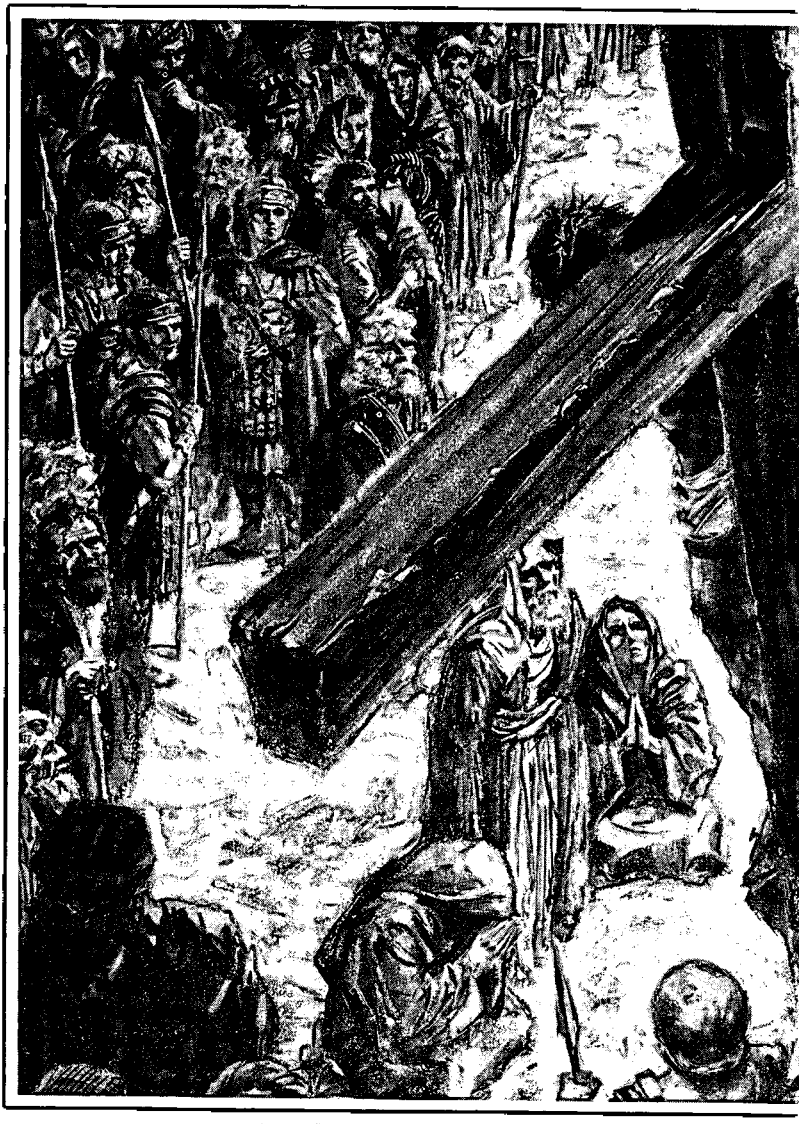
The Way to Life Eternal



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Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

Senior Division, No. 299, First Quarter, 1970

INDEX

LESSON TITLES FOR THE QUARTER

1. Our Father-God
2. Christ Our Saviour
3. At Peace With God
4. The Kingdom of Grace
5. The Sinner Justified
6. The Miracle of Spiritual Growth
7. Confidence in God
8. Love, the Crowning Virtue
9. Obedience Through Christ
10. Christian Maturity
11. The Return of Our Lord
12. The Gift of Immortality
13. The Kingdom of Glory

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The Blessing of Daily Study

"He who by faith receives the Word is receiving the very life and character of God. Every seed brings forth fruit after its kind. . . . Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the Word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 38.

"Appreciation of the Bible grows with its study."—*Ibid.,* p. 132.

"God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His Word, they find that it is spirit and life. The Word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 391.

"The neglect of the Word means starvation to the soul." —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 44.

My Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

.....

(signed)

The Way to Life Eternal

First Quarter, 1970

A knowledge of the way to life eternal is vital to times like these. The great old themes of the New Testament are here presented in a new format to show forth the strait pathway in an easy-reading guide.

This unique lesson presentation, combining statement, exposition, question, and application, has been prepared to enable you to gain the most from your time spent in the study of the Word. This new format makes it possible for one who may have as little as two minutes for study to glance over a page of the lesson and grasp the theme and main thought for the day. With the help of the "second-mile" suggestions given at the end of each lesson, this new format lends itself to several hours of intensive study and reflection.

Each day's outline begins with a passage of Scripture which gives the prime thought for that section of the lesson. This enables you to have before you the key text for the day's meditation while you are leafing through your Bible looking up the other references cited in the exploratory material.

Some other features that are intended for your study convenience are:

1. The wide margins and space between paragraphs for jotting in your own ideas or questions for the class discussion.

2. The "Think It Through" questions to give opportunity to make personal "life situation" applications of the lesson.

Before you participate in the Sabbath School lesson discussion, you are encouraged to complete the summary page found at the end of each lesson. We hope that these simple questions will bring to your mind the thoughts you have gained during this week's study that will make your contribution to the class discussion relevent to today's needs.

"The mind must be stored with pure principles. Truth must be graven on the tablets of the soul. The memory must be filled with the precious truths of the Word. Then, like beautiful gems, these truths will flash out in the life."—*Messages to Young People,* page 69.

OUR FATHER—GOD 1

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." 1 John 3:1.

The aim of this study is to increase our understanding of God's fatherhood and our sonship. God's love for His children found fullest expression after Christ's birth. The Saviour revealed His love as it had not been known before, and the disciples preached it as a major part of their teaching. Today the child of God gladly proclaims that God is a Father to each believer.

KEY THOUGHTS

1. God Knows and Cares. The Architect of the universe knows its myriad stars and maintains each in its appointed course. The same Infinite One has given us life and being and desires us to accept Him as the Architect of our lives.

2. Love Constrains God. God provides for the welfare and happiness of the creatures of His hand. When His earthborn children fell under the blight of sin He provided for their full and complete restoration.

3. Divine Love Constrains Us. The love of God constrains us to reflect His infinite love and to cooperate with Him in the restoration of our lives.

4. Our Privileges and Responsibilities. God invites us to have confidence in His beneficent purposes, to enter upon the privileges He accords erring members of His earthborn family, and to accept responsibilities befitting sons and daughters of the Eternal One.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The New Name**
   Luke 11:2
2. **The Father Revealed in Christ**
   John 14:8-10
3. **The Privilege of Sonship**
   1 John 3:1, 2
4. **The Discipline of Sonship**
   Heb. 12:5-7, 11
5. **The Father's Love**
   Rom. 8:35-39
6. **Approaching the Father**
   John 4:23, 24

Part 1

THE NEW NAME
Luke 11:2

"And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."

In Old Testament times God had been so misrepresented that the common people looked upon Him as an exacting, harsh judge with no feeling of compassion for His children. Desiring to remove this misconception and to restore again the confidence of men in the great love of God, Christ began His ideal prayer with the words, "Our Father."

While God is the common Father of all mankind by virtue of creation (see Mal. 2:10; Acts 17:28), in a special sense He is a Father only to the saints. Only a true believer in Him can be called a child of God, and only a true child can address God as Father. "But if you call God your Father you acknowledge yourselves His children, to be guided by His wisdom and to be obedient in all things, knowing that His love is changeless. You will accept His plan for your life."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* page 105.

How personal an interest does our heavenly Father take in His children on earth? Matt. 10:29-31.

Since God is willing to be called our Father, we can therefore expect that He will take a personal interest in us. See Matt. He gladly gives us that which is good. Luke 11:11-13. As a good Father, He will do all He can to save us. Mal. 3:17.

What is the supreme evidence of God's paternal love? 1 John 4:8-10.

THINK IT THROUGH

What other names could appropriately be applied to God the Father?

"In order to strengthen our confidence in God, Christ teaches us to address Him by a new name, a name entwined with the dearest associations of the human heart. He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite God our Father. This name, spoken to Him and of Him, is a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us. Spoken when asking His favor or blessing, it is as music in His ears. That we might not think it presumption to call Him by this name, He has repeated it again and again. He desires us to become familiar with the appellation."—"Christ's Object Lessons," pages 141, 142.

Part 2

THE FATHER REVEALED IN CHRIST

"Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

John 14:8-10

Near the close of His ministry Jesus told the disciples of His soon coming death and how He would return again to this earth after His ascension to take them home with Him. John 13:31 to 14:3. But the disciples were slow to comprehend. Grappling with his doubts, Philip said, "If you are going away, then give us some crowning demonstration. 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'"

How did Christ answer Philip? Verse 9.

It is only as we behold Jesus Christ that our eyes are opened to see beyond to our Father-God. "Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known." —*The Desire of Ages,* page 22.

How is the Father's love as revealed in Christ impressed upon our hearts today? Rom. 5:5; Gal. 4:6.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there any other way to know God than through Jesus Christ? Matt. 11:27; John 14:6.

"God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men."—"Steps to Christ," pages 10, 11.

Part 3

THE PRIVILEGE OF SONSHIP

1 John 3:1, 2

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

What an astonishing passage this is. We who by nature are sinful and under the curse of God and who in times past have been disobedient, unthankful, and unholy are pronounced the sons of God. John cannot help but say, "Behold, what manner of love!" It is beyond comprehension that the holy God is not ashamed to be called our Father and to call us His sons.

John here uses the phrase "sons of God" to describe the new relationship between God and the one who is born again. The same Greek expression is translated as "children of God" in verse 10 and in 1 John 5:2. This relationship is a gift which is "bestowed upon us." Verse 1. In mutual relationships between friends one party contributes as much as the other, but in the new birth God gives all and with thanksgiving we receive all.

What privilege awaits the child of God? Verse 2, last part. How may we enter upon this new relationship with God? John 1:12, 13.

"The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. . . .

"It is only through the life which God Himself has imparted, that either plant or animal can live. So it is only through the life from God that spiritual life is begotten in the hearts of men."—*Steps to Christ,* page 67.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can a child of God express his love to his Father?

"God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service." —"Christ's Object Lessons," page 282.

"The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child."—"Steps to Christ," page 15.

Part 4

THE DISCIPLINE OF SONSHIP

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him:

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Heb. 12:5-7, 11

In Hebrews 12:5, 6 Paul quotes an Old Testament passage to remind his readers that trials are not inconsistent with the love of God. See Prov. 3:11, 12. Only a father who is deeply concerned about his children will chasten them when he feels it necessary. Children without a loving father do not receive the benefit of discipline.

The word translated "chastening" means "upbringing," "training," "instruction," "discipline," and refers to the whole process by which children are prepared for the responsibilities of adult life. In verse 7 the ancient manuscripts read, "Endure unto chastening!" Knowing what is best for us, God calls upon us to submit to the training that is necessary that we may become mature Christians.

What privilege is accorded the one who endures God's chastening? Verse 7.

What is the end result of divine discipline? Verse 11.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does divine discipline differ from the suffering and disappointments that come to every individual?

"If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

"The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 10.

Part 5

THE FATHER'S LOVE

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

"As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rom. 8:35-39

These are words in which every Christian should immerse his soul. Paul asks the question: "Will anything ever make God cease to love us?" The answer is obvious. The Father of the universe could never forsake His children. There can never be a situation which would diminish God's feelings for us. God is not only loving and eternal, but He is "greater than all," and "no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." John 10:29.

Through whom is God's love demonstrated? Verse 39.

What does God intend that His love, operating through Christ, shall do for us? 2 Cor. 5:14.

The word translated "constraineth" means "impels," "controls." As an automatic pilot controls an airplane on a predetermined course, so Christ will control the person who has chosen to be guided by His love. Compare Rom. 8:3, 4.

THINK IT THROUGH

What evidence have I been given of God's love?

"Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand."—"The Acts of the Apostles," page 553.

Part 6

APPROACHING THE FATHER
John 4:23, 24

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

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These words are part of Christ's answer to the woman who questioned Him concerning the proper place to worship God. See John 4:6-22. It is not *where* but *how* we approach God that really matters. Since God is a Spirit, He can be found any place at any time, but only when we come to Him in "spirit and in truth." "That is, in all sincerity, with the highest faculties of the mind and emotions, applying the principles of truth to the heart (see on Matt. 5:3, 48; 7:21-27; Mark 7:6-9). This is genuine worship, Jesus says; all else is false."—*SDA Bible Commentary,* on John 4:23.

Does the Father welcome worship? Verse 23, last part.

"Salvation is not the result of men's feeble efforts at seeking out an indifferent God, but of the unwearied efforts of a heavenly Father who, with solicitous compassion, seeks for His lost children."—*SDA Bible Commentary,* on John 4:23.

What advice does Paul give those approaching the Father? Heb. 4:16.

In the Old Testament sanctuary service the high priest drew near to God on the Day of Atonement, and the people stood afar off. In Christ the people draw near to God themselves. Under the old system they were told, "Let him not approach." Lev. 21:17. Under the new covenant Christ's followers are advised, "Let us draw near with a true heart." Heb. 10:22.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is worship for God's benefit or for ours?

"Not by seeking a holy mountain or a sacred temple are men brought into communion with heaven. Religion is not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters."
—"The Desire of Ages," page 189.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. What new name did Jesus give for God? _____

2. What was the supreme demonstration of the Father's love to us? _____

_____

3. Complete: "For the love of Christ _____ _____."

4. What name for the Christian did the apostle John use to describe the new relationship? _____

5. Complete: "They that worship Him must worship Him in _____

_____ _____ _____."

6. The word "chastening" as used in the New Testament means (A) punishment, (B) correction, (C) penalization, (D) training.

(The answers are at the bottom of the page.)

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

(Each week this section will contain suggested readings for the student who wishes to spend a few extra moments with the Master each day.)

S "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 139-142. (1923 ed., pages 137-141.)

M "The Desire of Ages," pages 19-22.

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 279-283. (1923 ed., pages 281-285.)

W "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 9-13, 31-35. (1943 ed., pages 22-28, 53-58.)

T "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 103-106. (1943 ed., pages 154-156.)

F "Steps to Christ," pages 9-15. ("God's Love for Man.")

Answers: (1) Our Father; (2) sent His Son to this earth for us; (3) constraineth us; (4) children of God; (5) spirit and in truth; (6) D.

CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR 2

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16.

The purpose of this study is to give a deeper understanding of Christ's supernatural birth, His exemplary life, vicarious death, resurrection, and ascension, and how these affect the life of every individual. Realizing that there are insoluble mysteries concerning the nature of Christ, we should enter into our study with a positive emphasis on things that have been revealed, and a reverent reserve when we pass into unknown realms.

KEY THOUGHTS

Each of the five major phases of the earthly life of the Saviour represents an essential aspect of the plan of salvation. These five are:

1. The Incarnation. Sin estranged man from his Creator, thus severing his connection with the source of life. The reunion of divinity with humanity at Christ's birth makes it possible for our humanity to be united with divinity by the new birth.

2. A Perfect Life. The Saviour's life on earth was a perfect example of submission to the Father. Through the Holy Spirit He imparts power to us to follow that example. The process of learning to do so we call sanctification.

3. A Vicarious Death. On Calvary Christ died in our stead, and by virtue of His death we have access through faith to His saving grace. Accepting this gift, we experience justification.

4. A Triumphant Resurrection. Christ's triumph over death is our assurance of the resurrection and of life everlasting.

5. A Glorious Ascension. Christ ascended to heaven to complete the work of salvation, thereby enabling us to prepare for translation.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The God-man**
   John 1:1-3, 14
2. **His Mission to Earth**
   John 10:9, 10
3. **Victorious Life**
   1 Peter 2:21-23
4. **Vicarious Death**
   Rom. 5:8-11
5. **From Grave to Glory**
   1 Cor. 15:19-22
6. **His Priestly Work**
   Heb. 4:14-16

Part 1

THE GOD-MAN

John 1:1-3, 14

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

This portion of Scripture describes the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. With strong, majestic lines John portrays the supreme event of all ages, the invasion of this planet by God Himself wrapped in the outward form of a child. See Luke 2:7-14. This event fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14. Matthew quotes this prophecy and defines the name Immanuel: "Which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:23.

"God with us." What beautiful, mysterious, unexplainable words! In Christ two natures, the divine and the human, were mysteriously blended into one person. He became one of a kind, a God-man, the only being that ever has or ever will be such. Surely, "the limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery—the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary,* Vol. 7, p. 904.

How full and complete was the deity of the incarnate Christ? John 1:1. See also Col. 1:15-19; 2:9; Heb. 1:1-3, 8.

How full and complete was the humanity of the incarnate Christ? John 1:14. See also Heb. 2:14, 17; Phil. 2:5-8.

Sin alienated man from his Creator, severing his connection with the source of life; but the reunion of divinity with humanity at Christ's birth made it possible for humanity to be united again with divinity. Thus the incarnation was essential to salvation, for it bridged the gap between the sinner and God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is the incarnation of Christ called a mystery?

"Christ is the pre-existent Son of God. . . . There never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. . . . He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent."—"Evangelism," page 615.

"Had He not been fully human, Christ could not have been our substitute. He could not have worked out in humanity that perfection of character which it is the privilege of all to reach."—Ellen G. White in "The Signs of the Times," June 17, 1897.

Part 2

HIS MISSION TO EARTH
John 10:9, 10

"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The purpose of Christ's mission to earth is described in several ways in the Bible. Paul says that Christ gave Himself as "an offering and a sacrifice to God." Eph. 5:2. And again, that He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people." Titus 2:14. He came "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:6) and to "bear witness unto the truth." John 18:37.

How did our Lord Himself describe the purpose of His mission to earth? John 10:10.

When Adam and Eve were created, they were candidates for eternal life; but they sinned and lost this privilege. Christ came to restore this life to any who choose to accept it. Like a criminal who is pardoned, or a sick man who is cured, so the sinner can have life and can have it even more abundantly than did Adam and Eve, without sin, and without fear of death.

Read again John 10:9, 10 and note how the phrases used to describe the safety of God's children are drawn from the Old Testament. Compare verse 9, on entering in and going out, with Num. 27:17 and Deut. 28:6. We may feel like Solomon, "I know not how to go out or come in" (1 Kings 3:7), but we hear a Greater than Solomon saying, "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Whom did Jesus name as the objects of His mission to earth? Luke 19:10.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why was it a sacrifice for Jesus to become incarnate?

"By sin man was shut out from God. Except for the plan of redemption, eternal separation from God, the darkness of unending night, would have been his. Through the Saviour's sacrifice, communion with God is again made possible. We may not in person approach into His presence; in our sin we may not look upon His face; but we can behold Him and commune with Him in Jesus, the Saviour."—"Education," page 28.

Part 3

VICTORIOUS LIFE

1 Peter 2:21-23

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:

"Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

Jesus took man's nature but not man's sinfulness. There was nothing in Him that responded to sin. This has raised endless discussion, some of it good, some of it unprofitable. A few questions may be helpful here:

Was Jesus subject to the laws of heredity that affect every human being?

"Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 49.

Was Jesus a normal child, or was He supernaturally gifted above all others?

"He gained knowledge as we may do. . . . Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did."—*Ibid.,* p. 70.

Was He perfect throughout His whole life?

"At each stage of His development He was perfect, with the simple, natural grace of a sinless life."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 83. Compare 2 Cor. 5:21—"knew no sin."

Was Jesus tempted to sin?

He was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. Though tempted, He had no bias or propensity toward sin. "He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary,* Vol. 5, p. 1128.

How did Christ react to persecution? 1 Peter 2:23.
What does Christ's victory over sin mean to us? Heb. 2:18.

THINK IT THROUGH

What would have been the result had Jesus sinned while on earth?

"If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was 'in all points tempted like as we are.' Heb. 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God."—"The Desire of Ages," page 24.

Part 4

VICARIOUS DEATH

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Rom. 5:8-11

In verse 7 of this chapter Paul states that a righteous man might give his life for another good man. But Christ gave His life for us "while we were yet sinners," enemies, traitors, rebels. What greater demonstration of love could be given?

Notice this sequence: we are justified by His blood (verse 9); reconciled by His death (verse 10); saved by His life (verse 10). By His death we are justified and reconciled to God. Then God can work in us to perfect the character that is needed if we are to be saved in His kingdom.

Is God reconciled to man, or is man reconciled to God? Verse 10.

In another text Paul says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. See also Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20. Nowhere in the Bible is it said that God has to be reconciled to man. God hates sin, but His love for sinners is so great that He spared nothing to bring about a reconciliation. Christ died, not to win God over to man, but to win man back to God.

How fully did Christ accept the responsibility for our sins and reconcile us to God? 2 Cor. 5:21.

THINK IT THROUGH

Should the Christian attempt to be reconciled to his enemies? Why?

"In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. 'Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Phil. 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. . . .

"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.' "—"The Desire of Ages," page 25.

Part 5

FROM GRAVE TO GLORY

1 Cor. 15:19-22

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

About twenty-five years after Christ's ascension Paul wrote to the Corinthians and recounted the arguments for the resurrection of Jesus. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." 1 Cor. 15:17. This would make the Christian the most miserable of all men. Verse 19. His point is this: If Christ had not risen from the dead, all our religion is in vain; for He cannot save us from our sins. And this is the one thing for which we need a savior. Without His resurrection, there can be no redemption. Without the resurrection, there is no reconciliation. Without the resurrection, there is no life eternal.

What triumphant declaration did Paul make concerning Christ's resurrection? Verse 20.

This term "firstfruits" is in reference to the ancient custom of waving the first sheaf of the barley harvest before the Lord. As the wave sheaf was a pledge of the bountiful harvest to follow, likewise Christ's death and resurrection is our guarantee that we shall be made alive in Him.

At His ascension what comforting assurance was given to His disciples? Acts 1:9-11.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does 1 Cor. 15:22 mean that everyone will be saved?

"Christ is the firstfruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered *into the garner of God.*"—"The Great Controversy," page 399.

"The voice that cried from the cross, 'It is finished,' was heard among the dead. It pierced the walls of sepulchers, and summoned the sleepers to arise. Thus will it be when the voice of Christ shall be heard from heaven. That voice will penetrate the graves, and unbar the tombs, and the dead in Christ shall arise. At the Saviour's resurrection a few graves were opened, but at His second coming all the precious dead *shall hear His voice, and shall come* forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come."—"The Desire of Ages," page 787.

Part 6

HIS PRIESTLY WORK

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Heb. 4:14-16

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3) and entered into His priestly work. The work of Christ on earth was completed, but it was still necessary for Him to apply to each individual the benefits of the atonement.

Why is Christ worthy to be our High Priest? Verse 15. What is His priestly work? Heb. 2:17; 7:25; 9:24.

Christ our High Priest is able to love and sympathize with us in the most perfect, complete, godlike way possible. He suffers with the struggling Christian. Verse 15. This is why we can "come boldly unto the throne" (verse 16), fully expecting all the graces that are available to us there. As the sinner approaches the throne of grace, he sees the lovely, sinless character of Jesus. He becomes aware of how Jesus dealt with temptation and recognizes this as the godlike way to act. In contrast, he sees his own utter sinfulness; and, casting himself before the throne, he pleads for the forgiveness of sin. Then our "merciful and faithful high priest" makes "reconciliation for the sins," and the sinner is made right with God.

THINK IT THROUGH

What steps can I take today to become more like Jesus Christ?

"The blood of Jesus is pleading with power and efficacy for those who are backslidden, for those who are rebellious, for those who sin against great light and love. Satan stands at our right hand to accuse us, and our Advocate stands at God's right hand to plead for us. He has never lost a case that has been committed to Him. We may trust in our Advocate; for He pleads His own merits in our behalf. Hear His prayer before His betrayal and trial. Listen to His prayer for us; for He had us in remembrance. . . .

"He is making intercession for the most lowly, the most oppressed and suffering, for the most tried and tempted ones. With upraised hands He pleads, 'I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.' God loves to hear, and responds to the pleadings of His Son."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 7, p. 948.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. Which Old Testament prophet predicted that a virgin would give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel? _____

2. True or False: Jesus had both a divine nature and a human nature when He was on earth.

3. Complete: "I am come that they might have _____, and that they might have it _____ _____."

4. True or False: Jesus was born sinless, but He was capable of being tempted and could have fallen.

5. Complete: "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him [Christ] to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a _____ and _____ High Priest."

6. Immanuel means "_____."

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "The Desire of Ages," pages 22-26.

M "Patriarchs and Prophets," pages 63-65.

T "The Desire of Ages," pages 49, 71-74.

W "The Desire of Ages," pages 758-762.

T "The Desire of Ages," pages 779-787.

F "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pages 467-472.

Answers: (1) Isaiah; (2) True; (3) life, more abundantly; (4) True; (5) merciful, faithful; (6) God with us.

LESSON 3

January 17

AT PEACE WITH GOD 3

"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18, 19.

This study describes what Christ has done and is doing to reconcile sinners to God. Reconciliation denotes a change in the status of two or more estranged individuals. The act of reconciliation performed by Jesus changed the relationship of man and God from enmity to friendship. The change is on man's, not God's, part; but it is a direct result of God's appeal and God's grace in giving Christ to ransom man from sin.

KEY WORDS

1. Redemption. Jesus obtained eternal "redemption" for us. Heb. 9:12. This word looks at sin as slavery, and at sinners as slaves to sin. Rom. 6:16, 17. It sees the ministry of Christ in delivering us from sin as a work of setting slaves free from bondage.

2. Reconciliation. That God "reconciled" us to Himself by Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:18) is the good news of "reconciliation." Verses 19, 20. Christ became incarnate in order "to make reconciliation" for our sins. Heb. 2:17. These words look at sin as a state of hostility toward God, and at sinners as enemies of God. Rom. 5:10; 8:7. They see the ministry of Christ as a work of setting us at peace with God. Rom. 5:1, 10.

3. Propitiation. As used in the New Testament, "propitiation" is equivalent to "reconciliation." Christ is the "propitiation" for our sins. 1 John 2:2; 4:10. "Propitiation" presents Christ as the Lamb of God, by whom the enmity of sin is removed. John 1:29.

4. Atonement. Through Christ we have received the "atonement." As used in Romans 5:11 the word "atonement" simply means "at-one-ment" and is equivalent to "reconciliation."

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Without God in the world**
   Eph. 2:1-3
2. **The Great Reconciler**
   2 Cor. 5:18, 19
3. **Reunited by His Death**
   Rom. 5:8-11
4. **Reconciliation Applied**
   Heb. 2:17, 18
5. **No Longer Alone**
   John 1:11-13
6. **Grace in Action**
   Rom. 12: 1, 2

Part 1

WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD

"And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Eph. 2:1-3

According to Paul the miserable condition of a man living in sin can be described as follows:

1. He is condemned. Verse 1. Because he is cut off from God, the fountain of life, he is already considered as "dead in trespasses and sin." He has nothing to look forward to but death.
2. He is a slave. Verse 2. The sinner must live according to the dictates of Satan, the "prince of the power of the air." There is no freedom in sin.
3. He is controlled by lust. Verse 3. The sinner's "conversation" (better translated "conduct") is determined by the wishes of his lustful flesh rather than by the higher dictates of his spiritual nature. See Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:24-32.

It is no wonder that Paul goes on in verse 12 of Ephesians 2 to describe the sinner as an alien and stranger "having no hope, and without God in this world."

What is the attitude of the unregenerate heart toward God and spiritual things? Rom. 1:21-23; 8:7, 8.
Why has the sinner become alienated from God? Eph. 4:18, 19.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does the child of God have more freedom than the sinner? Why?

"[At Christ's birth] Satanic agencies were incorporated with men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. . . .

"It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 36, 37.

Part 2

THE GREAT RECONCILER

2 Cor. 5:18, 19

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

Did you notice that Paul repeats in verse 19 what he has just said in verse 18? Let it be said over and over again. We have been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Out of heaven itself came the Saviour to work the greatest miracle of all history, the saving of a lost world. See Col. 1:19, 20. Jesus Christ did not come to appease God by making a sacrifice to His wrath. Rather, God took the initiative, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19.

Jesus died in the place of the sinner and for his mistakes. The enmity that resulted from the sinner's violation of the law was set aside, and reconciliation between the sinner and his God became a reality. It is proper, then, to say that God is the author, man is the object, and the death of Christ is the medium, of reconciliation.

What responsibility has been committed to those who are already reconciled? Verses 18, 19, last parts.

What causes great joy in heaven? Luke 15:7, 10.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why doesn't God allow sinners to go their own way without interference?

"God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. . . .

"But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.' John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world."—"Steps to Christ," page 13.

Part 3

REUNITED BY HIS DEATH

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

"And *not only so, but we also joy in God through our* Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Rom. 5:8-11

Notice that we were reconciled to God by the death of Christ "when we were enemies." Verse 10. This does not mean that God made Himself our enemy. We made ourselves enemies of God. God did not need reconciling, but man did.

The reconciliation is described in several ways in the Bible. Paul speaks of it as "redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1:7), and as "reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). In 1 John 4:10 we read that God sent His Son to be "the propitiation for our sins," and in Romans 5:11 it is said that through Jesus Christ "we have now received the atonement." Different words are used, but all describe the same process that brings us together again with our Father-God. See 1 Peter 3:18.

How should the Christian react to his reconciliation? Verse 11.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. **Why do we need to be reconciled?**
2. **How could the death of one man make atonement for the sins of the whole world?**

"By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.' John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. . . . In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 25, 26.

Part 4

RECONCILIATION APPLIED

Heb. 2:17, 18

"Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."

Hebrews 2:9-18 portrays a wonderful unfolding of the work of Jesus Christ in reconciling sinners to God. The writer begins by describing how Jesus came to this earth that He might "taste death for every man." Verse 9. He was made "perfect through sufferings" (verse 10); He was not ashamed to call us brethren (verse 11). By His death He destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Verse 14. Now He has become "a merciful and faithful High Priest . . . , to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Verse 17.

Christ died for the entire world (see 2 Cor. 5:19), but each individual must make his own personal reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ. This work of reconciliation is the work which Jesus has entered into as our High Priest.

How did the sufferings of Christ fit Him for His priestly work? Heb. 2:18.

"Christ must become man so completely and fully that it can never be said that He is a stranger to any temptation, any sorrow, any trial or suffering that men must pass through."—*SDA Bible Commentary,* on Heb. 2:17.

How did John describe the priestly office of Christ? 1 John 2:1.

THINK IT THROUGH

When we are tempted, what can we ask Christ to do for us?

"Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and He is there to make an atonement for the people. He is there to present His wounded side and pierced hands to His Father. He is there to plead for His church that is upon the earth. He is cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. What is our work?—It is our work to be in harmony with the work of Christ. By faith we are to work with Him, to be in union with Him."—E. G. White in "Review and Herald," Jan. 28, 1890.

"Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 9.

Part 5

NO LONGER ALONE

John 1:11-13

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Israel was God's "peculiar people." Deut. 26:18. He chose them for "a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Deut. 7:6. It could be expected that they would accept Christ with open arms. But they denied Him. They turned Him out and gave Him over to the Gentiles. They had Him put to death in a manner of deep disgrace. "His own received Him not."

But not all failed Him, and "as many as received Him" were given the opportunity to become the sons of God. A person's salvation does not depend on the race, nation, or church to which he belongs. It is a gift to the one who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and accepts by faith the promise of salvation through Him.

What distinguishes true conversion from the false? Verse 13.

What experience must we cultivate in order to retain the blessings of divine grace? 2 Peter 3:18.

This can also be translated "keep on growing." We are to grow in both grace and knowledge, and to keep it up. "Those who believe the truth are to be newly converted every day." —*Testimonies to Ministers,* page 248. By growing in grace and accepting the power that comes from God we become sons of God, members of the divine family. See 1 John 3:1; Rom. 8:14.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do we "receive" God?

"Divine sonship is not something that we gain of ourselves. Only to those who receive Christ as their Saviour is given the power to become sons and daughters of God. The sinner cannot, by any power of his own, rid himself of sin. For the accomplishment of this result, he must look to a higher Power. John exclaimed, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' Christ alone has power to cleanse the heart."—Ellen G. White, "Sons and Daughters of God," page 12.

"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. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 312.

Part 6

GRACE IN ACTION

Rom. 12:1, 2

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Here Paul brings theology down to practical terms. The phrase "a living sacrifice" comes from the Old Testament Levitical law and is used by Paul to contrast the sacrifice of a lamb with the sacrifice of a living believer. In the Old Testament the sacrifices were killed, but under the new way of life we are "dead with Christ," so far as sin is concerned, and "alive unto God." See Rom. 6:8-11.

What does Paul caution us against? Rom. 12:2, first part.

Another translation reads, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold." Phillips. But if we are not to conform to the world, what should we do? "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." This is grace in action. The sinner is taken from his degraded position and transformed into a new individual, acceptable to the perfect will of God.

What is the result of the transforming power of God in the life? Gal. 5:22, 23.

It is interesting to compare these nine qualities with similar lists in 2 Peter 1:5-7; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 3:10. When grace comes into the life of a man, he will be transformed and brought into an intimate fellowship with God which it is the privilege only of the Christian to know. See Phil. 3:9, 10.

THINK IT THROUGH

How many of the fruits of the spirit are present in my life? Which one should I concentrate on developing today?

"He will not accept half a sacrifice. All, all, all, is God's, and we are required to render perfect service."—"Testimonies," Vol. 1, p. 694.

"We see by experience that in our own human strength, resolutions and purposes are of no avail. Must we, then, give up our determined efforts? No; although our experience testifies that we cannot possibly do this work ourselves, help has been laid upon One who is mighty to do it for us. But the only way we can secure the help of God is to put ourselves wholly in His hands, and trust Him to work for us. As we lay hold of Him by faith, He does the work. The believer can only trust. As God works, we can work, trusting in Him and doing His will."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 6, p. 1080.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. Complete: God is the _____, man is the _____, and the death of Christ is the _____ of reconciliation.

2. True or False: Jesus came to this earth to appease the wrath of God toward sinners. _____

3. According to the Bible what causes great joy in heaven? _____ _____.

4. The word "advocate" is used by John to describe the work of (A) Satan, (B) Jesus, (C) God the Father, (D) a Christian. _____

5. Complete: "But as many as _____ Him, to them gave He _____ to become the sons of God."

6. How many of the fruits of the Spirit can you name? _____ _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "Steps to Christ," pages 17-22. ("The Sinner's Need of Christ.")

M "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 186-192. (1923 ed., pages 187-193.)

T "Patriarchs and Prophets," pages 67-70.

W "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 6-9. (1943 ed., pages 17-21.)

T "Christ's Object Lessons, pages 198-211. (1923 ed., pages 201-213.)

F "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 314-319. (1923 ed., pages 320-325.)

Answers: (1) author, subject, medium; (2) False; (3) a sinner that repents; (4) B; (5) received, power; (6) love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

THE KINGDOM OF GRACE 4

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:16.

"Grace" is a translation of the Greek word "charis," which denotes "favor" or "goodwill." In ancient times a king or great man extended favor to servants, slaves, or captives. This idea appears in the Bible, with more elevated meaning, to show God's attitude to men.

KEY THOUGHTS

1. The Kingdom of Grace. A kingdom is an organized form of society consisting of king, subjects, and territory. The kingdom of grace is the church invisible throughout probationary time. Its role complete, the kingdom of grace will eventually merge into God's eternal kingdom of glory.

2. The King of Grace. Jesus Christ is the King of grace. The theme of His earthly ministry was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4:17. The crucifixion was "His true coronation."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 379.

3. Subjects of Grace. God's transforming grace is displayed by the subjects of His kingdom. By divine grace they were justified when they became its subjects; by divine grace they are sanctified as long as they remain loyal to God.

4. The Throne of Grace. The kingdom of grace exists to give its subjects access to the throne of grace, where they can "obtain mercy, and find grace to help" them overcome every inherited and cultivated tendency to evil and thus qualify for admission to the everlasting kingdom of glory. Heb. 4:16.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Kingdom Established**
   Matt. 4:17
   Rev. 12:10, 11
2. **Nature of the Kingdom**
   Luke 17:20, 21
3. **Like Unto a Mustard Seed**
   Matt. 13:31, 32
4. **Admission by Birth**
   John 3:3-5
5. **Citizenship Requirements**
   Matt. 5:3-10
6. **Privileges and Benefits**
   Mark 10:28-30

Part 1

THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

Matt. 4:17
Rev. 12:10, 11

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The kingdom of heaven cannot be clearly understood by comparing it with earthly governments. His kingdom is a kingdom of grace. Wherever the King is, wherever He rules with grace and power, that is where His kingdom is to be found. Thus when Jesus came it was very appropriate to say, "The kingdom of heaven is near," for the King Himself was very near. See Matt. 3:2; 12:28; Luke 16:16.

By what event was the permanent establishment of the kingdom of divine grace made possible? Heb. 2:14, 15. How did the permanent establishment of the kingdom change Satan's status? Rev. 12:10, 11.

At the cross two certainties were irrevocably established. First, Christ was victorious in making an atonement for sin. "Every barrier was then broken down which intercepted the freest fullness of the exercise of grace, mercy, peace, and love to the most guilty of Adam's race."—E. G. White manuscript 92, 1899. Second, "Satan saw that his disguise was torn away." He stood revealed as a "murderer," and "the last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 761.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does Satan continue his work even though Christ assured his eventual defeat?

"As used in the Bible, the expression 'kingdom of God' is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is brought to view by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After pointing to Christ, the compassionate intercessor who is 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' the apostle says: 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace." . . .

"The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ."—"The Great Controversy," pages 347, 348.

Part 2

NATURE OF THE KINGDOM
Luke 17:20, 21

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

The Jews looked forward with longing and anticipation to the coming of the Messiah, for they felt that when He came He would establish a glorious, visible kingdom here on earth. Before Jesus came on the scene, the Jewish leaders had heard John the Baptist preach that "the kingdom" was at hand. Later, Christ Himself had proclaimed that the kingdom was near. By now several years had passed, but a physical literal kingdom was not in sight. The Pharisees came to Jesus and chided Him with His failure to produce the kingdom He had promised. See verse 20.

How did Jesus reply to the Pharisees? Verse 21.

"The Pharisees sit in their observation towers in vain; the kingdom, being spiritual and internal, comes right under their noses, and with their unspiritual eyes they never see a thing of it or of its coming."—R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Luke's Gospel,* page 882.

The Revised Standard Version translates the last part of Luke 17:21 as "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." This rendering avoids the idea that the kingdom was in the hearts of the Pharisees.

How did Jesus explain the nature of His kingdom to Pilate? John 18:36.

THINK IT THROUGH

Has the kingdom of grace been established in my life? My home? My church?

"The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His Word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ."—"Testimonies," Vol. 7, p. 143.

"Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the Word of God."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 509, 510.

Part 3

LIKE UNTO A MUSTARD SEED

Matt. 13:31, 32

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

"Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Christ chose the smallest seed that was ordinarily planted in ancient gardens to illustrate the phenomenal growth of the kingdom of God. It was difficult for the disciples to understand how the kingdom could increase. They were but a handful of unlettered, ordinary people, set off in a small corner of the world. But even as the mustard seed grows from such a small beginning to a full-grown bush the size of a tree, so the kingdom of God has grown from its humble beginnings to its magnificent outreach today. See *Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 77, 78.

What other parable illustrates the nature and purpose of the kingdom of God's grace? Matt. 13:33.

While the mustard seed represents the extensive growth of God's kingdom, the parable of the leaven describes the intensive growth of the kingdom within the human heart. Although leaven is often used in the Bible to depict the growth of evil (see Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:7, 8), in the parable of the leaven it depicts the work of grace in transforming the lives of those who are receptive. This grace will work silently and irresistibly to change the quality of the life, diffusing itself into all the powers and faculties of the mind until the whole has been changed into the image of God Himself. 2 Cor. 3:18.

What transfer of the kingdom became necessary because of Israel's unfaithfulness? Matt. 21:43.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do today to extend the work of the kingdom?

"When Christ spoke this parable, there were only a few Galilean peasants to represent the new kingdom. Their poverty, the fewness of their numbers, were urged over and over again as a reason why men should not connect themselves with these simple-minded fishermen who followed Jesus. But the mustard seed was to grow and spread forth its branches throughout the world. When the earthly kingdoms whose glory then filled the hearts of men should perish, the kingdom of Christ would remain, a mighty and far-reaching power.

"So the work of grace in the heart is small in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the soul, an influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can measure its results?"—"Christ's Object Lessons," pages 77, 78.

Part 4

ADMISSION BY BIRTH

John 3:3-5

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus, a Jewish official, Pharisee, and member of the Sanhedrin, came secretly to Jesus inquiring of the kingdom of God. Christ's answer was straight and startling: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This was a devastating blow to Nicodemus. What higher birth could he have than to be born a son of Abraham in Palestine the Promised Land! What about his parentage, birth, position, prestige—? Was all this worthless?

How did Nicodemus reply to Christ's statement? Verse 4.

Birth is the beginning of life. To be "born again" is to start life over. At our first birth we are born corrupt, sinful, subject to death. See Rom. 5:12. If we are to inhabit the kingdom of God, we must be born again from above. The natural man must become a spiritual man. We must be changed from enemies of God (Rom. 8:7) to friends of God. We must be born again.

What is man's part in the new-birth experience? John 1:12, 13.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can a person know if he has been born again?

"Religion is not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters."—"The Desire of Ages," page 189.

Part 5

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matt. 5:3-10

The Beatitudes were given at a crucial period in the ministry of Christ. His message, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," had raised the hopes of the people to a high pitch—hopes that He might indeed be the One to conquer Rome. In this great declaration of the principles and laws of His kingdom, Jesus gave a succession of blessings listing the qualities that should be found in those who belonged to His kingdom. For further reading see *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* pages 6-35.

How important is it that we do the will of God? Matt. 7:21.

What is the basic law of the kingdom of heaven? Matt. 22:36-40.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is it possible to keep the commandments by an effort of the will?

"In the Sermon on the Mount He [Christ] sought . . . to give His hearers a right conception of His kingdom and of His own character. . . . He told them the conditions of entrance therein, leaving them to draw their own conclusions as to its nature."—"The Desire of Ages," page 299.

"Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience. Those who have felt their need of Christ, those who have mourned because of sin and have sat with Christ in the school of affliction, will learn meekness from the divine Teacher."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 13, 14.

Part 6

PRIVILEGES AND BENEFITS

Mark 10:28-30

"Then Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee.

"And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel's,

"But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

Some have ridiculed the promise given in Mark 10:30, pointing out that certainly a Christian does not receive one hundredfold here on this earth for everything he has lost. But what the scoffer does not know is that to the Christian the complete joy of loving fellowship and the very real and intense satisfaction that comes from serving God is greater by one hundredfold than anything he has lost. See Ps. 37:16; Prov. 15:16; 16:8; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:6. In addition to all this he will have "in the world to come eternal life," which is certainly worth infinitely more than any loss that is suffered here. See 2 Cor. 4:17.

What phrase in Mark 10:30 reminds us that this is still a world of sin?

Should we expect only spiritual blessings from God while on this earth? Matt. 6:30-33.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can you think of any case where a believer regretted any sacrifice involved in following Christ?

"Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the Word of God. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Matt. 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His Word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other."—"The Desire of Ages," page 121.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. The kingdom of grace is (A) the church invisible, (B) heaven, (C) all who have died in the faith, (D) all who will be translated.

2. Complete: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is _____ _____."

3. By what event was the establishment of the kingdom of grace made possible? (A) fall of man, (B) birth of Christ, (C) death of Christ, (D) stoning of Stephen. _____

4. Which of Christ's parables illustrates the phenomenal growth of the kingdom of grace? _____

5. In the parable of the leaven, Christ used the leaven to illustrate (A) sin in the heart, (B) the work of grace in the life, (C) the quality of mercy, (D) the need for forgiveness. _____

6. Complete: "Except a man be _____ of _____ and of the _____, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "The Desire of Ages," pages 231-235.

M "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 8, 107-109. (1943 ed., pages 159, 160.)

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 95-102. (1923 ed., pages 93-99.)

W "Steps to Christ," pages 43-48. ("Consecration.")

T "The Desire of Ages," pages 298-306.

F "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 395-399. (1923 ed., pages 397-406.)

Answers: (1) A; (2) within you; (3) C; (4) parable of the mustard seed; (5) B; (6) born, water, Spirit.

THE SINNER JUSTIFIED 5

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

The phrase "justified by faith" occurs only in the writings of Paul. Through revelation he became the great proponent of doctrine of justification by faith through grace. Others taught the doctrine, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he developed this greatest of all doctrinal themes to its fullest extent, and tied it to God's love and the cross of Christ. It is hoped that this study will lead you reverently to ask the question: How do I stand in the sight of God at this moment?

KEY WORDS

1. Justify and Justification. The New Testament words thus translated mean "to set right," "to regard as righteous," "to declare righteous," "to treat as being righteous," "to acquit." To be justified is to be made and declared righteous, to be acquitted of wrongdoing, to have charges canceled, to be brought into a right relation with God.

2. Righteousness. This word usually denotes the quality or state of being right. Among the Greeks "righteousness" consisted of conformity to accepted customs. To the Jews it was a matter of conformity to the requirements of the law as interpreted by the rabbis. But for Christ's followers it means conformity to the principles of the kingdom of heaven.

3. Imputed Righteousness. In the Greek New Testament the original expression sometimes translated "to impute" is also translated "to think" (Rom. 2:3), "to count" (Rom. 4:3), "to reckon" (Rom. 4:4). When God imputes righteousness to the repentant sinner, He figuratively places the righteousness of Christ to his credit on the books of heaven, and the sinner stands before God as if he had never sinned.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Born Sinful**
   Rom. 3:10-12
2. **Righteous in Christ**
   Rom. 3:24-26
3. **By Faith Not Works**
   Rom. 4:2-5
4. **A Proper Attitude**
   Luke 18:13, 14
5. **No Longer Enemies**
   Rom. 5:1, 2
6. **Free at Last**
   Rom. 8:1-4

Part 1

BORN SINFUL

Rom. 3:10-12

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Paul very clearly expresses in this passage why men need to be justified. We are all born guilty: "There is none righteous . . . there is none that doeth good." Every man is born with tendencies to evil and is placed in a world where he is surrounded with wickedness. He is destined to be a sinner. The odds are stacked against him. This is man's hopeless condition.

What is the reason for our desperate position? Rom. 1:21-24.

In what other words does Paul emphasize man's sinful condition? Rom. 3:23.

Another writer translates this verse as: "Everyone has sinned; everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan." Phillips.We have all come short of God's plan for our lives as an archer might shoot short of the mark or a long-distance runner come short of the goal. Oh, yes, we might glorify ourselves before men who are corrupt as we are; but when we come to understand the real glory of God, we cannot help but fall down and say, "I have sinned; I have fallen short of Thy glory."

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do we tend to think more highly of ourselves than we ought?

"The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist."—"Education," page 29.

"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. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness."—"Steps to Christ," page 18.

Part 2

RIGHTEOUS IN CHRIST

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

"To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Rom. 3:24-26

In Romans 3:10-23 Paul describes the hopeless condition of the sinner: "there is none righteous" (verse 10); "there is none that doeth good" (verse 12); "there is no fear of God" (verse 18); "all have sinned" (verse 23). But he does not leave us on this discouraging note. In verse 24 he assures us that despite our sinful condition we can be "justified freely by His grace."

How does the sinner receive this free gift? Verse 26.

A man has nothing in himself of which he can boast. See verse 27. If he is to be made right with his Creator, it must be by an act of God, His own gift, not by any works which man can do.

How did Christ earn the right to impute His righteousness to us? Rom. 5:19.

All are sinners, but all can become righteous because of God's free gift which justifies the sinner through Jesus Christ. See Rom. 5:16-18. How can the Judge of heaven and earth be just and yet declare righteous any sinner who cries out to Him? Only because Jesus Christ perfectly satisfied God's justice and opened the way for His grace. See 2 Cor. 5:21.

THINK IT THROUGH

How often do I give thanks for what Christ did for me at Calvary?

"Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' 2 Cor. 5:19."—"The Desire of Ages," page 762.

"In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds."—"Selected Messages," Bk. 1, p. 394.

Part 3

BY FAITH NOT WORKS

Rom. 4:2-5

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Abraham, called in the Bible the "friend of God" has left on record a notable example of faith in his offering of Isaac. It was promised to him that he would be "a father of many nations." Gen. 17:5. The Jews called him their father (John 8:39), and in James 2:21 he is called "our father," that is, the father of all Christians. Thus, when Paul wishes to give an illustration from the Old Testament of justification by faith alone, he naturally turns to Abraham, the spiritual father of all who believe in God.

Upon what basis was Abraham declared righteous? Rom. 4:3.

The word "counted" recalls Gen. 15:6, which is sometimes called the most important verse in the Old Testament: "He believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." "Counted," "reckoned," "imputed," all are from the same Greek word signifying an act of God resulting in the sinner's justification.

How does Paul describe the process by which the righteousness of Christ is transferred to the sinner? Verse 5.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is a man's salvation dependent upon the works he has done? Eph. 2:8-10. See also James 2:17-20.

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. . . .

"Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. . . .

"Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 6, pp. 1070, 1071.

Part 4

A PROPER ATTITUDE

Luke 18:13, 14

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

"Two men went to the temple to worship God. One, a Pharisee, stood with his eyes lifted to heaven and said, "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are." Verse 11. In contrast, the other man, a publican, standing "afar off" and striking his breast in the Oriental manner of showing great sorrow, cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The last two words would be better translated "the sinner." He speaks as though there were no other sinners but he. True repentance finds no comfort in the fact that there are many other perhaps greater sinners.

What was God's response to the two prayers? Verse 14.

"The Pharisee disqualified himself from receiving divine mercy and grace. Self-satisfaction closed the door of his heart to the rich currents of divine love that brought joy and peace to the publican. The prayer of the Pharisee was unacceptable before God, for it was not accompanied with the incense of the merits of Jesus Christ."—*SDA Bible Commentary,* on Luke 18:14.

How is the craving for righteousness rewarded? Matt. 5:6.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there a danger that some Christians today might think of themselves as better than other Christians because of the church they belong to or the position they hold in the church?

"The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. 5:3." —"Christ's Object Lessons," page 152.

"But we must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. The Pharisee felt no conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armor which the arrows of God, barbed and true-aimed by angel hands, failed to penetrate. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save. He came 'to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Luke 4:18. But 'they that are whole need not a physician.' Luke 5:31. We must know our real condition, or we shall not feel our need of Christ's help. We must understand our danger, or we shall not flee to the refuge. We must feel the pain of our wounds, or we shall not desire healing."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 158.

Part 5

NO LONGER ENEMIES
Romans 5:1, 2

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

In the Old Testament the Messiah was described as "the Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6. It was His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that was broken by the entrance of sin. It is disobedience that has produced the discord between God and man. Sin has separated us from God; and there can be no peace, for we look upon Him as our enemy. Rom. 8:7. But through Jesus Christ we are justified of our guilt and cleansed of our sin (1 John 1:9), and once again we can be at peace with our Creator. We may have thought of God as our worst enemy, but now we know Him to be our best Friend. More than this, "We have access by faith into this grace," and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

How does Paul describe the condition of the man who is at peace with God? Rom. 4:6-8.

What visible evidence testifies that a man has been made right with God? Phil. 1:10, 11.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is "blessedness" an apt description for the state of the forgiven sinner?

"You are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You believe that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise,—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it."—"Steps to Christ," page 51.

"Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 6, p. 1073.

Part 6

FREE AT LAST

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Romans 8:1-4

"That the righteousness of the law might he fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

To understand this passage better read Rom. 7:14-25 and then read again Rom. 8:1-4. Notice that in verse one of chapter 8 Paul does not say that we no longer deserve condemnation, for we certainly do. Nor does he say that we will not sin again or that we are good enough to be saved. "When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit." —*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 382.

Jesus came to this earth "in the likeness of sinful flesh" that He might condemn "sin in the flesh." He took sin upon Himself, felt its effects, experienced the condemnation it brings, died because of it. God's character is vindicated, justice is satisfied, and the accuser of the brethren is cast down (Rev. 12:10), and his accusations discredited. The way is clear for the salvation of every sinner who comes to Christ in faith.

What enables us to live a life acceptable to God? 2 Cor. 5:14.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I know if my actions are controlled by the love of Christ?

"The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can 'be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' Rom. 3:26." —"The Desire of Ages," page 762.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. Which New Testament writer was the greatest exponent of the doctrine of justification by faith? _____

2. What man was given the title "a father of many nations"? (A) Adam; (B) Jacob; (C) Moses; (D) Abraham _____

3. Complete: "For by grace are ye saved through _____; and that not of yourselves: it is the _____ _____ _____."

4. The Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray was not justified because he: (A) was too sinful; (B) was self-righteous; (C) left his eyes open while he prayed; (D) was insincere. _____

5. Complete: "Therefore being _____ by faith, we have _____ with _____ through our Lord Jesus Christ."

6. To the Christian, righteousness means: (A) conformity to accepted customs; (B) conformity to the rules of a church; (C) conformity to the laws of government; (D) conformity to the principles of the kingdom of heaven. _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "Education," pages 28, 29.

M "Selected Messages," Bk. 1, pp. 373-376.

T "Selected Messages," Bk. 1, pp. 389-394.

W "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 150-157. (1923 ed., pages 151-158.)

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 158-163. (1923 ed., pages 158-165.)

F "Steps to Christ," pages 23-28. ("Repentance," first third of chapter.)

Answers: (1) Paul; (2) D; (3) faith, gift of God; (4) B; (5) justified, peace, God; (6) D.

THE MIRACLE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH 6

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col. 2:6, 7.

The miracle of spiritual growth begins at conversion and continues throughout the believer's life. It is the gradual building of a Christlike character produced by the believer's submission to the grace of God. This miracle is often called sanctification; and it means perfect love, obedience, and conformity to God's will. It is called a miracle in this lesson because it is the result of the supernatural power of God working out His will in our lives.

KEY WORDS

1. Sanctification. The Greek word for sanctification, also translated "holiness," describes both the *process* of obtaining holiness and the resultant *state* of holiness. If a distinction is to be made between justification and sanctification, it might be said that justification focuses attention on the sinner's release from a state of unrighteousness, and sanctification on his becoming and being righteous.

2. New Testament Terms for Sanctification. New Testament writers use such expressions as: following after righteousness, walking in newness of life, growing up into Christ, growing in grace, adding grace to grace, being built up, strengthened, and established, being transformed, partaking of the divine nature, perfecting holiness —until the Christian is "complete in all the will of God." Col. 4:12.

3. Terms Used in These Lessons. In this series of lessons "justification" (Lesson 5) refers to the transition from a life dedicated to the pursuit of sin to one dedicated to the pursuit of righteousness. "Sanctification" refers to the process of character transformation that accompanies a normal Christian experience.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **What Sanctification Is**
   Phil. 3:12-15
2. **The Fight of Faith**
   1 Tim. 6:11, 12
3. **What Sanctification Accomplishes**
   James 1:2-5
4. **The Garment of Holiness**
   Matt. 22:2, 11, 12
5. **The Failure of Self-righteousness**
   Rom. 10:1-3
6. **Faultless at His Coming**
   1 Thess. 3:11-13

Part 1

WHAT SANCTIFICATION IS

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Phil. 3:12-15

Paul had been a Christian for many years when he wrote this passage; yet at no point during those years did he say, "I am sinless," or "I have reached the goal." Rather, he is pushing forward "if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." To be apprehended by Christ means to be seized and held by Him. Here Paul refers to his conversion. This is the moving power in his life. Now his only goal is to fulfill the ideal that Christ had for him.

What is Paul's attitude toward his previous labors? Verse 13.

Paul is not ashamed of his past life as a Christian. But he cannot be satisfied with what he has done. He must press on toward the goal which is continually advancing before him. Akbar, the ancient Mogul emperor, said, "I have lived a long time, but I have yet to see a man lost on a straight road."

What is the prize the Christian is to seek after? Verse 14; see also 2 Tim. 2:10.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why can we not rely on a past experience to get us into the kingdom of heaven?

"The Scriptures plainly show that the work of sanctification is progressive. When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to 'go on unto perfection;' to grow up 'unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' "—"The Great Controversy," page 470.

"The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened." —"Christ's Object Lessons," pages 98, 99.

Part 2

THE FIGHT OF FAITH

1 Tim. 6:11, 12

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

Paul often used vigorous terms in speaking of the Christian life: "flee," "follow after," "fight," "lay hold of." In the previous verses he warned Timothy of the dangers of seeking after material security. See verses 3-10. He says, "Flee these things" which would keep the Christian back, and "lay hold on eternal life."

It is not enough that a man of God flee evil things. The evil must be replaced with good. Verse 11. We are to "hunger and thirst" for righteousness (Matt. 5:6); we are to live "in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:2); we are to exercise faith (Heb. 10:38); we are to remember that all other qualities are but meaningless noise without love (1 Cor. 13:1); we are reminded that we need patience and endurance (James 1:3); meekness is a virtue which we should feel in our heart in relation to God and His work (Matt. 5:5). The Christian is to fight the fight of faith. But this fight is a "good fight," for we have a worthy cause. We are in the right. Satan is in the wrong. More than this, the good fight is a "fight of faith." Our weapons are not of our own making. Salvation is of the Lord, not men.

How only can we be assured of victory? Col. 2:6, 7.

In what other words does Paul describe the work of sanctification? 2 Cor. 7:1.

THINK IT THROUGH

Against what or whom is a Christian to fight?

"A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 331.

"Sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God." —"Ibid.," p. 360.

"True sanctification is an entire conformity to the will of God."—"The Sanctified Life," page 9.

Part 3

WHAT SANCTIFICATION ACCOMPLISHES

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:2-5

It is the lot of every Christian to "fall into divers temptations," but this is not to be a source of discouragement. "Count it all joy," says James, for the "trying of your faith worketh patience." The word "patience" is from a Greek term which means steadfastness or endurance. It emphasizes not merely passive submission but an active staying power that makes us triumphant over our temptations. See Rom. 2:7; Heb. 10:36.

What example of character transformation is seen in one of Christ's disciples? Mark 3:17; John 13:23.

"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."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 540.

Another outstanding example of divine discipline and its consequences is found in the life of Jacob. Without the long testing Jacob experienced, he would never have become the overcomer, a type of the victorious saints. Read *Patriarchs and Prophets,* pages 237, 238.

What discipline is often necessary in the process of sanctification? Heb. 12:5, 6, 11; Rev. 3:19.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can we use a poor upbringing as an excuse for defects in our character?

"Before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, un-Christlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character."—"Christ's Object Lessons," pages 174, 175.

Part 4

THE GARMENT OF HOLINESS

Matt. 22:2, 11, 12

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son."

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

"And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."

Extensive wardrobes went with wealth in the East, and great honor was attached to wearing a robe worn and given by a king. Even a beggar thus attired was as honored as royalty. In the parable of the wedding feast the king provided robes for his guests that all could be appropriately clothed. When all was in readiness, the king came in.

What did the king discover when he entered the room? Verse 11.

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. . . . It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310.

What was done with the unworthy guest? Matt. 22:13.

When our eternal destiny is decided, we will be acceptable to God only if we are clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. How wonderful if we can say, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61:10.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do we secure the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness?

"Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness,—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly,—by abiding in Him,—that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way."—"Steps to Christ," page 69.

"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. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 312.

Part 5

THE FAILURE OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Rom. 10:1-3

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and *going about to establish their own righteousness*, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

In the first part of Romans 10 Paul describes the great difference between the righteousness which is of the law and the righteousness which is of faith in Jesus Christ. To illustrate his point he refers to the Israelites. Whatever virtues the Jews possessed, they clearly did not find salvation by their works. Paul commends them that they have a "zeal of God," but this zeal was not "according to knowledge." Jesus Christ came to the Jews and proved Himself to be the Son of God, giving them the most convincing evidence of His Messiahship. Yet they refused to accept Him. They shut their eyes against the truth, and their zeal for the law became blind groping.

What errors led the Jews to reject the righteousness offered by God? Verse 3.

Into what danger are we likely to fall today if we do not submit to God's righteousness? Rev. 3:17.

This text reveals the inevitable delusion which accompanies self-righteousness. "Self-righteousness is not true righteousness, and those who cling to it will be left to take the consequences of holding a fatal deception."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 279.

THINK IT THROUGH

What solemn pronouncement will be given just before the coming of Christ? Rev. 22:11.

There will doubtless be many excluded from heaven who thought themselves well-suited because of their own good works. But in the day of judgment they find that they are not properly clothed and that their own righteousness is but as filthy rags which cannot hide their defilement.

"The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellowmen."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 123.

"There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 319.

Part 6

FAULTLESS AT HIS COMING

1 Thess. 3:11-13

"Now God Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

"To the end He may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

We have studied in this lesson what is involved in the miracle of spiritual growth. Now we turn to a number of texts which describe the end result of sanctification: "Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5:27. "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Col. 4:12. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Cor. 3:18. "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God." 1 Thess. 3:13.

The last quotation is in the form of a prayer in which Paul requests two things. First, he desires that the Thessalonians might "increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men." Verse 12. Love is an evidence that the miracle of spiritual growth is taking place in the life. The closer we come to Jesus Christ, the more loving we will be toward our fellowmen. Second, he prays that they might be established "unblamable in holiness." Verse 13. The more we grow in grace, the more we are established and confirmed in God's way of life.

When will the process of sanctification be complete? Jude 24.

What reason does Peter give why we should seek holiness? 1 Peter 1:15, 16.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I increasing daily in love and holiness? What evidence of this is seen in my life?

"A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve. How important, then, is the development of character in this life."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 332.

"Let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand."—"Steps to Christ," page 72.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. True or False: Justification always precedes sanctification. _____

2. Complete: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the _____ _____ of God in Christ Jesus."

3. Which of Christ's disciples described himself as one "whom Jesus loved"? _____

4. Complete: "As many as I love I _____ and _____."

5. The wedding garment in the parable of the wedding feast represented: (A) the righteousness of Christ; (B) the natural righteousness possessed by every man; (C) the justice of God; (D) living without sin in our own strength. _____

6. True or False: The process of sanctification will continue as long as life shall last. _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 560-565.

M "Christ's Object Lessons," page 330-333. (1923 ed., pages 332-335.)

T "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 539-545.

W "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 310-315. (1923 ed., pages 317-321.)

T "Selected Messages," Bk. 1, pp. 365-368.

F "Steps to Christ," pages 67-75. ("Growing Up Into Christ.")

Answers: (1) True; (2) high calling; (3) John; (4) rebuke, chasten; (5) A; (6) True.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD 7

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

Faith, a gift of God, is available to all. For this reason every man is said to have a measure of faith. Rom. 12:3. "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,* page 431.

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. Author. The word "author" in Heb. 12:2 is from a Greek word which means "leader," "chief," "founder," "originator." The Greeks used this word in designating the progenitor of a clan, in speaking of heroes, and as a divine name for Apollo. Christ is the "founder," or "source," of our faith. He is also its "finisher," or "completer."

2. Temptation. In the Greek New Testament this word always means "test," "trial," "affliction," "trouble," an "enticement" to sin. In addition to "temptation" in the usual sense it includes such trials and tests as sickness, persecution, poverty, and calamity of various kinds. God tests a person in order to strengthen and develop character, whereas Satan confronts a man with tests in order to break down and destroy character.

3. Take No Thought. The Greek expression means literally "not to care for," "to be anxious," "to be troubled [with cares]," "to think earnestly upon." In Old English "take no thought" meant "do not be anxious" about it.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Faith Defined**
   Heb. 10:38 to 11:1
2. **Faith, an Essential Gift**
   Heb. 11:5, 6
3. **The Test of Faith**
   James 2:14-18
4. **The Source of Faith**
   Rom. 10:17
   Heb. 12:2
   Gal. 5:22
5. **Faith and Life's Necessities**
   Matt. 6:31-33
6. **Well-placed Confidence**
   1 Peter 5:6, 7

Part 1

FAITH DEFINED

Heb. 10:38 to 11:1

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Two blind men came to Jesus one day asking for mercy, which to them could only mean the restoration of their sight. Jesus asked them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" They answered Him, "Yea, Lord." Then He touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Matt. 9:28, 29.

Our capacity to receive the boundless blessings of heaven is determined by our faith in Him. We may be just as much in need of divine mercy as were these blind men. Are we spiritually impoverished, defeated, unfruitful in service, or unhappy in soul, in home, in church, or in society? Are we "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"? Rev. 3:17. Then we also must cry out for mercy, and God will say to us, "According to your faith be it unto you."

What is faith? Heb. 11:1.

This outstanding text does not really give us a formal definition of faith, but rather a description of what it does for the believer. The Greek word *hupostasis,* translated "substance," is used in the ancient papyri when referring to the legal documents by which a person proved his ownership of property. Obviously the documents were not the actual property, but they provided evidence of its existence and of his right to it. Accordingly, *hupostasis* might here be rendered "title deed"—faith is the title deed of things hoped for.

The word translated "evidence" means "proof," "conviction." Genuine faith rests upon a firm underlying "substance" of sufficient evidence to warrant confidence in what is not yet seen.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what does Paul compare faith? Eph. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:8.

The heavy Roman shield was large enough to protect the whole body against "fiery darts," which were arrows with red-hot points or bound in burning tar. The breastplate was a leather or metal coat worn to protect the body.

"Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency."—"Gospel Workers," page 262.

"Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power."—"The Desire of Ages," page 347.

Part 2

FAITH, AN ESSENTIAL GIFT

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Heb. 11:5, 6

Faith is an essential gift, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." God is infinite, divine; we are mortal, finite. Consequently there are many things which we cannot know about God unless we accept them by faith. To take God at His word is the most exalted exercise that the human mind can perform.

What two things are we to believe about God? Verse 6.

Compare Heb. 11:6 with Rom. 1:17 and Rom. 5:2. Note the reasoning in these texts: (a) It is impossible (a strong word used also in Heb. 6:4, 18) to come to God without faith (Heb. 11:6). (b) The righteousness of God in the gospel "is revealed through faith for faith" (Rom. 1:17, RSV); that is, faith leads us progressively near to God. (c) It is by faith that we have access into the grace of God and by faith we continue to "stand" and rejoice in the glorious hope. Rom. 5:2. Faith gets us started, provides the power, and clears the way to God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is God so insistent that we have faith in Him? How can we develop faith in a God whom we have never seen?

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith."—"Steps to Christ," page 105.

"God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as coworkers with Him."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 224, 225.

Part 3

THE TEST OF FAITH

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

"And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

James 2:14-18

Some have concluded that this passage contradicts Paul's teaching that a man shall live by faith alone. However, James is not saying that works save a person, but that the test of one's faith is his actions. Paul is talking of justification; James is talking of morality. True religion is both devotion and duty. Profession without practice is not enough. James argues his point by saying that a man of faith would not tell a starving person that he ought to eat and then allow him to walk away without giving him food. How could a person who would do this have real faith in a God who gave His life for humanity? True faith produces a corresponding practice.

What does Paul say is the condition of faith that does not work? Verse 17.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the relation of faith to love? Gal. 5:6.

"Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life."—"Selected Messages," Bk. 1, p. 397.

"Some were reproved for their unbelief, others for having been slothful *servants. They had allowed others to* do the work in the Master's vineyard, and to bear the heaviest responsibilities, while they were selfishly serving their own temporal interests. Had they cultivated the abilities God had given them, they could have been reliable burden bearers, working for the interest of the Master. Said the Judge: 'All will be justified by their faith and judged by their works.' "—"Testimonies," Vol. 4, p. 386.

Part 4

THE SOURCE OF FAITH

Rom. 10:17
Heb. 12:2
Gal. 5:22

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

How do we obtain faith? (1) "Faith cometh by hearing . . . the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. Genuine faith is not a blind groping about in the absence of adequate evidence. True faith is a conviction that is founded upon knowledge based upon the Word of God. See 2 Tim. 3:15. (2) Jesus is "the Author and Finisher of our faith." Heb. 12:2. If we read the Scriptures with an honest heart, we will become established in our faith in Jesus as He is revealed to us. He becomes then not only the Author of faith but the Finisher. He will fill us with faith, keep us in the faith, and finally reward our faith. (3) Faith is a "fruit of the Spirit." Gal. 5:22. It is by the Spirit that Christ is made to "dwell in your hearts by faith." Eph. 3:17.

What does our faith enable Christ to do in and for us? Gal. 2:20.

THINK IT THROUGH

Since the Bible is so readily available today, why is there so little faith in God?

"The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, 'Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth.' John 17: 17. If studied and obeyed, the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 100.

"It is through the Word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Matt. 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ."—"The Desire of Ages," page 677.

Part 5

FAITH AND LIFE'S NECESSITIES

Matt. 6:31-33

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

In Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus discredits the accumulation of worldly goods. He indicates that it is far more valuable to store up treasure in heaven than on earth. The Christian should not be indolent in providing for the needs of his family (1 Thess. 4:11; 1 Tim. 5:8), but if the accumulation of material wealth becomes the focal point of life, then the emphasis is wrong. How, then, can we be sure that the necessities of life will be provided us? The answer is found in Matt. 6:31-33.

What is to be the Christian's first desire? Verse 33.

The Christian should realize that anxiety is wasted energy if it is directed to such things as lie beyond his control. There are some things which should be left to God to care for. It will be a joyful surprise to find how all of life fits into place and everything is provided for when we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

What is the role of faith in overcoming obstacles and dangers? Matt. 17:20.

THINK IT THROUGH

If we have sufficient faith, will God remove all trials and suffering from our lives?

"If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ,—the yoke of obedience and service,—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 101.

"It is the work of faith to rest in God in the darkest hour, to feel, however sorely tried and tempest-tossed, that our Father is at the helm. The eye of faith alone can look beyond the things of time to estimate aright the worth of the eternal riches."—"The Acts of the Apostles," pages 575, 576.

Part 6
WELL-PLACED CONFIDENCE
1 Peter 5:6, 7

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

This passage is an allusion to Ps. 55:22: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." Compare Ps. 37:5. How is it that we can cast all our care upon God without fear? Because "He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7. God is willing to take from us all our care because He loves us. What we fear, He will either remove or give us added strength to bear. He will order all events so as to convince us of His tender, fatherly love toward us. No evil, no danger, shall come to us but that it shall be for our best good. Rom. 8:28.

What further assurance is given us of God's care? Heb. 13:5.

The author here takes a promise made to several of the greatest men of the Old Testament (see Gen. 28:15; Joshua 1:5; Gen. 26:24) and applies it, in strengthened words, to the life of every Christian. Compare the promise in similar form in 1 Chron. 28:20 and Isa. 41:17. This teaching of a personal, unchanging, faithful God runs all through the Bible. Can we not with the psalmist express our faith and trust in our Father in these words: "This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death." Ps. 48:14.

Where do we draw the line between unnecessary worry and appropriate concern about the future?

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I really trust in God, or is this a meaningless concept to me?

"Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet."—"The Desire of Ages," page 330.

"There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose that neither time nor toil can weaken."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 147.

"He [Christ] knew that the life of His trusting disciples would be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter."—"The Desire of Ages," page 679.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. It is impossible to please God without _____.

2. To which two implements of war does Paul liken faith? (1) _____, (2) _____.

3. Which Bible writer emphasized the relationship of faith and works? _____

4. Complete: "Faith cometh by _____, and hearing by the _____ of _____."

5. Complete: "But seek ye _____ the kingdom of God, and His _____; and all these things shall be _____ unto you."

6. The most famous description of faith is found in (A) Rev. 12:17; (B) Matt. 9:29; (C) Rom. 1:17; (D) Heb. 11:1. _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "The Desire of Ages," pages 342-348.

M "Steps to Christ," pages 105-113. ("What to Do With Doubt.")

T "Selected Messages," Bk. 1, pp. 397, 398.

W "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 100-102. (1923 ed., pages 98, 99.)

T "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 98-101. (1943 ed., pages 147-150.)

F "The Desire of Ages," pages 328-332.

Answers: (1) faith; (2) shield, breastplate; (3) James; (4) hearing, Word, God; (5) first, righteousness, added; (6) D.

LOVE, THE CROWNING VIRTUE 8

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4:32.

The whole of Christian thought is contained in the words "God is love." 1 John 4:8. In the Bible this love is expressed in many ways, but it finds its supreme example in the plan of salvation and in the life of Jesus—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. A deeper appreciation of the love of God should create in man a greater response of love which is synonymous with obedience.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Love and Charity. These words are translated from a word whose wealth of meaning is difficult to express in English. The expression in Greek is not an affectionate, sentimental love based on the feelings, subject to change as the feelings change, but is essentially an expression of the higher powers of the mind and intelligence. In the New Testament it is altogether selfless and reflects a considered interest in the happiness and well-being of others, in recognition of their intrinsic worth in God's sight. It does not exclude feeling, but adds principle to feeling in such a way that principle controls feeling. It is love in its highest and truest form. It is a divine principle of thought and action that modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections.

2. Set Your Affection On. Here the Greek word means "to think of," "to care for," "to set the mind and heart on," "to strive after." It represents the united action of a person's affections and powers of reason, with emphasis on the role of intelligence. In Col. 3:2 it might be translated, "continually think of," or "continually pay attention to."

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Love's Boundaries**
   Matt. 5:43-46
2. **God's Infinite Love**
   Rom. 5:5-8
3. **A Loving Response**
   John 14:15, 23, 24
4. **Loving One Another**
   John 13:34, 35
5. **Love's Expression**
   Luke 10:30-34
6. **The Supremacy of Love**
   1 Cor. 13:1-3, 13

Part 1

LOVE'S BOUNDARIES

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matt. 5:43-46 **"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"**

The Jews of Christ's time commonly taught that it was their responsibility to love their neighbors, basing this teaching on such texts as Lev. 19:18. But they understood that "neighbor" referred only to those of their own country, nation, race, and religion. Moreover, they inferred from the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," that they were also to hate their enemies. They considered that since they alone were the sons of Abraham they were superior to other men and therefore justified in feeling contempt for all heathen. It was this false belief that Christ attempted to change when He said "I say unto you, Love your enemies." He wanted His disciples to know that love has no boundaries. See the *SDA Bible Commentary* on verse 43 for a fuller explanation of the Greek words for love and the limits of the English word love.

In what specific ways should the Christian show love for his enemies? Verse 44.

What evidence does God give of His love for all people? Verse 45.

THINK IT THROUGH **Is it possible to love God and still hate certain people on this earth?**

"When love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not because of favors received from them, but because love is the principle of action. Love modifies the character, governs the impulses, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love is as broad as the universe, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. Cherished in the heart, it sweetens the entire life and sheds its blessing upon all around." —"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 38.

"Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God's government in heaven and earth, and it must be the foundation of the Christian's character. This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to withstand trial and temptation."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 49.

Part 2

GOD'S INFINITE LOVE

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Rom. 5:5-8

Once in a while a man will dare to die in behalf of another good man, but God came down and died for us "while we were yet sinners." He died for men who were guilty, vile, obnoxious, and unthankful. That Christ should die for such men as these is the greatest proof of the love of God.

How does John describe God's love? 1 John 4:8-10.

No deeper thought on love was ever penned than the three words "God is love." "We must beware of watering down 'God is love' into 'God is loving,' or even 'God of all beings is the most loving.' Love is not a mere *attribute* of God; like light, it is His very *nature*."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Vol. 22, p. 103.

How may we more fully understand and appreciate God's love for us? Eph. 3:17-19.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does God show preference in His love to any church, or nation, or select individuals? Why do some countries seem to be blessed more than others?

"By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which 'angels desire to look,' and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which 'seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 19, 20.

Part 3

A LOVING RESPONSE

John 14:15, 23, 24

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.

"He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me."

Jesus clearly indicates in this passage that sincere love for Him will lead us to do whatever He asks us to do: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." 1 John 5:3. "Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship."—*Steps to Christ,* page 60.

Why does the natural man not place his affections upon God and His law? John 3:19.

What advice is given the Christian concerning his affections? Col. 3:2; 1 John 2:15.

Anything worldly—companions, amusements, evil thinking, the love of "filthy lucre," and all that is sinful—is called "the love of the world" and is in opposition to "the love of the Father." Read *Patriarchs and Prophets,* pages 458, 459.

THINK IT THROUGH

Paul said we are to set our "affection on things above." What are these "things"?

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

"Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. . . . When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 384.

Part 4

LOVING ONE ANOTHER
John 13:34, 35

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

The new commandment that Jesus gave to His disciples was not new in the sense that it never existed before. See Lev. 19:18. It was new because of the restored emphasis given to it by Jesus and the new demonstration of love which the disciples were encouraged to emulate.

At the time, the disciples found these words hard to understand, but as they reflected upon them after the crucifixion and resurrection they had a clearer conception of what Jesus meant. They had witnessed with their own eyes the sufferings of Christ in behalf of men. This demonstration of love produced a change in the lives of the disciples and the other believers.

A writer declared with some astonishment in regard to these early Christians, "They love each other even without being acquainted with each other." And another scoffer said, "Their Master has implanted the belief in them that they are all brethren."

What strong incentive do we have for being merciful to our fellowmen? Matt. 6:14, 15; Eph. 4:32.

What practical measure do we have by which to gauge our love for others? Matt. 7:12.

It is not enough for a Christian to demonstrate his love for God by obedience to the commandments. Sincere love for God finds its truest expression in love for our fellowmen. See *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 384, 385.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we learn to love someone that we dislike?

"In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. . . .

"Oh, what rays of softness and beauty shone forth in the daily life of our Saviour! What sweetness flowed from His very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. Their white robes of purity will be fragrant with perfume from the garden of the Lord. Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 134, 135.

Part 5

LOVE'S EXPRESSION

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

Luke 10:30-34

The parable of the Good Samaritan very aptly illustrates the way in which sincere love for our fellowmen will find expression. Read the story in its entirety as found in Luke 10: 29-37.

After the priest and Levite passed by, what did the Samaritan do for the wounded man? Verses 33, 34.

With what question did Jesus bring the parable to a close? Verses 36, 37.

This was an actual occurrence that took place near the city of Jericho. Both the priest and the Levite involved in the story were present when Jesus told the story. See *The Desire of Ages,* page 499. A Samaritan was the last person from whom a Jew would expect mercy and love; yet this man lived by the golden rule and represents those who are truly imitating Christ by following His example in doing good.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have you been involved in an incident similar to this parable? How did you respond?

"He showed that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 376.

"Whatever the difference in religious belief, a call from suffering humanity must be heard and answered. Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service. Loving ministry will break down prejudice, and win souls to God."—"Ibid.," p. 386.

Part 6

THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 Cor. 13:1-3, 13

Only a man in whose heart the Spirit of God has performed a marvelous work could write such words as these. Paul uses over and over in 1 Corinthians 13 the Greek word *agapē* to explain the nature and value of love. *Agapē* refers to a love that finds its source in God's love. It is a love directed not by feeling but by principle.

Why is love the greatest gift? Because love makes us like God, "for God is love." 1 John 4:8. "For love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4:7.

What are the characteristics of love? 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

A noted Puritan preacher used to say that substituting our individual name for "charity" in this passage (1 Cor. 13:4-8) would make us all blush to think how far we fall short in the practice of Christian love.

THINK IT THROUGH

Someone has said, "God is more pleased with a loving sinner than an unloving saint." Would you agree?

"In words which from that day to this have been to men and women a source of inspiration and encouragement, Paul set forth the importance of that love which should be cherished by the followers of Christ. . . .

"No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellowmen is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite."—"The Acts of the Apostles," pages 318, 319.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. Complete: "If ye love Me, _____ _____ _____."

2. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you." What was this new commandment? _____

3. True or False: The story of the Good Samaritan was an actual incident that took place near Jericho. _____

4. True or False: The Christian should consider anyone who needs help as his neighbor. _____

5. The most celebrated chapter on love is (A) Matthew 6, (B) Luke 10, (C) 1 Corinthians 13, (D) Philippians 2. _____

6. Complete: "And now abideth _____, _____, _____, these three; but the greatest of these is _____."

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 73-75. (1943 ed., pages 113-115.)

M "Steps to Christ," pages 9-15. ("God's Love for Man.")

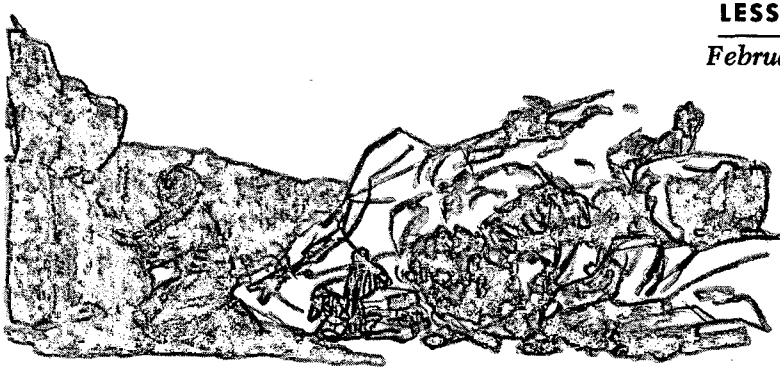
T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 384-389. (1923 ed., pages 391-395.)

W "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 550-552.

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 376-383. (1923 ed., pages 381-389.)

F "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pp. 167-171.

Answers: (1) Keep My commandments; (2) Love one another; (3) True; (4) True; (5) 1 Corinthians 13; (6) faith, hope, charity, charity.



OBEDIENCE THROUGH CHRIST 9

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Rom. 12:2.

True obedience is more than conformity to the law of God. It is a living response, motivated by love, to the voice and words of God. Sin disrupted the perfect communion between man and his Maker, but Christ restored this relationship and made it possible again to be in harmony with God's will. Every believer in God should face the question: How faithful am I to my responsibilities as a child of God?

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. Obey and Keep His Word. The usual Greek word for "obey" means literally "to listen submissively," that is, in order to know what one should do. The word for "keep" means "to keep watch over," "to guard," "to protect," "to pay attention to." Obedience, then, reflects diligent purpose to know God's will and to abide by it.

2. Constraineth. "The love of Christ constraineth us." 2 Cor. 5:14. The word translated "constraineth" means "to hold together," "to hold fast," "to urge," "to impel," "to control." Divine love not only paid the penalty for our sins, so providing justification, but also imparts power to triumph over sin, so making sanctification possible.

3. Transformed. The Greek *metamorphoō,* "to transform," is the source of our word "metamorphosis." Each stage in the metamorphosis of a butterfly represents a complete change in nature and appearance. Thus the pupa, for instance, is altogether different from the preceding caterpillar stage; and the mature butterfly, in turn, in no way resembles the pupa. This is the word used in Matt. 17:2 to describe the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain; and in Rom. 12:2 and 2 Cor. 3:18 of the change that takes place in the Christian whereby he comes to resemble Christ.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Obedience, the Test of Profession**
   Matt. 7:21-23
2. **In the Master's Steps**
   John 5:30; 6:38
3. **Constrained by Christ**
   2 Cor. 5:14, 17, 21
4. **What God Requires**
   James 1:22-25
5. **Living Without Sin**
   1 John 3:6-9
6. **When We Fail**
   1 John 1:9 to 2:1

Part 1

OBEDIENCE, THE TEST OF PROFESSION

"Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Matt. 7:21-23

The passage above indicates that an outward profession of religion, no matter how remarkable, will not assure entrance into heaven. There must also be a corresponding faith in God which is evidenced by obedience, for the blessings of salvation are promised only to "them that obey Him." Heb. 5:9.

When Christ returns, what reasons will many give why they should be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven? Matt. 7:22.

Of what is obedience to God's revealed will the visible evidence? John 14:15, 23, 24.

The RSV translation of John 14:15 reads: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Obedience is a natural response when love controls the life, and only when the life is under love's control is obedience acceptable to God.

"God's law is fulfilled only as men love Him with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. It is the manifestation of this love that brings glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill to men. The Lord is glorified when the great end of His law is attained." —*Testimonies,* Vol. 8, p. 139.

Those who walk the road to the kingdom will love their brethren (1 John 4:20) and do God's will (John 9:31).

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do many think they are eligible for salvation when they are not? Could you be in this group?

"Profession is as nothing in the scale. It is character that decides destiny."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 74.

"God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes."—"The Great Controversy," page 541.

Part 2

IN THE MASTER'S STEPS
John 5:30; 6:38

"I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me."

"For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

John 5:30 in RSV reads: "I can do nothing of My own authority; . . . I seek not My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." The Son of man during His earthly sojourn was obedient to His Father's will in all things, as in the prophecy: "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. We should remember that Jesus here had been charged with "making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18), and He is replying as the obedient Son, witnessing of His Father and His will.

What was Christ's purpose in coming to earth? John 6:38.

An example of Christ's obedience to the Father's will is seen in Mark 14:36: "And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Three times this prayer was offered in the garden of Gethsemane. Each time the fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Then came victory as Christ breathed the prayer of submission, "Thy will be done."

"As Jesus rested by faith in the Father's care, so we are to rest in the care of our Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 336.

What supreme illustration of obedience was seen at Calvary? Phil. 2:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

Did God the Father force Christ to die upon Calvary? Was Jesus' sacrifice at the time of Calvary still a deliberate choice on His part?

"Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, thought 'it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.' Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin. Through all the lowly experiences of life He consented to pass, walking among the children of men, not as a king, to demand homage, but as one whose mission it was to serve others. There was in His manner no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity. The world's Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature, yet united with His divine majesty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself.

"Jesus emptied Himself, and in all that He did, self did not appear. He subordinated all things to the will of His Father."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 14.

Part 3

CONSTRAINED BY CHRIST

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

2 Cor. 5:14, 17, 21

"Through the grace of Christ we may accomplish everything that God requires."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 301. How can this be? Because "the love of Christ constraineth us." 2 Cor. 5:14. In Jesus divine love is linked to omnipotent power. This divine, controlling love does for us "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." Rom 8:3.

What change will come in the life of a sinner who accepts Christ? 2 Cor. 5:17.

What means has been provided whereby we can do the will of God? Rom. 8:3, 4.

This does not say that the law itself was weak, but rather that it was "weak through the flesh." The law was actually strong in pointing out sin. But it could not save the sinner. The law became effective if a man, realizing his sinful condition, went to God and found forgiveness and grace in Christ. 1 Tim. 1:8; Gal. 3:24. Righteousness is obtained only through Jesus Christ. "We can receive of heaven's light only as we are willing to be emptied of self. We can discern the character of God, and accept Christ by faith, only as we consent to the bringing into captivity of every thought to the obedience of Christ."—*Gospel Workers,* page 57.

THINK IT THROUGH

Should we force ourselves to obey God even if we do not want to?

"The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."—"The Desire of Ages," page 466.

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses."—"Ibid.," p. 668.

Part 4

WHAT GOD REQUIRES

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

"For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

"For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

James 1:22-25

The thought expressed in James 1:22, 23 is very similar to that of Paul in Rom. 2:13: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." This does not mean it is wrong to hear the Word of God. Faith "cometh by hearing" and hearing is by the Word of God. Rom. 10:17. The danger lies in hearing the Word but not applying it to the life.

How did Jesus illustrate the danger of neglecting known duty? Matt. 7:24-27; 21:28-32.

This same lesson is taught in James 4:17: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." A man is judged according to what he knows to be right. The omission of good deeds makes a person as guilty as the commission of evil deeds.

What do men often substitute for obedience to God's expressed will? Mark 7:7-9.

Men may write their own human commandments, and they may seek to obey them by the exercise of all the fanatical zeal, willpower, and meticulous external observances of the Pharisees, yet all their "obedience" is vanity.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does faith make obedience to God's will unnecessary? Rom. 3:31.

"Every man is given sufficient light for the discharge of the duties required of him. Man's responsibilities are proportionate to his opportunities and privileges. God gives to everyone sufficient light and grace to do the work He has given him to do. If man fails to do that which a little light shows to be his duty, greater light would only reveal unfaithfulness, neglect to improve the blessings given."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 265.

"The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. . . . Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds."—"Ibid.," p. 272.

Part 5

LIVING WITHOUT SIN

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

1 John 3:6-9

The tense of the verb in verse 9 above indicates that the words "doth not commit sin" would be more accurately rendered "does not continue to sin," or "does not habitually sin." The Greek verb forms clearly do not mean that the one who has been born of God will never again fall before temptation. Rather, they imply that he has committed himself to a pattern of life in which he makes no provision for sinning, that it is his continuing firm purpose to live in harmony with that commitment, and that his life gives marked evidence of increasing freedom from sin.

If we are born of God, what kind of obedience will we manifest? Rom. 6:17; Eph. 6:6.

How does Paul describe the new birth experience? Rom. 12:2.

Do people who know us intimately sense that we are changed or transformed since becoming Adventists? Or is there very little difference? Have we "obeyed from the heart" (Rom. 6:17), or do we have the "form of godliness" without "the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5)? See *Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 128.

THINK IT THROUGH

What changes have come into my life as a result of my religious experience?

"When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit."—"My Life Today," page 250.

"So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul."—"Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," page 32.

Part 6

WHEN WE FAIL

1 John 1:9 to 2:1

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Here is a positive statement of our guilt: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar." Notice, if we make this claim, we are doing more than just lying, more than simply deceiving ourselves. We are making God a liar. Dare we ever claim "not to have sin" when we realize the blasphemous nature of such a statement! However, even though we are all sinners, God gives us strength to strive against sin.

Some might say that since God so readily forgives our sins, let Him forgive a few more sins. To avoid this conclusion John says, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." His purpose is to get us away from the sin habit; but for one who slips we have the assurance that Christ is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

John has reference here to the washing away of the guilt of sin: "The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. On this cleansing compare Acts 15:9; Eph. 5:26; Titus 2:14; and Rev. 1:5. It is the wonderful grace of God that our sins with all their guilt are to be removed as far as the East is from the West. Ps. 103:12; Isa. 43:25; 44:22; Micah 7:9.

THINK IT THROUGH

What word in the last part of 1 John 2:1 describes the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary?

Believers should not sin, but if the human instrument fails, Jesus, our merciful and righteous Advocate, is ever ready to accept the erring one and to renew His saving grace.

"When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the suffering of the Son of God."—"Messages to Young People," page 338.

"The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts."—"Steps to Christ," pages 57, 58.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. Complete: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a _____ _____."

2. Complete: "To him that knoweth to do _____ and doeth it not, to him it is _____."

3. True or False: Faith makes obedience to God's expressed will unnecessary. _____

4. True or False: A person who is born again will never again commit sin. _____

5. True obedience is a result of: (A) a determined effort to do what is right; (B) doing exactly what the law says: (C) loving God and our fellowman; (D) doing whatever our conscience says. _____

6. The greatest example in the Bible of obedience was seen in: (A) Joseph; (B) Christ; (C) Moses; (D) Paul. _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 278-281. (1923 ed., pages 280-283.)

M "The Desire of Ages," pages 686-693.

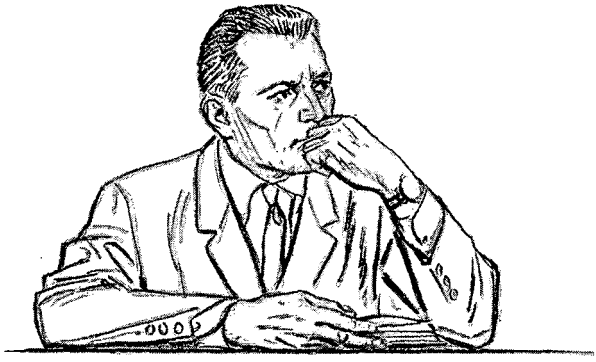
T "The Desire of Ages," pages 466, 667, 668.

W "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 147-152. (1943 ed., pages 211-218.)

T "Steps to Christ," pages 49-55. ("Faith and Acceptance.")

F "Selected Messages," Bk. 1, pp. 340-344.

Answers: (1) new creature; (2) good, sin; (3) False; (4) False; (5) C; (6) B.



CHRISTIAN MATURITY 10

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48.

The child of God should clearly understand what it means to have a mature Christian experience. God made man perfect, but sin produced imperfection which disqualified the sinner for salvation. His only hope is Christ. By faith in the atonement he is clothed in Christ's righteousness, and in that sense he is justified without condemnation before God. There is no instance in the New Testament of a personal claim to complete perfection, as this lesson makes clear.

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. Perfect. The adjective thus translated means "full-grown," "mature," "complete," "[what has] reached the goal." In Greek literature it is used of flawless sacrificial victims, of full-grown or mature animals, of mature persons, of trained and fully qualified professional men. The idea of maturity is evident in such passages as Eph. 4:13; 1 Cor. 14:20 (translated "men"); Heb. 5:13, 14 (translated "of full age"). The verb form means "to finish," "to complete," "to perfect."

2. Lay Aside Every Weight. The picture is of an athlete removing every encumbrance, such as clothing, which might be a handicap to him in a forthcoming athletic contest. The Greeks used the expression in this sense; and since Hebrews 12:1, 2 pictures the Christian race in terms of an athletic contest, this is probably Paul's meaning here.

3. Captain. This word in Hebrews 2:10 is from the same Greek word as "author" in chapter 12:2. Read the discussion of this word in Lesson 7.

4. Conversation. The Greek word here translated "conversation" means "manner of life," "conduct," "behavior." It does not mean "conversation" in the sense of "speech," but would include speech as one aspect of behavior, or conduct.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Ideal of Perfection**
   Matt. 5:48
2. **The Pursuit of Excellence**
   Phil. 3:12-15
3. **The Path to Perfection**
   2 Tim. 3:16, 17
4. **Christ Our Example**
   Heb. 12:1, 2
5. **Marks of Maturity**
   James 3:2, 1:4; Col. 3:14
6. **The Fullness of Christ**
   Eph. 4:13-15

Part 1
THE IDEAL OF PERFECTION
Matt. 5:48

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ presents a seemingly impossible ideal: "Be ye therefore perfect." But notice this statement in its context. In Matthew 5:43-48 Christ depicts what it means to be like the Father. "Love your enemies," He says, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Jesus refers here to the Jewish practice of considering a Gentile as no better than a dog. A true Christian will treat all men with respect as does God. Having said this Jesus adds: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

God is to be our model. We are to follow Him in all His perfections. This does not mean that we can reach complete equality with God, for God's attributes are infinitely superior to our finite virtues. But like God we can be fair and upright in dealing with our enemies. Jesus describes the perfect individual as one who is completely committed to the law of love and like God treats even his enemies with genuine love.

Unfortunately, the English word "perfect" does not adequately express the meaning of the Greek word *teleios* used in Matt. 5:48. In Biblical times this word could refer to an animal without blemish or deformity or to someone who was full-grown, mature, complete. It does not refer to absolute sinlessness in this life. See *Steps to Christ,* page 62. A child can be perfect for its age, a plant can be perfect for its stage of maturation; but both grow, and graduated perfection marks the developing life. See *Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 65, 66.

How did Luke record a teaching similar to that in Matthew? Luke 6:36.

"In both [Matt. 5:48; Luke 6:36] the perfection of the Father is placed as the goal before His children. In neither case is it said that they have reached it."—*Robertson Word Pictures,* Vol. 2, p. 92.

THINK IT THROUGH

Should we seek to reach absolute sinlessness though we know we cannot attain to it in this life?

"At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 65.

"While we cannot claim perfection of the flesh, we may have Christian perfection of the soul. . . . The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities. We may claim sanctification. We may enjoy the favor of God." —Ellen G. White, in "General Conference Bulletin," April 23, 1901.

Part 2

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Phil. 3:12-15

The word "perfect" is used with two different meanings in Phil. 3:12-15. In verse 12 Paul denies being "already perfect." He has not yet reached that stage of holiness that God wishes him to attain. But he presses on, like a runner straining for a prize, seeking for "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Verse 14.

In verse 15 he says: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Here the word "perfect" means "mature Christians," people who are no longer "babes" that need to be nursed in their Christian experience. While Paul places himself among these mature individuals, he does not mean that he or any other Christian of his day had reached a stage of perfect holiness. This idea is excluded by the denial found in verse 12. But some of the Philippians had, with Paul, reached a level of spiritual maturity described in verse 15 as "perfect."

How did Paul refer to certain Corinthian Christians? 1 Cor. 2:6.

THINK IT THROUGH

How is present perfection made possible? Rom. 8:1-4.

"The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of constant advancement. We have an object to gain, a standard to reach, that includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character."—"Testimonies," Vol. 8, p. 64.

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

Part 3

THE PATH TO PERFECTION
2 Tim. 3:16, 17

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

"That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

The pathway to Christian maturity is illuminated by the study of His Word. See Ps. 119:105. Or as Paul says, "Scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect." The word here translated "perfect" is from a Greek word meaning "fitted," "equipped." As used in this text, the perfect individual is one who through his study of the Bible is fitted for all that is required of a man as a Christian.

How is perfection made possible for the Christian? Heb. 13:20, 21.

Notice that perfection "in every good work" comes through Jesus Christ. Such perfection does not come suddenly, for Jesus "leads His people on step by step, purifying and fitting them for translation."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 333. If perfection comes through Christ, the Living Word, it follows that the inspired Written Word is an important aid to perfection, because it presents the fullest revelation of "our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep."

"The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God'; yet they are expressed in the words of men and are adapted to human needs."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 747.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is my Bible study sufficient in time and quality to promote my spiritual growth?

"In every command and in every promise of the Word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the Word is receiving the very life and character of God. . . .

"Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the Word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 38.

"Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving."—"Ibid.," p. 101.

Part 4

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Heb. 12:1, 2

The runner who competes in a race often provided Paul with an apt illustration of the Christian seeking eternal life. See Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 1 Cor. 9:24-27. An athlete must put forth every effort to win the contest that has been marked out for him. Likewise, if we expect to be successful in achieving the goal, we must "run with patience the race that is set before us." The word "patience" means "fortitude," "perseverance." We are to run "with patience" because this race is not won till it is completed. It was not until the end of his life that Paul could say, "I have finished the race." 2 Tim. 4:7, RSV. See also Heb. 10:36; Rev. 2:10.

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

How did Jesus demonstrate the need for patient endurance? Heb. 12:2.

What experiences contribute to our character development? Heb. 2:10; 12:11; James 1:12.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are there "weights" in my life that should be laid aside? How is this accomplished?

"When one turns away from human imperfections to behold Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in the character. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 250.

"We cannot equal the pattern; but we shall not be approved of God if we do not copy it and, according to the ability which God has given, resemble it."—"Testimonies," Vol. 2, p. 549.

"Remember that you will never reach a higher standard than you yourself set."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 331.

Part 5

MARKS OF MATURITY

James 3:2; 1:4; Col. 3:14

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

In the texts above can be found three marks of perfection that will be seen in a growing Christian:

(1) Pure speech. James indicates that the maturing Christian should be careful about his speech. James 3:2. "We must have perfect control over our own spirit. 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.' "—*Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 308.

(2) Patience. James 1:4 in the RSV reads: "Let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete." This patience or steadfastness may be passive as under trial or chastisement permitted by God. See Luke 21:19; 2 Cor. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:10; Heb. 12:7. It may also be active, persistent, persevering, as in "well-doing." See Rom. 2:7; Luke 8:15.

(3) Love. The apostle Paul encourages the Christian to "put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Col. 3:14, RSV. "When consecrated believers assemble, their conversation will not be upon the imperfections of others or savor of murmuring or complaint; charity, or love, the bond of perfectness, will encircle them. Love to God and their fellowmen flows out naturally in words of affection, sympathy, and esteem for their brethren.—*Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 509.

What attitude will a mature Christian have toward the problems of life? Acts 20:24; 2 Cor. 4:8-11.

THINK IT THROUGH

Should a Christian ever become discouraged? Is it a sin if he does?

"In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong."—"The Desire of Ages," page 429.

"As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 333.

"Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you can not overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God."—"Ibid.," p. 331.

Part 6

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

Eph. 4:13-15

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

In Eph. 4:13-15 Paul compares the church, Christ's mystical body, with the human body. Like the physical body, the church is to grow to a state of maturity or perfection in contrast to the childish state of immaturity. Verse 14. The task of church leaders then is to assist church members to attain unto full Christian maturity. This maturity is a fullgrown manhood in faith and knowledge in contrast with the inexperienced and immature faith of the spiritual child.

How does this growth come about? By growing "up into Him, . . . even Christ." Take away Christ, and all that is left to grow in our lives becomes mere counterfeit. Christ alone is our example of perfection.

Until what time may we expect the process of character perfection to go forward? 1 John 3:2, 3; Rev. 22:11.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do today to foster a more mature spiritual experience?

"The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life."—"The Desire of Ages," page 311.

"By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus."—"Selected Messages," Bk. 1, p. 395.

"Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men." "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—"Christ's Object Lessons," pages 67, 69.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. The word "perfect" as used in the New Testament usually means: (A) absolutely sinless; (B) to have all the attributes of God; (C) full-grown or mature; (D) to keep the law exactly. _____

2. Complete: "Sanctification is the work of a _____."

3. Paul often described a Christian seeking eternal life as a (A) runner in a race, (B) man looking in a mirror, (C) rider on a horse, (D) lost sheep. _____

4. Give the three marks of maturity discussed in this lesson: (1) _____ _____, (2) _____, (3) _____.

5. True or False: Near the end of his life Paul claimed that he had reached a state of sinlessness. _____

6. Complete: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for _____, for _____, for _____, for _____ in righteousness."

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 76-78. (1943 ed., pages 116-118.)

M "The Great Controversy," pages 469-473.

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 38, 48-50. (1923 ed., pages 32, 43-45.)

W "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 309-315.

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 328-333. (1923 ed., pages 330-335.)

F "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 62-69. (1923 ed., pages 61-67.)

Answers: (1) C; (2) lifetime; (3) A; (4) pure speech, patience, love; (5) False; (6) doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction.

THE RETURN OF OUR LORD 11

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:8.

Except for a few devout and farseeing men like Abraham and Moses, the true significance of the second coming of Christ was apparently lost upon the people of Old Testament times. It is in the New Testament that the blurred picture of this unique event in history is brought into sharp and startling focus. The aim of this study is to induce a deeper longing for the return of Jesus and an increased earnestness in preparing to meet Him.

KEY WORDS

1. Coming. The original Greek word means "presence," or "arrival." In the papyri it is used of the visit of an emperor or a king and of the arrival of a Roman general to celebrate a triumphal procession. The word thus appropriately describes Christ's return as King of kings. Sometimes it stresses presence as opposed to absence. It is the word translated "coming" in such passages as Matt. 24:27 and 2 Thess. 2:1, 8.

2. Appearing. This is the usual translation of the original Greek word meaning "visible manifestation," "an appearing," "an appearance." In 2 Thess. 2:8 it is translated "brightness," but elsewhere usually "appearing," as in 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13. In classical Greek it describes the sudden appearance of an enemy in war and the supposed appearances of heathen deities to their worshipers. In the papyri it is used of the inauguration of the emperor Caligula. The New Testament applies it to both the first and second advents of our Lord. In 2 Thess. 2:8 Paul speaks of the "brightness" of Christ's "coming," and seems to stress the visible presence of Christ following His appearing.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Hope of Christ's Coming**
   Titus 2:11-14
2. **Purpose of His Coming**
   Rev. 22:10-12
3. **His Glory Displayed**
   1 Thess. 4:16, 17
4. **Warnings and Preparations**
   Matt. 24:42-44
5. **Special Dangers**
   Matt. 24:4, 5; Luke 21:34-36
6. **Patience While Waiting**
   James 5:7, 8

Part 1

THE HOPE OF CHRIST'S COMING

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Titus 2:11-14

Because of the promises given by Jesus Himself, the "blessed hope" of the second coming was very real to the early Christians. Christ repeatedly directed the minds of the disciples to that glad reunion. Other writers of the New Testament made it a major Christian teaching. "The hope which is laid up for you in heaven" (Col. 1:5); "The Lord Himself shall descend" (1 Thess. 4:16); "This same Jesus . . . shall so come . . . as ye have seen Him go" (Acts 1:11); "The Son of man shall come in . . . glory" (Matt. 16:27).

What promise did our Lord make with respect to His return? John 14:1-3.

"Let not." The form of the verb in Greek implies, "stop letting" your heart be troubled. Christ's going away was to be the disciples' assurance that He would come again. See Acts 1:11.

The word for "mansions" (*monai*) means "permanent abiding places." Compare Ps. 23:6. "While He [Christ] was building mansions for them [the disciples], they were to build characters after the divine similitude."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 663.

THINK IT THROUGH

Who will be ready for Jesus when He comes again? Heb. 9:28.

The words "look for Him" literally mean, "wait it out for Him," that is, keep on waiting until Christ actually appears. Only those who patiently wait for Him now will be able to say at His return, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

"The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. . . . The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine."—"Christ's Object Lessons," pages 414, 415.

Part 2

PURPOSE OF HIS COMING

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Rev. 22:10-12

One purpose of Christ's coming is to "give every man according as his work shall be." Jesus uttered a similar promise: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. 16:27.

Reward is taught in the Scriptures as God's compensation to the saints, rather than their motive in service: "In keeping of them [God's commandments] there is great reward." Ps. 19:11. "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6. See also Ps. 58:11. In contrast to the reward of the righteous is God's judgment on the wicked. To the one, He gives "a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8); to the other, "sudden destruction" (1 Thess. 5:3).

What solemn announcement is made prior to Christ's coming? Rev. 22:11.

At what exact time will the saints be given their reward? 2 Tim. 4:1, 8.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can you think of any reward that comes to saints and sinners in this life?

"Not one who complies with the conditions will be disappointed at the end of the race. Not one who is earnest and persevering will fail of success. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The weakest saint, as well as the strongest, may wear the crown of immortal glory. All may win who, through the power of divine grace, bring their lives into conformity to the will of Christ. The practice, in the details of life, of the principles laid down in God's Word, is too often looked upon as unimportant—a matter too trivial to demand attention. But in view of the issue at stake, nothing is small that will help or hinder. Every act casts its weight into the scale that determines life's victory or defeat. And the reward given to those who win will be in proportion to the energy and earnestness with which they have striven."—"The Acts of the Apostles," pages 313, 314.

Part 3

HIS GLORY DISPLAYED

1 Thess. 4:16, 17

***"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with* a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

When our Lord returns, His coming will be announced "with a great sound of a trumpet" (Matt. 24:31), and He will appear "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west" (Matt. 24:27). "Behold, He cometh with clouds," said John the Revelator; "and every eye shall see Him." Rev. 1:7. From these verses it is clear that His appearance will not be hidden away in some isolated place. Every living human will see Him come in all the brilliance of His heavenly glory.

What change will take place in the righteous at His coming? 1 Cor. 15:51-54.

Corinth was full of pagan ideas about the life of the soul after the death of the body; hence the Christian church in that city needed explicit statements that set forth: (1) the resurrection of the whole being; (2) a sudden resurrection of the dead at the Lord's coming; (3) the granting of immortality and incorruptibility "in a moment," when "the trumpet shall sound" and the Lord shall appear.

How did two heavenly beings describe the second coming? Acts 1:9-11.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does Matt. 24:24 mean that many of the righteous will be deceived by Satan before the coming of Christ?

"Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: 'Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!' Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory."—"The Great Controversy," page 644.

Part 4

WARNINGS AND PREPARATIONS

Matt. 24:42-44

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Verse 44 goes beyond "ye *know* not what hour" of verse 42 and says: "In such an hour as ye *think* not, the Son of man cometh." The one indicates ignorance of the time; the other, surprise when it comes. The uncertainty as to the exact time of the coming of Christ requires that every generation be in perpetual readiness.

What will the hope of Christ's return lead every sincere believer to do? 1 John 3:2, 3.

"Sinful man cannot cleanse himself; he is sold under sin and utterly dependent upon the Saviour for purity (Jer. 17:9; John 3:3; 15:4, 5; Rom. 8:7). Nevertheless, there is some work that man, with divine aid, must do for himself (see on Phil. 2:12, 13). This work demands diligent watching and prayer (Eph. 6:13-18; Col. 4:2; Rev. 3:3). The central struggle is to maintain faith in the victory that Christ has gained for us, and to live believing that His grace is sufficient to give us the mastery over every besetment."—*SDA Bible Commentary,* on 1 John 3:3.

How did Jesus stress the importance of being prepared at all times? Matt. 25:1-13.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is it possible to know that the second coming is near and yet be surprised when it comes?

"The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. . . . They . . . have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 411.

Part 5

SPECIAL DANGERS

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

"For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Matt. 24:4, 5
Luke 21:34-36

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Since the time of Jesus there has been a procession of deceivers claiming to be Christ, and as the end draws near we can expect to see more of these false messiahs, and false ideas about the true Messiah which create an incorrect picture of Christ, His work, and His ministry. The warning is more valid today than at any other time: "Take heed that no man deceive you."

How will the false christs attempt to deceive the believers? Matt. 24:24.

Christ warned His followers in Luke 21:34-36 of those things which drag the heart down "so that day come upon you unawares." "These things" (verse 36) include the internal dangers of intemperance, carelessness, and ungodly conduct, as well as the external deceptions of false Christians and wonder-workers. "There are many who have outgrown their advent faith. They are living for the world."—*Testimonies to Ministers,* page 77.

THINK IT THROUGH

What will some be saying concerning Christ's coming? Matt. 24:48.

"As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation."—"The Great Controversy," page 624.

"The evil servant says in his heart, 'My lord delayeth his coming.' He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor."—"The Desire of Ages," page 635.

Part 6

PATIENCE WHILE WAITING

James 5:7, 8

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Even as a farmer plants his seed and then waits patiently for the seed to grow up and the harvest to come, so the Christian is to be patient "unto the coming of the Lord." The early Christians lived in constant expectation of the coming of Jesus Christ. They were not certain when He would come, but they did expect Him to come soon. Today we are closer to that event than ever before, but many of us are tempted to think His coming is far away. The devout Christian should cherish the hope that His advent is very near, "even at the door."

What admonition does Peter give those patiently awaiting the Lord's return? 1 Peter 1:13.

"Girding up the loins refers to the long, loose robes worn by Orientals, which were drawn up and belted at the waist when one wanted to walk or work with energy. This expression is used figuratively with reference to the mind, which includes thinking as well as the resultant willing, and the thought is: 'Make up your minds decisively!' . . . Instead of letting their thoughts, purposes, decisions hang loose while they move leisurely along in life as impulse and occasion may move them, the readers are to gird up their minds like people who are energetically set on going somewhere. To gird up the loins means business, decision, action, not idling, not drifting after this and that momentary attraction."—R. C. H. Lenskie, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude,* page 51.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is the coming of Christ looked forward to today with as much anticipation as it was in past generations?

"By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory. . . .

"Those who watch for the Lord's coming are not waiting in idle expectancy. The expectation of Christ's coming is to make men fear the Lord, and fear His judgments upon transgression. It is to awaken them to the great sin of rejecting His offers of mercy. Those who are watching for the Lord are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth. With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to cooperate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 633, 634.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. Complete: "Unto them that _____ _____ _____ shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

2. True or False: Immortality will be granted to the saints at the second coming of Christ. _____

3. Which parable of Christ stresses the importance of being prepared at all times? _____

4. Complete: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an _____ as ye _____ _____ the Son of man cometh."

5. What will be the crowning act in Satan's deceptions in the last days? (A) false prophets; (B) impersonation of Christ; (C) Sunday law; (D) great persecutions. _____

6. According to James, what trait of character will all develop who await the Lord's coming? _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "The Desire of Ages," pages 829-832.

M "The Great Controversy," pages 489-491.

T "The Great Controversy," pages 640-644.

W "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 411-415. (1923 ed., pages 419-424.)

T "The Desire of Ages," pages 627-632.

F "The Desire of Ages," pages 632-636.

Answers: (1) look for Him; (2) True; (3) parable of the ten virgins; (4) hour, think not; (5) B; (6) patience.

THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY 12

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

The purpose of this study is to give a new appreciation for the gift of everlasting life which will be given to the resurrected saints at the coming of our Lord. Christ is the author of resurrection, and "the divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 530. This lesson, therefore, centers in the Lord Jesus, for His resurrection was a public declaration that men are not left to a hopeless future.

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. Life. The Greek denotes the life principle, the antithesis of death. In his original state Adam had conditional possession of this life principle, but when he sinned he forfeited it and became subject to the principle of death. Death is the opposite of life. Rom. 6:23. In Christ all who believe inherit life, but only when immortality is bestowed at the second advent will Adam and his believing descendants exchange their conditional possession of life for unqualified immortality.

2. Immortality. The Greek word translated "immortal," "imperishable," is formed by prefixing a negative to a word meaning "ruin," "destruction," "deterioration," "dissolution," "corruption." Classical Greek writers speak of a "crown of immortality."

3. Crown of Life. The Greek word here used for "crown" means a garland of victory, not the crown of rulership. The Greek athlete would endure the most rigorous self-denial and discipline in order to secure a "corruptible crown," but the "crown of life" for which the Christian strives is "incorruptible."

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **God Does Not Lie**
   Titus 1:1, 2
2. **Christ Assured our Resurrection**
   1 Peter 1:3, 4
3. **Qualifying for Immortality**
   John 17:1-3
4. **The Resurrection Described**
   John 5:25, 28, 29
5. **From Death to Life**
   1 Cor. 15:51-54
6. **Tokens of Immortality**
   Rev. 22:1, 2

Part 1

GOD DOES NOT LIE

Titus 1:1, 2

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

A similar passage to the one above is 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." Both texts claim the hope of eternal life upon the basis of God's promise which was made "before the world began." See also 1 Peter 1:20. "The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 63. The Christian's hope is sure, for it rests upon the promise of the One who "cannot lie."

How did God restore the hope of everlasting life to sinners? John 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:10.

"One remark I cannot help making; the doctrine of the *resurrection* appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is *now!* How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! . . . There is not a doctrine in the Gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!"—Adam Clarke, *Commentary,* on 1 Corinthians 15, note 3 at end of chapter.

What will eventually happen to death? 1 Cor. 15:26.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why will there be no death in the new earth?

"All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb. Adam, who stands among the risen throng, is of lofty height and majestic form, in stature but little below the Son of God. He presents a marked contrast to the people of later generations; in this one respect is shown the great degeneracy of the race. But all arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth. In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave."—"The Great Controversy," pages 644, 645.

Part 2

CHRIST ASSURED OUR RESURRECTION

1 Peter 1:3, 4

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Our assurance of resurrection is based upon the historical fact that Jesus Christ Himself came forth from the tomb. Without the resurrection of Christ salvation for the sinner would be impossible. Only as the sinner believes in the Saviour as the antitype of the uplifted serpent (John 3:14) and as the Lamb of God who bore the sins of the world (John 1:29) can he find forgiveness for his own sins. Because Christ was lifted upon the cross, buried in the tomb, raised on the third day, the sinner is "begotten . . . unto a lively hope" of his own resurrection from the dead.

"The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. . . . As Jesus arose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 804.

What would have been the fate of humanity if Christ had not been resurrected? 1 Cor. 15:14, 17-20.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead." This is the triumph song of the church, and we should never lose its challenging assurance, its defiance of death. The resurrection is the one glorious star in the dark sky.

"Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord and of all His people: 'Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.' 1 Corinthians 15:23. Like the wave sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the firstfruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 399.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why was it necessary for Jesus Himself to come to this earth? John 1:4; 1 John 5:11, 12.

"The voice that cried from the cross, 'It is finished,' was heard among the dead. It pierced the walls of sepulchers, and summoned the sleepers to arise. Thus will it be when the voice of Christ shall be heard from heaven. That voice will penetrate the graves and unbar the tombs, and the dead in Christ shall arise. At the Saviour's resurrection a few graves were opened, but at His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him."—"The Desire of Ages," page 787.

"Christ declares that even now the power which gives life to the dead is among them, and they are to behold its manifestation. This same resurrection power is that which gives life to the soul 'dead in trespasses and sins.' Eph. 2:1."—"Ibid.," p. 209.

Part 3

QUALIFYING FOR IMMORTALITY

John 17:1-3

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee:

"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee." Similar expressions are found many times in the Scriptures: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36); "I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47); "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

When does the believing Christian inherit everlasting life? John 5:24.

"This declaration is more than a promise of eternal life to come; it is an assurance that the believer now and here may begin to enjoy life that is eternal in quality, because he is united spiritually with his Lord, whose life he shares. 'The Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginnng of the life eternal' (DA 388). See John 6:47; 1 John 5:11, 12." —*SDA Bible Commentary,* on John 5:24.

What must we do to inherit eternal life? Mark 13:13; Rom. 2:7, Rev. 2:10.

"The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden—perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. . . . God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* page 76.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between saving belief (Acts 16:31) and ordinary belief or knowledge (James 2:19)?

"Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal."—"The Desire of Ages," page 388.

Part 4

THE RESURRECTION DESCRIBED

John 5:25, 28, 29

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

In His vivid account of the moment when He shall return to this planet, Jesus describes "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." There is "a great sound of a trumpet." Then the angels who have come with Him "gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:30, 31.

Another description of the clouds of glory, the heavenly angels, and the celestial wonders emphasizes the appearance of Christ: "In solemn silence we all gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders, and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle, in His left a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through." —*Testimonies*, Vol. 1. p. 60.

Which of the dead will be resurrected at this time? 1 Thess. 4:13-17.

Some modern theologians console the bereaved by assuring that their departed loved ones are even now enjoying the bliss of heaven. But if the Thessalonian believers who had fallen asleep in Jesus were indeed in heaven, we may properly ask why Paul did not console their living loved ones with this reputed fact. If the apostle believed the righteous dead to be already in heaven, he certainly missed a perfect opportunity to enlighten and console the living.

THINK IT THROUGH

If Christ were to come at this moment, would it bring fear or joy to my heart?

"Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character."—Ellen G. White Comments, "SDA Bible Commentary," Vol. 6, p. 1093.

Part 5

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

1 Cor. 15:51-54

This is the end of the corruptible life that men have always known. This is the moment when the universe is restored to God's control and eternity is ushered in for all those who have gained the "victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57.

What is the signal for the dead to be raised? Verse 52.

The trumpet will announce Christ's coming as it did His appearance at Sinai. See Ex. 19:16 and Matt. 24:31. "The sound of a trumpet summoned Israel to meet with God. The voice of the Archangel and the trump of God shall summon, from the whole earth, both the living and the dead to the presence of their Judge."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 339.

"Put on" (verse 54) is a metaphor which refers to clothing. It is also used in 2 Cor. 5:2: "We groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." The kind of flesh and blood we now know are to be replaced by immortal, incorruptible bodies. Each of the redeemed will retain his own personal identity. See *Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 332, 361; *Testimonies,* Vol. 2, pp. 266, 267; *The Desire of Ages,* page 804.

THINK IT THROUGH

What Old Testament prophecy will be fulfilled at this time? Isa. 25:8.

"Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom. . . . We have seen by the scriptures just given [1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17] that when the Son of man comes, the dead are raised incorruptible and the living are changed. By this great change they are prepared to receive the kingdom; for Paul says: 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' 1 Corinthians 15:50. Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs."—"The Great Controversy," pages 322, 323.

Part 6

TOKENS OF IMMORTALITY

Rev. 22:1, 2

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

There was such a tree in the Garden of Eden which possessed a supernatural quality. With continued access to it man would have lived forever, for its fruit perpetuated life. Because of their disobedience Adam and Eve were no longer allowed to stay in the garden, and that beautiful tree which held the key to immortality was forbidden to the children of men. Later God "transplanted the tree of life to the Paradise above," where it will remain with the saints throughout eternity as a token of life everlasting. See *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 288.

What special function is performed by the tree of life? Verse 2, last part.

There is an interesting use of the phrase "leaves of the tree" in the *The Ministry of Healing*, page 122: "It is in these promises [in God's Word] that Christ communicates to us His grace and power. They are leaves from that tree which is 'for the healing of the nations.' . . . Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of the character, the inspiration and sustenance of the life. Nothing else can have such healing power. Nothing besides can impart the courage and faith which give vital energy to the whole being."

What other tokens of immortality will be found in the new earth? Rev. 22:1, 3.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why will sin never arise the second time?

"In the midst of Eden grew the tree of life, whose fruit had the power of perpetuating life. Had Adam remained obedient to God, he would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree and would have lived forever. But when he sinned he was cut off from partaking of the tree of life, and he became subject to death."—"The Great Controversy," pages 532, 533.

"In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called 'a country.' . . . There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. . . . On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home."—"Ibid.," p. 675.

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. The plan of salvation was decided upon: (A) before the creation of this world; (B) just after Adam and Eve fell; (C) at the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; (D) just before Christ was born. _____

2. What event assured the resurrection of the righteous? _____

_____

3. Complete: "And this is life eternal, that they might _____ _____ the only true God, and _____ _____ whom Thou hast sent."

4. True or False: The believer may begin to enjoy life that is eternal in quality right here and now. _____

5. Complete: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all _____, but we shall all be _____."

6. What three tokens of immortality will be found in the new earth?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "The Desire of Ages," pages 527-530.

M "The Desire of Ages," pages 779-787.

T "Steps to Christ," pages 57-65. ("The Test of Discipleship.")

W "Testimonies," Vol. 1, pp. 58-61.

T "The Great Controversy," pages 644-647.

F "Early Writings," pages 285-289.

Answers: (1) A; (2) the resurrection of Christ; (3) know Thee, Jesus Christ; (4) True; (5) sleep, changed; (6) tree of life, river of life, throne of God.

LESSON 13

March 28

THE KINGDOM OF GLORY 13

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

The word "kingdom" is used with a variety of meanings in the New Testament in such expressions as "kingdom of Christ," "kingdom of God," "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of glory." The meaning must be determined by the context. In this lesson the general meaning is the kingdom as the future home of the saints. It is hoped that the student will reconsecrate his life to the task of preparing for citizenship in that eternal kingdom.

KEY THOUGHTS

1. The Kingdoms of Grace and Glory. The kingdom of grace is preparatory to the eternal kingdom of glory. Christ officiates as Priest-King of the one, and as King of kings in the other. Under the kingdom of grace we are justified and sanctified; in the kingdom of glory we are glorified. Under the one we prepare for heaven; under the other we enter heaven. Under the one we receive conditional immortality; under the other we are immortalized.

2. Christ as King of Kings. Rev. 19:16. This title is also used of the Father in 1 Tim. 6:15. It is also used of Christ as He comes forth to take possession of the kingdom of this world (Rev. 11:15; 19:16), and may be considered His official title as King of the kingdom of glory.

3. The Throne of His Glory. Matt. 25:31. In times eternal Father and Son shared the throne of the universe. *Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 36. At the incarnation the Son voluntarily stepped down from the throne of the universe and gave back the scepter into the Father's hands. *The Desire of Ages,* pages 22, 23. At the ascension the Son was enthroned with the Father upon His throne. Rev. 3:21. Upon His return to earth He will be seated upon the throne of His own glory. Matt. 25:31.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Inauguration of the Kingdom**
   Rev. 19:11-13, 16
2. **The King and His Subjects**
   Matt. 25:31-34
3. **Entrance Requirements**
   2 Peter 1:10, 11
4. **The Fate of the Wicked**
   Matt. 13:40-43
5. **No More Sin**
   Rev. 21:2-4, 27
6. **Endless Life in a Perfect World**
   Rev. 22:3-5

Part 1

INAUGURATION OF THE KINGDOM

Rev. 19:11-13, 16

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

"And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God."

"And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

When the Son of man with all His angels appears in the heavens sitting "upon the throne of His glory" (Matt. 25:31), then shall be ushered in the great kingdom of glory. This event is dramatically described in the passage above. Christ is seen descending from heaven in power and majesty as the King of kings coming forth to deliver His people from those who are trying to destroy them. See *The Great Controversy,* page 641. He rides upon a white horse and has been given the title "Faithful and True." His eyes of flame, His crown, and the blood-tinged vesture single Him out as the Leader of the heavenly host. He is called "The Word of God." "Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. . . . And 'the armies which were in heaven, . . . follow Him. . . . No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow."—*The Great Controversy,* page 641.

What three titles describe the character and majesty of Christ? Verses 11, 13, 16.

What proclamation announces the establishment of the kingdom? Rev. 11:15, 17.

THINK IT THROUGH

What other titles can you think of that describe the character of Christ?

"As used in the Bible, the expression 'kingdom of God' is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of Epistle to the Hebrews. . . . The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace; for the existence of a throne implies the existence of a kingdom. . . .

"So the throne of glory represents the kingdom of glory; and this kingdom is referred to in the Saviour's words. . . . Matthew 25: 31, 32. This kingdom is yet future. It is not to be set up until the second advent of Christ."—"The Great Controversy," page 347.

Part 2

THE KING AND HIS SUBJECTS

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:

"And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

"And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Matt. 25:31-34

The throne on which Christ sits is called both "the throne of His glory" (verse 31) and "the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16). The King of grace is also the King of glory, since He is the dispenser of grace and also the executor of judgment.

With what gracious invitation will the King of glory welcome His subjects to their eternal home? Matt. 25:34.

Notice that the saints are called "ye blessed of My Father." When Jesus promised a heavenly abode to His followers, He spoke of it as His "Father's house" (John 14:2), and as the "kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). It was not to come by gradual progress, but suddenly, by a breaking in pieces of earthly kingdoms. Dan. 2:31-43. It would last forever (Dan. 2:44), and the redeemed would be with their Redeemer forever. 1 Thess. 4:17. The saints are then nevermore to be separated from the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. See *Early Writings,* page 110.

What honor will the saints have in the eternal kingdom? Rev. 22:5; Matt. 13:43.

THINK IT THROUGH

What now seems to be the greatest joy that awaits you in the new kingdom?

"With unutterable love, Jesus welcomes His faithful ones to the joy of their Lord. The Saviour's joy is in seeing, in the kingdom of glory, the souls that have been saved by His agony and humiliation. And the redeemed will be sharers in His joy, as they behold, among the blessed, those who have been won to Christ through their prayers, their labors, and their loving sacrifice. As they gather about the great white throne, gladness unspeakable will fill their hearts, when they behold those whom they have won for Christ, and see that one has gained others, and these still others, all brought into the haven of rest, there to lay their crowns at Jesus' feet and praise Him through the endless cycles of eternity." —"The Great Controversy," page 647.

Part 3

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

2 Peter 1:10, 11

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The RSV translates the words "give diligence" as "be the more zealous." Diligence is often used in the Bible in connection with a saintly endeavor to do God's will. In Gal. 2:10 the KJV speaks of forwardness in remembering the poor. In Eph. 4:3 it is rendered "endeavoring" in connection with keeping "the unity of the spirit." In 2 Peter 3:14 it is applied to those who should be "diligent" in seeking to be at peace with God "without spot, and blameless."

How can we be diligent in seeking blamelessness? "As your soul yearns after God, you will find more and still more of the unsearchable riches of His grace. As you contemplate these riches you will come into possession of them and will reveal the merits of the Saviour's sacrifice, the protection of His righteousness, the fullness of His wisdom, and His power to present you before the Father 'without spot, and blameless.' " —*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 567.

What reward awaits those who diligently seek to make their calling and election sure? 2 Peter 1:11.

Through what experience will all pass who gain entrance to the kingdom of heaven? Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 2:12.

The word "suffer" in 2 Tim. 2:12 may be rendered "endure." This is not referring to all forms of suffering, but suffering "with Him," or for Christ's sake. See Rom. 8:17.

THINK IT THROUGH

Who are accounted worthy to become heirs of the kingdom God has promised? 2 Thess. 1:4, 5.

Faith and patience are rungs in the ladder of Christian progress in 2 Peter 1:5-7. See *The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 530-532. Persecution is not to be sought; but when it comes in the line of Christian duty, its severity becomes a means of developing the Christian graces of patience and faith. That is God's way of thwarting Satan's destructive designs. What is intended as a hardship becomes a road to the kingdom.

"It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. . . . If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it. Those who refuse to cooperate with God on earth would not cooperate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 280.

Part 4

THE FATE OF THE WICKED

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

"The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

"And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Matt. 13:40-43

God will eventually destroy all those who endanger the lives of the saints and the very existence of the universe. For this reason the coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom will be a time of joy for the saints but a time of great "wailing and gnashing of teeth" for the wicked. God has suffered long with sin. Now it is time that sin shall reign no more. At the second coming the wrath of God shall be displayed "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:8. Following the millennium the final destruction of the wicked will take place, when those who are "not found written in the book of life" are "cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:15.

What kind of people are found among the wicked? Rev. 21:8; 22:15.

What vivid contrast is apparent between the fate of the wicked and the reward of the righteous? Matt. 13:42, 43.

Like the glory that broke forth upon Jesus at the time of His transfiguration (Matt. 17:2), so the saints will "shine forth as the sun." See also Dan. 12:3. This is a glorious scene —the final coronation and enthronement of Christ, the saints shining as the sun and taking possession of the new earth— but it will be marred by the fate of those who have refused to respond to the love of God. See Rom. 2:4-6.

THINK IT THROUGH

What privilege is granted the saints? Rev. 22:14.

"The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. . . . Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven: they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship."—"Steps to Christ," pages 17, 18.

Part 5

NO MORE SIN

"And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Rev. 21:2-4, 27

The Holy City comes "down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"; and, wonder of wonders, God Himself will "dwell with them . . . and be their God." All tears shall be wiped away, and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." How can this be? The answer is given at the end of verse 4: "For the former things are passed away." The curse has been removed, and sin shall be no more.

The eradication of sin is seen in the absence of death (1 Cor. 15:55, 56), as well as the strong evidence of Rev. 21:8; 22:3. All earthly kingdoms have been destroyed and replaced by the kingdom of glory. This kingdom will be everlasting because of its sinlessness and the added gift of immortality which has been given to its inhabitants. See Dan. 2:44. This is the land of perfection longed for, dreamed of, and sought by the faithful in every age.

Who only will be granted the privilege of entering the Holy City? Rev. 21:27.

THINK IT THROUGH

Will life in a sinless world be as exciting and rewarding as life on this earth?

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body."—"The Great Controversy," page 677.

Part 6

ENDLESS LIFE IN A PERFECT WORLD

Rev. 22:3-5

"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him:

"And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever."

One of the glorious privileges of the saints in the new earth will be to live in the presence of God Himself. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; . . . and they shall see His face." This reunion is brought about by the removal of the curse that came upon this earth as a result of sin. Christ "redeemed us from the curse . . . , being made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. The universe now beholds the full significance of what Christ accomplished at Calvary. The saints are welcomed to the New Jerusalem, and they shall reign in glorious union with God and with Jesus Christ.

For how long will this condition continue? Rev. 22:5. See also Rev. 11:5.

What does Peter say of the stability of Christ's glorious kingdom? 2 Peter 1:11.

The Greek word *aiōnios,* which in 2 Peter 1:11 is translated "everlasting," actually means "eternal" and has a wider meaning than just everlasting time. For instance, the eternal kingdom includes all the world (Rev. 11:15) which "the prince of this world" once ruled. The eternal kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness, glory, and peace, and will transcend time and space.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I prepared at this moment to be a citizen of that new kingdom?

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—"The Great Controversy," page 678.

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character."—"Ibid."

Part 7 ◇ SUMMARY QUESTIONS ◇ A TEST OF YOUR STUDY POWER

1. What event marks the establishment of the kingdom of glory? _____

_____

2. The final destruction of the wicked will take place (A) at the second coming; (B) during the millenium; (C) just before the New Jerusalem descends; (D) after the New Jerusalem descends. _____

3. Complete: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your _____ and _____ sure."

4. When will the text be fulfilled that says, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying"? (A) at the second coming; (B) when the saints arrive in heaven; (C) during the millenium; (D) after the descent of the New Jerusalem. _____

5. Complete: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the _____ _____ _____."

6. True or False: Sin will never again arise after the final destruction of the wicked. _____

THE SECOND MILE ◇ DAILY STUDY HELPS

S "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 107-109. (1943 ed., pages 159, 160.)

M "The Great Controversy," pages 647-652.

T "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 280-283. (1923 ed., pages 282-285.)

W "The Great Controversy," pages 666-673.

T "Education," pages 301-309.

F "The Great Controversy," pages 674-678.

Answers: (1) second coming; (2) D; (3) calling, election; (4) D; (5) tree of life; (6) True.

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Thirteenth Sabbath Offering

MARCH 28, 1970 · NORTHERN EUROPEAN DIVISION

The Northern European Division is a far-flung one, embracing 120 million people in eight countries of Europe, 80 million people in nine countries some 3,000 miles away in West Africa, and a further 23 million in modern Ethiopia 2,000 miles across the continent and still proud to be remembered as the ancient land of the Queen of Sheba. A project in each of these areas will benefit from the warm-hearted giving of God's people around the world.

The new Empress Zauditu Memorial Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, will receive one third of the overflow from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. To what Sabbath School members will give on March 28 will be added the help in many forms that has come from all sides: from His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie, from the public of Addis Ababa, from funds of the hospital itself, and from the General Conference and the division. A well-planned hospital building will stand as another monument to the fine medical ministry of this church and its devoted workers.

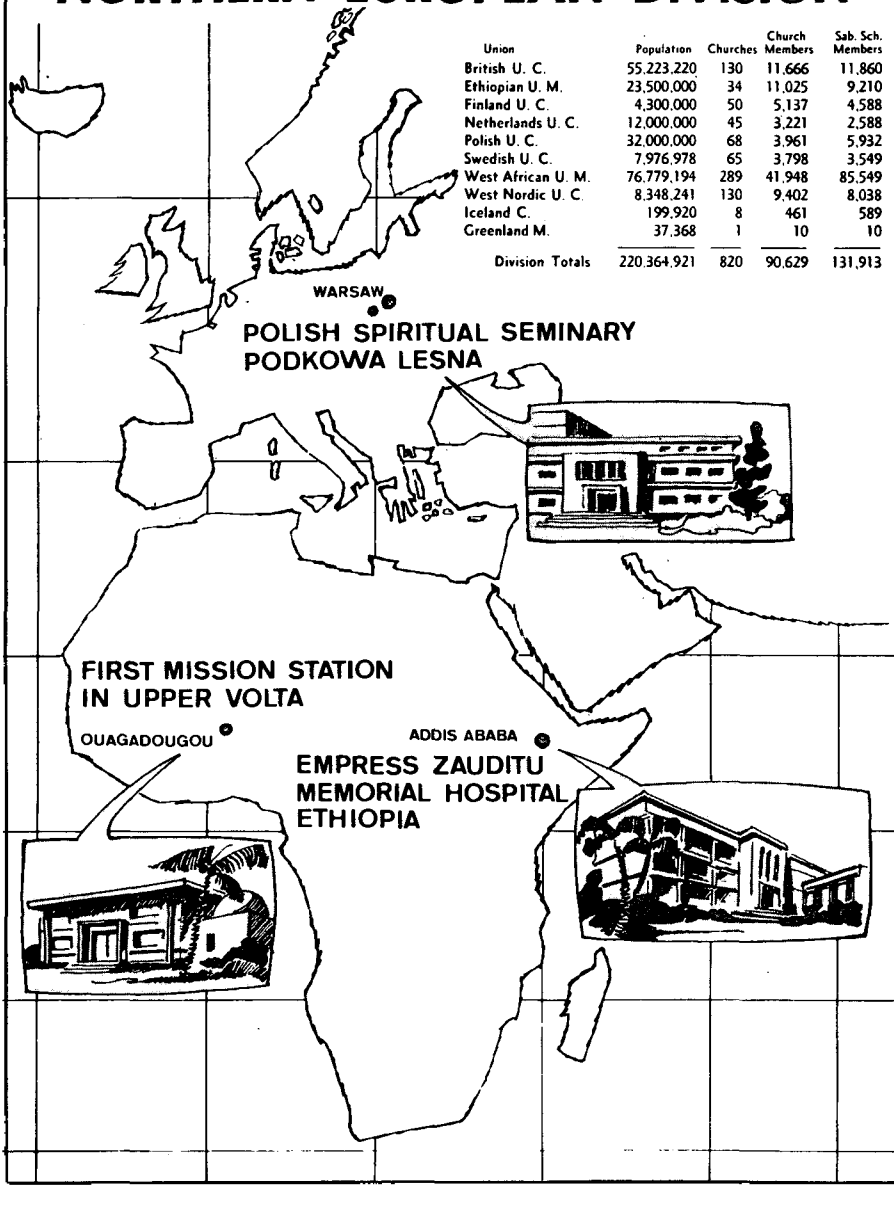
The opening of work in the unentered land of the Republic of Upper Volta, in West Africa, is another project to benefit from the overflow.

The third project to benefit from the overflow is our training school in Poland. Its facilities are limited, and there are a thousand urgent needs if this little institution is to fulfill its purpose in training men and women to carry the message to Poland's 32 million people.

Lessons for the Second Quarter of 1970

Sabbath School members who have not received a senior *Lesson Quarterly* for the second quarter of 1970 will be helped by the following outline in studying for the first lesson. The title of the series is "Stories of the Master Teacher." The title of the first lesson is "Heaven's Search and Rescue." The memory verse is Luke 19:10.

The outline is as follows: 1. God's Seeking Love. Luke 15:3, 4. 2. The Ideal Shepherd. John 10:9, 11, 12. 3. The Lost Dowry. Luke 15:8-10. 4. Death of a Prodigal. Luke 15:11-13. 5. Life of a Prodigal. Luke 15:14-24. 6. How Good Was He? Luke 15:25-32.

NORTHERN EUROPEAN DIVISION

Union	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sab. Sch. Members
British U. C.	55,223,220	130	11,666	11,860
Ethiopian U. M.	23,500,000	34	11,025	9,210
Finland U. C.	4,300,000	50	5,137	4,588
Netherlands U. C.	12,000,000	45	3,221	2,588
Polish U. C.	32,000,000	68	3,961	5,932
Swedish U. C.	7,976,978	65	3,798	3,549
West African U. M.	76,779,194	289	41,948	85,549
West Nordic U. C.	8,348,241	130	9,402	8,038
Iceland C.	199,920	8	461	589
Greenland M.	37,368	1	10	10
Division Totals	220,364,921	820	90,629	131,913