

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the First Half 2004

Steps to Christ

*Significant Steps
in the Spiritual Life*

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First Quarter
Steps to Christ

Second Quarter
***Significant Steps in
the Spiritual Life***

Issued by the
General Conference
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of the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the relationship of God with man and how he may enjoy a close communion with his Creator is the subject that will form the quarter that begins this New Year. To know the principles that maintain and re-establish the union of God with His creatures is a fascinating analysis and is of vital importance in the way to salvation.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. This verse is the sum of the plan of salvation in short, and according as it is possible for man to understand it and to put it into practice in his daily life, we have greatly considered the daily meditation of this captivating subject, through the lessons of this quarter.

“Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labor and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father’s house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages—are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart’s loving service to our Creator and Redeemer?” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 21.

We entreat the Lord to bless, illuminate and help us in the study of steps to Christ. Amen.

— *The Brothers of the General Conference*

**The Special Sabbath School Offering
is dedicated to Belize.**

*Remember to give your offering as an expression
of love and gratitude.*

1

Sabbath, January 3, 2004

God's Love for Man

MEMORY VERSE

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what are the reasons for the pain and death that affect every human being.
- To make known to others the goodness of God and His great love for man.
- To accept the most perfect and loving revelation of the love of God and His wonderful sacrifice.

1. How were death and suffering introduced into this world? Romans 5:12; 6:23; 1 John 3:4.

“God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator’s hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God’s law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God’s love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground for man’s sake. Genesis 3:17.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 9.

2. According to God, what instruments did He find necessary for the good of fallen man? Genesis 3:18; Romans 8:28.

“The thorn and the thistle—the difficulties and trials that make his life one of toil and care—were appointed for his good as a part of the training needful in God’s plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 9.

EVIDENCE OF GOD’S GOODNESS

3. How can I see that God is love in this dying world? Psalm 145:14-16; Matthew 6:26.

“The world, though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses.

“‘God is love’ is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 9, 10.

- 4. In what manner does the Lord constantly reveal Himself to man and how does He unite our hearts to His? Psalm 19: 1-4; Romans 1:19, 20.**

“God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 10.

- 5. How do those who do not understand God’s love consider Him, although there is so much evidence? Do men acknowledge God’s love and appreciate Him as they should? 2 Corinthians 4:4; Isaiah 6:9, 10.**

“Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 10, 11.

THE MOST PERFECT REVELATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD

- 6. Who was the only being who was able to truly reveal the character of God and erase the shadow with which Satan tried to distort things? John 17:4-6; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-3.**

“It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.

“The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. ‘No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.’ John 1:18. ‘Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.’ Matthew 11:27. When one of the disciples made the request, ‘Show us the Father,’ Jesus answered, ‘Have I been so long time with you,

and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" John 14:8, 9."
–*Steps to Christ*, p. 11.

7. What was the main purpose for the ministry of Jesus in favour of man? Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 19:10.

"In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, The Lord 'hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.' Luke 4:18."
–*Steps to Christ*, p. 11.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **What answer can be given to the questions about why injustice, pain, suffering and death exist?**
 - **Notwithstanding all the evil man has done, is there evidence in the world of the love and goodness of God? Besides what has already been mentioned in the lesson, what other proofs may be given?**
 - **Personally speaking, where do you find the clearest and most touching manifestation of God?**
-

Revelation of the Love of God

MEMORY VERSE

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the nature and breadth of the mission and ministry of Jesus here on earth.
- To truly understand the great evidence of His love for the lost human being.
- To walk precisely in the way He has prepared for us.
- To constantly meditate on the joyful goal God has prepared for us.

THE MISSION AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

1. How did Jesus Christ manifest the love of the Father in His ministry? Matthew 9:35.

“This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 11, 12.

2. Why did Jesus take upon Himself human nature? Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.

“He took man’s nature, that He might reach man’s wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 12.

EVIDENCE OF HIS LOVE

3. In what manner did Jesus manifest truth and love? Matthew 12:19-21.

“Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 12.

4. What was heard in Jesus’ voice when He rebuked others? Luke 19:41.

“He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, which refused to receive Him, the way, the truth, and the life. They had rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness. His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 12.

THE WAY TO GOD

5. How may I get to know the character of God? John 14:8, 9.

“Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father’s heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the

tender, pitying Saviour, was God ‘manifest in the flesh.’ 1 Timothy 3:16.

“It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became ‘a Man of Sorrows,’ that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. ‘The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.’ Isaiah 53:5.” –*Steps to Christ*, pp. 12, 13.

6. What do I understand when I behold Jesus on the cross? Isaiah 53:5.

“Behold Him in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, upon the cross! The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God—it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 13.

THE JOYFUL GOAL GOD HAS FOR US

7. What was the purpose of God in permitting Jesus to live amongst men? 1 John 4:9, 10.

“‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.’ He gave Him not only to live among men, to bear their sins, and die their sacrifice. He gave Him to the fallen race. Christ was to identify Himself with the interests and needs of humanity. He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is ‘not ashamed to call them brethren’ (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father’s throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed—the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 14.

8. What will be seen in me when I come to understand the height, the depth, and the breadth of the love of the Father, just like the apostle John did? Revelation 4:11. What can we see when we study the divine character of Jesus? John 17:3.

“The price paid for our redemption, the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us, should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ. As the inspired apostle John beheld the height, the depth, the breadth of the Father’s love toward the perishing race, he was filled with adoration and reverence; and, failing to find suitable language in which to express the greatness and tenderness of this love, he called upon the world to behold it. ‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ 1 John 3:1. What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. By assuming human nature, Christ elevates humanity. Fallen men are placed where, through connection with Christ, they may indeed become worthy of the name ‘sons of God.’

“Such love is without a parallel. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! Theme for the most profound meditation! The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother’s yearning sympathy for her wayward child.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 15.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **To what extent do we understand the mission and ministry of Jesus?**
 - **What is the way chosen by God for us to enable us to daily obtain more of His knowledge?**
 - **What does the knowledge of the fact that God has your salvation in mind cause your heart to feel?**
-

We Have Found a Saviour

MEMORY VERSE

“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth...” John 1:45.

OBJECTIVES

- To discover what condition we are in when under the power of sin.
- To remember what keeps us out of heaven so that we may stop doing those things.

OUR CONDITION UNDER THE POWER OF SIN

1. **Why is it impossible for man to resist the power of evil? Romans 7: 14, 18, 23. In what condition does the unregenerated heart of man since the fall of Adam and Eve find itself in? Genesis 3:10.**

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed....

“In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unregenerated

heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

2. What was and continues to be the specific purpose of the tempter towards man? Genesis 3:5.

“It was the tempter’s purpose to thwart the divine plan in man’s creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God’s work in creating man.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

TO HAVE A NEW LIFE

3. Who must dwell in us, so that a new life may be seen in us? John 15:4; 6:35.

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

“The Saviour said, ‘Except a man be born from above,’ unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, ‘he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ John 3:3, margin.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

4. What other thing do I need to do after understanding the love and goodness of God? Acts 6:30; Romans 7:24.

“It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, ‘I consent unto the law that it is good.’ ‘The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’ But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, ‘I am carnal, sold under sin.’ Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Romans 7:24, margin. Such is

the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' John 1:29."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 19.

THERE IS NO COMMUNION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS

5. What would happen if God would permit me to enter heaven in my degraded condition? Habakkuk 1:13, first part; 2 Corinthians 6:15.

"The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 17, 18.

6. Is it a decree of the Lord's that the wicked should be excluded from heaven? Revelation 6:15.

"It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **Why is it that after all my good intentions, I am still not able to free myself from the slavery of sin?**
- **If living with kind people makes me happy, how much more should I long for Jesus to dwell in me?**

- **Have I realized that sin can change me in such a manner that I will no longer have the desire for the fellowship of the saints or want to be in the presence of God?**
- **What is essential to prevent myself from reaching this negative state?**

4

Sabbath, January 24, 2004

Harmony with God

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that God has established a connecting bridge between heaven and earth, in His Son Jesus Christ.
- To consider the great love and wish of the Father for the lost son and a disobedient world.

CONNECTION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

1. **What can I learn from the experience of Jacob? Genesis 28: 11, 12.**

“Many are the figures by which the Spirit of God has sought to illustrate this truth, and make it plain to souls that long to be freed from the

burden of guilt. When, after his sin in deceiving Esau, Jacob fled from his father's home, he was weighed down with a sense of guilt. Lonely and outcast as he was, separated from all that had made life dear, the one thought that above all others pressed upon his soul, was the fear that his sin had cut him off from God, that he was forsaken of Heaven. In sadness he lay down to rest on the bare earth, around him only the lonely hills, and above, the heavens bright with stars. As he slept, a strange light broke upon his vision; and lo, from the plain on which he lay, vast shadowy stairs seemed to lead upward to the very gates of heaven, and upon them angels of God were passing up and down; while from the glory above, the divine voice was heard in a message of comfort and hope. Thus was made known to Jacob that which met the need and longing of his soul—a Saviour.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 19, 20.

2. Whom does the mystic ladder in Jacob's dream represent? Hebrews 10:19.

“With joy and gratitude he saw revealed a way by which he, a sinner, could be restored to communion with God. The mystic ladder of his dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man.

“This is the same figure to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael, when He said, ‘Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.’ John 1:51.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 20.

THE INITIATIVE OF GOD FOR HIS CHILDREN

3. With what yearning desire does the heart of God sigh for His earthly children? Luke 15:20, second and last part; Galatians 4:7.

“The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 21.

4. Who bridged the gulf that existed between heaven and earth and brought man closer to God? 2 Corinthians 5:18; Romans 5:10.

“In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God; earth was cut off from heaven. Across the gulf that lay between, there could be no communion. But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made, so that the ministering angels can hold communion with man. Christ connects fallen man in his weakness and helplessness with the Source of infinite power.”
—*Steps to Christ*, p. 20.

5. What joyful reality should be an incentive and should motivate me to give my heart to Christ? 1 John 4:19.

“Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labor and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father’s house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages—are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart’s loving service to our Creator and Redeemer?” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 21.

THE END OF THE SLAVERY

6. What dangers does the Lord present to me in His word if I serve Satan? Romans 6:16.

“And, on the other hand, the judgments of God pronounced against sin, the inevitable retribution, the degradation of our character, and the final destruction, are presented in God’s word to warn us against the service of Satan.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 21, 22.

7. What important question should I ask myself during this crucial time of my life? Proverbs 23:26.

“Shall we not regard the mercy of God? What more could He do? Let us place ourselves in right relation to Him who has loved us with amazing love. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us that we may be transformed into His likeness, and be restored to fellowship with the ministering angels, to harmony and communion with the Father and the Son.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 22.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **Have we realized that submission and obedience to righteousness makes us free beings, while submission to sin enslaves us?**
 - **As a parent, if one of your children happened to take a wrong path in life, what would be your most profound and constant desire? That of our heavenly Father for a dying world is much greater.**
 - **Would there be a greater joy than giving Him what He so desires?**
-

Repentance

MEMORY VERSE

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of true repentance.
- To learn the lesson that the Lord wants to give us through David’s repentance.
- To carefully consider the Biblical teachings in order to know how to obtain genuine repentance.

TRUE REPENTANCE

- 1. What does true repentance consist of? Why are some not able to obtain it? 2 Corinthians 7:10; Matthew 26:75.**

“Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.” *—Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

- 2. What erroneous conception do people have about repentance? Genesis 27:36; Hebrews 12:17.**

“There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an

outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever. Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.' Matthew 27:4.

"The confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him filled him with terror, but there was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul, that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God and denied the Holy One of Israel. Pharaoh, when suffering under the judgments of God, acknowledged his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. These all lamented the results of sin, but did not sorrow for the sin itself."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 23, 24.

AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE REPENTANCE

3. What can I learn from David's repentance? Psalm 41:4.

"The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness—to be restored to harmony and communion with God."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 24, 25.

4. What did David ask for and recognize in his repentance? Psalm 31:1, 2.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to
Thy loving-kindness:
According unto the multitude of Thy tender
mercies blot out my transgressions....
For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my

sin is ever before me....
 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow....
 Create in me a clean heart, O God;
 And renew a right spirit within me.
 Cast me not away from Thy presence;
 And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
 And uphold me with Thy free spirit....
 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou
 God of my salvation:
 And my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy
 righteousness.' Psalm 51:1-14.

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

A WRONG CONCEPT

5. What lie has the devil perpetrated concerning repentance?

"Just here is a point on which many may err, and hence they fail of receiving the help that Christ desires to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour?" –*Steps to Christ*, p. 26.

HOW TO RECEIVE REPENTANCE

6. What is the Biblical way shown to receive true repentance? Acts 13:38; Luke 24:47.

"The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that

goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, 'Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' Acts 5:31. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 26.

7. Who is the source of every right impulse in the life of the Christian? John 5:26; 8:12.

"Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts.

"Jesus has said, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' John 12:32. Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.

"It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them. An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?" —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 26, 27.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **How many and which repentances can be mentioned that are not genuine and don't resolve the problem?**

- **When sin is hidden, lessened, or justified, can one speak about true repentance?**
- **What influence must work on the heart to convince man of sin?**
- **Who are we to always behold to receive strength to repent with our whole heart?**

6

Sabbath, February 7, 2004

Confession

MEMORY VERSE

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.” Psalm 51:2, 3.

OBJECTIVES

- To realize what is necessary to do for our sins to be forgiven.
- To recognize the state of mind of the penitent soul.
- To avoid hardening one’s heart.
- To discover and maintain the attitude of the truly repentant soul.

CONDITIONS FOR FORGIVENESS

1. **What must I do to receive God’s mercy? Proverbs 28:13.**

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.’ Proverbs 28:13.

“The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.

“The apostle says, ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.’ James 5:16. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is brought before the only true Mediator, our great High Priest, who ‘was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,’ and who is ‘touched with the feeling of our infirmities,’ and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity. Hebrews 4:15.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 37.

2. What is the first requirement for forgiveness? 2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 John 1:9.

“Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. Explicit instruction is given concerning this matter.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 37, 38.

THE STATE OF THE PENITENT SOUL

3. In what state do those who truly confess their sins find themselves? Psalm 34:18.

“Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. The psalmist says, ‘The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.’ Psalm 34:18.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 38.

4. What should our mind concentrate on when we confess our sins to God? Psalm 32:5.

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

“In the days of Samuel the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin; for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of His power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in His ability to defend and vindicate His cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe and desired to be governed as were the nations around them. Before they found peace they made this definite confession: ‘We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.’ 1 Samuel 12:19. The very sin of which they were convicted had to be confessed. Their ingratitude oppressed their souls and severed them from God.” –*Steps to Christ*, pp. 38, 39.

OBSTACLES FOR A TRUE REPENTANCE

5. For what reasons only will my confession not be accepted? Isaiah 1:16, 17. What shall those who have a deadened conscience because of sin experience? Ephesians 4:18, 19; 1 Timothy 4:2.

“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. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set

before us: 'Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' Isaiah 1: 16, 17. 'If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: 'Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' 2 Corinthians 7:11.

"When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 39, 40.

6. How did Adam and Eve act after sinning, and how do we act? Genesis 3:12, 13.

"After Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion: 'The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' Genesis 3: 12, 13. Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable to God." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 40.

7. Where will true repentance lead me? Luke 18:13.

“True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as his eyes unto heaven, he will cry, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ and those who do acknowledge their guilt will be justified, for Jesus will plead His blood in behalf of the repentant soul.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 40, 41.

8. What shall I recognize when I understand the true meaning of confession? 1 Timothy 1:15. Why does God want me to understand the true motive of repentance and confession? 1 John 1:9.

“He does not hesitate to declare that ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.’ 1 Timothy 1:15.

“The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1:9.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 41.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **What is man required to do to be free from the terrible burden of sin?**
- **What does the person who is aware of his faults feel?**
- **If we are guilty, would putting the blame on others help us out in any way?**
- **If we consider the fact that God has the right solution for our sins, is it wise to wait for years to take care of our problems with the Lord and with our brethren?**

Sabbath, February 14, 2004

True Consecration

MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart.” Psalm 119:2.

OBJECTIVES

- To realize the absolute need for complete change in our lives.
- To be prepared for the greatest and longest war that we have to face every day and hour.
- To understand what it means for me to surrender to Christ completely and to accomplish this voluntarily and without any reserve.

THE GREATEST WAR

1. What do I need to do to see a true change in my life? Jeremiah 29:13.

“God’s promise is, ‘Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.’ Jeremiah 29:13.

“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. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: ‘Dead in trespasses and sins,’ ‘the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint,’ ‘no soundness in it.’ We are held fast in the snare of Satan, ‘taken captive by him at his will.’ Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1: 5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. 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*, p. 43.

- 2. What is the greatest battle in my life? Galatians 5:16, 17; James 4:1. What lie does Satan insinuate in the mind of people about the government of God? John 8:44.**

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.

“The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

COMPLETE AND VOLUNTARY SURRENDER

- 3. What method does God use so that I can approach Him? Isaiah 1:18.**

“It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. ‘Come now, and let us reason together’ is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

- 4. What dangers will I face if I surrender to Christ unwillingly? 2 Corinthians 9:7, second part.**

“A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” –*Steps to Christ*, pp. 43, 44.

- 5. What decision should I make when I surrender to Christ? Luke 14:33.**

“In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him. Hence the Saviour says, ‘Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.’ Luke 14:33. Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s children unless we are such entirely.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 44.

THE HUMAN CONDITION AND THE DIVINE INVITATION

6. What are God’s thoughts about those who want to be saved by their own works? Isaiah 64:6.

“There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 44.

7. What blessings do I receive from Christ when I accept Him? What things in my life do I leave behind when I surrender to Christ? Proverbs 23:26.

“When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery.

“Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, ‘What has Christ given for me?’ The Son of God

gave all—life and love and suffering—for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him? Every moment of our lives we have been partakers of the blessings of His grace, and for this very reason we cannot fully realize the depths of ignorance and misery from which we have been saved. Can we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and yet be willing to do despite to all His love and sacrifice? In view of the infinite humiliation of the Lord of glory, shall we murmur because we can enter into life only through conflict and self-abasement?...

“But what do we give up, when we give all? A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! I am ashamed to hear it spoken of, ashamed to write it.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 44-46.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **How convinced am I that my nature and character need to change find grace in God’s eyes?**
 - **If something is done superficially or with a grudging spirit will it be of any benefit for my spiritual life?**
 - **How can I gain victory in the greatest struggle against self?**
 - **Am I aware of what will hinder my consecration and am I willing to renounce and get rid of it?**
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Faith And Acceptance

MEMORY VERSE

“And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” Mark 10:52.

OBJECTIVES

- To open my heart so that I may take the necessary action to realize my sins and errors.
- To daily surrender entirely to Christ, leaving behind encumbering sin.
- To receive and develop the gift of faith so that all the promised blessings may be fulfilled.

TO RECOGNIZE SIN AND OBTAIN PEACE

- 1. What do I clearly see when the Holy Spirit quickens my conscience? John 16:8, 9.**

“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?” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 49.

- 2. How can I obtain real peace? Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 36:26.**

“It is peace that 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. But God offers it to you as a gift, ‘without money and without price.’ Isaiah 55:1. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it. The Lord says, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ Isaiah 1:18. ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.’ Ezekiel 36:26.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 49.

SOMETHING TO LEAVE BEHIND AND PUT AT A DISTANCE FROM OURSELVES

3. In what aspect is my condition similar to the paralytic man’s? Romans 3:10, 23.

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

4. What do I need to do after confessing my sins? Isaiah 55:7; John 8:11; Matthew 9:6.

“You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. Then believe that He does this *because He has promised*. This is the lesson which Jesus taught while He was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours. Jesus healed the people of their diseases when they had faith in His power; He helped them in the things which they could see, thus inspiring them with confidence in Him concerning things which they could not see—leading them to believe in His power to forgive sins. This He plainly stated in the healing of the man sick with palsy: *‘That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,* (then

saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.' Matthew 9:6. So also John the evangelist says, speaking of the miracles of Christ, 'These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.' John 20:31." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 49, 50.

AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT

5. What do we need to have in order to gain the heavenly gifts that have been promised? Of what magnitude should my faith and belief in the Lord Jesus be? Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 21:21.

"From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet 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 the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 50.

6. To receive spiritual healing, do I need to believe or feel that I am whole? Mark 11:24.

"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.'

"Jesus says, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Romans 8:1." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 51.

**7. What joyful experience will I have if give myself to Christ?
1 Peter 1:22, 23, 18, 19.**

“Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price. ‘Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold;... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.” –*Steps to Christ*, pp. 51, 52.

8. What is the secret that will enable me to never stop being a child of God? Colossians 2:6.

“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. The apostle says, ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’ Colossians 2:6.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **What can I do on my part to reach the true and sought after peace?**
- **Am I willing to recognize my sins and errors and leave them behind completely?**
- **What can I do so that my faith may develop and reach the state so desired by God?**

- **Acknowledging that sooner or later I will have to leave everything, would it not be much better to surrender generously and willingly to Christ now who brings me such great blessings?**
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9

Sabbath, February 28, 2004

The Test of Discipleship

MEMORY VERSE

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them.” Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

OBJECTIVES

- To experience rebirth, the miracle of the new creation.
- To produce in our lives the sweetest fruit, that of the Holy Spirit.
- To discover the secret to reach peace with God and men.
- To have a heart that beats and expresses the will of the Lord.

WHEN WE LET THE SPIRIT OF GOD ACT

- 1. How will God see me if I accept Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:17.**

2. Will I be able to appreciate the exact moment in which I was converted? John 3:8.

“A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. Christ said to Nicodemus, ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.’ John 3:8. Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 57, 58.

AMAZING AND CONCRETE RESULTS

3. How can I know if I am Christ's? Galatians 5:22, 23.

“By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?

“Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.

“Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, ‘love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.’ Galatians 5:22, 23. They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become seri-

ous and unobtrusive. The drunken become sober, and the profligate pure. The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Christians will seek not the 'outward adorning,' but 'the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.' 1 Peter 3:3, 4." *—Steps to Christ*, pp. 58, 59.

4. What will I experience if I genuinely repent? Acts 3:19; Romans 5:1.

"There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow men, the sinner may be sure that he has passed from death unto life.

"When, as erring, sinful beings, we come to Christ and become partakers of His pardoning grace, love springs up in the heart. Every burden is light, for the yoke that Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness, becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness." *—Steps to Christ*, p. 59.

5. If I continue getting to know Jesus, what will I surely reflect one day? 1 John 4:19. What fruits will I see in my life on account of the love of God?

"The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. 'We love, because He first loved us.' 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennoble the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around." *—Steps to Christ*, p. 59.

6. What are the two errors that Satan would have me believe? Romans 3:20; 9:31, 32; James 2:18, 26.

“There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first, already dwelt upon, is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

“The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 59, 60.

IN THE ROCK, IN THE HEART AND ON PAPER

7. What does obedience through love consist of? Hebrews 10:16.

“But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. 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.’ Hebrews 10:16.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 60.

8. Why does the Lord want to write His law in my mind and heart? 1 John 5:3.

“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. Thus the Scripture says, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’ ‘He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’ 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 60, 61.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **What attracts me more day after day: my own temporary interests or the truth?**
 - **What are the impulses of my heart, still those of the flesh or those of the Spirit?**
-

10

Sabbath, March 6, 2004

Growing up into Christ

MEMORY VERSE

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the spiritual application of the development of the seed into a plant.
 - To understand the development process of the Christian life.
1. **Just as the planting of a seed in the ground, what does the Lord expect from the believer after his rebirth? What does God call this change of heart? Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2.**

“The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. Again, it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandman. In like manner those who are just converted to Christ are, ‘as new-born babes,’ to ‘grow up’ to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. 1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:15. Or like the

good seed sown in the field, they are to grow up and bring forth fruit. Isaiah says that they shall 'be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.' Isaiah 61:3. So from natural life, illustrations are drawn, to help us better to understand the mysterious truths of spiritual life.

"Not all the wisdom and skill of man can produce life in the smallest object in nature. It is only through the life which God Himself has imparted, that either plant or animal can live. So it is only through the life from God that spiritual life is begotten in the hearts of men. Unless a man is 'born from above,' he cannot become a partaker of the life which Christ came to give. John 3:3, margin."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 67.

BLADE, EAR, CORN

2. What example does Jesus use to describe growth? With what does God compare the growth of a Christian? Mark 4:28.

"As with life, so it is with growth. It is God who brings the bud to bloom and the flower to fruit. It is by His power that the seed develops, 'first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.' Mark 4:28. And the prophet Hosea says of Israel, that 'he shall grow as the lily.' They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.' Hosea 14:5, 7. And Jesus bids us 'consider the lilies how they grow.' Luke 12:27."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 67, 68.

3. How can I abide and walk in Christ? Colossians 2:6.

"Do you ask, 'How am I to abide in Christ?' In the same way as you received Him at first. 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' 'The just shall live by faith.' Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By *faith* you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to *give* all,—your heart, your will, your service,—give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must *take* all,—Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,—to give you power to obey."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 69, 70.

4. What should be my primary goal every morning at the beginning of the day? Deuteronomy 7:6.

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 70.

5. Why is life with Christ a life of trust and peace for the soul? Isaiah 30:15.

“A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul’s contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness.

“Jesus says, ‘Abide in Me.’ These words convey the idea of rest, stability, confidence. Again He invites, ‘Come unto Me,... and I will give you rest.’ Matthew 11:28. The words of the psalmist express the same thought: ‘Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.’ And Isaiah gives the assurance, ‘In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.’ Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 30:15.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 70, 71.

6. What can I learn from the disciples in order to become like Jesus? Acts 4:13, last part; James 5:17. What change shall I experience if I abide in Christ as did the apostle John? 2 Corinthians 3:18.

"It was thus that the early disciples gained their likeness to the dear Saviour. When those disciples heard the words of Jesus, they felt their need of Him. They sought, they found, they followed Him. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They were with Him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from His lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to Him, as servants to their master, to learn their duty. Those disciples were men 'subject to like passions as we are.' James 5:17. They had the same battle with sin to fight. They needed the same grace, in order to live a holy life.

"Even John, the beloved disciple, the one who most fully reflected the likeness of the Saviour, did not naturally possess that loveliness of character. He was not only self-assertive and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injuries. But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love. Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious temper was yielded to the molding power of Christ. The regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit renewed his heart. The power of the love of Christ wrought a transformation of character. This is the sure result of union with Jesus. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ's Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 72, 73.

7. On what does the success of the Christian depend in this life full of sin? Philippians 2:13.

"Jesus prayed for us, and He asked that we might be one with Him, even as He is one with the Father. What a union is this! The Saviour has said of Himself, 'The Son can do nothing of Himself;' 'the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.' John 5:19; 14:10. Then if Christ is dwelling in our hearts, He will work in us 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Philippians 2:13. We shall work as He worked; we shall manifest the same spirit. And thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall 'grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.' Ephesians 4:15."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 75.

Sabbath, March 13, 2004

The Joy of Cooperation

MEMORY VERSE

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”
2 Corinthians 9:6.

OBJECTIVES

- To have a heart that is sensitive to the needs of others and always be prepared to help.
- To do good, and to remember the principle of reciprocation (sowing and reaping): What we do unto others shall be done unto us.
- To discover the secret that by sharing the gospel we shall grow in the grace of Christ.

A HEART THAT BEATS FOR OTHERS

1. How can I manifest the incomparable love of Christ? Mark 8:2, 9; James 2:16.

“When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. Its holy influence will be felt by all with whom we come in contact. The spirit of Christ in the heart is like a spring in the desert, flowing to refresh all and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the water of life.

“Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father’s care.”
—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 77, 78.

2. What example did the Lord leave me in regard to working for others? Matthew 4:23.

“The Saviour’s life on earth was not a life of ease and devotion to Himself, but He toiled with persistent, earnest, untiring effort for the salvation of lost mankind. From the manger to Calvary He followed the path of self-denial and sought not to be released from arduous tasks, painful travels and exhausting care and labor. He said, ‘The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.’ Matthew 20:28. This was the one great object of His life. Everything else was secondary and subservient. It was His meat and drink to do the will of God and to finish His work. Self and self-interest had no part in His labor.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 78.

3. Can I continue without preaching if I truly have Christ? Jeremiah 20:9.

“So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it. This spirit is the sure outgrowth of a soul truly converted. No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good we shall have something to tell. Like Philip when he found the Saviour, we shall invite others into His presence. We shall seek to present to them the unseen realities of the world to come. There will be an intensity of desire to follow in the path that Jesus trod. There will be an earnest longing that those around us may ‘behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29.” –*Steps to Christ*, pp. 78, 79.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCATION

4. What blessings does Jesus give to those who help others spiritually? Luke 6:38.

“And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator.

“God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 79.

5. In what manner can I be brought into sympathy more and more with my Saviour? 2 Timothy 1:8.

“We are brought into sympathy with Christ through the fellowship of His sufferings. Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver’s heart, allying him more closely to the Redeemer of the world, who ‘was rich, yet for your sakes ... became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.’ 2 Corinthians 8:9. And it is only as we thus fulfill the divine purpose in our creation that life can be a blessing to us.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 79, 80.

6. What additional blessings can be obtained by bringing the gospel to others? Proverbs 11:25.

“If you will go to work as Christ designs that His disciples shall, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need of a deeper experience and a greater knowledge in divine things, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness. You will plead with God, and your faith will be strengthened, and your soul will drink deeper drafts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials will drive you to the Bible and prayer. You will grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and will develop a rich experience.

“The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. The aspirations are elevated. There is no room for sloth or selfishness. Those who thus exercise the Christian graces will grow and

will become strong to work for God. They will have clear spiritual perceptions, a steady, growing faith, and an increased power in prayer. The Spirit of God, moving upon their spirit, calls forth the sacred harmonies of the soul in answer to the divine touch. Those who thus devote themselves to unselfish effort for the good of others are most surely working out their own salvation.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 80.

THE JOY OF SHARING THE GOSPEL

7. How can we grow in the grace of Christ? Acts 20:35.

“The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us—to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life. Those who endeavor to maintain Christian life by passively accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and doing nothing for Christ, are simply trying to live by eating without working. And in the spiritual as in the natural world, this always results in degeneration and decay.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 80, 81.

8. With what purpose did Jesus organize His church on this earth? Mark 16:15, 16.

“The church of Christ is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. Its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. And the obligation rests upon all Christians. Everyone, to the extent of his talent and opportunity, is to fulfill the Saviour’s commission. The love of Christ, revealed to us, makes us debtors to all who know Him not. God has given us light, not for ourselves alone, but to shed upon them.

“If the followers of Christ were awake to duty, there would be thousands where there is one today proclaiming the gospel in heathen lands. And all who could not personally engage in the work, would yet sustain it with their means, their sympathy, and their prayers. And there would be far more earnest labor for souls in Christian countries.

“We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. We can do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate, and with whom we do business.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 81.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What are the obstacles that prevent me from seeing the need of others and to help them find a solution?
 - Do I think that time, means, and efforts are a waste when done for others, or do I recognize that this can be a spiritual blessing for me as well?
 - Do I believe that the preaching of the gospel is a burden, a duty, a privilege or the most solemn and holy mission that has ever been given to man?
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12

Sabbath, March 20, 2004

Can We Communicate with God?

MEMORY VERSE

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE

1. Is it enough to just contemplate nature to be able to communicate with God? **Philippians 4:6.**

“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.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

2. What does the act of prayer actually include? 1 Samuel 1: 15.

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

OCCASIONAL CONTACT IS NOT ENOUGH

3. What happens to us when we neglect prayer? Matthew 26: 41.

“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. 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*, pp. 94, 95.

4. In what condition must I be so that God can hear my prayers? Matthew 5:6. What is the reason why God cannot hear my prayers? Isaiah 1:15, 16. What other requirement is necessary so that my prayers may reach the throne of God?

“There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, ‘I will pour water upon him that

is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.’ Isaiah 44:3. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit’s influence, or God’s blessing cannot be received....

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

“Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. ‘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. Jesus said to His disciples, ‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ Mark 11:24. Do we take Him at His word?” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 95, 96.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WHEN NO ANSWER IS GIVEN?

5. What should I cling to when I notice that that my prayers are not being answered? 2 Corinthians 1:20.

“The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, ‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’ “ —*Steps to Christ*, p. 96.

6. What is necessary to receive an answer from God? Luke 18:1; 11:9, 10.

“Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be ‘instant in prayer,’ to ‘continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.’ Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2. Peter exhorts believers to be ‘sober, and watch unto prayer.’ 1 Peter 4:7. Paul directs, ‘In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.’ Philippians 4:6. ‘But ye, beloved,’ says Jude, ‘praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.’ Jude 20, 21. 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.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 97, 98.

TIME AND NATURE OF PRAYER

7. During what time of the day can I pray? 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

“There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.”We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength.

“Pray in your closet, and as you go about your daily labor let your heart be often uplifted to God. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 98, 99.

8. What should prayer become in my daily life? Psalm 130:6; Isaiah 26:9.

“We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God’s children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things.

“Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 99, 100.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **What is prayer for you: a habit, a duty, a joy or a blessing?**
- **Can you remember and mention cases in which prayer has protected you from falling into temptation?**
- **Until now have your prayers only expressed certain ideas or have they been a true pouring out of your soul before God?**
- **How have you reacted when some of your prayer requests have not been answered in the way you expected?**
- **What can you say about your personal prayer life, does this play a primary role in your life?**

***Please read the Missionary Report
from Tanzania
on page 60***

Fountain of Joy And Happiness

MEMORY VERSE

“Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.” Jeremiah 7:23.

OBJECTIVES

- To transform every believer into a happy messenger of reconciliation and peace with God.
- To remember the goods we have received from the Lord’s hand and to always be grateful and trust in Him.
- To learn how to counsel, encourage, and restore those who are weak and ensnared in sins and problems.
- To walk with Christ in order to have the marvellous fruit of the spirit.

GRATITUDE FOR THE BLESSINGS RECEIVED

1. What role shall I play in this world if I am a child of God? 2 Corinthians 5:20.

“The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love. ‘As Thou hast sent Me into the world,’ said Jesus, ‘even so have I also sent them into the world.’ ‘I in them, and Thou in Me;... that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.’ John 17:18, 23. The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, ‘Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,’ ‘known and read of all men.’ 2 Corinthians 3:3, 2. In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ’s follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you,

desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 115.

2. What questions does the Lord ask me so that I may overcome my discouragement? Matthew 6:25-33; Deuteronomy 5:33.

“Have there not been some bright spots in your experience? Have you not had some precious seasons when your heart throbbed with joy in response to the Spirit of God? When you look back into the chapters of your life experience do you not find some pleasant pages? Are not God’s promises, like the fragrant flowers, growing beside your path on every hand? Will you not let their beauty and sweetness fill your heart with joy?” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 117.

DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

3. What things does the Lord ask me to behold in moments of affliction? Psalm 136:5-9, 23-25.

“Thank God for the bright pictures which He has presented to us. Let us group together the blessed assurances of His love, that we may look upon them continually: The Son of God leaving His Father’s throne, clothing His divinity with humanity, that He might rescue man from the power of Satan; His triumph in our behalf, opening heaven to men, revealing to human vision the presence chamber where the Deity unveils His glory; the fallen race uplifted from the pit of ruin into which sin had plunged it, and brought again into connection with the infinite God, and having endured the divine test through faith in our Redeemer, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and exalted to His throne—these are the pictures which God would have us contemplate.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 118.

4. How will God and His Spirit feel when I doubt and distrust His promises? Ephesians 4:30.

“When we seem to doubt God’s love and distrust His promises we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit. How would a mother feel if her children were constantly complaining of her, just as though she did not mean them well, when her whole life’s effort had been to forward their interests and to give them comfort? Suppose they should doubt her love; it would break her heart. How would any parent feel to be thus treated by his children? And how can our heavenly Father regard us when we distrust His love, which has led Him to give His only-begotten Son that we might have life? The apostle writes, ‘He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?’ Romans 8:32. And yet how many, by their actions, if not in word, are saying, ‘The Lord does not mean this for me. Perhaps He loves others, but He does not love me.’ “–*Steps to Christ*, pp. 118, 119.

HOW TO TREAT THE WEAK AND THOSE IN PRISON

5. How should I treat the brave souls that are being attacked by Satan? Galatians 6:1.

“There is many a brave soul sorely pressed by temptation, almost ready to faint in the conflict with self and with the powers of evil. Do not discourage such a one in his hard struggle. Cheer him with brave, hopeful words that shall urge him on his way. Thus the light of Christ may shine from you. ‘None of us liveth to himself.’ Romans 14:7. By our unconscious influence others may be encouraged and strengthened, or they may be discouraged, and repelled from Christ and the truth.

“There are many who have an erroneous idea of the life and character of Christ. They think that He was devoid of warmth and sunniness, that He was stern, severe, and joyless. In many cases the whole religious experience is colored by these gloomy views.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 120.

GOD IS WITH US AND FOR US

6. What should my life be like if I say that Christ lives in me? Galatians 5:22.

“Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or morose. The life of those who imitate Him will be full of earnest purpose; they will have a deep sense of personal responsibility. Levity will

be repressed; there will be no boisterous merriment, no rude jesting; but the religion of Jesus gives peace like a river. It does not quench the light of joy; it does not restrain cheerfulness nor cloud the sunny, smiling face. Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister; and when His love reigns in the heart, we shall follow His example." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 120, 121.

7. How does the Lord encourage me in my daily struggles? Psalm 46:1, 2.

"It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care. But our Lord does not deceive us. He does not say to us, 'Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path.' He knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. His prayer for His disciples was, 'I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' 'In the world,' He says, 'ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' John 17:15; 16:33." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 122, 123.

8. What does the Lord Jesus give me so that my joy may be full? John 15:11. What examples assure me that God takes care of me?

"The most gorgeous attire produced by the skill of art cannot bear comparison with the natural grace and radiant beauty of the flowers of God's creation. Jesus asks, '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?' Matthew 6: 28, 30. If God, the divine Artist, gives to the simple flowers that perish in a day their delicate and varied colors, how much greater care will He have for those who are created in His own image? This lesson of Christ's is a rebuke to the anxious thought, the perplexity and doubt, of the faithless heart.

"The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient. Jesus says, 'My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' 'These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' John 14:27; 15:11." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 124.

9. What unmerited privileges has Jesus prepared for me in heaven? John 14:1-3.

“Then the redeemed will be welcomed to the home that Jesus is preparing for them. There their companions will not be the vile of earth, liars, idolaters, the impure, and unbelieving; but they will associate with those who have overcome Satan and through divine grace have formed perfect characters. Every sinful tendency, every imperfection, that afflicts them here has been removed by the blood of Christ, and the excellence and brightness of His glory, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, is imparted to them. And the moral beauty, the perfection of His character, shines through them, in worth far exceeding this outward splendor. They are without fault before the great white throne, sharing the dignity and the privileges of the angels.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 126.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **Can I confirm that I am conscious and grateful for all the good things that I have received from the beneficial hand of God?**
 - **Until what point can I recognize that I have been a messenger of peace and reconciliation in the place where the Lord has placed me?**
 - **Do I truly feel and am I really happy by the fact that I’m getting to know my Saviour more and more?**
 - **Have I reached a spiritual level of communion with Christ to be able to participate in the translation at His soon coming and live in the atmosphere of heaven?**
-

MISSIONARY REPORT FROM TANZANIA

To be read on Sabbath, March 27, 2004

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered Sabbath, April 3, 2004

“We are fast approaching the end. The printing and circulation of the books and papers that contain the truth for this time are to be our work.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 89. “The world is to receive the light of truth through an evangelizing ministry of the word in our books and periodicals.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 61.

Dear brothers and sisters and all those scattered around the world, who love the Reformation truth. In the name of the Lord, we would like to share with you the progress of the work of Reformation in the East African region, which is comprised of the following countries: Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. By the grace of God, the wonderful message of Reformation reached this region in the early 1970's and was welcomed with great enthusiasm. As more souls were won to the truth, a great demand for Swahili language publications emerged, Swahili being the major official language spoken by the majority of our members and interested souls in Tanzania and surrounding regions, including the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are about 6,200 members whose official language is Swahili but most of the publications within the union are in the English language, which can only be read by a small minority of educated members. Members, interested souls, and canvassers distributing literature urgently need publications in the Swahili language.

In our bid to reach the neighborhood and the public at large, we intend to establish and promote the canvassing work in the whole region. The inspired pen writes: “Our publications have a most sacred work to do in making clear, simple, and plain the spiritual basis of our faith. Everywhere the people are taking sides; all are ranging themselves either under the banner of truth and righteousness or under the banner of the apostate powers that are contending for the supremacy. At this time, God's message to the world is to be given with such prominence and power that the people will be brought face to face, mind to mind, heart to heart with truth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7,

p. 150. "Our publications should go everywhere. Let them be issued in many languages." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 62.

We urgently need a printing house equipped with a printing press and other facilities to publish literature in the Swahili language. The General Conference Committee in different sessions agreed to establish the printing facilities in Tanzania where standard Swahili is spoken.

The initial plan and preparations have already been laid and are only awaiting funds for purchasing the premises, machinery, and other equipment. We also have the necessary manpower to direct the work. It is our objective to make this project self-supporting; after the project has been established it can generate income to sustain itself.

We therefore appeal to you for your generous assistance through contributions to advance this work.

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:20, 21.

"Those who sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:5, 6.

All brethren in this region extend their sincere thanks for your understanding of their needs. May the Lord bless you all.

—*Parmenas N. Shirima*
East African Regional Representative

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the Second Quarter 2004

*Significant Steps
in the Spiritual Life*

INTRODUCTION

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27.

“There are many mysteries in the Word of God that we do not comprehend, and many of us are content to stop our investigation when we have just begun to receive a little knowledge concerning Christ. When there begins to be a little unfolding of the divine purposes to the mind, and we begin to obtain a slight knowledge of the character of God, we become satisfied and think that we have received about all the light that there is for us in the Word of God. But the truth of God is infinite. With painstaking effort we should work in the mines of truth, discovering the precious jewels that have been hidden.... Jesus meant just what He said when He directed His disciples to ‘search the Scriptures’ (John 5:39). Searching means to compare scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. We should not be satisfied with a superficial knowledge.

“We do not half-realize what the Lord is willing to do for His people.... Our petitions, mingled with faith and contrition, should go up to God for an understanding of the mysteries that God would make known to His saints.... An angel’s pen could not portray all the glory of the revealed plan of redemption. The Bible tells how Christ bore our sins and carried our sorrows. Here is revealed how mercy and truth have met together at the cross of Calvary, how righteousness and peace have kissed each other, how the righteousness of Christ may be imparted to fallen man. There infinite wisdom, infinite justice, infinite mercy, and infinite love were displayed. Depths, heights, lengths, and breadths of love and wisdom, all passing knowledge, are made known in the plan of salvation.

“He who desires the truth in his heart, who longs for the working of its powers upon the life and character, will be sure to have it.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 10.

—*The Brothers of the General Conference*

Spiritual Life, a Growing Process

INTRODUCTION

“Ministers need to have a more clear, simple manner in presenting the truth as it is in Jesus. Their own minds need to comprehend the great plan of salvation more fully. Then they can carry the minds of the hearers away from earthly things to the spiritual and eternal. There are many who want to know what they must do to be saved. They want a plain and clear explanation of the steps requisite in conversion and there should not a sermon be given unless a portion of that discourse is to especially make plain the way that sinners may come to Christ and be saved.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 157.

OBJECTIVES

- To experience the divine message of justification by faith in our daily lives.
- To understand the relationship between justification by faith and the third angel’s message.
- To see the fruit of justification in the sanctification of our life.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

1. **When we trust in God, what wonderful assurance of receiving forgiveness for our sins do we have? Acts 13:38, 39.**

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and in the life to come, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will, and stay in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and going from strength to strength, from glory to glory.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1070.

- 2. How can this message be practiced in our lives? Romans 5: 1-5.**

- 3. Can we say that “justification by faith” and the third angel’s message have something in common? Romans 1:16, 17; Revelation 14:12.**

“This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety. It invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all commandments of God... This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” *—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92.

SANCTIFICATION, A GROWING PROCESS

- 4. How did Jesus clearly show the different stages of spiritual growth in the Christian life? Mark 4:26-28.**

“As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled; there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.” *—Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 65.

- 5. In the heavenly work of justification and sanctification by faith, to whom will we joyfully subject our decisions, feelings, and will? Romans 6:19-22.**

“Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1076.

THE END RESULT IN THE LIFE OF GOD’S PEOPLE

6. What is the final goal of Jesus, to be realized consecutive the steps of spiritual growth of the believers? Ephesians 4: 13.

“‘The wheat develops, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear’. The object of the husbandman in the sowing of the seed and the culture of the growing plant is the production of grain. He desires bread for the hungry and seed for future harvest. So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest as the reward of His labor and sacrifice. Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing—the reproduction of Christ’s character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 67.

7. What is the result of the third angel’s message and, therefore, of justification and sanctification by faith? Revelation 14:9-12.

“Who are these? God’s denominated people—those who on this earth have witnessed to their loyalty. Who are they? Those who have kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ; those who have owned the Crucified One as their Saviour.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 981.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Have we realized the great importance of understanding and living the message of justification by faith?**

- **Will an understanding of the relationship of justification by faith and the third angel's message affect our influence and the testimony we give to the world?**
- **In the day-by-day sanctification of your Christian walk have you seen the fruit of justification?**

2

Sabbath, April 10, 2004

The “Three Loaves of Bread”

INTRODUCTION

“Let every one who claims to believe that the Lord is soon coming, search the Scriptures as never before; for Satan is determined to try every device possible to keep souls in darkness and blind the mind to the perils of the times in which we are living. Let every believer take up his Bible with earnest prayer, that he might be enlightened by the Holy Spirit as to what is truth, that he may know more of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Search for the truth as for hidden treasures, and disappoint the enemy.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 362.

OBJECTIVES

- To reflect upon the food that is vital for the midnight supper.
- To not remain indifferent or unawares of our need to participate in the midnight supper.
- To acknowledge that our understanding of the truth will grow if we live according to the light we have received.

- 1. According to the parable of the midnight visit, a friend was lacking something, so he turned to another friend to supply that need, what was it? How many loaves were mentioned? Luke 11:5, 6.**
- 2. Who also arrived at midnight in another parable? Prophetically speaking, what time period is marked as “midnight”? Matthew 25:5, 6.**

“The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth’s history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God’s service. All apparently wait for Christ’s appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 412.

THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL BREAD

- 3. Who will give us this indispensable supper, and what is it like? Luke 11:13; John 6:32-35.**

“In the parable all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 408.

“‘I am the bread of life,’ the Author, Nourisher, and Supporter of eternal, spiritual life. In the thirty-fifth verse of the sixth chapter of John, Christ represents Himself under the similitude of heavenly bread. To eat His flesh and to drink His blood means to receive Him as a heaven-sent teacher. Belief in Him is essential to spiritual life. Those who feast on the Word never hunger, never thirst, never desire, any higher or more exalted good.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1135.

- 4. How can we be sure of receiving the spiritual bread so essential in our lives at all times? Luke 11:8-10.**

5. What are the “three loaves of bread” that God offers to His people and to the world during the time of the midnight cry and of the midnight supper? Revelation 14:6-12.

“I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angel’s messages. Said my accompanying angel: ‘Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.’ I was again brought down through these messages and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform....

“And I saw the mercy and goodness of God in sending a warning to the people of the earth, and repeated messages to lead them to a diligent searching of heart and study of the Scriptures, that they might divest themselves of errors which have been handed down from the heathen and papists. Through these messages God has been bringing out His people where He can work for them in greater power and where they can keep all His commandments....

“These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 258, 259, 250, 256.

6. How important are these messages in the experience of God’s people and for the world? Matthew 24:14.

“The three angels of Revelation 14 are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angels’ messages. All are linked together. The evidences of the abiding, everliving truth of these grand messages, that mean so much to the church, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, are not extinct. Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages, so that the people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time and place; but they live and are to exert

their power upon our religious experience while time shall last....

"The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of probation until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 17-19.

7. For all those who accept the truth and live according to it, what will happen to their light? Proverbs 4:18.

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

"In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential, new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of his resurrection, He began at 'Moses and all the prophets' and 'expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.' Luke 24:27. But it is the light which shines in the fresh unfolding of truth that glorifies the old. He who rejects or neglects the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 127, 128.

"Treasure every ray of light. Cherish every desire of the soul after God. Give yourself the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings. You have seen but the first rays of the early dawn of His glory. As you follow on to know the Lord, you will know that His going forth is prepared as the morning. 'The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Proverbs 4:18... Having repented of our sins, confessed them, and found pardon, we are to continue to learn of Christ until we come into the full noontide of a perfect gospel faith." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 318.

FOR MEDITATION

- **How much longer do we have to wait until we reach "midnight" in the history of the world, or have we already reached it?**

- **Is this just a story about a man in need of food at midnight who has to ask others for help, or is there a spiritual lesson in it for us?**
- **What is the food that we need every day and every hour for the supply of our life?**
- **What should we do in order to receive more light for the next dark days?**

3

Sabbath, April 17, 2004

Purification, Cleansing, And Trials

INTRODUCTION

“Jesus is in His holy temple and will now accept our sacrifices, our prayers, and our confessions of faults and sins and will pardon all the transgressions of Israel that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still, for then there will be no Priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father’s throne.” —*Early Writings*, p. 48.

OBJECTIVES

- To realize the need of purification and in repentance come to the Lord in order to reach this goal.
- To be sure that we belong to the wise virgins and truly have the oil of the Holy Spirit.
- To remember that what we do not have now, we will most certainly not achieve in the last moment.

- To follow each step of the third angel's message in a practical manner in order to have a spiritual experience.

THE CLEANSING PROCESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

- 1. What prophetic message did God give to the prophet Daniel for the time of the end? Daniel 12:8-10.**
- 2. What are the differences between the wise and the foolish virgins? Matthew 25:3, 4; 7:24-27.**

"A theoretical knowledge of the truth is essential. But the knowledge of the greatest truth will not save us; our knowledge must be practical.... The truth must be brought into their hearts, sanctifying and cleansing them from all earthliness and sensuality in the most private life. The soul temple must be cleansed." *—Review and Herald*, May 24, 1887.

- 3. What experiences will the wise virgins go through during the latter part of the third angel's message? Malachi 3:2, 3; 1 Peter 1:22, 23.**

"They must give up errors and traditions received from men and turn wholly to God and His Word. They must be purified, made white, and tried. Those who endure that bitter trial will obtain an eternal victory." *—Early Writings*, p. 243.

- 4. What three experiences will the redeemed have according to the vision? Revelation 7:13, 14.**

"It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character....

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation?”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 215, 216.

THE FIRST STEP IN RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

5. How does the first angel’s message represent a call for purification of the soul from all sin as the first step of worshipping God? Revelation 14:7; Mark 1:3, 4.

“The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 467.

“This soul-purifying work led the affections away from worldly things to a consecration never before experienced....

“Like John, the forerunner of Jesus, those who preached this solemn message felt compelled to lay the ax at the root of the tree, and call upon men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” —*Early Writings*, p. 233.

THE SECOND STEP IN THE PROGRESSIVE WORK

6. What is the next step for the repenting believer, which is represented as making white? Romans 6:18, 22.

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

“The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.” —(*Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895) *Messages to Young People*, p. 35.

7. After we come with faith into the Most Holy to stand before God's judgment, will we be tried to the uttermost? 1 Peter 4:17; Revelation 22:11.

"This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, 'They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth.'"
—*Early Writings*, p. 254.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Am I well prepared like the wise virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom's coming?**
- **Do I have a double portion of the Holy Spirit to encounter the dark hours of the night?**
- **What has my personal experience been like in the day by day sanctification of my Christian walk?**
- **Have I searched my soul to discover whether my mind, heart and hands are pure, before entering into the most holy place?**

The Everlasting Gospel

INTRODUCTION

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 363.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that the everlasting gospel is the message of salvation.
- To see the relationship of justification and sanctification by faith with the message.
- To make the gospel a personal experience and grow in the promised light.

A WORLDWIDE MESSAGE

1. What message does the Lord send to all of the inhabitants of the earth through the first angel? Revelation 14:6.

“...Before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached ‘to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.’ Revelation 14:6, 14. God ‘hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.’ Acts 17:31. Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that ‘this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.’ “ —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

2. **What is revealed in the “gospel” that must be announced to every nation and inhabitant of the earth? Romans 1:16, 17; Ephesians 1:15.**
3. **Which blessings will we receive, if the heavenly gift of justification by faith is imputed to us? Romans 3:24-26; Titus 3:7.**

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.” –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 117.

“Here the truth is laid out in plain lines. This mercy and goodness is wholly undeserved. The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God’s forgiving grace....

The sinner cannot depend upon his own good works as a means of justification.... He believes the promises of God, which through Christ are made unto him sanctification and righteousness and redemption. And if he follows Jesus, he will walk humbly in the light, rejoicing in the light and diffusing that light to others. Being justified by faith, he carries cheerfulness with him in his obedience in all his life. Peace with God is the result of what Christ is to him. The souls who are in subordination to God, who honor Him, and are doers of His Word, will receive divine enlightenment.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1071.

PROCESS AND GOAL

4. **What is the necessary process that every believer must go through to reach the goal? Mark 4:26-28.**

“As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth....

“Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 506, 508.

5. What is the main goal of these messages of grace for us? Ephesians 4:13.

“...The last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

GOD’S LIGHT IS INCREASING

6. Which prophecy regarding the development of light in the believers as well as in the progress of the third angel’s message do we have? Psalm 97:11.

“The third angel has lighted up the past, the present, and the future.” —*Early Writings*, p. 255.

“This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. For it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 363.

7. What may we expect if we appreciate and live according to the light we have received? John 16:12, first part.

“The question has been asked me, ‘Do you think that the Lord has any more light for us as a people?’ I answer that He has light that is new to us, and yet it is precious old light that is to shine forth from the Word of truth. We have only the glimmerings of the rays of the light that is yet to

come to us. We are not making the most of the light which the Lord has already given us, and thus we fail to receive the increased light; we do not walk in light already shed upon us.” –*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 401, 402.

FOR MEDITATION

- **To discover the great blessings included in the gospel message.**
 - **To experience, grow and reach the goal the Lord has for us.**
 - **To be prepared in order to progress every day.**
 - **To receive and give more light.**
-

A Sign from the Experience of Jonah

INTRODUCTION

“...It is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 363.

OBJECTIVES

- To become aware of what the Lord can accomplish in the short period of three days.
- To keep in mind that we must go through the same experience that Jesus went through in His life here on earth: death, rest, and resurrection.
- To seriously consider what God’s goal is for us personally and as a people.

IN THREE DAYS A GREAT WORK MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED

1. **To which particular experience in the life of the prophet Jonah did Jesus make reference to in order to prove the divine origin of His mission? Jonah 2:1; Matthew 12:38-40.**

“‘And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign?’ ‘There shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.’ As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, Christ was to be the same time ‘in the heart of the earth.’ And as the preaching of Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so Christ’s preaching was a sign to His generation.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 406.

2. **What was Jonah’s experience during those three days? Jonah 2:4.**

3. What is the spiritual meaning of the three-day period in the prophet Hosea's message to the Israelites? Is this a short or a long time? Hosea 6:2.

"The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Savior, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear. This is God's witness before the world to the divine mission of His Son." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 407.

THREE DAYS OF SIGNIFICATIVE EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

THE DAY OF DEATH

4. What singular experience in the nature of man is represented by the death of Christ? Romans 6:1-4, 7; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

"And all who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 86.

"The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. Self is in need of being crucified. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere." –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1100, 1101.

THE DAY OF REST

5. What spiritual lesson does Christ's rest in the grave during the Sabbath hours teach us? Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:4-10.

"We are to find rest by wearing His yoke and bearing His burdens. In being co-workers with Christ in the great work for which He gave His life, we shall find true rest. When we were sinners, He gave His life for us. He wants us to come to Him and learn of Him. Thus we are to find rest. He says He will give us rest. 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.' In doing this you will find in your own experience the rest that Christ gives, the rest that comes from wearing His yoke and lifting His burdens." *—Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1090.

THE DAY OF TRIUMPH AND VICTORY

6. What spiritual experience does the resurrection and new life of Jesus symbolize for us? Romans 6:9-11.

"Through faith, irrespective of feeling, Jesus, the Author of our salvation, the Finisher of our faith, will, by His precious grace, strengthen the moral powers, and the sinner may reckon himself 'to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.' Simple faith, with the love of Christ in the soul, unites the believer to God." *—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 147.

GOD'S HIGH GOAL FOR US

7. What high level of spiritual maturity is the heavenly goal for every believer and for the people of God? Colossians 1:29.

"God desires His people to show by their lives the advantage of Christianity over worldliness, to show that they are working on a high, holy

plane. He longs to see them showing that the truth they have received has made them children of the heavenly King. He longs to make them channels through which He can pour His boundless love and mercy.

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of the Saviour shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim His own.” *—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 324.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Do you think that in a short while the Lord can also do a great work in your life?**
 - **What has your personal experience regarding death to sin until now been like?**
 - **Can you say that you have found rest in the Lord and are living in the atmosphere of heaven daily?**
 - **What do you think will help us to reach the goal of a perfect Christlike character?**
-

Lessons from Some of the Yearly Feasts

INTRODUCTION

“At these yearly assemblies the hearts of old and young would be encouraged in the service of God, while the association of the people from the different quarters of the land would strengthen the ties that bound them to God and to one another.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 540.

In Leviticus 23 seven yearly feasts are mentioned. In this lesson we will take into consideration some of them in their spiritual meaning: Passover and Unleavened bread, Pentecost and the Day of Atonement.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what the spiritual meaning of the unleavened bread is for us.
- To remember that we must be like bread made with heavenly leaven.
- To not to forget that we must first repent and be reconciled with God and men before an atonement for our sins may take place in heaven's court.
- To discover that the symbolic teachings the Lord gave to the Israelites through the Levitical feasts are still being taught in the third angel's message.

THE YEARLY FEASTS OF LEVITICUS

1. **Name some of the yearly feasts given to Israel during the time of Moses to bring the people nearer to the Lord? Leviticus 23:5, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 24-34.**

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF PASSOVER AND UNLEAVENED BREAD

2. **To which great, historical event in Israel is the Passover connected? Exodus 12:11-14, 27.**

3. What does Egypt symbolize, and from what is the believer freed when God's power takes them out of there? Exodus 6:5; Ephesians 2:5; Romans 6:18-22.

"The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 277.

4. Why did the loaves of bread have to be unleavened? What does the leaven symbolize in this case? Matthew 16:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

"The use of unleavened bread also was significant. It was expressly enjoined in the law of the Passover, and as strictly observed by the Jews in their practice, that no leaven should be found in their houses during the feast. In like manner the leaven of sin must be put away from all who would receive life and nourishment from Christ. So Paul writes to the Corinthian church...." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 278.

PENTECOST AND THE BREAD WITH HEAVENLY LEAVEN

5. What was the difference between the Passover loaves and those of Pentecost? What does the leaven symbolize in this case? Leviticus 23:17, last part; Matthew 13:33.

"Among the Jews leaven was sometimes used as an emblem of sin. At the time of the Passover the people were directed to remove all the leaven from their houses as they were to put away sin from their hearts. Christ warned His disciples, 'Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.' Luke 12:1. And the apostle Paul speaks of the 'leaven of malice and wickedness.' 1 Corinthians 5:8. But in the Savior's parable, leaven is used to represent the kingdom of heaven. It illustrates the quickening, assimilating power of the grace of God.

"None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of this power. In all who will submit themselves to the Holy Spirit a new principle of life is to be implanted; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 95, 96.

- 6. What did the disciples experience when they received the heavenly bread during the day of Pentecost? Acts 2:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.**

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, A CALL TO REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION

- 7. What was the significance and purpose of the services in the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 23:27-32; Hebrews 9:7.**

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration....

“Only once a year could the priest enter there, and that after the most careful and solemn preparation. With trembling he went in before God, and the people in reverent silence awaited his return, their hearts uplifted in earnest prayer for the divine blessing. Before the mercy seat the high priest made the atonement for Israel; and in the cloud of glory, God met with him.”

In the great Day of Atonement “assurance had been given that their iniquity should be remembered no more.” Thanks to God’s grace, people who had confessed their sins were now “at peace with God”. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 355, 352, 540.

- 8. Through whose intercession do we receive reconciliation from the throne of grace? Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; 2 Corinthians 5:18,19.**

“I the great day of final award, the dead are to be ‘judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be freed, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 357, 358.

“Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.” *—Faith and Works*, p. 107.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Just like the doors of the Israelites in the past, is your heart signed with the blood of Christ?**
 - **Are you keeping the house of your soul clean and free from the human leaven of sin?**
 - **How often do you partake of the heavenly leaven in order to repeat the experience of Pentecost?**
 - **Considering that now we are living during the heavenly atonement, are you confessing your sins every day?**
 - **Can you find any other teachings for your spiritual life in the symbols of the Levitical feasts?**
-

The Three Sections of the Sanctuary

INTRODUCTION

“Thus in the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the temple that afterward took its place, the people were taught each day the great truths relative to Christ’s death and ministration, and once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners.” *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 358.

OBJECTIVES

- To consider how the divine works of salvation are represented through different stages.
- To study the sanctuary and its furnishings not only as symbols of Jesus and of His work, but to also apply their meaning in our spiritual life.
- To realize that we should have a goal in our life and that we need to reach it before the sealing time.

EVERYONE A TEMPLE FOR THE LORD

1. **What is every believer before God? 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, 5-12; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Exodus 25:8.**

THE SYMBOLS OF THE FIRST SECTION

2. **How many sections were there in the tabernacle of the earth which was built according to the heavenly pattern? Was the plan for its three sections accidental? Exodus 27:9; Hebrews 9:1-3.**

3. What did the gate and the two typical objects placed inside the court symbolize?

- Gate: Exodus 38:18, 19; John 10:1-3, 9, 10.
- Altar: Exodus 38:1-7; Acts 2:23; 1 Corinthians 1:17, last part.
- Laver: Exodus 38:8; Acts 22:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11.

FURNISHINGS OF THE HOLY PLACE AND SYMBOLS THAT POINT TO CHRIST

4. What spiritual experiences do the three objects in the sanctuary symbolize?

- Candlestick: Exodus 40:25; John 8:12; Ephesians 5:8.
- Table with the shewbread: Exodus 40:22, 23; John 6:35, 51, 57, 58.
- The golden altar: Exodus 40:26, 27; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; Revelation 8:3, 4.

“The slumbering Church must be aroused, awakened out of its spiritual lethargy, to a realization of the important duties which have been left undone. The people have not entered into the holy place, where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for His children.” —*Review and Herald*, February 25, 1890.

“Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world....

“The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary; but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor who is at God’s right hand presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ’s propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1077, 1078.

5. What is the meaning of the objects within the ark? What spiritual traits do they represent that we should reach when we are ready to be sealed? Hebrews 9:4.

- Tables of testimony: Hebrews 8:10.
- Pot with the manna: Nehemiah 9:15; John 6:31-35; Revelation 2:17.
- Aaron's rod: Numbers 17:10.

"The deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd, with only a rod in his hand; but God would make that rod the symbol of His power....

"Yet Moses dared not choose. In place of a shepherd's crook a rod of power had been given him, which he could not lay down until God should release him." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 251, 396.

"The truth is of no value to any soul unless it is brought into the inner sanctuary, and sanctifies the soul. Piety will degenerate, and religion become a shallow sentimentalism, unless the plowshare of truth is made to go deep into the fallow ground of the heart." —*Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892.

PREPARATION, THE GOAL OF OUR LIFE

6. Since the mediating work of Christ in heaven will soon come to an end, what should we do without delay in order to be sealed? Amos 4:12, last part.

7. How should we enter the most holy place where our dear Saviour resides? Hebrews 10:19-24.

"Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And by rejecting the two former messages, they have so darkened their understanding that they can see no light in the third angel's message, which shows the way into the most holy place. I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these

messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there.”
–*Early Writings*, pp. 260, 261.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Are you aware that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and the dwelling place of the Lord?**
 - **If you could have stood in the in the court of the old sanctuary, what would you have considered first? Why?**
 - **Out of all the furnishings located in the holy place, which inspires you to approach the Lord?**
 - **If you were in the most holy place in heaven, what would be your greatest joy?**
 - **Have you set goals in your life with the hope of having this experience one day? Are you reaching them?**
-

The Way of Holiness

INTRODUCTION

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness.” Isaiah 35:8.

“Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” Psalm 77:19, 20.

“Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way.” Proverbs 15:10.

OBJECTIVES

- To emphasize the need of faith in Jesus as an essential step that leads to the way of redemption.
- To understand how we may be freed from the slavery of sin and condemnation.
- To become more sanctified daily through constant communion with Jesus.
- To discover the value of our talents and spiritual gifts in order to develop them use them for the benefit of the church.

ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS

1. **What should be our sincere wish if we want to meet the Lord and remain in an intimate relationship with Him? Jeremiah 29:13.**
2. **What is the only way of truth that leads us to life? John 14:6.**

“There are many who seem to feel that they have a great work to do themselves before they can come to Christ for His salvation. They seem to think that Jesus will come in at the very last of their struggle, and give them help by putting the finishing touch to their lifework. It seems difficult for them to understand that Christ is a complete Saviour, and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. They lose sight of the fact that Christ Himself is ‘the way, the truth, and the life.’” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 181.

“Many are losing the right way, in consequence of thinking that they must climb to heaven, that they must do something to merit the favor of God. They seek to make themselves better by their own unaided efforts. This they can never accomplish. Christ has made the way by dying our Sacrifice, by living our Example, by becoming our great High Priest. He declares, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). If by any effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 102.

THE WAY OF FAITH

3. With what do the steps to heaven begin with? Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6-8.

4. How can we be saved from condemnation, and how do we go about receiving the white garment of justification? Romans 1:17; 8:1-4.

“Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety.... Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ’s righteousness, stands faultless before God.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1070.

5. What are the signs that assure us that have made this experience? John 10:1-10; 8:32, 36; Romans 6:16-18.

“But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” –*Faith and Works*, p. 100.

SANCTIFICATION AND LIFE IN JESUS

6. After justification by faith, what other gift does the Lord give to those who belong to Him? 1 Corinthians 1:30.

“No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other human being. Holiness is the gift of God through Christ. Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are His spiritual children, born again, renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed. With clearer vision they behold eternal realities. They are adopted into God’s family, and they become conformed to His likeness, changed by His Spirit from glory to glory. From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ....

“Accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, and following His example of self-denial—this is the secret of holiness.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1117.

HOW CAN YOU PERSONALLY GAIN THE VICTORY OVER YOUR SINS?

7. What blessing and sign does the Lord give to His beloved children for the benefit of the church? 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Matthew 25:14, 15.

“To every man is given his work; not one is excused. Each has a part to act according to his capacity; and it devolves upon the one who presents the truth to carefully and prayerfully learn the ability of all who accept the truth, and then to instruct them and lead them along, step by step, letting them realize the burden of responsibility resting upon them to do the work that God has for them to do.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 397.

- 8. What does God promise to those who remain steadfast in the way that leads to holiness until the end? 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; Revelation 3:21.**
- 9. What will be the joyful song sung and the garment worn by the overcomers? Revelation 15:2, 3; 22:14.**

FOR MEDITATION

- **Have you been freed from the slavery of sin and experienced peace and joy in the Lord?**
- **By taking as your example the life of Jesus, have you progressed in the way of holiness?**
- **Do you know what your spiritual gifts are and how to use them wisely to be a blessing for the church?**
- **Have you considered what will happen to those who don't use the gifts that have been entrusted to them and don't bring forth fruits?**

The Three Baptisms

INTRODUCTION

„Just prior to His leaving His disciples for the heavenly courts, Jesus encouraged them with the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs as much to us as it did to them, and yet how rarely it is presented before the people, and its reception spoken of in the church. In consequence of this silence upon this most important theme, what promise do we know less about by its practical fulfillment than this rich promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby efficiency is to be given to all our spiritual labor?... Other blessings and privileges have been presented before the people until a desire has been awakened in the church for the attainment of the blessing promised of God; but the impression concerning the Holy Spirit has been that this gift is not for the church now, but that at some time in the future it would be necessary for the church to receive it.”
—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 174.

OBJECTIVES

- To consider the preparation that is necessary in our life and the changes that must be made before the water baptism.
- To acknowledge in our prayers the great need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- To think about the baptism by fire, what this means for us, and when it may be performed.
- To understand the three main processes of spiritual growth under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the baptisms that accompany them.

THE WATER BAPTISM, PREPARATION AND PROMISES

1. **Speaking about the baptism that Jesus had to perform, which three elements did John the Baptist mention? Ephesians 4:5; Matthew 3:11.**

2. Before the water baptism may be performed, what changes must take place in our lives with the help of the Holy Spirit? Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38.

“Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was, ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ Luke 13:5. And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent.

“The Lord desires His servants today to preach the old gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession.... The sinner must be labored for, perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God’s law, and shall exercise repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.” –*Evangelism*, pp. 179, 180.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

3. What other baptisms have to take place in us after water baptism has been performed? Acts 2:38, 39; Romans 8:14, 16.

“God desires to refresh His people by the gift of the Holy Spirit, baptizing them anew in His love. There is no need for a dearth of the Spirit in the church. After Christ’s ascension the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting, praying, believing disciples with a fullness and power that reached every heart. In the future the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth. The earth is to be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 40.

THE THIRD FORM OF BAPTISM

4. After a baptism by water and the Spirit in the Jordan River, which other baptism awaited Jesus? Luke 12:49, 50.

5. What special guidance will the believer receive when he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit? John 16:13, 14.

“Without the co-operation of the Spirit of God, no amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light. Before one book of the New Testament had been written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ’s ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying disciples. Then the testimony of their enemies was, ‘Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.’ Acts 5:28.

“Christ promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church and the promise belongs as much to us as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 284.

6. Which blessed fruit can also be seen in the character of the victorious Christian? Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22, 23.

“As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.

“‘The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.’ Galatians 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 68, 69.

7. What are the three forms the Holy Spirit uses in His saving work in the world to convince the people of truth? John 16:7-11.

“Christ Himself will decide who are worthy to dwell with the family of heaven. He will judge every man according to his words and his works. Profession is nothing in the scale. It is character that decides destiny.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 74.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Do you have the great desire to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?**
 - **In order to receive this baptism, are there special prayers and preparations that must be done?**
 - **What would you do if today you received this great gift from the Lord?**
 - **How you seen the fruit of the Holy Spirit abundantly in you life?**
 - **Do you feel prepared for the baptism of fire?**
-

The Dew, the Early And the Latter Rain

INTRODUCTION

“As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 68.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the main purpose of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian growth.
 - To grasp some of its effects through the representation of natural phenomena.
 - To recognize the great need of the Holy Spirit to prepare us as a people for the latter rain, and the world for the final harvest of the gospel.
 - To recognize the importance of prayer in order to receive spiritual gifts and use them wisely for the right purpose.
- 1. Through the use of which natural symbols does God show us the work of the Holy Spirit? Deuteronomy 32:2; Joel 2: 23; James 5:7, last part.**

“The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth....

“But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.

“There is to be ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.’ There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 506.

THE DEW OF THE SPIRIT AND ITS EFFECTS

- 2. In order to grow spiritually, what must be done to help the seeds of the gospel germinate? Deuteronomy 32:2; Romans 8:23, last part.**

«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.... No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the co-operation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven.» –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 671, 672.

THE EARLY RAIN

- 3. Before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit could come to pass, what did the disciples do to prepare? Acts 2:1; 1:14.**

“It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 507.

- 4. What kind of assurance is given about the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Romans 8:14-16; 1 John 4:13.**

“The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

- 5. What does every believer who is baptized with the Holy Spirit receive as the early rain in order to be able to spread the gospel more effectively? Acts 2:39; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.**

“Just prior to His leaving His disciples for the heavenly courts, Jesus encouraged them with the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs as much to us as it did to them, and yet how rarely it is presented before the people, and its reception spoken of in the church. In consequence of this silence upon this most important theme, what promise do we know less about by its practical fulfillment than this rich promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby efficiency is to be given to all our spiritual labor?” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 174.

THE LATTER RAIN

- 6. As we are living in the time of the latter rain, what kind of experience can we expect from the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8; Ephesians 4:13; Revelation 14:12.**

“As the ‘former rain’ was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the ‘latter rain’ will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest. ‘Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.’ Hosea 6:3.... ‘In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.’ ‘And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ Acts 2: 17, 21.

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

7. Can we receive the latter rain without receiving the former rain only because we live in the time of the latter rain? Joel 2:23.

“The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.

“There is to be ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.’...

“Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 506, 507.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Have you been able to witness the Holy Spirit in your spiritual growth?**
- **Considering the experiences you have made with the Lord, do you remember when you received the first fruits of the Spirit?**
- **Are you already using the received spiritual gifts for the progress of the gospel, in order to make them develop?**
- **What do you think may be done in order to prepare the church for the latter rain?**

The Experiences of the Advent People

INTRODUCTION

“I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform.” —*Early Writings*, p. 259.

OBJECTIVES

- To see the experience of the advent people in the past and see God’s leading hand upon them.
- Reflecting on the test they had to face, prepare ourselves for ours and for the final one.
- To ask ourselves if it possible to receive more light, while we are not obedient to that already received.

1. Which was the result of the first angel’s message among the true believers until the spring of 1844? Revelation 14:6, 7.

“This soul-purifying work led the affections away from worldly things to a consecration never before experienced....

“Like John, the forerunner of Jesus, those who preached this solemn message felt compelled to lay the ax at the root of the tree, and call upon men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” —*Early Writings*, p. 233.

2. Could those who didn’t purify themselves from sin under the influence of the first angel’s message, receive the second angel’s message? Luke 8:18; John 15:2, first part.

“...Those who had not loved the appearing of Jesus, but embraced the message through fear, were pleased that He did not come at the time of

expectation. Their profession had not affected the heart and purified the life....

“Many who professed to be looking for Christ had no part in the work of the message. The glory of God which they had witnessed, the humility and deep devotion of the waiting ones, and the overwhelming weight of evidence, caused them to profess to receive the truth; but they had not been converted; they were not ready for the coming of their Lord....

“Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.” *—Early Writings*, pp. 235, 239, 260.

3. In which direction do the believers, who received the second angel’s message develop? Luke 10:28; James 1:25.

“Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation’s fountain. God’s people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality.” *—Early Writings*, p. 239.

4. How did God support the second angel’s message in order to help the Adventists to proclaim the fall of Babylon?

“Like showers of rain upon the thirsty earth, the Spirit of grace descended upon the earnest seekers. Those who expected soon to stand face to face with their Redeemer felt a solemn joy that was unutterable. The softening, subduing power of the Holy Spirit melted the heart as His blessing was bestowed in rich measure upon the faithful, believing ones.” *—The Great Controversy*, pp. 402, 403.

5. How did God support His transformed disciples to proclaim the fall of Israel? Acts 2:2-4; 4:31; 3:13-16.

“The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

6. Which will be the final result of the third angel’s message? Whose seal do we want to receive? Revelation 14:12, 1-5.

“The third angel has lighted up the past, the present, and the future, and they know that God has indeed led them by His mysterious providence.

“It was represented to me that the remnant followed Jesus into the most holy place and beheld the ark and the mercy seat, and were captivated with their glory. Jesus then raised the cover of the ark, and lo! the tables of stone, with the ten commandments written upon them.” —*Early Writings*, p. 255.

7. Which other powerful message should support the third angel’s message? Revelation 18:1-4.

“The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel’s message as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel’s message.” —*Early Writings*, p. 277.

8. What does the loud cry mean for the missionary work in all the world? Revelation 18:2.

“Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lightened with his glory. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere, as he cried mightily, with a strong voice, ‘Babylon the great is fallen....’” —*Early Writings*, p. 277.

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

“I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’” –*Early Writings*, p. 271.

FOR MEDITATION

- **Can we receive more light and special power from heaven if we don’t appreciate the light we have?**
 - **Is the future identity of the remnant already in my character and personal life?**
 - **According to God’s plan, what is my mission among His people today?**
 - **Which special heavenly provision is prepared for the final work on this earth? Am I prepared to be God’s instrument in it?**
-

A People Put to a Test

INTRODUCTION

“This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, ‘They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth.’ The third angel closes his message thus: ‘Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ “—*Early Writings*, p. 254.

OBJECTIVES

- To consider what would be the effect if every believer would not only accept the message of Minneapolis, but also put it in practice in his life.
- To become aware of the condition of the people revealed through the second test of the First World War.
- To learn the lesson the Lord has given through these past experiences in order not to fall out of the way, but to remain and progress in the light.
- To analyze ourselves and to understand who we are and what we should be.

THE MESSAGE PREACHED AT MINNEAPOLIS

1. **Since when did the work of the loud cry begin in the preaching of the third angel’s message?**

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

2. Which message was specially proclaimed among the advent people in 1888 and how was it accepted? Jeremiah 23:61, last part.

“An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Brethren [E. J.] Waggoner and [A. T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.”—*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 234, 235.

FACING A SECOND TEST

3. What other test did the Lord permit to come upon His people in the years 1914-1918 to reveal the need of a true reformation? Hebrews 12:4; 1 Corinthians 10:12, 13.

“God calls upon those who are willing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit to lead out in a work of thorough reformation. I see a crisis before us, and the Lord calls for His laborers to come into line.”—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 514.

“Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 17.

“Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law should be the motto of every Christian.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 147.

4. What is the task of the reformation in order to be the faithful remnant? Isaiah 58:13; Proverbs 4:25-27.

“Where do we find the people who are thus addressed? Who is it that shall build the old waste places, and raise up the foundation of many generations? Where are the people who have had light from heaven to see that a breach has been made in the law of God?...

“Those who receive this light are brought to view in the proclamation of the third angel’s message.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1152.

WALKING AND PROGRESSING IN THE LIGHT

- 5. If, after violation, the light or God’s law is still not appreciated, as it should, which danger is possible? John 1:5; 3:19; Matthew 25:28.**

“The time will come when many will be willing to do anything and everything possible in order to have a chance of hearing the call which they rejected at Minneapolis.... Better opportunities will never come, deeper feelings they will not have....

“God will not be trifled with.” –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, pp. 112, 113.

- 6. What kind of features must the bearer of the third angel’s message have, which received the power of the latter rain? Revelation 14:11, 12; 2 Peter 1:4.**

“The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory....

“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....

“Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416, 420.

- 7. What is necessary for God’s people to endure the coming tests? Luke 12:37, 38; 2 Peter 1:5-8.**

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action.... Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” –*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“...The days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 80.

FOR MEDITATION

- **What has been your experience in the message “Christ our righteousness”? Have you received its blessings?**
- **If another test would come today, what do you think would be the result?**
- **Can you say that you are progressing in your spiritual life, achieving new levels in the Christian ladder?**
- **Does your character correspond to the holy entrusted message?**

***Please read the Missionary Report
from Bangladesh
on page 116***

The Great Responsibility of the Messengers

INTRODUCTION

“The true ambassador of Christ is in perfect union with Him whom he represents, and his engrossing object is the salvation of souls. The wealth of earth dwindles into insignificance when compared with the worth of a single soul for whom our Lord and Master died. He who weigheth the hills in scales and the mountains in a balance regards a human soul as of infinite value.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 261.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the great responsibility which God has entrusted to His small people to share the light with others.
- To consider that it does not make much sense to remain satisfied only with the knowledge and possession of the message.
- Lack of consecration, and love of the world, may affect the life of all the church.
- To look unto Jesus to attain the victory and the future glory which soon will be revealed.

A HOLY PEOPLE WITH A SOLEMN MESSAGE

1. **Which was the goal according to which God chose Israel as His people? Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 7:6, 7.**
2. **What is the holy and solemn mission of God’s people in the last time? Revelation 14:6-12; 18:1-4.**

“We are now living in the closing scenes of this world’s history. Let men tremble with the sense of the responsibility of knowing the truth.

The ends of the world are come. Proper consideration of these things will lead all to make an entire consecration of all that they have and are to their God....

“The weighty obligation of warning a world of its coming doom is upon us. From every direction, far and near, calls are coming to us for help. The church, devotedly consecrated to the work, is to carry the message to the world ... A world, perishing in sin, is to be enlightened. The lost pearl is to be found. The lost sheep is to be brought back in safety to the fold. Who will join in the search? Who will bear the light to those who are wandering in the darkness of error?” —(*Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895) *Evangelism*, p. 16.

FOOD FOR GOD’S HOUSEHOLD

- 3. If our character and nature are still not changed, does it make sense to calm ourselves that we have a deep knowledge of the theory of the messages? 1 John 2:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.**

“A theoretical knowledge of the truth is essential. But the knowledge of the greatest truth will not save us; our knowledge must be practical.... The truth must be brought into their hearts, sanctifying and cleansing them from all earthliness and sensuality in the most private life. The soul temple must be cleansed.” —*Review and Herald*, May 24, 1887.

- 4. Which is the responsibility, with which God has entrusted the leaders of his work? Isaiah 62:6, 7; Matthew 24:45-47; Acts 20:28.**

“A man may preach pleasing, entertaining sermons, yet be far from Christ as regards religious experience. He may be exalted to the pinnacle of human greatness, yet never have experienced the inward work of grace that transforms the character. Such a one is deceived by his connection and familiarity with the sacred truths of the gospel, which have reached the intellect, but have not been brought into the inner sanctuary of the soul.

“We must have more than an intellectual belief in the truth.” —*Review and Herald*, February 14, 1899.

“The small churches have been presented to me as so destitute of spiritual food that they are ready to die, and God says to you, ‘Be watch-

ful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God....’ “–*Review and Herald*, March 4, 1890.

HOW WE MAY OVERCOME

- 5. What kind of responsibility has God entrusted to each member of His people? Could the love of the world of some members of the church lead to withdrawal of God’s blessings? Joshua 7:1, 10-12, 20, 21.**

“It is painful to see the unbelief that exists in the hearts of many of God’s professed followers. We have the most precious truths ever committed to mortals, and the faith of those who have received these truths should correspond to their greatness and value.” –*Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889.

- 6. How can we overcome doubt and lukewarmness and other hindrances? Matthew 14:28-31; John 15:4.**

“In order to gain the victory over every besetment of the enemy, we must lay hold on a power that is out of and beyond ourselves. We must maintain a constant, living connection with Christ, who has power to give victory to every soul that will maintain an attitude of faith and humility.” –*Review and Herald*, July 9, 1908.

- 7. What is our hope and sense in life, for whose sooner realization we can work from the whole heart? Revelation 22: 20, 21; 21:1-5.**

FOR MEDITATION

- **What does it mean for me to be a member of God’s chosen people?**
- **How much do I feel responsible for the light the Lord has entrusted to the church and to me?**

- **If I am not a fully consecrated member, what will be my influence in the church?**
 - **Am I looking often to Jesus to reach the victory in my spiritual life and in my mission?**
 - **Do we feel responsible before Him, who out of love sacrificed Himself for all mankind?**
-

MISSIONARY REPORT FROM BANGLADESH

To be read on Sabbath, June 26, 2004

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered Sabbath, July 5, 2004

“Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.” 1 Chronicles 29:9.

In February 2001, by the grace of the Lord, Brother Branco Cholic received an urgent message from Mr. Diban Das requesting that The People’s Republic Of Bangladesh be visited by the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement. Permission was granted, and almost one year later, in November 2002, a small but faithful group of believers was established. Today, there are eight different groups but, unfortunately, they have no official church, or other meeting place.

The People’s Republic of Bangladesh has a total estimated population of 130 million with an area of 144sq.km. About 80 percent of Bangladeshis are Muslims, making Bangladesh one of the largest Muslim countries in the world. Hinduism is professed by about 13 percent of the population. Bangladesh also has a very small Christian community of about half a million. All religions in Bangladesh tend to be accomodating to other faiths and beliefs and Bangladesh is known for its lack of communal strife.

Although the Reform Movement is just a very small percentage of the Christian community, many who come in contact with our message are thrilled to hear it. One elderly brother who had been in the Adventist Church for over 30 years, on hearing about the Reform, wanted to join us immediately. Sadly, other families who have come over from the Adventist Church have then been dismissed from their Adventist schools and driven out of their homes.

A different approach has been taken by the Reform Movement towards those in the Muslim and Hindu faiths. Special classes have been successfully set up to introduce and establish faith and confidence in the Bible and other Adventist truths.

There are many enormous challenges facing all the pioneer Reform workers in Bangladesh. The believers and missionaries are only a few and Bangladesh has a huge population. With the Lord’s help, all should know about this saving message.

Furthermore, we would like to purchase land and build houses of worship. The work is still in its very early stages and so we urgently need the support and cooperation of our dear brothers and sisters around the world.

“All that we do is to be done willingly. We are to bring our offerings with joy and gratitude, saying as we present them, Of Thine own we freely give Thee. The most costly service we can render is but meager compared to the gift of God to our world. Christ is a gift every day. God gave Him to the world, and He graciously takes the gifts entrusted to His human agents for the advancement of His work in the world. Thus we show that we recognize and acknowledge that every thing belongs to God, absolutely and entirely.--MS 124, 1898.

The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.--DA 65.” –*Counsels on Stewardship*, p.198.

–James Somar Chowdhury
Secretary of Bangladesh’s Field

