FAITH AND THE PROMISES OF GOD

D. TANK

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON

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THE BLESSING OF DAILY STUDY

"The beauty and riches of the Word have a transforming influence on mind and character."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 132.

"There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. . . . If God's Word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times."—*Steps to Christ,* page 90.

My Daily Lesson Study 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.

Name _____

Lesson Titles for the Quarter

1. Faith Is Indispensable
2. Faith and a Knowledge of God
3. Faith and God's Promises
4. Faith and the Promise of Reconciliation
5. Faith and the Promise of Pardon
6. Faith and the Promise of God's Presence
7. Faith and the Promise of God's Love
8. Faith and the Promise of Answered Prayer
9. Faith and God's Promises of Care and Guidance
10. Faith and the Promise of the Holy Spirit
11. Faith and Assurance
12. Faith and the Promise of Victory
13. Faith and the Promise of Christ's Return

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Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

FAITH AND THE PROMISES OF GOD

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Bible records the unique experiences of men and women of faith who demonstrated the dependability of the promises made by the infinite God. To test the reality of these promises, as these Bible characters tested them, we are enjoined to exercise faith. "O taste and see that the Lord is good," is the Biblical invitation. But how to exercise faith? This is the urgent consideration, and this should be made very plain. To every promise of God there are conditions. If we are willing to do His will, all His strength is ours. Whatever gift He promises is in the promise itself. "The seed is the Word of God." As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in the promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift. Wonderful thought!

"Faith that enables us to receive God's gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being. It grows as exercised in appropriating the Word of God. In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in contact with the Word." —*Education,* pages 253, 254.

This series of lessons endeavors to make some essential features of Christianity very simple and practical. The promises and gifts of God are ours to accept and experience, not merely to admire. Only as God's children appropriate His promises by faith does the gospel become "the power of God unto salvation."

Lesson 1, for April 6, 1968

Faith Is Indispensable

MEMORY VERSE: "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." Hebrews 11:6.

STUDY HELPS: "Education," pages 253-261; "Gospel Workers," pages 259-263; "Steps to Christ," chapter, "Faith and Acceptance"; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: To gain a greater appreciation and understanding of faith as one of life's imperatives.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. The Role of Faith in Christian Experience

1. What faith is. Heb. 11:1.
2. The object of faith. Mark 11:22; John 3:16.
3. Faith a way of life. 2 Cor. 5:7.
4. How faith is cultivated. Rom. 10:17.
5. The response of faith. Gal. 5:6.

II. Faith, the Imperative Factor

6. Faith and fellowship with God. Heb. 11:6.
7. Faith and the origin and destiny of life. Heb. 11:3; 2 Peter 3:13.
8. Faith and salvation. Eph. 2:8; 3:17.
9. Faith brings joy, peace, hope. Rom. 15:13.
10. Possibilities of faith. Mark 9:23.

11. Faith and spiritual prosperity. 2 Chron. 20:20.

III. Warnings and Counsels

12. Last days marked by faithlessness. Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

13. Hold fast to faith. Heb. 10:35-37.

14. Faith a shield against temptation. Eph. 6:16.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence on 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."—*Steps to Christ,* page 105.

"There is an evidence that is open to all, —the most highly educated, and the most illiterate,—the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His Word, the truth of His promises." —*Ibid.,* p. 111.

The Role of Faith in Christian Experience

1. How does the Bible define faith? Heb. 11:1.

NOTE.—"When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His Word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. . . . But this is not faith. . . . Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God."—*Steps to Christ,* page 63.

2. What is the basis of our relationship to God and to Christ? Mark 11:22; John 3:16.

NOTE.—"Faith is not the ground of our salvation, but it is the great blessing—the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the feet that run, the hand that grasps. It is the means, not the end. If Christ gave His life to save sinners, why shall I not take that blessing? My faith grasps it, and thus my faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. Thus resting and believing, I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6, p. 1073.

"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."—*Ibid.*

3. How is faith related to Christian living? 2 Cor. 5:7.

NOTE.—Faith results in a distinct way of life. The Christian plans and lives his life with reference to the God "whom having not seen, ye love." Faith makes God a reality, an ever-present Companion; and thus we "walk by faith, not by sight."

"It is not a conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 51.

4. How is faith cultivated? Rom. 10:17.

NOTE.—In order to grow and to become strong and invincible, faith must constantly be nourished on its native food—the Word of God. To neglect the study of God's Holy Word is to starve faith. It is by faith that the miracle of a transformed life is wrought; it is by faith that our prayers are answered. It is by faith that we are to overcome the wicked one; it is by faith that the Holy Spirit is to dwell in our hearts. If faith is anemic for want of feeding on the Word of God, every other aspect of the Christian life will be correspondingly weak.

"The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the Word of God is to be brought into the daily practice."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 314. See also *The Desire of Ages,* page 126.

5. How will genuine faith manifest itself? Gal. 5:6. Compare James 2:17; Heb. 11:8.

Faith, the Imperative Factor

6. How vital is faith to fellowship with God? Heb. 11:6.

NOTE.—"Jesus says, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches' (John 15:5). Can we conceive of a more intimate relation than this implies? . . . This spiritual relation between Christ and the soul can be established only through the exercise of personal faith. 'Without faith it is impossible to please Him' (Heb. 11:6); for it is faith that connects us with the power of heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. . . . Faith familiarizes the soul with the existence and presence of God, and, living with an eye single to the glory of God, more and more we discern the beauty of His character, the excellence of His grace. Our souls become strong in spiritual power; for we are breathing the atmosphere of heaven, and realizing that God is at our right hand, that we shall not be moved."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, pp. 334, 335.

7. To what two perplexing questions does faith provide the answers? Heb. 11:3; 2 Peter 3:13.

8. How only is the grace of God accessible to the repentant sinner? Eph. 2:8; 3:17.

NOTE.—"The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6, p. 1073.

9. What comes to us as a result of exercising genuine faith? Rom. 15:13.

NOTE.—Faith must never be based on one's feelings, but on the promises of God; joy and peace come as a result of believing. In other words, faith precedes feeling. "There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy. Believe, believe! my soul says, believe. Rest in God."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 2, pp. 319, 320.

10. What is possible for one who exercises faith? Mark 9:23.

11. How is spiritual prosperity related to faith? 2 Chron. 20:20.

Warnings and Counsels

12. What will characterize the days preceding Christ's return? Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

NOTE.—"This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:8).

"Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 15.

13. What counsel is given those who await the return of the Lord? Heb. 10:35-37.

NOTE.—"It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. . . .' Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the City of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 9, pp. 287, 288.

14. What will the shield of faith enable us to do? Eph. 6:16.

Lesson 2, for April 13, 1968

Faith and a Knowledge of God

MEMORY VERSE: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3.

STUDY HELPS: "Testimonies," Vol. 8, pp. 263-278; "Steps to Christ," chapter, "A Knowledge of God"; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: A realization that the revelation God has given of Himself is sufficient to inspire faith and confidence in the hearts of all who sincerely seek Him.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. A Knowledge of God Is Vital

1. Salvation is to know God. John 17:3.
2. The essential knowledge. Jer. 9:23, 24.
3. God has no rivals. Isa. 43:10; 44:6.
4. We believe that God is. Heb. 11:6.

II. God Has Revealed Himself

5. In nature. Rom. 1:19, 20; Ps. 19:1; Isa. 40:25, 26.
6. Through revelation. Heb. 1:1; 2 Tim. 3:16.
7. In and through Jesus Christ. Heb. 1:2; 2 Cor. 4:6.
8. Through His providences. Ps. 34: 6-8; 107:43.

III. We Can Approach God

9. Seeking and finding God. Jer. 29:13, 14.

10. We have a Mediator. 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1.
11. God Himself loves us. John 16:27; 3:16.
12. Access through the Son. Matt. 11:27; John 14:6.
13. Father and Son will abide with us. John 14:23; Isa. 57:15.
14. Fellowship the ultimate goal. 1 John 1:3.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"We are too faithless. Oh, how I wish that I could lead our people to have faith in God! They need not feel that in order to exercise faith they must be wrought up into a high state of excitement. All they have to do is to believe God's Word, just as they believe one another's word. He hath said it, and He will perform His Word. Calmly rely on His promise, because He means all that He says. Say, He has spoken to me in His Word, and He will fulfill every promise that He has made. Do not become restless. Be trustful. God's Word is true." —*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, pp. 83, 84.

A Knowledge of God Is Vital

1. What is a knowledge of God declared to be? John 17:3.

NOTE.—"In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. 'This is life eternal,' He said, 'that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.' John 17:3. This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 114.

2. In what only should man take pride? Jer. 9:23, 24.

NOTE.—"If men could see for a moment beyond the range of finite vision, if they could catch a glimpse of the Eternal, every mouth would be stopped in its boasting. Men living in this little atom of a world are finite; God has unnumbered worlds that are obedient to His laws and are conducted with reference to His glory. When men have gone as far in scientific research as their limited powers will permit, there is still an infinity beyond what they can apprehend."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students,* page 66.

3. What is said of the true God as compared with all false gods? Isa. 43:10; 44:6.

4. What is it essential to believe concerning God? Heb. 11:6.

NOTE.—"There is no encouragement given for unbelief. The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 7, p. 928.

God Has Revealed Himself

5. Of what does nature testify? Rom. 1:19, 20; Ps. 19:1; Isa. 40:25, 26.

NOTE.—"It is not that they do not know the truth about God: indeed He has made it quite plain to them. For since the beginning of the world the invisible attri-

butes of God, for example, His eternal power and divinity, have been plainly discernible through things which He has made and which are commonly seen and known, thus leaving these men without a rag of excuse. They knew all the time that there is a God, yet they refused to acknowledge Him as such." Rom. 1:19-21. (From *The New Testament in Modern English,* copyright J. B. Phillips, 1958. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.)

6. Through what means other than nature has God revealed Himself to humanity? Heb. 1:1; 2 Tim. 3:16.

NOTE.—"God speaks to us in His Word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption. Here is open before us the history of patriarchs and prophets and other holy men of old. They were men 'subject to like passions as we are.' James 5:17. We see how they struggled through discouragements like our own, how they fell under temptation as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God; and, beholding, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness."—*Steps to Christ,* pages 87, 88.

7. Through whom did God make the most complete revelation of Himself? Heb. 1:2; 2 Cor. 4:6. Compare John 14:9.

NOTE.—"Who is Christ?—He is the only-begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought,—as a thought made audible. Christ is the Word of God. Christ said to Philip, 'He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.' His words were the echo of God's words. Christ was the likeness of God, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person. . . .

"Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. But not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it is revealed in Christ."—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 21.

8. In what other manner does God reveal Himself? Ps. 34:6-8; 107:43.

NOTE.—"God speaks to us through His providential workings, and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart."—*Steps to Christ,* page 87.

We Can Approach God

9. What remarkable assurance has God given? Jer. 29:13, 14.

NOTE.—"The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God. . . . God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him."—*Steps to Christ,* page 43.

10. In what capacity does Jesus now serve His believing children? 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1.

11. What did Jesus say of God's attitude toward us? John 16:27; 3:16.

NOTE.—"Said Jesus: 'The Father Himself loveth you.' If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove 'as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the Forerunner is for us entered.' It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. He does not become perplexed by the multiplicity of our grievances nor overpowered by the weight of our burdens. His watchcare extends to every household and encircles every individual; He is concerned in all our business and our sorrows. He marks every

tear; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out His purposes of love toward us, 'that we might be partakers of His holiness' and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 742.

12. How only can we approach God the Father? Matt. 11:27; John 14:6.

NOTE.—"Jehovah did not deem the plan of salvation complete while invested only with His love. He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed in our nature. As our Intercessor, Christ's office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters. He intercedes in behalf of those who receive Him. With His own blood He has paid their ransom. By virtue of His merits He gives them power to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. And the Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ by receiving and welcoming Christ's friends as His friends."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 8, p. 177.

13. With whom will the Father and the Son make their abode? John 14:23; Isa. 57:15.

14. What is the final goal of all our spiritual endeavors? 1 John 1:3. Compare John 10:28, 29.

NOTE.—The Infinite God has provided evidence of His existence, His love, and His concern for us sufficient to lead everyone who is honest in heart into a satisfying and and unbroken fellowship with Him. No one need miss the way. God can re-create the human heart with a capacity for fellowship with the divine. All of God's dealings with human beings are with the intent that "they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:27, 28.

Lesson 3, for April 20, 1968

Faith and God's Promises

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

STUDY HELPS: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pages 621, 622; "Education," pages 253-255; "Selected Messages," Bk. 1, pp. 83-85; Bk. 2, pp. 242-245; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: To appreciate the greatness of God's promises, and to learn how to appropriate them by faith.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. The Vastness of God's Promises

1. Exceeding great and precious. 2 Peter 1:4.
2. All our needs covered. Phil. 4:19; Ps. 84:11.
3. Spiritual blessings supplied. Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.
4. Temporal necessities provided. Matt. 6:30-34; Acts 14:17.

II. The Nature of God's Promises

5. They are trustworthy. James 1:17; Num. 23:19.
6. They are unfailing. 2 Cor. 1:20.

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7. They require man's cooperation. Isa. 1:19, 20.
8. They are conditional. Deut. 11: 26-28; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 3:20.

III. Conditions for Fulfillment of God's Promises

9. Firmly believe the promises. Luke 24:25; 1 Thess. 2:13.
10. Be fully persuaded God will perform His word. Rom. 4:20, 21.
11. Meet conditions of the promises. Deut. 28:1, 2, 13, 14; Jer. 18:9, 10.
12. Accept the promises by faith as though fulfilled. 1 John 5:14, 15; Mark 11:24.
13. Express gratitude for the promises. Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20.

THE LESSON

Introduction

In His plan for the redemption of man, our heavenly Father has provided for all our needs with specific promises. Recorded in His Holy Word, these promises are "exceeding great and precious." "In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises 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."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 122.

In this lesson we shall see how vast are God's provisions, and how, by faith and obedience, we can appropriate these promises in our daily lives. God's promises were not meant merely to arouse our interest and admiration; they were intended for our appropriation. God's gifts are in His promises—when we accept the promises by faith, the gifts are ours also.

The Vastness of God's Promises

1. With what words does the apostle Peter describe God's promises? What are these promises designed to do for us? 2 Peter 1:4.

NOTE.—An amazing transformation is assured in the lives of those who appropriate the promises of God by faith. They may become "partakers of the divine nature"!

"There are many who, though striving to obey God's commandments, have little peace or joy. This lack in their experience is the result of a failure to exercise faith. They walk as it were in a salt land, a parched wilderness. They claim little, when they might claim much; for there is no limit to the promises of God. Such ones do not correctly represent the sanctification that comes through obedience to the truth. The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Through the exercise of faith the believer comes into possession of these blessings. Through faith, every deficiency of character may be supplied."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 563, 564.

2. How comprehensive is God's care and provision for His children? Phil. 4:19; Ps. 84:11.

NOTE.—"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. 'No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Matt. 11:30; Ps. 84: 11.

"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 of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 481.

3. What provision has God made for our spiritual growth? Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

4. What promise is given concerning man's temporal needs? Matt. 6: 30-34; Acts 14:17.

NOTE.—"Christ is the source of all temporal, as well as all spiritual blessings. . . .

"How can those who expect to stand around Christ's throne, and to be clothed with His righteousness, distrust God, and fear that He will leave them to come to want? Where is their faith? Our heavenly Father feeds the ravens, and will He not much more feed us? . . . If we had a right view of Christ, we would permit nothing to interpose between ourselves and Him." —*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 234.

The Nature of God's Promises

5. What characteristic of God makes His promises trustworthy? James 1:17; Num. 23:19. Compare Joshua 21:45.

6. What is said of the reliability of all God's promises made through Jesus Christ? 2 Cor. 1:20. Compare Ps. 37:25.

NOTE.—" 'Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' Can you not *trust* in your heavenly Father? Can you not *rest* upon His gracious promise? 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Precious promise! Can you not *rely* upon it? Can we not have *implicit trust,* knowing that He is faithful who hath promised? I entreat you to let your trembling faith again *grasp* the promises of God. *Bear your whole weight upon them* with unwavering faith; for they will not, they cannot, fail." —*Testimonies,* Vol. 2, p. 497. (Emphasis supplied.)

7. To experience the fulfillment of God's promises, what must be our attitude? Isa. 1:19, 20.

NOTE.—"In the work of salvation there is a cooperation of human and divine agencies. There is much said concerning the inefficiency of human effort, and yet the Lord does nothing for the salvation of the soul without the cooperation of man. The Word of God is clear and distinct on this point, and yet when so much depends upon our cooperation with the heavenly agencies, men conduct themselves as though they could afford to set aside the claims of God, and let the things of eternal importance wait their convenience."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* pages 217, 218.

8. What indications do we have that God's promises are conditional? Deut. 11:26-28; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 3:20.

NOTE.—"All His [God's] gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will cooperate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 145.

Conditions for Fulfillment of God's Promises

9. How should we regard the Bible promises? Luke 24:25; 1 Thess. 2:13.

NOTE.—"The good-ground hearer receives the Word 'not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God.' 1 Thess. 2:13. Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true learner. He trembles at the Word; for to him it is a living reality."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 59.

10. Of what must we as individuals be fully persuaded in order to experience the fulfillment of God's promises? Rom. 4:20, 21. Compare Dan. 3:16-18; Matt. 9:28, 29.

11. Upon what does the fulfillment of such promises depend? Deut. 28:1, 2, 13, 14; Jer. 18:9, 10.

NOTE.—"Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him.

"Many are forfeiting the conditions of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us. We present to God His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by so doing He would dishonor His own name."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 143.

12. When we comply with the conditions God wisely attaches to His promises, what assurance is ours? 1 John 5:14, 15; Mark 11:24.

NOTE.—"Is Jesus true? Does He mean what He says? Answer decidedly, Yes, every word. Then if you have settled this, by faith claim every promise that He has made, and receive the blessing; for this acceptance by faith gives life to the soul. You may believe that Jesus is true to you, even though you feel yourself to be the weakest and most unworthy of His children."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 517.

"For any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received.

"We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most."—*Education*, page 258.

13. What should be mingled with all our petitions? Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20.

Lesson 4, for April 27, 1968

Faith and the Promise of Reconciliation

MEMORY VERSE: "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." Romans 5:10.

STUDY HELPS: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pages 33-70; "The Desire of Ages," pages 19-26, 114-131, 741-764; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary"; "The Great Controversy," pages 675-678.

STUDY AIM: To deepen the assurance of acceptance into the family of God.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. Estranged From God

1. A happy beginning. Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:15.
2. Free moral agents—a choice. Gen. 2:17.
3. Failure and estrangement. Gen. 3:6-8, 19, 24.
4. Man's condition hopeless. Eph. 2:12; Rom. 5:12.

II. Love Found a Way

5. God took the initiative. 1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:8.
6. Christ took man's place. Heb. 2:9.
7. Christ bore man's guilt. 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:4-6.
8. Reconciliation assured. Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21.

III. The Estrangement Ended; Reconciliation Effected

9. From sinners to sons. Matt. 11:28; John 12:32; 1:12.
10. The new birth. John 3:3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

11. Adopted into the royal family. Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 2:19.
12. Represented before the Father. Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5.
13. Heirs to an inheritance. Rom. 8:18; Rev. 21:7.
14. The return of the redeemed. Isa. 35:10.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"The sin of Adam and Eve caused a fearful separation between God and man. And Christ steps in between fallen man and God, and says to man: 'You may yet come to the Father; there is a plan devised through which God can be reconciled to man, and man to God; through a mediator you can approach God.' And now He stands to mediate for you. He is the great High Priest who is pleading in your behalf; and you are to come and present your case to the Father through Jesus Christ. Thus you can find access to God; and though you sin, your case is not hopeless. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' "—*Testimonies,* Vol. 2, p. 591. Faith makes this experience a reality.

Estranged From God

1. In the beginning, what was the condition of the first family? What privilege did they enjoy? Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:15.

NOTE.—To man, the crowning work of His creation, God gave three precious possessions: life, Gen. 2:7; a home, Gen. 2:15; dominion, Gen. 1:28.

2. With what special capacity did the Creator endow the first pair? Gen. 2:17.

NOTE.—With the power to choose between good and evil also came accountability. Man, who is permitted to choose, must also accept the consequences of his choices. The consequences were made very plain.

3. What was the result of the unwise choice made by Adam and Eve? Gen. 3:6-8, 19, 24.

NOTE.—How true are the words of Isaiah: "For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money." Isa. 52:3. All that Adam and Eve were endowed with they lost through disobedience: innocence, Gen. 3:7; life, Gen. 3:19; home, Gen. 3:23, 24; dominion, Heb. 2:8. God's plan of reconciliation will, through Christ, restore all that was lost through Adam. Acts 3:21.

4. As a consequence of transgression, what is man's condition? Eph. 2:12; Rom. 5:12.

Love Found a Way

5. Who took the initiative in bringing about a reconciliation? Why did God do this? 1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:8.

6. In becoming our Saviour, whose place did Christ take? What was involved? Heb. 2:9.

NOTE.—"After Christ had condescended to leave His high command, step down from an infinite height and assume humanity, He could have taken upon Him any condition of humanity He might choose. But greatness and rank were nothing to Him, and He selected the lowest and most humble walk of life."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 7, p. 903.

"In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead. But the only way in which He could reach men was to veil His glory by a garb of humanity. The angels beheld the hiding of His glory, that divinity might touch humanity. Christ ever retained the utmost hatred for sin, but He loved the purchase of His blood. He suffered in the place of sinful men, taking them into union with Himself."—*Ibid.*, p. 904.

7. How closely did Christ identify Himself with sinners? 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:4-6.

NOTE.—"Christ made satisfaction for the guilt of the whole world, and all who will come to God in faith, will receive the righteousness of Christ, 'who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed' (1 Peter 2:24). Our sin has been expiated, put away, cast into the depths of the sea. Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, pp. 392, 393.

8. As a result of Christ's infinite sacrifice, what was assured to sinners? Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21.

NOTE.—Our reconciliation with the Father was assured. The way into the presence of God was opened. "In Him we have a complete offering, an infinite sacrifice, a mighty Saviour, who is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. In love He comes to reveal the Father, reconcile man to God, to make him a new creature renewed after the image of Him who created him.

"Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. We can make no atonement for ourselves; but by faith we can accept the atonement that has been made."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, pp. 321, 322.

The Estrangement Ended; Reconciliation Effected

9. In view of the reconciliation provided, what gracious invitation and positive assurance is extended to sinners? Matt. 11:28; John 12:32; 1:12.

10. What marvelous transformation comes to all who by faith embrace the provisions God has made for our reconciliation? John 3:3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

NOTE.—"The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to cooperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven."—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 356.

11. Into what family are transformed sinners adopted? Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 2:19.

NOTE.—"The only-begotten Son of God has died that we might live. The Lord has accepted this sacrifice in our behalf, as our substitute and surety, on the condition that we receive Christ and believe on Him. The sinner must come in faith to Christ, take hold of His merits, lay his sins upon the Sin Bearer, and receive His pardon. It was for this cause that Christ came into the world. Thus the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the repenting, believing sinner. He becomes a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King, an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 215.

12. In what capacity does Christ now serve before the Father? Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5. Compare 1 John 2:1.

NOTE.—"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."—*The Great Controversy,* page 489.

13. By virtue of membership in the royal family, to what may the children of God look forward? Rom. 8:18; Rev. 21:7.

NOTE.—"Language fails to express the value of the immortal inheritance. The glory, riches, and honor offered by the Son of God are of such infinite value that it is beyond the power of men or even angels to give any just idea of their worth, their excellence, their magnificence."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 2, p. 40.

14. What picture does Isaiah portray of the ransomed as they return to their eternal home? Isa. 35:10.

Lesson 5, for May 4, 1968

Faith and the Promise of Pardon

MEMORY VERSE: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," chapters, "Repentance" and "Confession"; "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pp. 635-641.

STUDY AIM: To gain a fuller appreciation of the assurance of pardon given to every believing child of God.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. The Universal Need for Pardon

1. All have sinned and need pardon. Rom. 3:23; 5:12.
2. The consequences of sin. Rom. 6:23; Prov. 11:19; Isa. 59:2.
3. Sin enslaves. John 8:34; Rom. 6:16.
4. No human remedy. Jer. 2:22; 13:23; Rom. 7:18-20, 24.

II. The Promise of Pardon

5. God's attitude toward sinners. Micah 7:18; Ex. 34:6, 7.
6. The price of our pardon. Eph. 1:7; 1 John 4:10.
7. An Advocate provided. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24.
8. God's invitation to all. Isa. 1:18.

III. Conditions of Pardon

9. Recognition of our need. Job 42:5, 6; Ps. 51:4, 5.
10. Confession. 1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13; Ps. 32:5.
11. Thorough repentance and reformation. Ezek. 18:30; 2 Chron. 7:14; Isa. 55:7.
12. Willingness to forgive others. Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; 18:21, 22.

IV. The Assurance of Pardon

13. Sins pardoned and forgotten. Jer. 31:34; Heb. 10:22, 23; 1 John 5:14, 15.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Every individual has a past as well as a present. That past we cannot ignore, for memory keeps us constantly in touch with it. In the past, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." It is the studied purpose of Satan, the originator of evil, to haunt humanity with the sins of the past. The result is frustration and bewilderment. Mankind has been offered many self-help remedies for guilt and frustration, but all such remedies have proved futile. Without divine intervention the condition of the human family is hopeless.

But God has intervened. An incalculable price has been paid for our sins. A fountain has been opened for sin and uncleanness, where we may wash and be clean. The promise is explicit and clear: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18. May God bring to each heart the *assurance* of forgiveness.

The Universal Need for Pardon

1. How many are in need of pardon? Why? Rom. 3:23; 5:12.

2. Unless we repent of our sins and receive pardon, what will be the result? Rom. 6:23; Prov. 11:19; Isa. 59:2.

3. What is the condition of one who yields to sin? John 8:34; Rom. 6:16.

NOTE.—"Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. In all the Bible there is not a more fearful warning against trifling with evil than the words of the wise man that the sinner 'shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' Prov. 5:22."—*Steps to Christ,* page 34.

4. How does the Bible state the impossibility of man's freeing himself from sin and its effects? Jer. 2:22; 13:23; Rom. 7:18-20, 24.

NOTE.—"As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, of its power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. You feel that sin has separated you from God, that you are in bondage to the power of evil. The more you struggle to escape, the more you realize your helplessness. Your motives are impure; your heart is unclean. You see that your life has been filled with selfishness and sin. You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain it?

"It is peace you need—Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it."—*Steps to Christ,* page 49.

The Promise of Pardon

5. What is God's disposition and attitude toward sinners? Micah 7:18; Ex. 34:6, 7.

NOTE.—"The Lord is full of compassion for His suffering ones. What sins are too great for His pardon? He is merciful, and as such is infinitely more ready and more pleased to pardon than to condemn. He is gracious, not looking for wrong in us; He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are but dust. In His boundless compassion and mercy He heals all our backslidings, loving us freely while we are yet sinners, withdrawing not His light, but shining on us for Christ's sake."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 2, p. 231.

6. What action did God's love prompt Him to take for our pardon? Eph. 1:7; 1 John 4:10.

NOTE.—"All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him."—*Education,* page 263.

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

7. How is the Christian's case represented before the Father? Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24.

NOTE.—"Everyone who will break from the slavery and service of Satan, and will stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel will be kept by Christ's intercessions. Christ, as our Mediator, at the right hand of the Father, ever keeps us in view, for it is as necessary that He should keep us by His intercessions as that He should redeem us with His blood. If He lets go His hold of us for one moment, Satan stands ready to destroy. Those purchased by His blood, He now keeps by His intercession."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6, p. 1078.

8. What compelling invitation does God extend to all? Isa. 1:18.

Conditions of Pardon

9. What revelation of ourselves will motivate us to seek God's pardon? Job 42:5, 6; Psalm 51:4, 5. Compare Luke 15:17, 18.

NOTE.—"No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. . . .

"The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image."—*Steps to Christ,* page 65.

10. What is required of those who seek forgiveness? How definite must our confessions be? 1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13; Ps. 32:5.

NOTE.—"There is great need today of just such sincere, heartfelt repentance and confession [as that of Daniel]. Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 636.

11. What must accompany confession in order that it may be acceptable to God? Ezek. 18:30; 2 Chron. 7:14; Isa. 55:7. Compare Lev. 6:4, 5.

NOTE.—"Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away."—*Steps to Christ,* page 39.

Note the heartfelt repentance of David recorded in Psalm 51.

12. What spirit must we maintain toward others if we would have our sins pardoned? Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; 18:21, 22.

NOTE.—"We are not forgiven *because* we forgive, but *as* we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 251.

The Assurance of Pardon

13. When we believe God's promises and comply with the conditions, what assurance may we, by faith, accept? Jer. 31:34; Heb. 10:22, 23; 1 John 5:14, 15.

NOTE.—Faith assures us of the fulfillment of God's promises. Ellen G. White, having described the healing of the paralytic at Bethesda, makes the following application:

"In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make it 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.

"Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, 'I believe it; it *is* so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.' "—*Steps to Christ,* page 51.

Lesson 6, for May 11, 1968

Faith and the Promise of God's Presence

MEMORY VERSE: "And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Exodus 33:14.

STUDY HELPS: "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pp. 628, 651, 652; "Testimonies to Ministers," pages 387-391; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary"; Psalm 139.

STUDY AIM: To gain a deeper realization of the fact that we are always in the presence of the infinite God.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. The Infinite God Is Everywhere Present

1. He is infinite in power and knowledge. Isa. 40:25-28.
2. His presence fills heaven and earth. Isa. 66:1; Acts 7:48-50.
3. His presence dwells with the humble. Isa. 57:15; 66:2.
4. He is never far from any one of us. Acts 17:26-28.

II. God Knows Every Detail of Our Lives

5. His eye sees all. Heb. 4:13; Jer. 23:24; Ps. 139:7-12.
6. He knows all our activities. Ps. 139:1-3; Isa. 29:15.
7. He knows our words and motives. Ps. 139:4; Matt. 12:36, 37.

III. Assurance of God's Presence and Aid

8. His presence promised to His children. Ex. 33:14; John 14:18; Heb. 13:5.

9. He is present in all our trials. Isa. 43:1, 2; 63:9.
10. Assurance to Israel and Joshua. Deut. 31:6-8; 4:7.
11. The secret of Moses' faith. Heb. 11:27.
12. Faith makes the promised presence a reality. Ps. 16:8.
13. The influence of His abiding presence. 2 Cor. 3:18.

THE LESSON

Introduction

A satisfying fellowship with God can be established only upon an unwavering faith in His reality and His presence. Paul says: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him. The man who approaches God must have faith in two things, first that God exists and secondly that it is worth a man's while to try to find God." Heb. 11:6. (From *The New Testament in Modern English,* copyright J. B. Phillips 1958. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.)

"As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, *no other influence can equal the sense of God's presence.* 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' . . . This thought was Joseph's shield amidst the corruptions of Egypt. To the allurements of temptation his answer was steadfast: 'How . . . can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Gen. 39:9. Such a shield, faith, if cherished, will bring to every soul."—*Education,* page 255. (Emphasis supplied.)

The Infinite God Is Everywhere Present

1. What evidence does Isaiah give of the power and knowledge of God? Isa. 40:25-28.

2. How extensive is the presence of God? Isa. 66:1; Acts 7:48-50.

3. Although the presence of God fills the heavens and the earth, with whom does He condescend to dwell? Isa. 57:15; 66:2.

NOTE.—"We should cherish gratitude of heart all the days of our life because the Lord has put on record these words: 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' The reconciliation of God to man, and man to God, is sure when certain conditions are met."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* page 370.

"From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 300.

4. How closely has God identified Himself with humanity? Acts 17:26-28.

NOTE.—"Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a Being who moves in all His works according to His will. It is not by an original power inherent in nature that year by year the earth produces its bounties and the world keeps up its continual march around the sun. The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God's power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotations. The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. It is not as the result of a mechanism, that, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is the continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6, p. 1062.

God Knows Every Detail of Our Lives

5. Is it possible for man to withdraw himself from the presence of God? Heb. 4:13; Jer. 23:24; Ps. 139: 7-12.

NOTE.—"If we were to cherish an habitual impression that God sees and hears all that we do and say and keeps a faithful record of our words and actions, and that we must meet it all, we would fear to sin. Let the young ever remember that wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are in the presence of God. No part of our conduct escapes observation. We cannot hide our ways from the Most High."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 217.

6. How fully is God acquainted with all our ways? Ps. 139:1-3; Isa. 29:15.

NOTE.—"The eye of the Lord is upon all the work, all the plans, all the imaginings of every mind; He sees beneath the surface of things, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is not a deed of darkness, not a plan, not an imagination of the heart, not a thought of the mind, but that He reads it as an open book. Every act, every word, every motive, is faithfully chronicled in the records by the great Heart Searcher, who said, 'I know thy works.' "—*Testimonies to Ministers,* pages 463, 464.

7. With what else besides our actions is God also fully acquainted? What accounting must eventually be made? Ps. 139:4; Matt. 12:36, 37.

NOTE.—"We are never alone. We have a Companion, whether we choose Him or not. . . . To your every word and action you have a witness,—the holy, sin-hating God. Nothing that is said or done or thought can escape His infinite eye. Your words may not be heard by human ears, but they are heard by the Ruler of the universe. He reads the inward anger of the soul when the will is crossed. He hears the expression of profanity. In the deepest darkness and solitude He is there. No one can deceive God; none can escape from their accountability to Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 3, p. 1153.

Assurance of God's Presence and Aid

8. What precious promise has God made to His people? Ex. 33:14; John 14:18; Heb. 13:5.

NOTE.—"The presence of God is guaranteed to the Christian. This Rock of faith is the living presence of God. The weakest may depend upon it. Those who think themselves the strongest may become the weakest unless they depend on Christ as their efficiency, their worthiness. This is the Rock upon which we may build successfully. God is near in Christ's atoning sacrifice, in His intercession, His loving, tender ruling power over the church. Seated by the eternal throne, He watches them with intense interest. As long as the members of the church shall through faith draw sap and nourishment from Jesus Christ, and not from man's opinions and devisings, and methods; if having a conviction of the nearness of God in Christ, they put their entire trust in Him, they will have a vital connection with Christ as the branch has connection with the parent stock."—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 77.

9. How does the living God identify Himself with our trials? Isa. 43:1, 2; 63:9. Compare Dan. 6:18-23; 3:21-25; Acts 27:23-25.

NOTE.—"As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who

walked with the Hebrew worthies into the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 513.

10. What wonderful assurance did Moses give to Joshua and his people? What should they exercise as a result of this promise? Deut. 31:6-8; 4:7.

NOTE.—"To His children today the Lord declares, 'Be strong, . . . and work: for I am with you.' The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them."—*Prophets and Kings,* page 576.

11. What was the secret of Moses' faith? Heb. 11:27.

NOTE.—"When God commanded Moses to do anything, he did it without stopping to consider what the consequences might be. He gave God credit for wisdom to know what He meant and firmness of purpose to mean what He said; and therefore Moses acted as seeing the Invisible."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* page 346.

12. What must we do individually if the presence of God is to be a living reality to us? Ps. 16:8.

NOTE.—If we would have an ever deepening sense of the presence of God, then we must cultivate a proper relationship by setting the Lord always before us. This requires constant vigilance and practice. We must:

a. Exercise an unwavering faith in the promises of His presence. "God has given us Jesus, and in Him is the revelation of God. Our Redeemer says: '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.' [John 14:23.] . . . If we know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, unspeakable gladness will come to the soul. Oh, how we need the divine presence!"—*Testimonies to Ministers,* pages 169, 170.

b. Let Christ be real to us. This is what is meant by setting the Lord always before us. Our joys, our sorrows, our plans, our labors—all must be constantly kept before Him through communion. "We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart's desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard."—*Gospel Workers,* page 258.

13. What effect will a sense of God's presence have upon our life and character? 2 Cor. 3:18.

Lesson 7, for May 18, 1968

Faith and the Promise of God's Love

MEMORY VERSE: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4:16.

STUDY HELPS: First epistle of John; 1 Corinthians 13; "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 546-551; "Steps to Christ," chapters, "God's Love for Man" and "Test of Discipleship"; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: To understand the need of having the love of God implanted in the heart, and to realize that this can be accomplished only through the exercise of faith in God's promises.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. Human Love Is Not Enough

1. Human love is often selfish. Luke 6:32, 33; Ezek. 33:31.
2. What God's chosen people lacked. John 5:42.
3. The quality of love that is essential. John 17:26.
4. Need for all-embracing love. Matt. 5:43-47.
5. Faith also needed. Gal. 5:6.

II. God Has Promised Us His Love

6. God's love made known. John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8.
7. God shares His love with His children. Rom. 5:5.
8. Love, the basis of fellowship. 1 John 4:7, 8.

III. Evidences of Divine Love in the Life

9. Leads to obedience. 1 John 2:5, 6; 5:3; 2 John 6.
10. Embraces the brotherhood. John 13:34, 35; 14:15; 1 John 4:19-21.
11. Motivates to service. 2 Cor. 5:14.
12. Manifests itself in compassion. 1 John 3:17, 18; Matt. 9:36.
13. Leads to endurance. Rom. 8: 35-39.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"Yes; Christ has said it, and He means just what He says. He will honor all our drafts if we will grasp His promise by living faith, and put our trust in Him. Look to Him, and live. All who obey God are embraced in the prayer which Christ offered to His Father, 'I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them' (John 17: 26). Wonderful truth, too difficult for humanity to comprehend!"—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 300.

Divine love is too infinite to comprehend, but not too difficult to experience if we accept it on God's promises by simply appropriating faith.

Human Love Is Not Enough

1. What does the Bible say of the shallowness of what some call "love"? Luke 6:32, 33; Ezek. 33:31.

NOTE.—"It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?"—*Steps to Christ,* page 58.

2. What did Christ say the people of His day lacked? John 5:42.

NOTE.—In Christ's day the professed people of God had made no room in their hearts for His love, therefore they were incapable of loving God in return.

"In rejecting the love of Christ they reject that which alone can impart purity and steadfastness to human love."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 225.

"The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance."—*Ibid.*, p. 420.

3. What type of love did Jesus pray for His followers to possess? John 17:26.

NOTE.—"The Lord has made abundant provision that His love may be given to us as His free, abundant grace, as our inheritance in this life, to enable us to diffuse the same by being yoked up with Christ. Jesus conveys the circulating vitality of a pure and sanctified Christlike love through every part of our human nature. When this love is expressed in the character, it reveals to all those with whom we associate that it is possible for God to be formed within, the hope of glory."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* page 466.

4. If we desire to be Christlike, how all-embracing must our love become? Matt. 5:43-47.

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

5. What two traits of character are mentioned as particularly desirable in the Christian life? Gal. 5:6.

NOTE.—"Faith and love are the essential, powerful, working elements of Christian character. Those who possess them are one with Christ, and are carrying forward His mission. . . . We are to sit at Christ's feet as continual learners, and to work with His gifts of faith and love. We shall then wear Christ's yoke, and lift His burdens, and Christ will recognize us as one with Him; in heaven it will be said, 'Ye are laborers together with God.' "—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 71.

God Has Promised Us His Love

6. How did God make His marvelous love known to man? John 3: 16; Rom. 5:6-8.

NOTE.—"Not because we first loved Him did Christ love us; but 'while we were yet sinners' He died for us. He does not treat us according to our desert. Although our sins have merited condemnation, He does not condemn us. . . . Notwithstanding our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His Holy Word, His hand is stretched out still.

"Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 161.

7. How did we come into possession of God's love? Rom 5:5.

NOTE.—"It is the work of the Holy Spirit from age to age to impart love to human hearts, for love is the living principle of brotherhood."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 8, p. 139.

"Jesus came to impart to the human soul the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart; but it is impossible to endow men with the Holy Spirit, who are set in their ideas, whose doctrines are all stereotyped and unchangeable, who are walking after the traditions and commandments of men, as were the Jews in the time of Christ."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 386.

Since God's love can be implanted in the heart only by the Holy Spirit, it is evident that this divine love is absent from the life only because no room has been made for the Holy Spirit.

"The great sin of those who profess to be Christians is that they do not open the heart to receive the Holy Spirit."—*Ibid.*, Bk. 2, p. 57.

8. What intimate relationship does love establish? 1 John 4:7, 8.

NOTE:—"True sanctification comes through the working out of the principle of love. 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 560.

"The love of Christ is a golden chain that binds finite, human beings who believe in Jesus Christ to the Infinite God. The love that the Lord has for His children passeth knowledge. No science can define or explain it. No human wisdom can fathom it. The more we feel the influence of this love, the more meek and humble shall we be."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 5, p. 1141.

"Pure love is simple in its operations, and separate from every other principle of action. When combined with earthly motives and selfish interests, it ceases to be pure. God considers more with how much love we work, than the amount we do. Love is a heavenly attribute. The natural heart cannot originate it."—*Ibid.,* Vol. 7, p. 952.

Evidences of Divine Love in the Life

9. When the love of God dwells in the heart, what will we desire to do? 1 John 2:5, 6; 5:3; 2 John 6.

NOTE.—"But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. . . . If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, 'I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.' . . . And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship."—*Steps to Christ,* page 60.

10. What is positive evidence that the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts? What is the proof of true discipleship? John 13:34, 35; 14: 15; 1 John 4:19-21.

NOTE.—"Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another,—this is the best gift 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."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 551.

11. What is the compelling motive in service? 2 Cor. 5:14.

NOTE.—" 'The love of Christ,' said Paul, 'constraineth us.' 2 Corinthians 5:14. This was the actuating principle of his conduct; it was his motive power. If ever his ardor in the path of duty flagged for a moment, one glance at the cross caused him to gird up anew the loins of his mind, and press forward in the way of self denial. In his labors for his brethren he relied much upon the manifestations of infinite love in the sacrifice of Christ, with its subduing, constraining power."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 500.

12. What attitude, if manifested, shows that the love of God does not possess us? Contrast this with the attitude of the Master. 1 John 3:17, 18; Matt. 9:36.

NOTE.—"Although the customs of the world are no criterion for us, yet I have been shown that the pitying sympathy and the benevolence of the world for the unfor-

tunate in many cases shame the professed followers of Christ. Many manifest indifference toward those whom God has thrown among them for the purpose of testing and proving them, and developing what is in their hearts. God reads. He marks every act of selfishness, every act of indifference toward the afflicted, the widows and the fatherless; and He writes against their names, 'Guilty, wanting, law-breakers.' We shall be rewarded as our works have been."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 3, pp. 524, 525.

13. What assurance is given that the love of God can sustain us under all circumstances? Rom. 8:35-39.

NOTE.—"When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But 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.

Lesson 8, for May 25, 1968

Faith and the Promise of Answered Prayer

MEMORY VERSE: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," pages 93-104; "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 139-149; "Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing," pages 102-122; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: To develop a simple, appropriating faith in the assurance that "not one sincere prayer is lost; that "amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 174.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. Communication With God

1. Fellowship, a Christian privilege. 1 John 1:3.
2. We may become sons of God. John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-3; Rom. 8:16.
3. Acquaintance with the Divine. John 17:3; Job 22:21; Rev. 3:20.

II. Communication, a Privilege and a Necessity

4. Constant communication necessary. Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17.
5. Asking and receiving. Luke 11:9, 10.
6. Proper spirit in prayer. Phil. 4:4-7.

III. Assurances of Divine Response

7. An amazing promise. Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 15:7.
8. The answer is assured. 1 John 5:14, 15.
9. Prayer made effectual. Rom. 8:26.

IV. Conditions of Answered Prayer

10. Pray in His name. John 14: 12-14; 16:23-27.
11. Know the will of God. 1 John 5:14.
12. Be willing to obey. 1 John 3: 22; Ps. 66:18.
13. Unselfishly seek God's glory. John 14:13.
14. Ask in faith. Heb. 11:6; James 1:6, 7.

Introduction

The very nature of a genuine Christian experience makes prayer imperative. Christianity is not a creed, nor is it a set of truths. It is intensely personal. "Christ is Christianity."—*Gospel Workers,* pages 282, 283. There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ, and He is ever the same. Heb. 13:8. Hence a Christian experience is fellowship with Jesus, and this fellowship is established by faith. Paul declares: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. 1:9.

Fellowship can be maintained only through unbroken communion. This is true of earthly friendships; it is doubly true of our friendship and fellowship with Christ. Neglect communion, and religion becomes a dry formality. Hence the Master taught that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

"It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer, of unyielding faith. The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 203.

Communication With God

1. What is the ultimate purpose of the gospel? 1 John 1:3. Compare 1 Cor. 1:9.

NOTE.—"Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as one who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 85.

"Wherever we go, there is the recollection of One dear to us. We are abiding in Christ by a living faith. He is abiding in our hearts by our *individual appropriating of faith.* We have the companionship of the divine presence, and as *we realize this presence,* our thoughts are brought into captivity to Jesus Christ."—*Testimonies to Ministers,* page 388. (Emphasis supplied.)

2. What close relationship exists between God and those who come to Him in faith? John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-3; Rom. 8:16.

3. For what should God's children earnestly seek? John 17:3; Job 22:21; Rev. 3:20.

NOTE.—A personal acquaintance with God is not only a Scriptural possibility, it is the essence of Christianity. Many are the ways in which God reveals Himself—through His Word, through nature, through His providences, and by His Spirit. How wonderful is the promise: "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." John 14:23. The fulfillment of this promise we may not be able to explain, but we can experience it.

Communication, a Privilege and a Necessity

4. In order to maintain an unbroken fellowship with God, what must we do? Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17.

NOTE.—"Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we

must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."—*Steps to Christ,* page 93.

"Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God."—*Ibid.,* p. 98.

5. In order to receive God's promised gifts and blessings, what are we invited to do? Luke 11:9, 10.

NOTE.—"The same compassionate Saviour lives today, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural cooperates with the supernatural. It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask."—*The Great Controversy,* page 525.

"Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, 'Ye shall receive.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 564.

6. In what spirit should God's children pray? Phil. 4:4-7.

NOTE.—"Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart's desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 174.

Assurances of Divine Response

7. What challenging promises of answered prayer has Christ made? Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 15:7.

NOTE.—"Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal."—*Education,* pages 257, 258.

"Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?" —*Steps to Christ,* pages 94, 95.

8. With what attitude should we approach the Saviour, and what assurance do we have when we come to Him? 1 John 5:14, 15.

NOTE.—"When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we *have* received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 200.

9. What help may we claim in making our prayers acceptable and effectual? Rom. 8:26.

NOTE.—"Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood,

shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6, pp. 1077, 1078.

Conditions of Answered Prayer

10. What secret of answered prayer did Jesus mention? John 14:12-14; 16:23-27.

NOTE.—"To pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His Spirit, and work His works."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 668.

"To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works."—*Steps to Christ,* pages 100, 101.

When we come in the name of Jesus, we come not as beggars, but as children. Therefore we may "come boldly [with confidence] unto the throne of grace." Heb. 4:16.

11. With what must our prayers harmonize? 1 John 5:14.

NOTE.—The will of God can be discovered through a diligent study of the Word of God and the messages of the spirit of prophecy. A submissive will is no substitute for a prayerful study of the Bible.

12. To claim God's answer to our prayers, what must be our attitude? 1 John 3:22; Ps. 66:18.

NOTE.—"All His [God's] gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will cooperate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 145.

"Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him.

"Many are forfeiting the condition of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us."—*Ibid.,* p. 143.

13. How does answered prayer affect men's concept of God? John 14:13.

14. To assure God's favorable response to our prayers, what must we exercise? Heb. 11:6; James 1:6, 7.

NOTE.—At times God's answer may be No instead of Yes. Accordingly our petitions should ever include the submissive spirit in "If it be Thy will."

"Faith is an essential element of prevailing prayer. . . . With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, we may present our petitions to the Father, claiming all that He has promised. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word."—*Prophets and Kings,* pages 157, 158.

"Pray in faith. And be sure to bring your lives into harmony with your petitions, that you may receive the blessings for which you pray. Let not your faith weaken, for the blessings received are proportionate to the faith exercised. . . . Pray, believe, rejoice. Sing praises to God because He has answered your prayers. Take Him at His word. 'He is faithful that promised.' Heb. 10:23. Not one sincere supplication is lost."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 7, p. 274.

Faith and God's Promises of Care and Guidance

MEMORY VERSE: "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," pages 85-91; "Messages to Young People," page 156; "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 153, 154; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: To develop greater confidence in God's promises of unfailing care and guidance.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. God's Concern for His Children

1. God loves us. John 16: 26, 27.
2. God assures us of His care. 1 Peter 5:7.
3. We need not be anxious. Phil. 4:6.
4. The peace of God "passeth all understanding." Phil. 4:7.

II. Promises of God's Care

5. All our needs supplied. Ps. 84:11; 34:8-10; Phil. 4:19.
6. Temporal necessities provided. Matt. 6:25-32.
7. Spiritual blessings given. Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.
8. Man must do his part. 1 Thess. 4:11; Prov. 10:4.

III. Promises of Guidance

9. Our need of guidance. Jer. 10:23, 24.
10. God guides continually. Ps. 32:8.
11. God guides unerringly. Isa. 30:21.
12. We must acknowledge Him. Prov. 3:6.
13. God guides through His Word and His Spirit. Ps. 119:105; John 16:13.

THE LESSON

Introduction

An adequate concept of the greatness and the love of God will banish anxiety and worry. God can be trusted to care for His own. God will not call to Himself the helpless and needy only to abandon them. This is not the kind of God the Bible presents. Christianity establishes a parent-child relationship between us and our heavenly Father. Our heavenly Parent has all the resources; we, His children, must maintain an attitude of confidence and trust.

"He knows each individual by name, and cares for each as if there were not another upon the earth for whom He gave His beloved Son."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 229.

"When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. We may well have anxiety, and anticipate danger and loss; for it is certain to befall us. But when we really believe that God loves us, and means to do us good, we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear; for our will is swallowed up in the will of God."—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 119.

God's Concern for His Children

1. What assurance did Jesus give concerning the Father's love? John 16:26, 27.

NOTE.—"One who knows, has said, 'The Father Himself loveth you.' One who has had an experimental knowledge of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that love, has declared unto us this amazing fact. . . . We are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father, and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* page 178.

2. What does the apostle Peter admonish God's people to do? Why? 1 Peter 5:7.

NOTE.—"The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord 'telleth the number of the stars;' and yet 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' Ps. 147:4, 3. 'Come unto Me,' is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer. The rest that Christ offers depends upon conditions, but these conditions are plainly specified. They are those with which all can comply."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 329.

3. Since God loves and cares, what should we not do? What should we do? Phil. 4:6.

NOTE.—"You have not faith and love and confidence in God. If you had, you would trust in Him. You worry yourself out of the arms of Christ, fearing that He will not care for you."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 697.

4. What precious experience will follow implicit trust in God? Phil. 4:7.

Promises of God's Care

5. How completely do the promises of God cover all our needs? Ps. 84:11; 34:8-10; Phil. 4:19.

6. What temporal necessities has God promised to supply? Matt. 6: 25-32.

NOTE.—"The power of God is manifested in the beating of the heart, in the action of the lungs, and in the living currents that circulate through the thousand different channels of the body. We are indebted to Him for every moment of existence, and for all the comforts of life. . . . He loads us with His benefits. We are indebted to Him for the food we eat, the water we drink, the clothes we wear, the air we breathe. Without His special providence, the air would be filled with pestilence and poison. He is a bountiful benefactor and preserver. . . .

"We may state to Him our temporal matters, asking Him for bread and raiment as well as for the bread of life and the robe of Christ's righteousness. . . . The gifts of Him who has all power in heaven and earth are in store for the children of God."—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 17.

7. How completely has our Father provided for our spiritual necessities? Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

8. What is our part in God's plan to provide for our temporal needs? 1 Thess. 4:11; Prov. 10:4.

NOTE.—"We are to be vigilant, watching for the coming of the Son of man; and we must also be diligent; working as well as waiting is required; there must be a union of the two. This will balance the Christian character, making it well developed, symmetrical. We should not feel that we are to neglect everything else, and give ourselves up to meditation, study, or prayer; neither are we to be full of bustle and hurry and work, to the neglect of personal piety. Waiting and watching and working are to be blended. 'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.' "—*The Adventist Home,* page 23.

"If any man will not work, neither shall he eat, applies to the spiritual, religious life as well as to the earthly, temporal things.

"Paul not only endured the taxation of the physical powers in common labor without one feeling of either belittling or degrading himself, and without discontent; but he bore the burden while at the same time exerting the activities of his mind to advance and attain in spiritual knowledge. He taught, and he practiced the lessons he taught. . . .

"The apostle in his day considered idleness a sin, and those who indulge this evil today disgrace their profession. . . .

"If a man in good physical health has property, and has no need of entering into employment for his own support, he should labor to acquire means that he may advance the cause and work of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 7, pp. 911, 912.

Promises of God's Guidance

9. How did Jeremiah state man's universal need? For what did he pray? Jer. 10:23, 24.

NOTE.—"God's Word sheds an unerring light upon the pathway of man's life. Notwithstanding the many influences which arise to divert and distract the mind, those who honestly seek God for wisdom will be guided into the right course."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 247.

10. How intimate and personal is God's promised guidance? Ps. 32:8.

NOTE.—"Our heavenly Father is our Ruler, and we must submit to His discipline. We are members of His family. He has a right to our service. . . . Whatever path God chooses for us, whatever way He ordains for our feet, . . . with childlike submission as obedient children, we must look to God, to follow His guidance, and difficulties will clear away. The promise is, 'I will instruct thee and teach thee.' "—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 175.

11. How specifically does God promise to guide each of His children? Isa. 30:21.

NOTE.—"God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. In all His dealings with human beings He recognizes the principle of personal responsibility. He seeks to encourage a sense of personal dependence and to impress the need of personal guidance. He desires to bring the human into association with the divine, that men may be transformed into the divine likeness. Satan works to thwart this purpose. He seeks to encourage dependence upon men. When minds are turned away from God, the tempter can bring them under his rule. He can control humanity." — *The Ministry of Healing,* pages 242, 243.

12. In order to experience the constant guidance of God, what attitude must we maintain? Prov. 3:6.

NOTE.—"Christ in His life on earth made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps.

"Too many, in planning for a brilliant future, make an utter failure. Let God plan for you. As a little child, trust to the guidance of Him who will 'keep the feet of His saints.' 1 Sam. 2:9. 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 Ministry of Healing,* page 479.

13. What specific agencies does God employ in guiding His children? Ps. 119:105; John 16:13.

NOTE.—"There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us. . . .

"God reveals His will to us in His Word, the Holy Scriptures.

"His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart. . . .

"Another way in which God's voice is heard, is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be wrought out in the character."—*Messages to Young People,* page 156.

Lesson 10, for June 8, 1968

Faith and the Promise of the Holy Spirit

MEMORY VERSE: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7.

STUDY HELPS: "The Desire of Ages," pages 668-672; "Testimonies," Vol. 8, pp. 19-23; "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 47-56; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary"; "The Coming of the Comforter," L. E. Froom.

STUDY AIM: To find a full personal acceptance of the promised Spirit as indispensable to salvation and to the finishing of God's work.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. The Holy Spirit in the Plan of Redemption

1. The coming of the Holy Spirit. John 16:7.
2. The Spirit makes Christ's sacrifice and work effectual. John 15:26; 16:12-14.
3. Specific functions of the Holy Spirit. John 16:8-11.

II. The Holy Spirit Has Come as Promised

4. Inauguration at Pentecost: promise, Acts 1:4, 5; fulfillment, Acts 2:1-7, 33.
5. The gift assured to all believers. Acts 2:36-39.
6. Evidences of the Spirit's control in the church. Acts 5:3, 9; 13:2, 4; 16:6.

III. The Holy Spirit and Victorious Living

7. An evidence of sonship. Rom. 8:9, 14-16.
8. Power for godly living. Gal. 5:16, 22, 23; Rom. 8:1, 2, 10-13.
9. All believers are to receive the Spirit. Eph. 5:18; Acts 2:38.
10. The gift accepted by faith. Gal. 3:14.

IV. The Holy Spirit and the Finishing of God's Work

11. The task assigned to the church. Matt. 28:18-20.
12. The promised Spirit gives power. Acts 1:8; Zech. 4:6.
13. Preparation for the outpouring of the Spirit. Joel 2:12, 13, 28.
14. The Spirit given to those who ask. Luke 11:13; Zech. 10:1.

THE LESSON

Introduction

"From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His 'good Spirit to instruct them.' Nehemiah 9:20. And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 53.

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness." —*Ibid.,* p. 49.

"Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. . . . Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 672.

"The great sin of those who profess to be Christians is that they do not open the heart to receive the Holy Spirit."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 2, p. 57.

The Holy Spirit in the Plan of Redemption

1. Why would it be "expedient" for Christ to go away? John 16:7.

NOTE.—"The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 669.

2. Whose work would the Holy Spirit make effectual? John 15:26; 16: 12-14.

NOTE.—"The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and *without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.* . . . Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 671. (Emphasis supplied.)

3. What specific work would the Holy Spirit accomplish in the world? John 16:8-11.

NOTE.—"The preaching of the Word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the Word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the

Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the cooperation of the Spirit of God."—*The Desire of Ages,* pages 671, 672.

The Holy Spirit Has Come as Promised

4. What promise did Christ make? When and how was the promise fulfilled? Acts 1:4, 5; 2:1-7, 33.

5. To whom is the promise of the Holy Spirit assured? Acts 2:36-39.

NOTE.—"To us today, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the Day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 8, p. 20.

6. What evidence does the Bible record of the Spirit's control in the early church? Acts 5:3, 9; 13:2, 4; 16:6.

The Holy Spirit and Victorious Living

7. Of what is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit an evidence? Rom. 8:9, 14-16.

8. Through what agency alone is godly living possible? What will be the evidence? Gal. 5:16, 22, 23; Rom. 8:1, 2, 10-13.

NOTE.—"It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 671.

"Those who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God, will constantly receive a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual 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 His 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 made complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence."—*Gospel Workers,* pages 112, 113.

9. What positive command is given to the believers? What preparatory work must take place? Eph. 5:18; Acts 2:38.

NOTE.—"To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment."—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 31.

10. How are we to receive this precious gift? Gal. 3:14.

NOTE.—Like every other promised gift, the Holy Spirit must be appropriated by faith. There is no other way. Here is where we are prone to fail. Hence, the power of God continues to await our demand and reception. "This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 672.

"In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of

His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 419.

The Holy Spirit and the Finishing of God's Work

11. What command did Christ give to His followers before returning to heaven? Matt. 28:18-20.

NOTE.—"Christ made full provision for the prosecution of the work entrusted to the disciples, *and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success.* So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there. . . .

"To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. . . . He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciples, and He will be with us 'even unto the end.' "—*Testimonies,* Vol. 8, pp. 16, 17. (Emphasis supplied.)

"Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim." —*The Desire of Ages,* page 825.

12. What provision did Christ make for completing the great gospel commission? Acts 1:8; Zech. 4:6.

NOTE.—Human resources, no matter how plentiful, can never meet the demands of the great commission. This is by Christ's design and purpose. He has assumed the responsibility for the successful prosecution of His work. He has promised all the resources needed through the gift of His Spirit. To neglect this provision is to invite failure.

"The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. . . . If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 50.

13. What is to prepare the way for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain for the finishing of God's work? Joel 2:12, 13, 28. Compare Acts 1:14; 2:1.

NOTE.—"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 121.

"If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come."—*Ibid.,* p. 124. (See also last note under question 10.)

14. For what should the people of God pray at this time? Luke 11:13; Zech. 10:1.

NOTE.—"Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 50.

Lesson 11, for June 15, 1968

Faith and Assurance

MEMORY VERSE: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Isaiah 32:17.

STUDY HELPS: "Steps to Christ," chapters, "Consecration," "Faith and Acceptance," and "Growing Up Into Christ"; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary"; "S.D.A. Bible Dictionary."

STUDY AIM: To know the necessity and possibility of making our "calling and election sure."

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. Assurance Taught in the Bible

1. Counseled to seek assurance. 2 Peter 1:10, 11.
2. Experience of the Thessalonians. 1 Thess. 1:5.
3. What Paul knew. 2 Tim. 1:12; Rom. 8:38, 39.
4. What the apostle John knew assuredly. 1 John 3:2, 14.

II. Steps to Full Assurance

5. Come through faith. Heb. 10:22; Rom. 4:19-21.
6. Willingness to do God's will. John 7:17.
7. Correct understanding of justification. Rom. 5:1.
8. Consistency in Christian living. 1 John 2:6; Col. 2:6.

III. Areas of Absolute Assurance

9. Our sonship. John 1:12; Rom. 8:16, 17; 1 John 3:1, 2.
10. Forgiveness of sin. 1 John 1:9; Isa. 43:25; Ps. 103:12.
11. Grace for the present. Phil. 1:6; 1 John 5:4; 2 Cor. 2:14.
12. Heaven at last. 1 John 5:11-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

THE LESSON

Introduction

No one need doubt his relationship to Christ and his position as a child of God. We can be sure. The Bible holds out, for all who covet it, an experience of fullest assurance. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the *promise might be sure* to all the seed." Rom. 4:16. Had salvation been based on man's good works, he never could know full assurance, for he would never know when his works were equal to God's requirements. Assurance comes from accepting the promises, complying with the conditions, and believing that God will fulfill what He has promised. "It *is* so if you believe it." —*Steps to Christ,* page 51.

Assurance Taught in the Bible

1. What urgent counsel does the apostle Peter give believers? 2 Peter 1:10, 11.

NOTE.—"The calling and election are an act of God (1 Peter 1:2; 2:21); yet it is possible for one to 'frustrate the grace of God' (Gal. 2:21). Accordingly, the believer needs to 'work out' his 'own salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil. 2:12). He will then be making a certainty of what God has already desired and made possible."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on 2 Peter 1:10.

2. When the Thessalonians received the gospel, what effect did it have upon them? 1 Thess. 1:5.

NOTE.—The Thessalonians witnessed in the lives of Paul and his companions a full demonstration of the gospel as the "power of God unto salvation." This demonstration brought to the believers "much assurance" and led them into a full participation of the gospel and its power. Hence they became "ensamples" to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

3. How did the apostle Paul testify to the full assurance in his heart? 2 Tim. 1:12; Rom. 8:38, 39.

NOTE.—Paul did not merely hope, desire, or guess. He *knew*. He was *persuaded*. He took no chances where eternal interests were involved. He did not "neglect so great salvation." What Christ promised, Paul claimed; what Christ required, Paul complied with. To be among those who were "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" was to him an intriguing reality.

In pursuit of this high calling Paul counted "all things but loss" that he might "know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." He staked out his claim in a better land, and nothing could move him from this settled purpose. His assurance was not based on feeling; it rested solidly on the promises of God—promises made a reality by his invincible faith.

4. Of what was the apostle John absolutely certain? What was the evidence? 1 John 3:2, 14.

Steps to Full Assurance

5. What will the exercise of faith in God's promises and provisions generate? Heb. 10:22; Rom. 4:19-21.

NOTE.—Assurance is generated by faith, deepened by hope (Heb. 6:11; Rom. 5:5), and confirmed by love (1 John 3:14).

"Every promise in the Word of God furnishes us with subject matter for prayer, presenting the pledged word of Jehovah as our assurance. Whatever spiritual blessing we need, it is our privilege to claim through Jesus. We may tell the Lord, with the simplicity of a child, exactly what we need."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* page 133.

6. In order to be fully persuaded as to what is truth, what must be our attitude? John 7:17.

NOTE.—"Those who humbly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, to know and to do God's will, will not be in doubt of their obligations to God. For 'if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.' If you would know the mystery of godliness, you must follow the plain word of truth,—feeling or no feeling, emotion or no emotion. Obedience must be rendered from a sense of principle, and the right must be pursued under all circumstances. This is the character that is elected of God unto salvation."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* page 125.

"Disguise it as they may, the real cause of doubt and skepticism, in most cases, is the love of sin. The teachings and restrictions of God's Word are not welcome to the proud, sin-loving heart, and those who are unwilling to obey its requirements are ready to doubt its authority."—*Steps to Christ,* page 111.

7. In order to enjoy full and abiding assurance, what wonderful provision of the gospel must we see clearly? Rom. 5:1.

NOTE.—A faulty understanding of the doctrine of justification often results in uncertainty about one's Christian experience. If we would cherish deep and abiding assurance in our hearts, then we must see clearly that Christ's work, and His alone, is the ground of our acceptance with God. Here, human effort can contribute nothing,

either directly or indirectly. For justification, through which we become the children of God, our essential part is the exercise of faith. Justification is a perfect, finished work, and admits of no degrees. The Bible uses four expressions in speaking of justification:

a. "Being justified freely by His grace." Rom. 3:24. This is the *source* of our justification. If God were not graciously disposed toward sinners there could be no reconciliation.

b. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood." Rom. 5:9. The blood is the *means* by which we are justified. The blood was the purchase price of our redemption.

c. "Therefore being justified by faith." Rom. 5:1. Faith is the method of *receiving* justification, which has been graciously provided through the blood of the Son of God.

d. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified." James 2:24. Our works, our manner of living, constitute the *evidence* of our justification which has been freely and solely wrought by God.

Justification depends, not upon us, but upon the infinite God, who has promised and knows how to perform. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:26. This brings deep and abiding assurance.

8. To enjoy continuing assurance, what must the justified believer henceforth do? 1 John 2:6; Col. 2:6.

NOTE.—Nothing will destroy peace of conscience and assurance more effectively than an inconsistent life. A child of God must make a clean break with everything he knows to be out of harmony with God's will. Failure to do this is to court a troubled heart and risk ultimate loss.

"Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, 'I am Christ's; I have given myself to Him;' and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him."—*Steps to Christ,* page 52.

Areas of Absolute Assurance

9. If we have opened our hearts fully to Jesus, of what may we be sure? John 1:12; Rom. 8:16, 17; 1 John 3:1, 2.

NOTE.—"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. . . . Christ alone has power to cleanse the heart. . . . But the promise of sonship is made to *all* who 'believe on His name.' "—*Sons and Daughters of God,* page 12.

"How can we ever be in doubt and uncertainty, and feel that we are orphans? It was in behalf of those who had transgressed the law that Jesus took upon Him human nature; He became like unto us, that we might have everlasting peace and assurance. We have an Advocate in the heavens, and whoever accepts Him as a personal Saviour is not left an orphan to bear the burden of his own sins."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* page 104.

10. If we have truly confessed our sins, of what may we be certain? 1 John 1:9; Isa. 43:25; Ps. 103:12.

NOTE.—From the Bible account of Jesus' healing the sick we may learn how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. The paralytic of Bethesda was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Jesus bade him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The sick man might have said, "Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word." But no, he believed Christ's word—believed that he was made whole—and he made the effort at once; he *willed* to walk, and he did walk. He acted on Christ's word, and God gave the power.

11. If we remain fully surrendered to Christ, of what glorious provision may we be assured? Phil 1:6; 1 John 5:4; 2 Cor. 2:14.

NOTE.—"Let no one despair of gaining the victory. Victory is sure when self is surrendered to God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* Vol. 1, p. 1095.

"The great Captain of our salvation has conquered in our behalf, that through Him we might conquer, if we would, in our own behalf. But Christ saves none against their choice; He compels none to obedience. He made the infinite sacrifice that they might overcome in His name and His righteousness be imputed unto them."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 3, p. 457.

12. If we accept the provisions God has made for our salvation, of what may we cherish full assurance? 1 John 5:11-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

NOTE.—"Teach the great practical truths that must be stamped upon the soul. Teach the saving power of Jesus, 'in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Col. 1:14. It was at the cross that mercy and truth met together, that righteousness and truth kissed each other. . . . Show that the life of Christ reveals an infinitely perfect character. Teach that 'as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.' John 1:12. Tell it over and over again. We may become the sons of God, members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. Let it be known that all who accept Jesus Christ and hold the beginning of their confidence firm to the end will be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ 'to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.' 1 Peter 1:4, 5." —*Testimonies,* Vol. 6, pp. 59, 60.

Lesson 12, for June 22, 1968

Faith and the Promise of Victory

MEMORY VERSE: "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.

STUDY HELPS: "Early Writings," pages 145-147; "The Great Controversy," pages 492-504; "Patriarchs and Prophets," pages 33-43; "Testimonies to Ministers," pages 516-520.

STUDY AIM: To discover the provisions God has made for complete victory over sin.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. The Great Controversy

1. The conflict began in heaven. Rev. 12:7-9.
2. Satan deluded the entire human family. Gen. 3:1-8, 23, 24; Rom. 5:12.
3. Plan of redemption provided through Christ. John 3:16; Eph. 1:7.
4. The conflict continues. 1 Peter 5:8.

II. Temptation and Trial, the Common Lot of All

5. All will be tried. 1 Peter 4:12.
6. Temptation and sin. James 1:14, 15; Rom. 6:13, 16.
7. Results of resisting temptation. 1 Peter 1:6, 7; James 1:2-4, 12.

III. Victory Assured

8. Divine aid promised. 1 Cor. 10:13.

9. Continuous triumph possible. 2 Cor. 2:14; John 10:28, 29.
10. God's gift through Christ. 1 Cor. 15:57.
11. Victory through faith. 1 John 5: 4, 5.
12. We must offer resistance. 1 Peter 5:9; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Tim. 6:12.
13. Avoid needless exposure to temptation. Ps. 1:1.
14. "More than conquerors." Rom. 8:37-39.

THE LESSON

Introduction

Every human being is involved in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. We are on one side or the other. There is no no-man's-land in this conflict. Neither is it possible to give allegiance to both sides. Jesus declared unequivocally, "He that is not with Me is against Me." Thus, any who surrender to the claims of Christ become involved in the bitter conflict between right and wrong, good and evil, Christ and Satan. This is no sham battle; it is real warfare, because our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

But just as conflict with evil is a certainty, so also is the promise of victory through the name of our blessed Christ. His strong arm "hath gotten Him the victory." The cross settled the issue. The echo of His precious promise is heard down through the corridors of time: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33. In His victory we shall discover ours: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:37.

The Great Controversy

1. Where and with whom did the great controversy between good and evil originate? Rev. 12:7-9.

NOTE.—"So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator. They delighted in reflecting His glory and showing forth His praise. And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confiding and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. But a change came over this happy estate. There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 35.

2. What were the devastating results of Satan's being cast down to this earth? Gen. 3:1-8, 23, 24; Rom. 5:12.

3. What great plan for man's redemption was immediately available? John 3:16; Eph. 1:7.

NOTE.—"The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery

to rescue the ruined race."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 63.

4. What is Satan's attitude toward those who have surrendered to Christ? What is the cause of this conflict? 1 Peter 5:8. Compare Eph. 6:11, 12.

NOTE.—It was when Adam and Eve fell that God promised to put enmity between the followers of Christ and Satan. "There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin."—*The Great Controversy,* page 505.

"It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his bidding."—*Ibid.,* p. 506.

Temptation and Trial, the Common Lot of All

5. When confronted with temptations and trials, what are we not to conclude? 1 Peter 4:12.

NOTE.—Temptation and trial are the common lot of all. So long as Satan is at work, just so long will inducements be presented to us to surrender our loyalty and devotion to God. While Satan tempts all mankind to evil, his special attacks are made on those who are determined to live for God. Accordingly, we should not regard it a strange experience when we are confronted with temptations.

"Children should be so trained and educated that they will expect temptations and calculate to meet difficulties and dangers." —*Testimonies,* Vol. 3, p. 144.

6. When does temptation become sin? James 1:14, 15; Rom. 6:13, 16.

NOTE.—"So long as the soul rests with unshaken confidence in the virtue and power of the atonement, it will stand firm as a rock to principle, and all the powers of Satan and his angels cannot sway it from its integrity. The truth as it is in Jesus is a wall of fire around the soul that clings to Him. Temptations will pour in upon us, for by them we are to be tried during our probation upon earth. This is the proving of God, a revelation of our own hearts. *There is no sin in having temptations; but sin comes in when temptation is yielded to."—Testimonies,* Vol. 4, pp. 357, 358. (Emphasis supplied.)

7. What is the result of successfully enduring trials? 1 Peter 1:6, 7; James 1:2-4, 12.

NOTE.—The Greek word *peirasmos* means both "trial" and "temptation." In James 1:2 and 1 Peter 1:6 the context indicates that trials, rather than temptations, are intended. The word is so translated in some modern versions.

Victory Assured

8. What assurance is given to all in the hour of temptation? 1 Cor. 10:13.

NOTE.—"It is not God's purpose to coerce the will. Man was created a free moral agent. Like the inhabitants of all other worlds, he must be subjected to the test of obedience; but he is never brought into such a position that yielding to evil becomes a matter of necessity. No temptation or trial is permitted to come to him which he is unable to resist. God made such ample provision that man need never have been defeated in the conflict with Satan."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* pages 331, 332.

"No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin. 'The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.' Cry unto the Lord, tempted soul. Cast yourself, helpless, unworthy, upon Jesus, and claim His very promise. The Lord will hear. He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart, and He will help in every time of temptation." —*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 177.

9. For what assurance should we constantly thank God? 2 Cor. 2:14; John 10:28, 29.

10. Through whom alone may we hope to be victorious? 1 Cor. 15:57.

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

"This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. Paul admonishes believers: 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Phil. 2: 12, 13. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it."—*The Great Controversy,* pages 469, 470.

11. By what means do we lay hold of the victory God has promised? I John 5:4, 5.

NOTE.—"How can 'our faith' enable us to overcome the world? John provides the answer in v. 5, where he implies that the faith to which he is referring is that which accepts Jesus as the Son of God. Such a faith appropriates the Saviour's victory over the world and duplicates it in the life of the believer. It does not stop at mental assent but leads to postive action. Like the paralytic who was commanded to rise, we attempt what seems impossible (John 5:5-9). As our will chooses to rise from the thralldom of sin, the life-giving power of God comes into every moral fiber and enables us to accomplish what we by faith have willed. Were we to lie back and wait for the Lord to lift us up from sin, nothing would happen. Our faith must lay hold of His promises, and must desire, choose, and will to act upon them before that strength can aid us."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on 1 John 5:4.

12. Armed with a firm faith in the promises of God, how are we to relate ourselves to the attacks of Satan? 1 Peter 5:9; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Tim. 6:12.

NOTE.—"The example of Christ shows us that our only hope of victory is in continual resistance of Satan's attacks. He who triumphed over the adversary of souls in the conflict of temptations understands Satan's power over the race, and has conquered him in our behalf. As an overcomer, He has given us the advantage of His victory, that in our efforts to resist the temptations of Satan we may unite our weakness to His strength, our worthlessness to His merits. And sustained by His enduring might under the strength of temptation, we may resist in His all-powerful name, and overcome as He overcame."—*Messages to Young People,* page 50.

"Every Christian must stand on guard continually, watching every avenue of the soul where Satan might find access. He must pray for divine help and at the same time resolutely resist every inclination to sin. By courage, by faith, by persevering toil, he can conquer. But let him remember that to gain the victory Christ must abide in him and he in Christ."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 47.

13. If we would be kept from evil, what must we refuse to do? Ps. 1:1.

NOTE.—"Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; *they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.* The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest. The heart must be faithfully sentineled, or evils without will awaken evils within, and the soul will wander in darkness."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 518. (Emphasis supplied.)

14. Recalling God's gracious provisions for His children, what assurance does the apostle Paul express? Rom. 8:37-39.

Lesson 13, for June 29, 1968

Faith and the Promise of Christ's Return

MEMORY VERSE: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

STUDY HELPS: "The Great Controversy," pages 299-316; "Christ's Object Lessons," pages 405-421; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

STUDY AIM: To alert our hearts to the reality of Christ's imminent return.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

I. Last-day Skepticism

1. A pointed question. Luke 18:8.
2. General unbelief. 2 Peter 3:3, 4.
3. Dangers confronting the church. Luke 12:45; Heb. 2:3.
4. As in the days of Noah and Lot. Luke 17:26-30.

II. The Promise of Christ's Return

5. The promise made by Jesus. John 14:1-3; Luke 21:27; Rev. 22:12.
6. The promise confirmed by angels. Acts 1:10, 11.
7. The promise reiterated by the apostles. Heb. 9:28; Titus 2:11-13.
8. The manner revealed. Mark 13:36; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7.

III. Faith in the Promise of Christ's Return

9. Self preparation. 1 John 3:3; 2 Peter 3:11, 14.
10. Hasten the finishing of God's work. Matt. 24:14; John 9:4.
11. Revive the spirit of urgency. Rom. 13:11, 12; Eph. 5:14-16.
12. An inspiration to unity. James 5:8, 9; John 13:35.
13. The joyous response; a crown of victory. Isa. 25:9; 2 Tim. 4:8.

THE LESSON

Introduction

No promises in the Bible are more explicit than those which relate to the second coming of Christ. This is a cardinal teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In fact, it is one of the great truths that brought this movement into existence. As a people we have proclaimed throughout the whole world the prophetic truth, the manner, and the signs of the Master's return.

The statements of Scripture on this vital truth are clear and positive. But knowledge alone does not constitute a preparation for this solemn and final event. "Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians."—*Steps to Christ,* page 48.

"We must have genuine faith. As yet we scarcely grasp the reality of the truth. We only half believe the Word of God. A man will act out all the faith he has. Notwithstanding that the signs of the times are fulfilling all over the world, faith in the Lord's coming has been growing feeble."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 93.

"The Lord is coming. Let everyone show his faith by his works. Faith in Christ's near advent is dying out of the churches, and selfishness is causing them to rob God to serve their own personal interests. When Christ is abiding in us, we shall be self-denying like Him."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 153.

In this lesson we are not so much concerned about the theology of the second advent as we are about the necessity of cultivating a living faith that will grasp the reality of God's promises concerning it.

Last-day Skepticism

1. What pointed question did Christ raise concerning faith in our day? Luke 18:8.

NOTE.—"This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:8).

"Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 15.

2. What attitude on the part of many is foretold as characteristic of the last days? What specific promise would be ridiculed? 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

NOTE.—"When these things [the signs of the end] are dwelt upon as they should be, scoffers will be developed who walk after their own lusts, saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' But 'when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.' 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.' Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 10.

3. What special danger confronts the professing people of God today? Luke 12:45; Heb. 2:3.

NOTE.—"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.

4. What parallels between our day and the days of Noah and Lot indicate that we are in the last days? Luke 17:26-30.

The Promise of Christ's Return

5. By what specific promises did Jesus forever settle the question of His return? John 14:1-3; Luke 21:27; Rev. 22:12.

NOTE.—"Long have we waited for our Saviour's return. But nonetheless sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sitteth on the throne."—*The Adventist Home,* pages 544, 545.

6. How specifically did the angels, at the time of Christ's ascension, confirm the Master's promise to return? Acts 1:10, 11.

7. Cite the testimony of the apostles with regard to their faith in the second coming of Christ. Heb. 9:28;

Titus 2:11-13. Compare 2 Peter 3:9-13; 1 John 3:2.

8. What will be the manner of Christ's return? Mark 13:36; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7. Compare Matt. 24:27.

Faith in the Promise of Christ's Return

9. What effect will genuine faith in the promise of Christ's return have upon the life of the believer? 1 John 3:3; 2 Peter 3:11, 14.

NOTE.—He who truly believes in the soon return of Christ will make every preparation to meet Him. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." "Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 216.

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 419, 420.

"Take the world, but give me Jesus" should be the prayer of all who look for Christ's return.

10. If we really believe that Christ is soon to return, what will we purpose to do? Matt. 24:14; John 9:4.

NOTE.—"My heart is often burdened because so many who might work are doing nothing. . . . Every church member who has a knowledge of the truth is expected to work while the day lasts; for the night cometh, wherein no man can work. Erelong we shall understand what that night means."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 9, p. 26.

11. What urgent plea does the apostle Paul make to those who know the present truth? Rom. 13:11, 12; Eph. 5:14-16.

NOTE.—"We must be more decidedly in earnest. We must talk the truth in private and in public, presenting every argument, urging every motive of infinite weight, to draw men to the Saviour uplifted on the cruel cross. God desires every man to attain unto eternal life. Mark how all through the Word of God there is manifest the spirit of urgency, of imploring men and women to come to Christ, to deny appetites and passions that corrupt the soul. With all our powers we must urge them to look unto Jesus and to accept His life of self-denial and sacrifice."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 6, p. 65.

12. What spirit should prevail among the believers who are anticipating the coming of the Lord? Of what is unity among the brethren an evidence? James 5:8, 9; John 13:35.

NOTE.—"The unity of the church is the convincing evidence that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer. This is an argument which worldlings cannot controvert. Therefore Satan is constantly working to prevent this union and harmony, that unbelievers, by witnessing backsliding, dissension, and strife among professed Christians, may become disgusted with religion and be confirmed in their impenitence."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 620.

13. What will be the joyous response of those who are ready and waiting for the return of their Lord? What token of triumph will they receive? Isa. 25:9; 2 Tim. 4:8.

Helps for the Whole Family

in the study of the Sabbath School Lessons

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R&H
PERIODICAL DEPARTMENT

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

June 29, 1968

Australasian Division

Again this quarter the overflow of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go to one specific project; namely the remodeling and enlarging of the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital at Wahroonga, a suburb of Sydney, Australia.

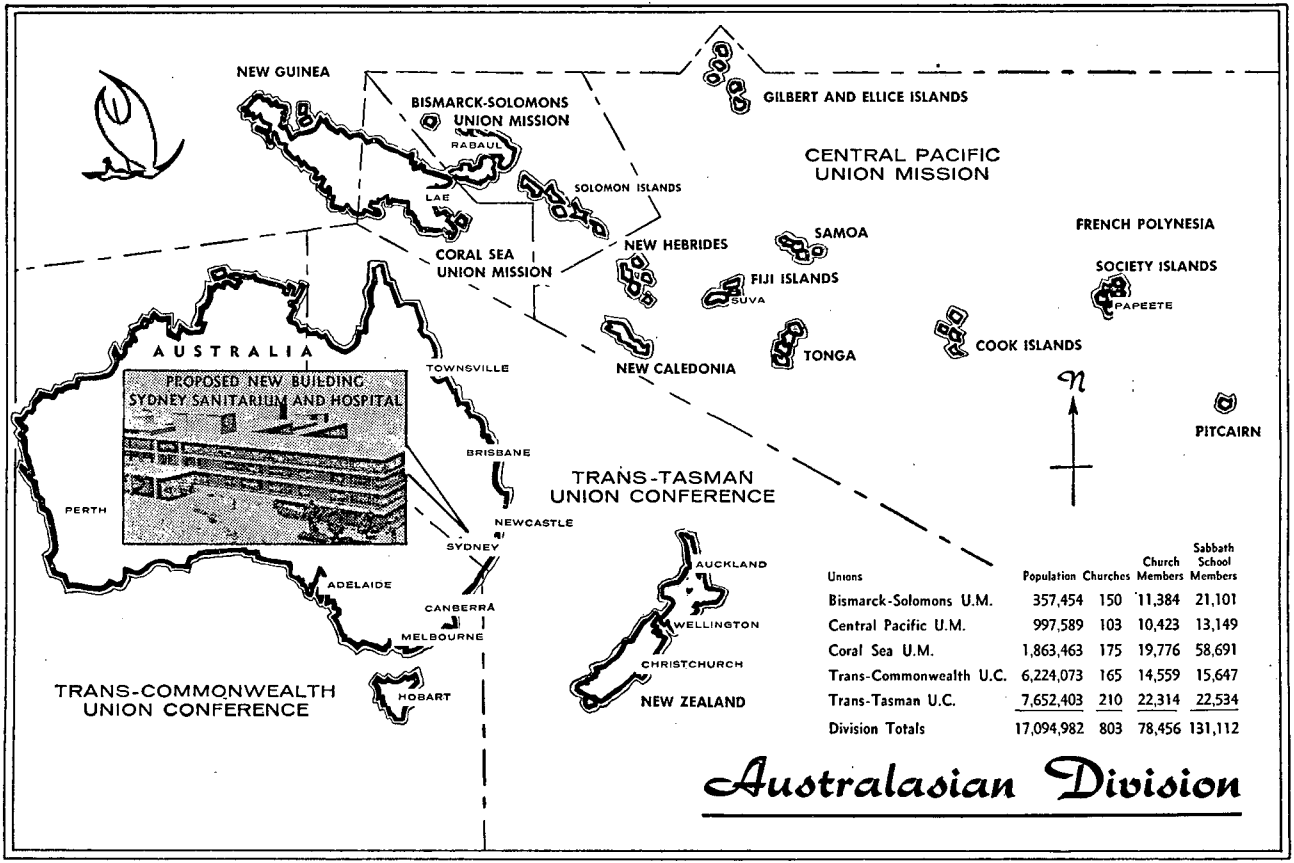
Just before she returned from Australia to the United States at the turn of the century, Mrs. E. G. White made a special visit to Sydney to view the proposed site of the sanitarium which she had been urging the brethren to build. As she viewed for the first time the eighty acres that fell away in gentle slopes from a 700-foot eminence, set in lovely bushland, she exclaimed, "This is the place!"

Within two years the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital was built with timbers that were imported from the United States. Through the years the "San" has proved a wonderful blessing to the community and to the church in its missionary activities at home and in lands afar. Ninety-six graduates from this medical institution are at present serving in overseas mission fields. Now, however, the central and original section of the Sanitarium has become antiquated and substandard, and its timbers are a terrible fire hazard during the hot Australian summer months. The Nurses' Registration Board now requires that the bed capacity be increased from 180 to 300 in order for the institution to retain its registration as a nurses' training school. Australia needs our graduates; the world field needs them. You can help train them by supporting the rebuilding project with a liberal Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on June 29.

Lessons for the Third Quarter, 1968

Sabbath School members who did not receive a senior *Lesson Quarterly* for the third quarter of 1968 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first lesson. The title of the series is "Studies in the Book of James." The title of the first lesson is "Trials and Character Development." The memory verse is 1 Peter 4:12, 13. The texts to be studied are:

Ques. 1. James 1:2-4; Matt. 5:10-12; 1 Peter 4:12, 13.
Ques. 2. James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:7.
Ques. 3. James 1:3 (last part); Rom. 5:3.
Ques. 4. Rev. 14:12.
Ques. 5. James 1:4.
Ques. 6. James 1:5; Prov. 3:5, 6.
Ques. 7. James 1:5 (first part); Matt. 7:7, 8.
Ques. 8. James 1:6 (first part); Mark 11:24.
Ques. 9. James 1:6 (last part), 7.
Ques. 10. James 1:8.
Ques. 11. James 1:9; Matt. 5:3.
Ques. 12. James 1:10, 11.
Ques. 13. James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; Matt. 24:13.



Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sabbath School Members
Bismarck-Solomons U.M.	357,454	150	11,384	21,101
Central Pacific U.M.	997,589	103	10,423	13,149
Coral Sea U.M.	1,863,463	175	19,776	58,691
Trans-Commonwealth U.C.	6,224,073	165	14,559	15,647
Trans-Tasman U.C.	7,652,403	210	22,314	22,534
Division Totals	17,094,982	803	78,456	131,112

Australasian Division