expressed no coldness or discourtesy. The Saviour's form of address to His mother was in accordance with Oriental custom. It was used toward persons to whom it was desired to show respect. Every act of Christ's earthly life was in harmony with the precept He Himself had given, ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’ (Exodus 20:12). On the cross, in His last act of tenderness toward His mother, Jesus again addressed her in the same way, as He committed her to the care of His best-loved disciple. Both at the marriage feast and upon the cross, the love expressed in tone and look and manner interpreted His words.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 146.

b. What did Christ's mother say to the servants and what is the application of these words today? John 2:5.

“As the guests assemble, many seem to be preoccupied with some topic of absorbing interest. A suppressed excitement pervades the company. Little groups converse together in eager but quiet tones, and wondering glances are turned upon the Son of Mary. As Mary had heard the disciples' testimony in regard to Jesus, she had been gladdened with the assurance that her long-cherished hopes were not in vain. Yet she would have been more than human if there had not mingled with this holy joy a trace of the fond mother's natural pride. As she saw the many glances bent upon Jesus, she longed to have Him prove to the company that He was really the Honored of God. She hoped there might be opportunity for Him to work a miracle before them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 145.

“Christ's dignity and officework are in imposing such conditions as He pleases. . . . God has provided divine assistance for all emergencies to which our human resources are unequal.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 414, 415.

3. THE FIRST MIRACLE**a. What did Jesus tell the servants at the wedding to do? John 2:6–8.**

“Beside the doorway stood six large stone water jars, and Jesus bade the servants fill these with water. It was done. Then as the wine was wanted for immediate use, He said, ‘Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast’ (John 2:8). Instead of the water with which the vessels had been filled, there flowed forth wine.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 148.

b. What was the reaction of the governor of the feast? John 2:9, 10.

“Neither the ruler of the feast nor the guests generally were aware that the supply of wine had failed. Upon tasting that which the servants brought, the ruler found it superior to any he had ever before drunk, and very different from that served at the beginning of the feast. Turning to the bridegroom, he said, ‘Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now’ (John 2:10).

“As men set forth the best wine first, then afterward that which is worse, so does the world with its gifts. That which it offers may please the eye and fascinate the senses, but it proves to be unsatisfying. The wine turns to bitterness, the gaiety to gloom. That which was begun with songs and mirth ends in weariness and disgust. But the gifts of Jesus are ever fresh and new. The feast that He provides for the soul never fails to give satisfaction and joy. Each new gift increases the capacity of the receiver to appreciate and enjoy the blessings of the Lord. He gives grace for grace. There can be no failure of supply. If you abide in Him, the fact that you receive a rich gift today insures the reception of a richer gift tomorrow. The words of Jesus to Nathanael express the law of God's dealing with the children of faith. With every fresh revelation of His love, He declares to the receptive heart, ‘Believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these’ (John 1:50).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 148.

4. THE GOOD WINE

- a. What type of wine did Christ provide? Isaiah 65:8.

“The wine which Christ provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine ‘in the cluster,’ and says, ‘Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it’ (Isaiah 65:8).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 149.

- b. What did Christ say, through the wise man, regarding fermented wine? Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-32.

“It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, ‘Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise’ (Proverbs 20:1). And He Himself provided no such beverage. Satan tempts men to indulgence that will becloud reason and benumb the spiritual perceptions, but Christ teaches us to bring the lower nature into subjection. His whole life was an example of self-denial. In order to break the power of appetite, He suffered in our behalf the severest test that humanity could endure. It was Christ who directed that John the Baptist should drink neither wine nor strong drink. It was He who enjoined similar abstinence upon the wife of Manoah. And He pronounced a curse upon the man who should put the bottle to his neighbor’s lips. Christ did not contradict His own teaching. The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 149.

“Let every soul remember that he is under sacred obligations to God to do his best for his fellow creatures. How careful should everyone be not to create a desire for stimulants. . . . Many incidents have come to my attention in which through some simple advice, men and women have become the slaves of the drink habit. Physicians are responsible for making many drunkards. Knowing what drink will do for its lovers, they have taken upon themselves the responsibility of prescribing it for their patients. Did they reason from cause to effect, they would know that stimulants would have the same effect on every organ of the body as they have on the whole man. What excuse can doctors render for the influence they have exerted in making fathers and mothers drunkards?”—*The Review and Herald*, May 29, 1894.

5. CHRIST AT SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- a. What objectives were achieved through Christ’s presence at the wedding feast at Cana? John 2:11.

- b. What did Christ demonstrate through His ministry? Matthew 11:29.

“The ministry of Christ was in marked contrast to that of the Jewish elders. Their regard for tradition and formalism had destroyed all real freedom of thought or action. They lived in continual dread of defilement. To avoid contact with the ‘unclean,’ they kept aloof, not only from the Gentiles, but from the majority of their own people, seeking neither to benefit them nor to win their friendship. By dwelling constantly on these matters, they had dwarfed their minds and narrowed the orbit of their lives. Their example encouraged egotism and intolerance among all classes of the people.

“Jesus began the work of reformation by coming into close sympathy with humanity. While He showed the greatest reverence for the law of God, He rebuked the pretentious piety of the Pharisees, and tried to free the people from the senseless rules that bound them. He was seeking to break down the barriers which separated the different classes of society, that He might bring men together as children of one family. His attendance at the marriage feast was designed to be a step toward effecting this. . . .

“A Jewish marriage was an impressive occasion, and its joy was not displeasing to the Son of man. By attending this feast, Jesus honored marriage as a divine institution.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 150, 151.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What spiritual fruits did Christ’s miracle at Cana bear?
2. What is the significance of Christ’s words to His mother: “Woman, what have I to do with thee?”
3. Why did the governor of the feast show surprise?
4. What wine is appropriately a symbol of Christ’s blood?
5. What was Jesus’ purpose in being present at social gatherings?

The Temple

“The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him” (Habakkuk 2:20).

“The precincts of the church should be invested with a sacred reverence.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 494.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 154–166.
Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 491–500.

Sunday

July 18

1. THE TEMPLE DEFILED

- a. **What situation prevailed in the temple of Jerusalem at the beginning of Christ’s earthly ministry? John 2:13, 14.**

“The dealers demanded exorbitant prices for the animals sold, and they shared their profits with the priests and rulers, who thus enriched themselves at the expense of the people. The worshipers had been taught to believe that if they did not offer sacrifice, the blessing of God would not rest on their children or their lands. Thus a high price for the animals could be secured; for after coming so far, the people would not return to their homes without performing the act of devotion for which they had come.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 155.

“In the defilement and cleansing of the temple we have a lesson for this time. The same spirit that existed among the Jews, leading them to substitute gain for godliness, and outward pomp for inward purity, curses the Christian world today. It spreads like a defiling leprosy among the professed worshipers of God. Sacred things are brought down to a level with the vain matters of the world. Vice is mistaken for virtue, and righteousness for crime. Temporal business is mingled with the worship of God. Extortion and wicked speculation are practiced by those who profess to be servants of the Most High.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 123.

- b. **What effect did the iniquitous trading have upon the temple services? Ezekiel 22:26 (first part).**

Monday

July 19

2. REVERENCE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

- a. **How does God consider the place where He manifests His presence? Exodus 3:1–5.**

- b. **How should we conduct ourselves in God’s house and in His divine presence? Habakkuk 2:20.**

- c. **What command did the Lord give when He descended upon Mount Sinai? Exodus 19:12, 13.**

“When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, the place was consecrated by His presence. Moses was commanded to put bounds around the mount and sanctify it, and the word of the Lord was heard in warning: ‘Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live’ (Exodus 19:12, 13). Thus was taught the lesson that wherever God manifests His presence, the place is holy. The precincts of God’s temple should have been regarded as sacred.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 155, 156.

“It is too true that reverence for the house of God has become almost extinct. Sacred things and places are not discerned; the holy and exalted are not appreciated. Is there not a cause for the want of fervent piety in our families? Is it not because the high standard of religion is left to trail in the dust? God gave rules of order, perfect and exact, to His ancient people. Has His character changed? Is He not the great and mighty God who rules in the heaven of heavens? Would it not be well for us often to read the directions given by God Himself to the Hebrews, that we who have the light of the glorious truth shining upon us may imitate their reverence for the house of God? We have abundant reason to maintain a fervent, devoted spirit in the worship of God. We have reason even to be more thoughtful and reverential in our worship than had the Jews. But an enemy has been at work to destroy our faith in the sacredness of Christian worship. . . .

“The moral taste of the worshipers in God’s holy sanctuary must be elevated, refined, sanctified.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 495, 496.

3. THE TEMPLE, AN OBJECT LESSON

- a. What was the Lord's purpose in establishing His sanctuary among His people? Exodus 25:8.

“That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

- b. What does it mean that we are the temple of God? 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Isaiah 57:15.

“Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

“By a most beautiful and impressive figure, God's word shows the regard He places upon our physical organism and the responsibility resting on us to preserve it in the best condition: ‘Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own.’ ‘If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are’ (I Corinthians 6:19, RV, margin; 3:17).

“Let pupils be impressed with the thought that the body is a temple in which God desires to dwell, that it must be kept pure, the abiding place of high and noble thoughts. As in the study of physiology they see that they are indeed ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ (Psalm 139:14), they will be inspired with reverence. Instead of marring God's handiwork, they will have an ambition to make all that is possible of themselves, in order to fulfill the Creator's glorious plan. Thus they will come to regard obedience to the laws of health, not as a matter of sacrifice or self-denial, but as it really is, an inestimable privilege and blessing.”—*Education*, pp. 200, 201.

“It is a duty to know how to preserve the body in the very best condition of health, and it is a sacred duty to live up to the light which God has graciously given.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 70.

4. JESUS PURIFIES THE TEMPLE

- a. What was Christ's reaction towards the desecration of the temple? John 2:15, 16.

“As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the unfair transactions. He saw the distress of the poor, who thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins. He saw the outer court of His temple converted into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange. . . .

“Slowly descending the steps, and raising the scourge of cords gathered up on entering the enclosure, He bids the bargaining company depart from the precincts of the temple. With a zeal and severity He has never before manifested, He overthrows the tables of the money changers. The coin falls, ringing sharply upon the marble pavement. None presume to question His authority. None dare stop to gather up their ill-gotten gain. Jesus does not smite them with the whip of cords, but in His hand that simple scourge seems terrible as a flaming sword. Officers of the temple, speculating priests, brokers and cattle traders, with their sheep and oxen, rush from the place, with the one thought of escaping from the condemnation of His presence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 157, 158.

- b. What is the extent of Christ's act in purifying the temple? Malachi 3:1–3.

“In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. . . . God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

5. PURIFYING THE LIVING TEMPLE

- a. What is it that individuals cannot accomplish by their own efforts? Jeremiah 2:22; 13:22; Job 14:4.

“No man can of himself cast out the evil throning that have taken possession of the heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

- b. What does the Lord intend to do for and in us? Ezekiel 36:25–27; Zechariah 3:3–5.

“Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him’ (Revelation 3:20). He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them; . . . and they shall be My people.’ ‘He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea’ (2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19). His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and ‘an habitation of God through the Spirit’ (Ephesians 2:21, 22).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 161, 162.

“While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 166.

“I call upon everyone who claims to be a son of God never to forget this great truth, that we need the Spirit of God within us in order to reach heaven, and the work of Christ without us in order to give us a title to the immortal inheritance.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 442.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who were the leaders of the iniquitous trade in the temple?
2. What should be the attitude of anyone who comes to God?
3. What spiritual significance did the temple at Jerusalem have?
4. What did Christ announce in cleansing the temple?
5. Who only can cleanse the human heart?

Nicodemus (I)

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

“The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 167–172.
Steps to Christ, pp. 23–36.

1. A JEWISH RULER

- a. Who was Nicodemus and what position did He occupy? John 3:1.

“Nicodemus held a high position of trust in the Jewish nation. He was highly educated, and possessed talents of no ordinary character, and he was an honored member of the national council. With others, he had been stirred by the teaching of Jesus. Though rich, learned, and honored, he had been strangely attracted by the humble Nazarene. The lessons that had fallen from the Saviour’s lips had greatly impressed him, and he desired to learn more of these wonderful truths.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 167.

- b. In what esteem was Nicodemus held by the people? John 3:10.

“[Nicodemus] was a strict Pharisee, and prided himself on his good works. He was widely esteemed for his benevolence and his liberality in sustaining the temple service, and he felt secure of the favor of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

“This man was rich and honored of the Jews. He was famous throughout Jerusalem for his wealth, his learning and benevolence, and especially for his liberal offerings to the temple to carry out its sacred services.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 126.

2. A PRIVATE INTERVIEW

- a. **At what hour did Nicodemus seek to meet with Jesus and why? John 3:2 (first part).**

“When night came on, Jesus, pale with the weariness of his long-continued labors, sought for retirement and repose in the Mount of Olives. Here Nicodemus found him and desired a conference.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 126.

“[Nicodemus] greatly desired an interview with Jesus, but shrank from seeking Him openly. It would be too humiliating for a ruler of the Jews to acknowledge himself in sympathy with a teacher as yet so little known. And should his visit come to the knowledge of the Sanhedrin, it would draw upon him their scorn and denunciation. He resolved upon a secret interview, excusing this on the ground that if he were to go openly, others might follow his example. Learning by special inquiry the Saviour’s place of retirement in the Mount of Olives, he waited until the city was hushed in slumber, and then sought Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 168.

“As he had witnessed Christ’s wonderful works, the conviction had fastened itself upon his mind that this was the Sent of God. Too proud openly to acknowledge himself in sympathy with the Galilean Teacher, he had sought a secret interview.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 104.

“Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and his inspired pen recorded it for the instruction of millions. The vital truths there taught are as important today as they were that solemn night in the shadowy mountain.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 136.

- b. **How did Nicodemus begin his interview with Jesus? John 3:2.**

“In the presence of Christ, Nicodemus felt a strange timidity, which he endeavored to conceal under an air of composure and dignity. ‘Rabbi,’ he said, ‘we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him’ (John 3:2). By speaking of Christ’s rare gifts as a teacher, and also of His wonderful power to perform miracles, he hoped to pave the way for his interview. His words were designed to express and to invite confidence; but they really expressed unbelief. He did not acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, but only a teacher sent from God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 168.

3. THE NEW BIRTH (I)

- a. **What figurative language did Jesus use to illustrate conversion? John 3:3.**

“Instead of recognizing this salutation, Jesus bent His eyes upon the speaker, as if reading his very soul. In His infinite wisdom He saw before Him a seeker after truth. He knew the object of this visit, and with a desire to deepen the conviction already resting upon His listener’s mind, He came directly to the point, saying solemnly, yet kindly, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3, margin).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 168.

- b. **What is the importance of Christ’s words? John 3:5–8.**

“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.

“Nicodemus had heard the preaching of John the Baptist concerning repentance and baptism, and pointing the people to One who should baptize with the Holy Spirit. He himself had felt that there was a lack of spirituality among the Jews, that, to a great degree, they were controlled by bigotry and worldly ambition. He had hoped for a better state of things at the Messiah’s coming. Yet the heart-searching message of the Baptist had failed to work in him conviction of sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

“It is one thing to assent in a general way to the agency of the Holy Spirit, and another thing to accept His work as a reprover calling to repentance. Many feel a sense of estrangement from God, a realization of their bondage to self and sin; they make efforts for reform; but they do not crucify self. They do not give themselves entirely into the hands of Christ, seeking for divine power to do His will. They are not willing to be molded after the divine similitude. In a general way they acknowledge their imperfections, but they do not give up their particular sins. With each wrong act the old selfish nature is gaining strength.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 48.

4. THE NEW BIRTH (II)

- a. When is an individual truly born again? John 1:12, 13.

“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.

- b. What does it mean to be born of water? Mark 16:16 (first part); Romans 6:3-5.

“[John 3:5 quoted.] Nicodemus knew that Christ here referred to water baptism and the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of God. He was convinced that he was in the presence of the One whom John the Baptist had foretold.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

“Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God’s spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, ‘*The Lord our Righteousness*’ (Jeremiah 23:6).

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing.’ And to them is fulfilled the promise: ‘I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty’ (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91 (author’s italics).

“Those who submit to the solemn rite of baptism pledge themselves, before the heavenly universe, to come out from the world. They have taken their position under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, to be laborers together with God, and as such to make known His will to those who are perishing in sin. They are to search the Scriptures diligently, feeling that it is of the highest importance for them to understand what saith the Lord. Having learned His will, they are to do it heartily, remembering that the truth is the seed they must sow in order to reap a harvest for God.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 19, 1907.

5. THE POWER OF GOD

- a. What did Jesus say with reference to the two natures of man? John 3:6.

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Job 14:4; Romans 8:7). Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

- b. By what means can a new birth be accomplished? John 3:7, 8.

“There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.

“The Saviour said, ‘Except a man be born from above,’ unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, ‘he cannot see the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3, margin). The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception. . . . Of Christ it is written, ‘In Him was life; and the life was the light of men’—the only ‘name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved’ (John 1:4; Acts 4:12).”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 18, 19.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Because of his good works, how did Nicodemus consider himself?
2. In what manner did Nicodemus behave himself in the presence of Christ?
3. What does it mean to be “born again”?
4. How does the new birth take place?
5. Where does true conversion begin—on the inside or on the outside of a person?

First Sabbath Offering

Twin Lakes Missionary Institute



For the past four years the First Sabbath Offering for the month of May has been dedicated to the missionary schools of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement around the world. Continuing our focus on educational institutions this quarter, we will dedicate this special First Sabbath Offering for the missionary school of the North American Region.

In operation for a number of years, the school has been moved around from Missouri to Colorado to Pennsylvania to California and Tennessee and administered at different times by various Fields of the Region. A number of years ago such Fields in the Region (comprised of the United States of America and Canada) combined together to form one central missionary school with one administrative structure.

The result has been a great blessing. At the time of printing, this school, under the new administration, has graduated students from thirteen different states of the United States, as well as students from Puerto Rico, Haiti and St. Lucia in the Caribbean. Many of these students have gone on to work for the church as missionaries and administrators across the United States and at the General Conference. Some of the students have been sent abroad as missionaries to open and establish the work in new Missions. At the 19th General Conference delegation held in Brazil in 2003, four of the delegates from the North American Region were graduates of this school.

Now there is a great need to improve the facilities of the school and expand the program to include more intensive training. We appeal to brethren and sisters around the world to contribute generously to the work of this missionary school.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!”—*Education*, p. 271.

The North American Missionary School Board of Trustees

PROJECT 019

Nicodemus (II)

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15).

“There are thousands today who need to learn the same truth that was taught to Nicodemus by the uplifted serpent. They depend on their obedience to the law of God to commend them to His favor. When they are bidden to look to Jesus, and believe that He saves them solely through His grace, they exclaim, ‘How can these things be?’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

Suggested Readings: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 172–177.
Steps to Christ, pp. 37–41.

Sunday

August 1

1. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. **How did Nicodemus consider himself, and what ironic question did he ask Jesus? John 3:4, 9.**

“By virtue of his birth as an Israelite [Nicodemus] regarded himself as sure of a place in the kingdom of God. He felt that he needed no change. Hence his surprise at the Saviour’s words. He was irritated by their close application to himself. The pride of the Pharisee was struggling against the honest desire of the seeker after truth. He wondered that Christ should speak to him as He did, not respecting his position as ruler in Israel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

- b. **On what did the Pharisees pride themselves in the days of Christ? Luke 18:9–12.**

“The Jews had been first called into the Lord’s vineyard, and because of this they were proud and self-righteous. Their long years of service they regarded as entitling them to receive a larger reward than others. Nothing was more exasperating to them than an intimation that the Gentiles were to be admitted to equal privileges with themselves in the things of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 400.

2. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. **How did Jesus illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit within the human heart? John 3:8.**

“The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

- b. **How are the divine impressions fixed upon the human heart? Psalms 63:6; 32:8; Jeremiah 42:3; 1 Corinthians 2:10.**

“Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God—a patient, protracted process.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

“The mere hearing of sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, the reading of the Bible through and through, or the explanation of it verse by verse, will not benefit us or those who hear us, unless we bring the truths of the Bible into our individual experience. The understanding, the will, the affections, must be yielded to the control of the word of God. Then through the work of the Holy Spirit the precepts of the word will become the principles of the life.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 514.

“The work of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten the darkened understanding, to melt the selfish, stony heart, to subdue the rebellious transgressor, and save him from the corrupting influences of the world. The prayer of Christ for His disciples was: ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth’ (John 17:17). The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, pierces the heart of the sinner and cuts it in pieces.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 441.

3. EVIDENCE OF A NEW BIRTH

- a. **How are internal workings of the Holy Spirit manifested externally? Galatians 5:22–25.**

“While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

- b. **When does a person receive the blessing of a transformation? Romans 10:9, 10; 1 John 1:9.**

“No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.

“It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages.

“While Jesus was speaking, some gleams of truth penetrated the ruler's mind. The softening, subduing influence of the Holy Spirit impressed his heart. Yet he did not fully understand the Saviour's words. He was not so much impressed by the necessity of the new birth as by the manner of its accomplishment. He said wonderingly, ‘How can these things be?’ (John 3:9).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

“When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.

“The all-powerful grace of God, uniting with the efforts and will of man, works the transformation in the life and character of man, and brings him into a position where he can prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 22, 1878.

4. THE SERPENT LIFTED UP

- a. **With what Old Testament symbol did Jesus illustrate His crucifixion? John 3:14, 15.**

“Nicodemus was being drawn to Christ. As the Saviour explained to him concerning the new birth, he longed to have this change wrought in himself. By what means could it be accomplished? Jesus answered the unspoken question: ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life’ (John 3:14, 15).

“Here was ground with which Nicodemus was familiar. The symbol of the uplifted serpent made plain to him the Saviour’s mission. When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass, and place it on high in the midst of the congregation. Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so One made ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ was to be their Redeemer (Romans 8:3). Many of the Israelites regarded the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to set them free from sin. God desired to teach them that it had no more value than that serpent of brass. It was to lead their minds to the Saviour. Whether for the healing of their wounds or the pardon of their sins, they could do nothing for themselves but show their faith in the Gift of God. They were to look and live.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 174, 175.

- b. **Why did some Israelites die when bitten by the serpents? 1 Corinthians 10:9; Hebrews 3:12. Why will many perish in the last day?**

“Many of the Israelites saw no help in the remedy which Heaven had appointed. The dead and dying were all around them, and they knew that, without divine aid, their own fate was certain; but they continued to lament their wounds, their pains, their sure death, until their strength was gone, and their eyes were glazed, when they might have had instant healing. . . . Jesus has pledged His word; He will save all who come unto Him. Though millions who need to be healed will reject His offered mercy, not one who trusts in His merits will be left to perish.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 432.

5. TO LOOK AND LIVE

- a. **What should sinners do if they wish to be saved? Isaiah 45:22; Hebrews 12:2, 3.**

“The fatal effects of sin can be removed only by the provision that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God’s word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice. Unlike the inert and lifeless symbol, Christ has power and virtue in Himself to heal the repenting sinner.

“While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. ‘Him that cometh to Me,’ says Christ, ‘I will in no wise cast out’ (John 6:37). But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 431 (author’s italics).

- b. **What lesson finally understood by Nicodemus should also be assimilated by us? Ephesians 2:8.**

“Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow His grace upon us, not because we are worthy, but because we are so utterly unworthy. Our only claim to His mercy is our great need.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 161.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What was the main characteristic of the Pharisees in the days of Christ?**
2. **Who is the principal regenerating Agent of humanity?**
3. **How is a transformation of the heart manifested?**
4. **Explain the symbol of the uplifted serpent.**
5. **In what do many Christians trust and what do they need to understand?**

Jesus and John the Baptist

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

“John the Baptist was pronounced by our Saviour the greatest of prophets. Yet what a contrast between the language of this man of God and that of many who profess to be ministers of the cross. When asked if he was the Christ, John declares himself unworthy even to unloose his Master's sandals.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 224.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 178–182.

Sunday

August 8

1. A PROBLEM AMONG THE DISCIPLES

- a. **What question arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews? John 3:25.**

“A question arose between [John's disciples] and the Jews as to whether baptism availed to cleanse the soul from sin; they maintained that the baptism of Jesus differed essentially from that of John. Soon they were in dispute with Christ's disciples in regard to the form of words proper to use at baptism, and finally as to the right of the latter to baptize at all.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 178.

- b. **How did the disciples of John display their envy at Christ's work? John 3:26.**

- c. **What noble answer did John give to his disciples? John 3:27.**

“John had by nature the faults and weaknesses common to humanity, but the touch of divine love had transformed him. He dwelt in an atmosphere uncontaminated with selfishness and ambition, and far above the miasma of jealousy. He manifested no sympathy with the dissatisfaction of his disciples, but showed how clearly he understood his relation to the Messiah, and how gladly he welcomed the One for whom he had prepared the way.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 179.

Monday

August 9

2. JOHN'S MISSION

- a. **How did John demonstrate that he knew his mission? John 3:28, 29.**

“[John] said, ‘A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice’ (John 3:27–29). John represented himself as the friend who acted as a messenger between the betrothed parties, preparing the way for the marriage. When the bridegroom had received his bride, the mission of the friend was fulfilled. He rejoiced in the happiness of those whose union he had promoted. So John had been called to direct the people to Jesus, and it was his joy to witness the success of the Saviour's work. He said, ‘This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease’ (Verses 29, 30).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 179.

- b. **What was John's work? John 1:23, 29.**

- c. **What is our work?**

“Looking in faith to the Redeemer, John had risen to the height of self-abnegation. He sought not to attract men to himself, but to lift their thoughts higher and still higher, until they should rest upon the Lamb of God. He himself had been only a voice, a cry in the wilderness. Now with joy he accepted silence and obscurity, that the eyes of all might be turned to the Light of life.

“Those who are true to their calling as messengers for God will not seek honor for themselves. Love for self will be swallowed up in love for Christ. No rivalry will mar the precious cause of the gospel. They will recognize that it is their work to proclaim, as did John the Baptist, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). They will lift up Jesus, and with Him humanity will be lifted up. ‘Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones’ (Isaiah 57:15).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 179, 180.

3. THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

- a. How did the majority of the people react to Christ's message? John 3:32.

“The disciples of John had declared that all men were coming to Christ; but with clearer insight, John said, ‘No man receiveth His witness;’ so few were ready to accept Him as the Saviour from sin. But ‘he that hath received His witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true’ (John 3:33, RV). ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’ No need of disputation as to whether Christ's baptism or John's purified from sin. It is the grace of Christ that gives life to the soul. Apart from Christ, baptism, like any other service, is a worthless form. ‘He that believeth not the Son shall not see life’ (John 3:36).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 181.

- b. To whom is the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed? John 3:34.

“The soul of the prophet, emptied of self, was filled with the light of the divine. As he witnessed to the Saviour's glory, his words were almost a counterpart of those that Christ Himself had spoken in His interview with Nicodemus. John said, ‘He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. . . . For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.’ Christ could say, ‘I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me’ (John 5:30). To Him it is declared, ‘Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows’ (Hebrews 1:9). The Father ‘giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.’

“So with the followers of Christ. We can receive of heaven's light only as we are willing to be emptied of self. We cannot discern the character of God, or accept Christ by faith, unless we consent to the bringing into captivity of every thought to the obedience of Christ. To all who do this the Holy Spirit is given without measure. In Christ ‘dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full’ (Colossians 2:9, 10, RV).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 180, 181.

“The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. . . . All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327.

4. THE VALUE OF BAPTISM

- a. What value does baptism have without the grace of Christ? John 3:36 (last part).

- b. On the other hand, when is baptism of real value? John 3:36 (first part).

“Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God's spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, ‘*The Lord our Righteousness*’ (Jeremiah 23:6).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

“The vows which we take upon ourselves in baptism embrace much. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we are buried in the likeness of Christ's death and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and we are to live a new life. Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ. Henceforth the believer is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. He is to make all worldly considerations secondary to this new relation. Publicly he has declared that he will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. . . .

“The obligations in the spiritual agreement entered into at baptism are mutual. As human beings act their part with wholehearted obedience, they have a right to pray: ‘Let it be known, Lord, that Thou art God in Israel.’ The fact that you have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is an assurance that, if you will claim Their help, these powers will help you in every emergency. The Lord will hear and answer the prayers of His sincere followers who wear Christ's yoke and learn in His school His meekness and lowliness. ‘If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God’ (Colossians 3:1–3).

“‘Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 98, 99.

5. A WISE METHOD

- a. Upon realizing that the Pharisees were trying to create a crisis between John and Himself, what did Jesus do? John 4:1-3.

“Jesus knew that they would spare no effort to create a division between His own disciples and those of John. He knew that the storm was gathering which would sweep away one of the greatest prophets ever given to the world. Wishing to avoid all occasion for misunderstanding or dissension, He quietly ceased His labors, and withdrew to Galilee. We also, while loyal to truth, should try to avoid all that may lead to discord and misapprehension. For whenever these arise, they result in the loss of souls. Whenever circumstances occur that threaten to cause division, we should follow the example of Jesus and of John the Baptist.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 181.

- b. What attitude did John take to defuse the crisis? John 3:30.

“John had been called to lead out as a reformer. Because of this, his disciples were in danger of fixing their attention upon him, feeling that the success of the work depended upon his labors, and losing sight of the fact that he was only an instrument through which God had wrought. But the work of John was not sufficient to lay the foundation of the Christian church. When he had fulfilled his mission, another work was to be done, which his testimony could not accomplish. His disciples did not understand this. When they saw Christ coming in to take the work, they were jealous and dissatisfied.

“The same dangers still exist. God calls a man to do a certain work; and when he has carried it as far as he is qualified to take it, the Lord brings in others, to carry it still farther. But, like John's disciples, many feel that the success of the work depends on the first laborer. Attention is fixed upon the human instead of the divine, jealousy comes in, and the work of God is marred. The one thus unduly honored is tempted to cherish self-confidence. He does not realize his dependence on God. The people are taught to rely on man for guidance, and thus they fall into error, and are led away from God.

“The work of God is not to bear the image and superscription of man. From time to time the Lord will bring in different agencies, through whom His purpose can best be accomplished. Happy are they who are willing for self to be humbled, saying with John the Baptist, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 181, 182.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did John's disciples become jealous of Christ's work?
2. What did John declare to his disciples?
3. For what purpose is the gift of the Holy Spirit granted?
4. How does baptism fulfill its true objective?
5. What did Jesus and John do when they realized the danger of a crisis between their respective disciples?

An Important Work. “The Sabbath school work is important, and all who are interested in the truth should endeavor to make it prosperous.”—*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 109.

Marvelous Power for Good. “Our Sabbath schools are nothing less than Bible societies, and in the sacred work of teaching the truths of God's word, they can accomplish far more than they have hitherto accomplished. The Sabbath school, when rightly managed, possesses marvelous power, and is adapted to doing a great work, but it is not now what it may and should be. The influence growing out of Sabbath school work should improve and enlarge the church; but in no case should it ever be allowed to divert from the interests of the church. There is a most precious missionary field in the Sabbath school, and if there are now omens of good, they are only indications and beginnings of what may be done.”—*Ibid.*, p. 29.

God's Instrumentalities. “I feel a deep interest in our Sabbath schools throughout the land, because I believe them to be instrumentalities of God for the education of our youth in the truths of the Bible. Constant efforts should be made by both parents and teachers to interest the youth in matters of eternal importance. The Sabbath school is a missionary field, and very much more of a missionary spirit should be manifested in this important work than has been manifested in the past.”—*Ibid.*, p. 35.

Soul-Winning. “The Sabbath school should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 20.

Influence Beyond Estimate. “Very much can be done for the education and moral and religious training of our youth by well-organized, properly conducted Sabbath schools. Time and attention should be given to this branch of the work; for its importance in its influence upon our youth cannot be estimated.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.

The Samaritan Woman (I)

“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

“He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 183–188.

Sunday

August 15

1. JESUS IN SYCHAR

- a. **On His journey to Galilee, where did Jesus stop with His disciples? John 4:5, 6.**

“As Jesus sat by the well side, He was faint from hunger and thirst. The journey since morning had been long, and now the sun of noon-tide beat upon Him. His thirst was increased by the thought of the cool, refreshing water so near, yet inaccessible to Him; for He had no rope nor water jar, and the well was deep. The lot of humanity was His, and He waited for someone to come to draw.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 183.

- b. **Who came to the well, and what favor did Jesus ask of her? John 4:7.**

“A woman of Samaria approached, and seeming unconscious of His presence, filled her pitcher with water. As she turned to go away, Jesus asked her for a drink. Such a favor no Oriental would withhold. In the East, water was called ‘the gift of God.’ To offer a drink to the thirsty traveler was held to be a duty so sacred that the Arabs of the desert would go out of their way in order to perform it. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust. The King of heaven came to this outcast soul, asking a service at her hands.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 183, 184.

Monday

August 16

2. LIVING WATER (I)

- a. **How did Jesus call the woman’s attention to the gift of salvation? John 4:10.**

- b. **What was the woman’s reaction to Christ’s offer? John 4:11, 12.**

“The woman had not comprehended the words of Christ, but she felt their solemn import. Her light, bantering manner began to change. Supposing that Jesus spoke of the well before them, she said, ‘Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself?’ (John 4:11, 12). She saw before her only a thirsty traveler, wayworn and dusty. In her mind she compared Him with the honored patriarch Jacob. She cherished the feeling, which is so natural, that no other well could be equal to that provided by the fathers. She was looking backward to the fathers, forward to the Messiah’s coming, while the Hope of the fathers, the Messiah Himself, was beside her, and she knew Him not. How many thirsting souls are today close by the living fountain, yet looking far away for the wellsprings of life! ‘Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) . . . The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: . . . if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved’ (Romans 10:6–9).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 184.

“Christ’s gracious presence in His word is ever speaking to the soul, representing Him as the well of living water to refresh the thirsting soul. It is our privilege to have a living, abiding Saviour. He is the source of spiritual power implanted within us, and His influence will flow forth in words and actions, refreshing all within the sphere of our influence, begetting in them desires and aspirations for strength and purity, for holiness and peace, and for that joy which brings no sorrow with it. This is the result of an indwelling Saviour.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 390.

“How much interest Christ manifested in this one woman! How earnest and eloquent were His words! They stirred the heart of the listener.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 195.

3. LIVING WATER (II)

- a. With what words did Jesus establish the difference between one kind of water and another? John 4:13, 14.

“Jesus did not immediately answer the question in regard to Himself, but with solemn earnestness He said, ‘Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life’ (John 4:13, 14).

“He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again. Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, ‘The Desire of all nations,’ is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

- b. How did the Samaritan woman show that she did not understand Christ’s words? John 4:15.

“Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing—‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life’ (John 4:14). From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs.

“As Jesus spoke of the living water, the woman looked upon Him with wondering attention. He had aroused her interest, and awakened a desire for the gift of which He spoke. She perceived that it was not the water of Jacob’s well to which He referred; for of this she used continually, drinking, and thirsting again. ‘Sir,’ she said, ‘give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw’ (Verse 15).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

4. JESUS BEGINS TO REVEAL HIS IDENTITY

- a. What new subject did Jesus introduce in His conversation with the Samaritan woman? John 4:16.

- b. What was her response? John 4:17 (first part).

“Jesus now abruptly turned the conversation. Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour. He ‘saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.’ She answered, ‘I have no husband’ (John 4:16, 17). Thus she hoped to prevent all questioning in that direction.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

- c. How did Jesus supplement her answer? John 4:17(last part), 18.

“But the Saviour continued, ‘Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly’ (John 4:17, 18).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

A Converting Power. “The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it gives to young and old a knowledge of God’s word, but because it awakens in them a love for its sacred truths, and a desire to study them for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings.”—*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 109, 110.

A Blessing to the Church. “There is a broad field in Sabbath school work that needs to be diligently cultivated, and that is to inspire our youth to give themselves wholly to the Lord, to be used by Him in His cause. . . . There are sacred responsibilities entrusted to Sabbath school workers, and the Sabbath school should be the place where, through a living connection with God, men and women, youth and children, may be so fitted up that they shall be a strength and blessing to the church. They should help the church upward and onward, as far as it lies in their ability, going from strength to greater strength.”—*Ibid.*, p. 92.

5. JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF AS THE SAVIOUR

- a. What did the woman realize about Jesus? John 4:19. Was this recognition sufficient?

“The listener trembled. A mysterious hand was turning the pages of her life history, bringing to view that which she had hoped to keep forever hidden. Who was He that could read the secrets of her life? There came to her thoughts of eternity, of the future judgment, when all that is now hidden shall be revealed. In its light, conscience was awakened.

“She could deny nothing; but she tried to evade all mention of a subject so unwelcome. With deep reverence, she said, ‘Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet’ (John 4:19). Then, hoping to silence conviction, she turned to points of religious controversy. If this was a prophet, surely He could give her instruction concerning these matters that had been so long disputed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 187, 188.

- c. When the woman manifested hope in the coming of the Messiah, what did Jesus say to her? John 4:25, 26.

“The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down, and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the worship acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, ‘I that speak unto thee am He’ (John 4:26).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 194.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus never perform a miracle on his own behalf?
2. What resource did Jesus use to call the attention of the Samaritan woman to the gospel?
3. What did the Master say concerning the water of life?
4. What power did Christ evidence in revealing the secret of life to the Samaritan woman?

The Samaritan Woman (II)

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

“Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 188–195.

1. THE WATER JUG LEFT BEHIND

- a. Upon recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, what did the Samaritan woman immediately do? John 4:28, 29.

“The woman had been filled with joy as she listened to Christ's words. The wonderful revelation was almost overpowering. Leaving her waterpot, she returned to the city, to carry the message to others. Jesus knew why she had gone. Leaving her waterpot spoke unmistakably as to the effect of His words. It was the earnest desire of her soul to obtain the living water; and she forgot her errand to the well, she forgot the Saviour's thirst, which she had purposed to supply. With heart overflowing with gladness, she hastened on her way, to impart to others the precious light she had received.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 191.

- b. What did the inhabitants of Sychar do when they heard the testimony of their fellow citizen? John 4:30.

“‘Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did,’ she said to the men of the city. ‘Is not this the Christ?’ Her words touched their hearts. There was a new expression on her face, a change in her whole appearance. They were interested to see Jesus. ‘Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him’ (John 4:29, 30).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 191.

2. THE HARVEST AND THE REAPERS

- a. **As Jesus saw the inhabitants of Sychar coming, what did He say to His disciples? John 4:35–38.**

“As Jesus still sat at the well side, He looked over the fields of grain that were spread out before Him, their tender green touched by the golden sunlight. Pointing His disciples to the scene, He employed it as a symbol: ‘Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest’ (John 4:35). And as He spoke, He looked on the groups that were coming to the well. It was four months to the time for harvesting the grain, but here was a harvest ready for the reaper.

“‘He that reapeth,’ He said, ‘receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth’ (Verses 36, 37). Here Christ points out the sacred service owed to God by those who receive the gospel. They are to be His living agencies. He requires their individual service. And whether we sow or reap, we are working for God. One scatters the seed; another gathers in the harvest; and both the sower and the reaper receive wages. They rejoice together in the reward of their labor.

“Jesus said to the disciples, ‘I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors’ (Verse 38). The Saviour was here looking forward to the great ingathering on the day of Pentecost. The disciples were not to regard this as the result of their own efforts. They were entering into other men's labors. Ever since the fall of Adam Christ had been committing the seed of the word to His chosen servants, to be sown in human hearts. And an unseen agency, even an omnipotent power, had worked silently but effectually to produce the harvest. The dew and rain and sunshine of God's grace had been given, to refresh and nourish the seed of truth. Christ was about to water the seed with His own blood. His disciples were privileged to be laborers together with God. They were coworkers with Christ and with the holy men of old. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, thousands were to be converted in a day. This was the result of Christ's sowing, the harvest of His work.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 191, 192.

- b. **What was the effect of the woman's testimony about Christ? John 4:39.**

3. JESUS IN SAMARIA

- a. **What petition did the Samaritans make to Jesus? John 4:40.**

- b. **What was the result? John 4:41.**

“In the words spoken to the woman at the well, good seed had been sown, and how quickly the harvest was received. The Samaritans came and heard Jesus, and believed on Him. Crowding about Him at the well, they plied Him with questions, and eagerly received His explanations of many things that had been obscure to them. As they listened, their perplexity began to clear away. They were like a people in great darkness tracing up a sudden ray of light till they had found the day. But they were not satisfied with this short conference. They were anxious to hear more, and to have their friends also listen to this wonderful teacher. They invited Him to their city, and begged Him to remain with them. For two days He tarried in Samaria, and many more believed on Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 192.

- c. **How can we benefit from having a similar experience as the people of Samaria?**

“If we meet obstacles in our path, and faithfully overcome them; if we encounter opposition and reproach, and in Christ's name gain the victory; if we bear responsibilities and discharge our duties in the spirit of our Master—then, indeed, we gain a precious knowledge of His faithfulness and power. We no longer depend upon the experience of others, for we have the witness in ourselves. Like the Samaritans of old, we can say, ‘We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world’ (John 4:42).

“The more we contemplate the character of Christ, and the more we experience of His saving power, the more keenly shall we realize our own weakness and imperfection, and the more earnestly shall we look to Him as our strength and our Redeemer. We have no power in ourselves to cleanse the soul temple from its defilement; but as we repent of our sins against God, and seek pardon through the merits of Christ, He will impart that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God we may be sanctified, and thus obtain a fitness for the society of holy angels and the white-robed redeemed ones in the kingdom of glory.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 83.

4. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SAMARITANS

- a. **What did many Samaritans declare after having accepted Jesus as the Messiah? John 4:42.**

“The Pharisees despised the simplicity of Jesus. They ignored His miracles, and demanded a sign that He was the Son of God. But the Samaritans asked no sign, and Jesus performed no miracles among them, save in revealing the secrets of her life to the woman at the well. Yet many received Him. In their new joy they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world’ (John 4:42).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 192, 193.

- b. **Upon what prophecy did the Samaritans base their faith in the promised Messiah? Genesis 49:10.**

“The Samaritans believed that the Messiah was to come as the Redeemer, not only of the Jews, but of the world. The Holy Spirit through Moses had foretold Him as a prophet sent from God. Through Jacob it had been declared that unto Him should the gathering of the people be; and through Abraham, that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. On these scriptures the people of Samaria based their faith in the Messiah. The fact that the Jews had misinterpreted the later prophets, attributing to the first advent the glory of Christ's second coming, had led the Samaritans to discard all the sacred writings except those given through Moses. But as the Saviour swept away these false interpretations, many accepted the later prophecies and the words of Christ Himself in regard to the kingdom of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 193.

- c. **How can we reproduce the work of Christ with the Samaritans?**

“Christ's teaching softened and subdued the soul. The truth received into the heart will work a renovation in the soul. Those who love Jesus will love the souls for whom He died. The truth planted in the heart will reveal the love of Jesus and its transforming power. Anything harsh, sour, critical, domineering, is not of Christ, but proceeds from Satan.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 156.

5. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

- a. **Give some examples of what Christians become when they truly receive Christ. Mark 5:18–20; 7:31–37.**

- b. **What essential lesson do we learn from the Samaritan woman? 1 John 1:1–3; 2 Corinthians 5:14 (first part).**

“As soon as she had found the Saviour the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised, a whole cityful were brought to hear the Saviour. She carried the light at once to her countrymen.

“This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What did the woman do when she recognized Jesus as the only Saviour?**
2. **What is the meaning of the words, “Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest”?**
3. **How many days did Jesus remain with the Samaritans?**
4. **What testimony did the Samaritans give concerning Jesus?**
5. **What do people do as soon as they receive Jesus into their hearts?**

First Sabbath Offering

North Brazilian Union Renaissance School

Continuing the theme of educational First Sabbath Offerings, the fund collected during the month of September will benefit the Renaissance School located in Brasilia, the capital city of Brazil.

The church school system of primary education has been well established in southern Brazil for many years. A number of successful schools have been established, most notably in the populous city of Sao Paulo. Now the work is moving steadily north. The North Brazilian Union is copying the success of their brethren and sisters to the south in establishing a strong educational base to train our youth for service to the Master.

Your help is needed to make this project a success. Many of the students who attend our schools come from the world, and we have had many examples of parents giving their hearts to the Lord as a result of seeing the blessing the school has been for their children. We ask you to please give generously to this most fundamental type of missionary work.

“Our church schools are ordained by God to prepare the children for this great work. Here children are to be instructed in the special truths for this time, and in practical missionary work. They are to enlist in the army of workers to help the sick and the suffering. Children can take part in the medical missionary work and by their jots and tittles can help to carry it forward. Their investments may be small, but every little helps, and by their efforts many souls will be won to the truth. By them God’s message will be made known and His saving health to all nations. Then let the church carry a burden for the lambs of the flock. Let the children be educated and trained to do service for God, for they are the Lord’s heritage.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 176, 177.

Your brethren and sisters from the North Brazilian Union

PROJECT 004



The Nobleman’s Son

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21).

“When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we *have* received it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 200 (author’s italics).

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 196–200.

Sunday

August 29

1. JESUS IN GALILEE

- a. After spending two days with the Samaritans, to what city of Galilee did Jesus journey? John 4:43–46 (first part).

“The news of Christ’s return to Cana soon spread throughout Galilee, bringing hope to the suffering and distressed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 196.

- b. Who came to meet Jesus in Galilee? John 4:46 (last part), 47 (first part).

“In Capernaum the tidings attracted the attention of a Jewish nobleman who was an officer in the king’s service. A son of the officer was suffering from what seemed to be an incurable disease. Physicians had given him up to die; but when the father heard of Jesus, he determined to seek help from Him. The child was very low, and, it was feared, might not live till his return; yet the nobleman felt that he must present the case in person. He hoped that a father’s prayers might awaken the sympathy of the Great Physician.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 196, 197.

2. THE NOBLEMAN'S UNBELIEF

a. What was the nobleman's request? John 4:47 (last part).

"On reaching Cana he found a throng surrounding Jesus. With an anxious heart he pressed through to the Saviour's presence. His faith faltered when he saw only a plainly dressed man, dusty and worn with travel. He doubted that this Person could do what he had come to ask of Him; yet he secured an interview with Jesus, told his errand, and besought the Saviour to accompany him to his home. But already his sorrow was known to Jesus. Before the officer had left his home, the Saviour had beheld his affliction."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 197, 198.

b. In what words did Jesus reveal His knowledge of the nobleman's unbelief? John 4:48.

"But He knew also that the father had, in his own mind, made conditions concerning his belief in Jesus. Unless his petition should be granted, he would not receive Him as the Messiah. While the officer waited in an agony of suspense, Jesus said, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe' (John 4:48).

"Notwithstanding all the evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the petitioner had determined to make his belief in Him conditional on the granting of his own request."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

"Christ had said to the nobleman whose son He healed, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe' (John 4:48). He was grieved that His own nation should require these outward signs of His Messiahship. Again and again He had marveled at their unbelief."—*Ibid.*, p. 315.

"Many who refuse the message which the Lord sends them are seeking to find pegs on which to hang doubts, to find some excuse for rejecting the light of heaven. In the face of clear evidence they say, as did the Jews, 'Show us a miracle, and we will believe. If these messengers have the truth, why do they not heal the sick?' . . .

"Could their eyes be opened, they would see evil angels exulting around them and triumphing in their power to deceive them. The day is just before us when Satan will answer the demand of these doubters and present numerous miracles to confirm the faith of all those who are seeking this kind of evidence. How terrible will be the situation of those who close their eyes to the light of truth and ask for miracles to establish them in deception!"—*Evangelism*, p. 594.

3. SEEING AND BELIEVING

a. How did Christ reveal sadness at the unbelief of His own people? Matthew 12:38, 39.

"Christ was pained that His own people, to whom the Sacred Oracles had been committed, should fail to hear the voice of God speaking to them in His Son."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

b. What difference existed between Jews and Samaritans in regard to their belief in Jesus? Mark 6:2–6; John 4:40–42.

"The Saviour contrasted this questioning unbelief with the simple faith of the Samaritans, who asked for no miracle or sign. His word, the ever-present evidence of His divinity, had a convincing power that reached their hearts."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

c. To whom should our own faith be revealed today? Romans 16:26.

"However short our service or humble our work, if in simple faith we follow Christ, we shall not be disappointed of the reward. That which even the greatest and wisest cannot earn, the weakest and most humble may receive. Heaven's golden gate opens not to the self-exalted. It is not lifted up to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child. Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 404.

"Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel's message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out. It is at the cross of Christ that mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. The sinner must be led to look to Calvary; with the simple faith of a little child he must trust in the merits of the Saviour, accepting His righteousness, believing in His mercy."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 156, 157.

4. FAITH REWARDED

- a. When the nobleman's faith took hold of Christ, how did he reiterate his plea? John 4:49.

“Yet the nobleman had a degree of faith; for he had come to ask what seemed to him the most precious of all blessings. . . .

“Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible. In an agony of supplication he cried, ‘Sir, come down ere my child die’ (John 4:49). His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me’ (Genesis 32:26).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

- b. What did Jesus do instead of going to the nobleman's home? John 4:50.

“Jesus had a greater gift to bestow. He desired, not only to heal the child, but to make the officer and his household sharers in the blessings of salvation, and to kindle a light in Capernaum, which was so soon to be the field of His own labors. But the nobleman must realize his need before he would desire the grace of Christ. This courtier represented many of his nation. They were interested in Jesus from selfish motives. They hoped to receive some special benefit through His power, and they staked their faith on the granting of this temporal favor; but they were ignorant as to their spiritual disease, and saw not their need of divine grace. . . .

“Like Jacob he prevailed. The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need. ‘Go thy way,’ He said; ‘thy son liveth’ (John 4:50). The nobleman left the Saviour's presence with a peace and joy he had never known before. Not only did he believe that his son would be restored, but with strong confidence he trusted in Christ as the Redeemer.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 198, 199.

“If we make an entire surrender to Him, leave our life of sin and passion and pride, and cling to Christ and His merits, He will fulfill to us that He has promised. He says that He will give liberally to all who ask Him. Cannot we believe it? I have tested Him on this point, and know that He is faithful to fulfill all His promises.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1887.

5. CURE AND SALVATION

- a. In what manner did Jesus heal the nobleman's son? John 4:51–53.

“At the same hour the watchers beside the dying child in the home at Capernaum beheld a sudden and mysterious change. The shadow of death was lifted from the sufferer's face. The flush of fever gave place to the soft glow of returning health. The dim eyes brightened with intelligence, and strength returned to the feeble, emaciated frame. No signs of his malady lingered about the child. His burning flesh had become soft and moist, and he sank into a quiet sleep. The fever had left him in the very heat of the day. The family were amazed, and great was the rejoicing.

“Cana was not so far from Capernaum but that the officer might have reached his home on the evening after his interview with Jesus; but he did not hasten on the homeward journey. It was not until the next morning that he reached Capernaum. What a homecoming was that! When he went to find Jesus, his heart was heavy with sorrow. The sunshine seemed cruel to him, the songs of the birds a mockery. How different his feelings now! All nature wears a new aspect. He sees with new eyes. As he journeys in the quiet of the early morning, all nature seems to be praising God with him. While he is still some distance from his own dwelling, servants come out to meet him, anxious to relieve the suspense they are sure he must feel. He shows no surprise at the news they bring, but with a depth of interest they cannot know he asks at what hour the child began to mend. They answer, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him’ (John 4:52). At the very moment when the father's faith grasped the assurance, ‘Thy son liveth,’ divine love touched the dying child.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 199.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why are prophets generally not well received in their own lands?
2. What words of the nobleman revealed his unbelief?
3. How did Christ react to the unbelief of His people?
4. What does Jesus promise to all who accept His invitation?
5. How does Jesus act towards any person who pleads for help?

The Paralytic of Bethesda

“Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17).

“The work of Christ in healing the sick was in perfect accord with the law. It honored the Sabbath.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 207.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 201–206.

Sunday

September 5

1. THE HEALING WATERS

a. **For what purpose did many disabled people go to Jerusalem? John 5:2, 3.**

b. **What belief did the people have about the pool of Bethesda? John 5:4.**

“Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water’ (John 5:2, 3).

“At certain seasons the waters of this pool were agitated, and it was commonly believed that this was the result of supernatural power, and that whoever first after the troubling of the pool stepped into the waters, would be healed of whatever disease he had. Hundreds of sufferers visited the place; but so great was the crowd when the water was troubled that they rushed forward, trampling underfoot men, women, and children, weaker than themselves. Many could not get near the pool. Many who had succeeded in reaching it died upon its brink. Shelters had been erected about the place, that the sick might be protected from the heat by day and the chilliness of the night. There were some who spent the night in these porches, creeping to the edge of the pool day after day, in the vain hope of relief.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 201.

Monday

September 6

2. THE PARALYTIC

a. **Whom did Jesus see beside the pool? John 5:5.**

“Jesus was again at Jerusalem. Walking alone, in apparent meditation and prayer, He came to the pool. He saw the wretched sufferers watching for that which they supposed to be their only chance of cure. He longed to exercise His healing power, and make every sufferer whole. But it was the Sabbath day. Multitudes were going to the temple for worship, and He knew that such an act of healing would so excite the prejudice of the Jews as to cut short His work.

“But the Saviour saw one case of supreme wretchedness. It was that of a man who had been a helpless cripple for thirty-eight years. His disease was in a great degree the result of his own sin, and was looked upon as a judgment from God. Alone and friendless, feeling that he was shut out from God’s mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of misery. At the time when it was expected that the waters would be troubled, those who pitied his helplessness would bear him to the porches. But at the favored moment he had no one to help him in. He had seen the rippling of the water, but had never been able to get farther than the edge of the pool. Others stronger than he would plunge in before him. He could not contend successfully with the selfish, scrambling crowd. His persistent efforts toward the one object, and his anxiety and continual disappointment, were fast wearing away the remnant of his strength.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 201, 202.

b. **What did Jesus ask him and what was his answer? John 5:6, 7.**

c. **What did Jesus tell the paralytic to do? John 5:8.**

“Jesus does not ask this sufferer to exercise faith in Him. He simply says, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk’ (John 5:8). But the man’s faith takes hold upon that word. Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Without question he sets his will to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles respond to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man.

“Jesus had given him no assurance of divine help. The man might have stopped to doubt, and lost his one chance of healing. But he believed Christ’s word, and in acting upon it he received strength.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 202, 203.

3. SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS

- a. In what condition do people who are separated from Christ find themselves? Isaiah 1:5, 6; Ephesians 2:1-3.

“Through the same faith we may receive spiritual healing. By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 203.

“The branch which does not derive its nourishment from the vine is unable to bear fruit. Having no real, vital connection with the vine, not receiving the sap which flows through the parent stock, it is fruitless. So it is with those who are not truly united to Christ. They may claim to know Him, their names may be on the church roll, but unless they are living branches of the True Vine, this is of no value. There is a union with the church that avails nothing with God. Their profession will not save them, for their want of faith, their lack of fruit, proves that they are false branches. They are hearers, and not doers, of the word of God, and their future is shown in this parable [of the vine and the branches]. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. ‘If a man abide not in me,’ said Christ, ‘he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned’ (John 15:6).”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 10, 1896.

- b. What is the only remedy for such a condition? Acts 9:34.

“There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it. In despair they cry, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ (Romans 7:24, margin). Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’ (John 5:6). He bids you arise in health and peace. Do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe His word, and it will be fulfilled. Put your will on the side of Christ. Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength. Whatever may be the evil practice, the master passion which through long indulgence binds both soul and body, Christ is able and longs to deliver. He will impart life to the soul that is ‘dead in trespasses’ (Ephesians 2:1). He will set free the captive that is held by weakness and misfortune and the chains of sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 203.

4. THE WRATH OF THE PHARISEES

- a. Ignoring the blessing bestowed upon the paralytic, why did the Pharisees become irritated? John 5:9 (last part), 10.

“The restored paralytic stooped to take up his bed, which was only a rug and a blanket, and as he straightened himself again with a sense of delight, he looked around for his Deliverer; but Jesus was lost in the crowd. The man feared that he would not know Him if he should see Him again. As he hurried on his way with firm, free step, praising God and rejoicing in his new-found strength, he met several of the Pharisees, and immediately told them of his cure. He was surprised at the coldness with which they listened to his story.

“With lowering brows they interrupted him, asking why he was carrying his bed on the Sabbath day. They sternly reminded him that it was not lawful to bear burdens on the Lord’s day. In his joy the man had forgotten that it was the Sabbath; yet he felt no condemnation for obeying the command of One who had such power from God. He answered boldly, ‘He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk’ (John 5:11). They asked who it was that had done this, but he could not tell. These rulers knew well that only One had shown Himself able to perform this miracle; but they wished for direct proof that it was Jesus, that they might condemn Him as a Sabbath-breaker. In their judgment He had not only broken the law in healing the sick man on the Sabbath, but had committed sacrilege in bidding him bear away his bed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 203, 204.

- b. What had the Jews made of the Sabbath? Matthew 23:4.

“The Jews had so perverted the law that they made it a yoke of bondage. Their meaningless requirements had become a byword among other nations. Especially was the Sabbath hedged in by all manner of senseless restrictions. It was not to them a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honorable. The scribes and Pharisees had made its observance an intolerable burden. A Jew was not allowed to kindle a fire nor even to light a candle on the Sabbath. As a consequence the people were dependent upon the Gentiles for many services which their rules forbade them to do for themselves.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 204.

5. THE SABBATH AND ITS OBJECTIVE

- a. How did Jesus relate to the law of God and to the Sabbath? Isaiah 42:21.

“Jesus had come to ‘magnify the law, and make it honorable.’ He was not to lessen its dignity, but to exalt it. The scripture says, ‘He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth’ (Isaiah 42:21, 4). He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 206.

- b. What should and should not be done on the Sabbath? Exodus 20:8–11.

“A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ’s life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the way for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord’s day, and to declare their traditions void. . . .

“And man also has a work to perform on this day. The necessities of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the needy must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God’s holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour’s pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 206, 207.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What belief was prevalent among the Jews concerning the pool of Bethesda?
2. What special case attracted Christ’s attention?
3. Who is the only Physician that can cure our spiritual paralysis?
4. What action of Jesus greatly irritated the Jews?
5. What works are in harmony with the Sabbath commandment?

The Authority of the Son

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:26, 27).

“My authority, He said, for doing the work of which you accuse Me, is that I am the Son of God, one with Him in nature, in will, and in purpose. In all His works of creation and providence, I cooperate with God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 208.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 206–213.

1. EQUAL WITH GOD

- a. Besides the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath, for what other reason did the Jews hate Jesus? John 5:17, 18.

“Jesus claimed equal rights with God. . . .
 “The whole nation of the Jews called God their Father, therefore they would not have been so enraged if Christ had represented Himself as standing in the same relation to God. But they accused Him of blasphemy, showing that they understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 207, 208.

- b. How did Christ vindicate the authority of God’s commandments above human traditions? Matthew 15:1–9, 13.

“These adversaries of Christ had no arguments with which to meet the truths He brought home to their consciences. They could only cite their customs and traditions, and these seemed weak and vapid when compared with the arguments Jesus had drawn from the word of God and the unceasing round of nature.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 208.

2. UNITY WITH THE FATHER

- a. How did Jesus explain His relationship with the Father? John 5:19, 20.
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- b. What authority and power pertaining to the Father did Christ declare He also possessed? John 5:21–23.
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“The humble Nazarene asserts His real nobility. He rises above humanity, throws off the guise of sin and shame, and stands revealed, the Honored of the angels, the Son of God, One with the Creator of the universe. His hearers are spellbound. No man has ever spoken words like His, or borne himself with such a kingly majesty. His utterances are clear and plain, fully declaring His mission, and the duty of the world. ‘For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him. . . . For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man’ (John 5:22, 23, 26, 27).

“The priests and rulers had set themselves up as judges to condemn Christ's work, but He declared Himself their judge, and the judge of all the earth. The world has been committed to Christ, and through Him has come every blessing from God to the fallen race. He was the Redeemer before as after His incarnation. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. He has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given, each is to be judged. And He who has given the light, He who has followed the soul with tenderest entreaty, seeking to win it from sin to holiness, is in one its advocate and judge. From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. It is He who has encountered the deceiver, and who through all the ages has been seeking to wrest the captives from his grasp, who will pass judgment upon every soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 210.

“Christ is the only true standard of character, and he who sets himself up as a standard for others is putting himself in the place of Christ. And since the Father ‘hath committed all judgment unto the Son’ (John 5:22), whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogative of the Son of God. These would-be judges and critics are placing themselves on the side of antichrist.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 125, 126.

3. ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

- a. What assurance is given to every true believer? John 5:24.
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- b. What other divine prerogative did Christ assert He possessed? John 5:25–29.
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“And God ‘hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man’ (John 5:27). Because He has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save—because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgment.

“But Christ's mission was not for judgment, but for salvation. ‘God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved’ (John 3:17). And before the Sanhedrin Jesus declared, ‘He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life’ (John 5:24, RV).

“Bidding His hearers marvel not, Christ opened before them, in still wider view, the mystery of the future. [John 5:28, 29, RV quoted.]

“This assurance of the future life was that for which Israel had so long waited, and which they had hoped to receive at the Messiah's advent. The only light that can lighten the gloom of the grave was shining upon them. But self-will is blind. Jesus had violated the traditions of the rabbis, and disregarded their authority, and they would not believe.

“The time, the place, the occasion, the intensity of feeling that pervaded the assembly, all combined to make the words of Jesus before the Sanhedrin the more impressive. The highest religious authorities of the nation were seeking the life of Him who declared Himself the restorer of Israel. The Lord of the Sabbath was arraigned before an earthly tribunal to answer the charge of breaking the Sabbath law. When He so fearlessly declared His mission, His judges looked upon Him with astonishment and rage; but His words were unanswerable. They could not condemn Him. He denied the right of the priests and rabbis to question Him, or to interfere with His work. They were invested with no such authority. Their claims were based upon their own pride and arrogance. He refused to plead guilty of their charges, or to be catechized by them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 210, 211.

4. JESUS, THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE SCRIPTURES**a. How did Jesus explain the cause of the Jews' unbelief? John 5:37, 38.**

“Instead of apologizing for the act of which they complained, or explaining His purpose in doing it, Jesus turned upon the rulers, and the accused became the accuser. He rebuked them for the hardness of their hearts, and their ignorance of the Scriptures. He declared that they had rejected the word of God, inasmuch as they had rejected Him whom God had sent. ‘Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me’ (John 5:39, RV).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 211.

b. Why did the Jews fail to understand the Scriptures? John 5:39, 40.

“In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God. So far as it was of divine institution, the entire system of Judaism was a compacted prophecy of the gospel. To Christ ‘give all the prophets witness’ (Acts 10:43). From the promise given to Adam, down through the patriarchal line and the legal economy, heaven's glorious light made plain the footsteps of the Redeemer. Seers beheld the Star of Bethlehem, the Shiloh to come, as future things swept before them in mysterious procession. In every sacrifice Christ's death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt.

“The Jews had the Scriptures in their possession, and supposed that in their mere outward knowledge of the word they had eternal life. But Jesus said, ‘Ye have not His word abiding in you.’ Having rejected Christ in His word, they rejected Him in person. ‘Ye will not come to Me,’ He said, ‘that ye might have life’ (John 5:38, 40).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 211, 212.

“The word of God, spoken to the heart, has an animating power, and those who will frame any excuse for neglecting to become acquainted with it will neglect the claims of God in many respects. The character will be deformed, the words and acts a reproach to the truth. . . . As the mind dwells upon the virtue and piety of holy men of old, the spirit which inspired them will kindle a flame of love and holy fervor in the hearts of those who would be like them in character.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 17, 18.

5. THE GLORY OF GOD**a. What other cause of unbelief among the Jews was pointed out by Jesus? John 5:41, 42.**

“The Jewish leaders had studied the teachings of the prophets concerning the kingdom of the Messiah; but they had done this, not with a sincere desire to know the truth, but with the purpose of finding evidence to sustain their ambitious hopes. When Christ came in a manner contrary to their expectations, they would not receive Him; and in order to justify themselves, they tried to prove Him a deceiver. When once they had set their feet in this path, it was easy for Satan to strengthen their opposition to Christ. The very words that should have been received as evidence of His divinity were interpreted against Him. Thus they turned the truth of God into a lie, and the more directly the Saviour spoke to them in His works of mercy, the more determined they were in resisting the light.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 212.

b. What led the Jews to reject Jesus and welcome false teachers? John 5:43, 44.

“I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive’ (John 5:43). Jesus came by the authority of God, bearing His image, fulfilling His word, and seeking His glory; yet He was not accepted by the leaders in Israel; but when others should come, assuming the character of Christ, but actuated by their own will and seeking their own glory, they would be received. And why? Because he who is seeking his own glory appeals to the desire for self-exaltation in others. To such appeals the Jews could respond. They would receive the false teacher because he flattered their pride by sanctioning their cherished opinions and traditions.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 212, 213.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What authority and rights did Christ claim?
2. What relationship has always existed between Jesus and the Father?
3. What power does Christ possess?
4. Explain John 5:39, 40.
5. What was the result of the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah?

Feeding the Multitude

“Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat” (Matthew 14:16).

“Often we hesitate, unwilling to give all that we have, fearing to spend and to be spent for others. But Jesus has bidden us, ‘Give ye them to eat’ (Matthew 14:16). His command is a promise; and behind it is the same power that fed the multitude beside the sea.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 369 (author’s italics).

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 364–371.

Sunday

September 19

1. THE HUNGERING MULTITUDE

a. Besides the disciples, who else accompanied Jesus? John 6:1, 2.

“Christ had retired to a secluded place with His disciples, but this rare season of peaceful quietude was soon broken. The disciples thought they had retired where they would not be disturbed; but as soon as the multitude missed the divine Teacher, they inquired, ‘Where is He?’ Some among them had noticed the direction in which Christ and His disciples had gone. Many went by land to meet them, while others followed in their boats across the water. The Passover was at hand, and, from far and near, bands of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem gathered to see Jesus. Additions were made to their number, until there were assembled five thousand men besides women and children. Before Christ reached the shore, a multitude were waiting for Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 364.

b. What was the spiritual condition of the people? Mark 6:34.

“[Christ] ‘was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd’ (Mark 6:34). Leaving His retreat, He found a convenient place where He could minister to them. They received no help from the priests and rulers; but the healing waters of life flowed from Christ as He taught the multitude the way of salvation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 364, 365.

Monday

September 20

2. TEMPORAL NUTRITION

a. Besides satisfying the spiritual needs of the people, with what else did Jesus concern Himself? John 6:3–5.

“He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual need. The people were weary and faint. There were mothers with babes in their arms, and little children clinging to their skirts. Many had been standing for hours. They had been so intensely interested in Christ’s words that they had not once thought of sitting down, and the crowd was so great that there was danger of their trampling on one another. Jesus would give them a chance to rest, and He bade them sit down. There was much grass in the place, and all could rest in comfort.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 365, 366.

b. What did Jesus say to Philip and with what intention? John 6:5, 6.

c. What did Philip answer Jesus? John 6:7.

“The day seemed to [the people] like heaven upon earth, and they were utterly unconscious of how long it had been since they had eaten anything.

“At length the day was far spent. The sun was sinking in the west, and yet the people lingered. Jesus had labored all day without food or rest. He was pale from weariness and hunger, and the disciples besought Him to cease from His toil. But He could not withdraw Himself from the multitude that pressed upon Him.

“The disciples finally came to Him, urging that for their own sake the people should be sent away. Many had come from far, and had eaten nothing since morning. In the surrounding towns and villages they might be able to buy food. But Jesus said, ‘Give ye them to eat’ (Luke 9:13), and then, turning to Philip, questioned, ‘Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ (John 6:5). This He said to test the faith of the disciple. Philip looked over the sea of heads, and thought how impossible it would be to provide food to satisfy the wants of such a crowd. He answered that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be nearly enough to divide among them, so that each might have a little.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 365.

3. AVAILABLE PROVISION

- a. What information did Andrew give to Jesus? John 6:8, 9.

“Jesus inquired how much food could be found among the company. ‘There is a lad here,’ said Andrew, ‘which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?’ (John 6:9).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 365.

- b. What plan did Jesus suggest to keep order among the hungry multitude? John 6:10.

“Jesus directed that [the five barley loaves and two fishes] be brought to Him. Then He bade the disciples seat the people on the grass in parties of fifty or a hundred, to preserve order, and that all might witness what He was about to do.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 365.

- c. Explain the sequence of actions Christ took in multiplying the food. John 6:11; Matthew 14:19.

“When [order] was accomplished, Jesus took the food, ‘and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude’ (Matthew 14:19). ‘And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes’ (Mark 6:42, 43). . . .

“Christ never worked a miracle except to supply a genuine necessity, and every miracle was of a character to lead the people to the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. The simple food passed round by the hands of the disciples contained a whole treasure of lessons. It was humble fare that had been provided; the fishes and barley loaves were the daily food of the fisher folk about the Sea of Galilee. Christ could have spread before the people a rich repast, but food prepared merely for the gratification of appetite would have conveyed no lesson for their good. Christ taught them in this lesson that the natural provisions of God for man had been perverted. And never did people enjoy the luxurious feasts prepared for the gratification of perverted taste as this people enjoyed the rest and the simple food which Christ provided so far from human habitations. . . .

“Selfishness and the indulgence of unnatural taste have brought sin and misery into the world, from excess on the one hand, and from want on the other.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 365–367.

4. SPIRITUAL LESSONS (I)

- a. What lesson did Jesus teach the disciples after feeding the multitude? John 6:12, 13.

“After the multitude had been fed, there was an abundance of food left. But He who had all the resources of infinite power at His command said, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost’ (John 6:12). These words meant more than putting the bread into the baskets. The lesson was twofold. Nothing is to be wasted. We are to let slip no temporal advantage. We should neglect nothing that will tend to benefit a human being. Let everything be gathered up that will relieve the necessity of earth's hungry ones. And there should be the same carefulness in spiritual things. When the baskets of fragments were collected, the people thought of their friends at home. They wanted them to share in the bread that Christ had blessed. The contents of the baskets were distributed among the eager throng, and were carried away into all the region round about. So those who were at the feast were to give to others the bread that comes down from heaven, to satisfy the hunger of the soul. They were to repeat what they had learned of the wonderful things of God. Nothing was to be lost. Not one word that concerned their eternal salvation was to fall useless to the ground.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 368.

- b. What lessons of cooperation can we learn from this experience? Mark 6:37–40; Luke 6:38; Galatians 6:6, 10.

“In Christ's act of supplying the temporal necessities of a hungry multitude is wrapped up a deep spiritual lesson for all His workers. Christ received from the Father; He imparted to the disciples; they imparted to the multitude; and the people to one another. So all who are united to Christ will receive from Him the bread of life, the heavenly food, and impart it to others. . . .

“Christ is the great center, the source of all strength. His disciples are to receive their supplies from Him. The most intelligent, the most spiritually minded, can bestow only as they receive. Of themselves they can supply nothing for the needs of the soul. We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive. Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 369, 370.

The Sabbath School Work

A Broad, Important Field. “Superintendents and the workers in our Sabbath schools have a very important, broad field to cultivate. They need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit of God, that their minds may be impressed to use the very best methods, and follow the best plans to make their work wholly successful. The Lord will work with their efforts; for the youth are the purchase of the blood of the only-begotten Son of God. The Lord loved these youth, and gave Jesus to die, that ‘whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John 3:16).

“There is a great work of education to be carried on. The teachers should often pray for and with the children and youth, that they may ‘behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). They should teach the youth their accountability to God, and help them to understand what Jesus expects of them. Exert every influence you can possibly command to interest them in the Scriptures. Labor for their souls, that they themselves shall become zealous workers, using their talents to impart to others that which has been imparted to them.”—*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 83.

Worthy of Long Service. “The Sabbath school should be a place where the jewels of truth are searched for and rescued from their environment of error, and placed in their true setting in the framework of the gospel. Precious gems of truth, long lost sight of, are now to be restored to the children of God. The themes of justification by faith, the righteousness of Christ, should be presented in our schools, that the youth and children may understand these important subjects, and teachers and scholars may know the way of salvation. Sacred and eternal principles connected with the plan of salvation have long been lost from sight, but they must be restored to their proper place in the plan of salvation, and made to appear in their heavenly light, and penetrate the moral darkness in which the world is enshrouded.

“Let the youth take heed to the words of the wise man, ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding’ (Proverbs 3:5). Let them walk softly, prayerfully, and carefully before the Lord, in continual dependence upon Him, and at the same time exerting all their powers, improving all their

opportunities, trusting to what the Lord can do with their consecrated abilities. Let them inquire at every step, ‘Is this the way of the Lord?’ Humility is a characteristic of those who have true wisdom, and, no matter what may be their attainments, they will not be self-confident and boastful.

“The Lord calls for young men and women to gird themselves for lifelong, earnest labor in the Sabbath school work. Spasmodic efforts will not avail to accomplish much good, or to make you successful laborers in the work of God. By patient continuance in well-doing, you are to become laborers together with God. You are to reckon yourselves the servants of God by the day. Be diligent in your work for one day, and see that you make no crooked paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the path of rectitude by your misdoings.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 52, 53.

An Abundant Reward. “No one can labor in the Sabbath school or in the temperance work without reaping a bountiful harvest, not only in the end of the world, but in the present life. In the very effort to enlighten and bless others, his own views will become clearer and broader. The more we endeavor to explain the truth to others, with a love for souls, the plainer will it become to ourselves. It ever opens with new beauty and force to the understanding of the expounder.”—*Ibid.*, p. 108.

Search the Scriptures. “No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and neglect the study of the word of God. By carefully and closely searching His word we shall obey the injunction of Christ, ‘Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me’ (John 5:39). This search enables the student to observe closely the divine Model, for they testify of Christ. The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed. ‘Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith’ (Hebrews 12:2).”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 17.

FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



JULY 3
Philippine Union
(See p. 4.)

AUGUST 7
Twin Lakes
Missionary Institute
(See p. 30.)



SEPTEMBER 4
North Brazilian Union
Renaissance School
(See p. 52.)

