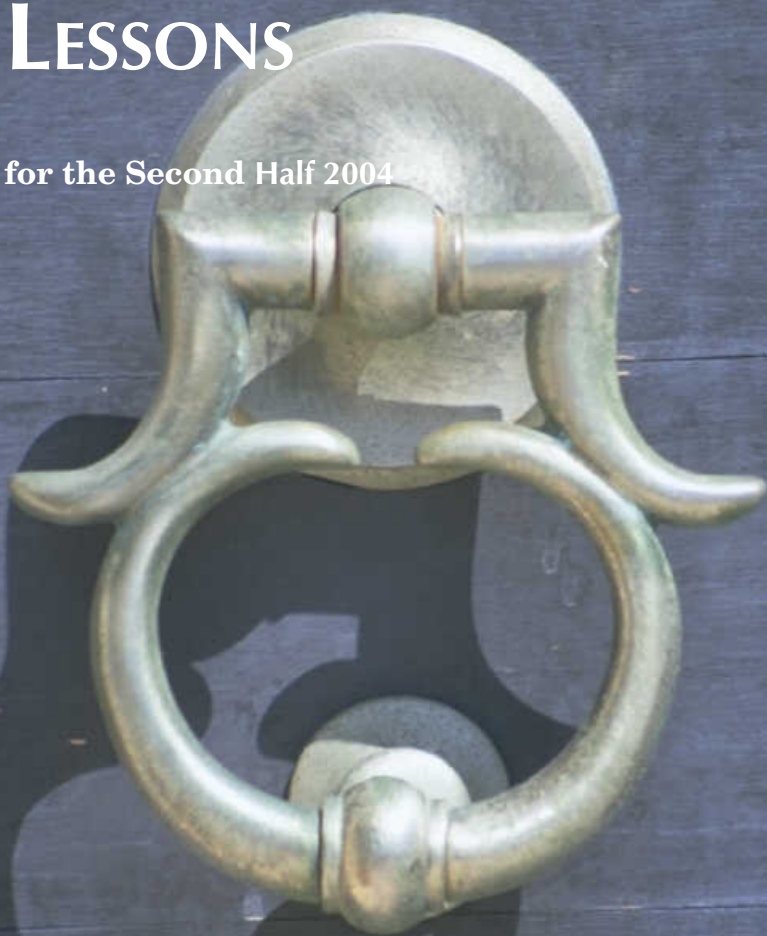


SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the Second Half 2004



Our Health, a Valuable Gift

Christian Service

Author of Third Quarter: Anonymous
Author of Fourth Quarter: Br. J. V. Giner

Revision and Supervision of Contents
by the Ministerial Department of the General Conference

Design, Edition and Translation
by the Publishing Department of the General Conference

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the Second Half 2004

Third Quarter

Our Health, a Valuable Gift

Fourth Quarter

Christian Service

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

Postfach 1310
D-74803 Mosbach/Baden

Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse 17
D-74821 Mosbach/Baden
Germany

Telephone (+49) 6261-4357 / Fax (49) 6261-14327
e-Mail: sda.refmov@t-online.de
Internet: www.imssdarm.org

Contents

Our Health, a Valuable Gift

Introduction	5
1. The first Human beings and their diet	6
2. The Bible and our Health	9
3. Divine Instructions for Health Maintenance	12
4. The Great Physician	15
5. General Health Rules	18
6. Faithful Health Reformers	21
7. Jesus and Health Laws	24
8. The Three Angel's Messages and Health Reform	27
9. Living the Health Reform	30
10. The Importance of Health Reform	33
11. Stimulants and Sedatives	36
12. Moral Purity	39
13. Eternal Gain or Loss	42
Missionary Report from Madagascar	45

Christian Service

Introduction	48
1. God: The Source of Infinite Love	49
2. Christ: Mediator between God and Man	52
3. Christ: Provider of the bread of life	56
4. Christ: Physician of the soul and of the spirit	59
5. Christ: Physician of the body	63
6. Christ: His soul gaining methods	66
7. The Holy Spirit and His Work of Service	69
8. The Church: Recipient of the gifts of the Spirit	72
9. The Church: A Missionary Tool	75
10. The Church and its gifts, First part	77
11. The Church and its gifts, Second part	80
12. The Angels: Ministering spirits	84
13. Service Rewarded	87
Missionary Report from the General Conference	
Good Samaritan Department	91

INTRODUCTION

In one of the books of the New Testament, John, the elder and well beloved apostle wished Gaius: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” 3 John 2. God’s great wish is our well being in all aspects. Not only did He create the wonderful organs to fulfill different functions, but He also gave guidelines about the kind of nutrition and the principles of health to follow. The Spirit of Prophecy repeatedly emphasizes: “Health is a great treasure. It is the richest possession mortals can have. Wealth, honor, or learning is dearly purchased if it be at the loss of the vigor of health. None of these attainments can secure happiness, if health is wanting. It is a terrible sin to abuse the health that God has given us; for every abuse of health enfeebles us for life and makes us losers, even if we gain any amount of education.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 186.

How many people treasure health as they should? Do many think how they can keep healthy? And when their health is weakened, how many are willing to use the best healing methods? How many wonder what the Divine principles to preserve health are? And then, are we willing to follow them?

“Though the facts of physiology are now so generally understood, there is an alarming indifference in regard to the principles of health. Even of those who have a knowledge of these principles, there are few who put them in practice. Inclination or impulse is followed as blindly as if life were controlled by mere chance rather than by definite and unvarying laws.” —*Education*, p. 195.

Health reform is not a minor subject. In general, the way that we eat, work, dress and the way that we live, affects and works for either our own good or disadvantage.

May the Lord help us so that these lessons may create an interest in all of us so that we may apply these health principles, paying more attention to Health Reform so that a wonderful result may be obtained in our character, quality of life, health and holiness.

— *The Brethren of the General Conference*

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

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

1

Sabbath, July 3, 2004

The First Human Beings and their Diet

STRUCTURE

- The human being at creation
- Diet in paradise
- Disobedience and its consequences

THE HUMAN BEING AT CREATION

1. What is one of God's greatest miracles? Psalms 139:14.

“The laws that govern our physical organism, God has written upon every nerve, muscle, and fiber of the body. Every careless or willful violation of these laws is a sin against our Creator.

“How necessary, then, that a thorough knowledge of these laws should be imparted! The principles of hygiene as applied to diet, exercise, the care of children, the treatment of the sick, and many like matters, should be given much more attention than they ordinarily receive.” —*Education*, pp. 196, 197.

2. How was man created? Genesis 1:27, 31.

“Man came from the hand of his Creator perfect in organization and beautiful in form. The fact that he has for six thousand years withstood the ever-increasing weight of disease and crime is conclusive proof of the power of endurance with which he was first endowed.”—*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 117.

DIET IN PARADISE

3. What was the duty of man on earth? Genesis 1:28 What commandment did the Lord give to the first human beings for the maintenance of their bodies? Genesis 1:29.

“In order to know what are the best foods, we must study God’s original plan for man’s diet. He who created man and who understands his needs appointed Adam his food.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 380.

“God gave our first parents the food He designed that the race should eat. It was contrary to His plan to have the life of any creature taken. There was to be no death in Eden. The fruit of the trees in the garden, was the food man’s wants required.”—*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 81.

4. What commandment did the Lord give to man with the purpose of preserving his happy condition? Genesis 2:16-17.

DISOBEDIENCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

5. Were they faithful to the Lord’s command? To what category does the first sin that our first parents committed belong? Genesis 3:1-6; James 1:14-15.

“It seemed a small matter to our first parents to transgress the command of God in that one act,— the eating from a tree that was so beautiful to the sight and so pleasant to the taste,—but it broke their allegiance to

God, and opened the gates to a flood of guilt and woe that has deluged the world.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 149.

“The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained. There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God’s goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil.” —*Education*, p. 24.

- 6. What are we told about the age of people during that time? Genesis 5:5, 25-27.**

- 7. For what reasons did God send the flood? How did food and drink become a curse for humanity? Genesis 6:3; Matthew 24:38-39.**

“The inhabitants of the antediluvian world were intemperate in eating and drinking. They would have flesh meats, although God had at that time given man no permission to eat animal food. They ate and drank till the indulgence of their depraved appetite knew no bounds, and they became so corrupt that God could bear with them no longer. Their cup of iniquity was full, and He cleansed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 147.

FOR REFLECTION

- “For since by man came death...” 1 Corinthians 15:21.
 - “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for they all have sinned.” Romans 5:12.
-

The Bible and Our Health

STRUCTURE

- Protection against disease
- The importance of healing
- Holiness and health
- Temperance as part of the holiness process

PROTECTION AGAINST DISEASE

1. **What promise did the Lord give to His people, from the beginning? Exodus 23:25.**

2. **What are the Lord's conditions for keeping away disease from His children? Exodus 15:26.**

“The Lord gave His word to ancient Israel, that if they would cleave strictly to Him, and do all His requirements, He would keep them from all the diseases such as He had brought upon the Egyptians; but this promise was given on the condition of obedience. Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world's object lesson of health and prosperity... If as a people they had lived according to God's plan, they would have been preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations. Above any other people they would have possessed physical strength and vigor of intellect.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, pp. 26, 27.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALING

3. How did the Lord spend the greater part of His time while He was here on earth? Acts 10: 36; Luke 13:16; Matthew 4:23.

“During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy but to save. His righteousness went before Him, and the glory of the Lord was His reward. Wherever He went, the tidings of His mercy preceded Him. Where He had passed, the objects of His compassion were rejoicing in health, and making trial of their new-found powers. Crowds were collecting around them to hear from their lips the works that the Lord had wrought.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 350.

4. Why does the health of the body have such great importance from the Christian point of view? 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20.

“Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value; yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and it must be kept in the best condition physically and under the most spiritual influences in order that our talents may be put to the highest use. Anything that lessens physical strength enfeebles the mind and makes it less capable of discriminating between right and wrong.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 346.

HOLINESS AND HEALTH

5. Why did the Lord give His people such strict rules about the way to live? Deuteronomy 14:2-3.

“I am to urge upon the attention of our people that the Lord Himself has placed a wall of separation between the world and that which He has established on the earth. God’s people are to serve Him, for Christ has called them out of the world, and sanctified and refined them, that they may do His service. . . . There is no such thing as maintaining con-

cord between the profane and the holy. There can be no concord between Christ and Belial. But 'the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself' (Ps. 4:3). And this consecration to the Lord, this separation from the world, is plainly declared and positively enjoined in both the Old and the New Testaments.' –Letter 329, Dec. 11, 1905, to J. A. Burden, manager of the Loma Linda Sanitarium." –*This Day with God*, p. 354.

TEMPERANCE AS PART OF THE HOLINESS PROCESS

- 6. What did Paul speak about before the governor Felix? Acts 24:25 With what fruit is temperance closely united to? Galatians 5:22.**

- 7. How did the apostle Paul counsel the believers to consecrate their lives to God? Romans 12:1-2 How far does the process of holiness extend? 1 Thessalonians 5:23.**

"The life of Daniel is an inspired illustration of what constitutes a sanctified character. It presents a lesson for all, and especially for the young. A strict compliance with the requirements of God is beneficial to the health of body and mind. In order to reach the highest standard of moral and intellectual attainments, it is necessary to seek wisdom and strength from God, and to observe strict temperance in all the habits of life. In the experience of Daniel and his companions we have an instance of the triumph of principle over temptation to indulge the appetite." –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 80.

FOR REFLECTION

"Transgression of physical law is transgression of the moral law; for God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is the author of the moral law. His law is written with His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty, which has been entrusted to man. And every misuse of any part of our organism is a violation of that law." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 347.

Divine Instruction for Health Maintenance

STRUCTURE

- The plan of God for Israel
- Diet chosen by God
- A lesson for us

PLAN OF GOD FOR ISRAEL

1. **With what purpose did God turn Israel into His people? Leviticus 20:26; Exodus 19:5, 6.**

2. **What instruction did God give Israel regarding health? Exodus 19:10; Leviticus 13:46-52.**

3. **In what manner did the Lord desire to separate certain diseases from His people? Leviticus 15:4-12; 14:45-47.**

“The necessity of personal cleanliness was taught in the most impressive manner. Before gathering at Mount Sinai to listen to the proclamation of the law by the voice of God, the people were required to wash both their persons and their clothing. This direction was enforced on pain of death. No impurity was to be tolerated in the presence of God.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 279.

“During the sojourn in the wilderness the Israelites were almost continually in the open air, where impurities would have a less harmful effect than upon the dwellers in close houses. But the strictest regard to cleanliness was required both within and without their tents. No refuse was allowed to remain within or about the encampment.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 279.

DIET CHOSEN BY GOD

4. What was the natural diet established by God in the beginning? Genesis 1:29.

“The diet appointed man in the beginning did not include animal food. Not till after the flood, when every green thing on the earth had been destroyed, did man receive permission to eat flesh.

“In choosing man’s food in Eden, the Lord showed what was the best diet; in the choice made for Israel, He taught the same lesson. He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and undertook their training, that they might be a people for His own possession. Through them He desired to bless and teach the world. He provided them with the food best adapted for this purpose, not flesh, but manna, “the bread of heaven.” –*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 374.

5. Was Israel satisfied with the way of life chosen by God in the wilderness? Exodus 16:2-3; Numbers 11:4.

“It was only because of their discontent and their murmurings for the fleshpots of Egypt that animal food was granted them, and this only for a short time. Its use brought disease and death to thousands. Yet the restriction to a non-flesh diet was never heartily accepted. It continued to be the cause of discontent and murmuring, open or secret, and it was not made permanent.” –*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 374.

6. How did the Israelites show that they were unsatisfied with the way of life God had chosen for them? Numbers 11:18-20 What consequences did they have to bear? Numbers 11:33-34.

“When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, it was his purpose to establish them in the land of Canaan a pure, happy, healthy people. Let us look at the means by which he would accomplish this. He subjected them to a course of discipline, which, had it been cheerfully followed, would have resulted in good, both to themselves and to their posterity. He removed flesh-food from them in a great measure. He had granted them flesh in answer to their clamors, just before reaching Sinai, but it was furnished for only one day. God might have provided flesh as easily as manna, but a restriction was placed upon the people for their good. It was his purpose to supply them with food better suited to their wants than the feverish diet to which many of them had been accustomed in Egypt. The perverted appetite was to be brought into a more healthy state, that they might enjoy the food originally provided for man, -- the fruits of the earth, which God gave to Adam and Eve in Eden.” —*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 118.

A LESSON FOR US

7. Was Israel able to reach the goal established by God in this manner? 1 Corinthians 10:5-6.

“Had they been willing to deny appetite in obedience to His restrictions, feebleness and disease would have been unknown among them. Their descendants would have possessed physical and mental strength. They would have had clear perceptions of truth and duty, keen discrimination, and sound judgment. But they were unwilling to submit to God’s requirements, and they failed to reach the standard He had set for them, and to receive the blessings that might have been theirs. They murmured at God’s restrictions, and lusted after the fleshpots of Egypt. God let them have flesh, but it proved a curse to them.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 378.

8. For whom is the experience of Israel a warning? 1 Corinthians 10:11-12.

FOR REFLECTION

“The Lord gave His word to ancient Israel, that if they would cleave strictly to Him, and do all His requirements, He would keep them from all the diseases such as He had brought upon the Egyptians; but this promise was given on the condition of obedience. Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world’s object lesson of health and prosperity. The Israelites failed of fulfilling God’s purpose, and thus failed of receiving the blessings that might have been theirs.” –*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 26.

4

Sabbath, July 24, 2004

The Great Physician

STRUCTURE

- Forgiveness and healing
- Biblical healing methods
- Recommended and rejected methods of healing
- Effective counsel for the sick

FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

- 1. What was Jesus’ principal duty while He was here on earth? Isaiah 61: 1-2; Matthew 11:4-5.**
- 2. How did Jesus show the sick the reason for their diseases? John 5:14; Matthew 9:2.**

“When Christ healed disease, He warned many of the afflicted ones, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” John 5:14. Thus He taught that they had brought disease upon themselves by transgressing the laws of God, and that health could be preserved only by obedience.”
—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 113.

BIBLICAL HEALING METHODS

3. What methods did Jesus use when healing the sick? John 9:6-7.

“We have the sanction of the word of God for the use of remedial agencies... On one occasion Christ anointed the eyes of a blind man with clay and bade him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.” John 9:7. The cure could be wrought only by the power of the Great Healer, yet Christ made use of the simple agencies of nature. While He did not give countenance to drug medication, He sanctioned the use of simple and natural remedies.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 233.

4. What other case is also known to us? 2 Kings 20:7.

“Hezekiah, king of Israel, was sick, and a prophet of God brought him the message that he should die. He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard His servant, and sent him a message that fifteen years should be added to his life. Now one word from God would have healed Hezekiah instantly; but special directions were given, ‘Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.’ Is. 38:21.”
—*Gospel Workers*, p. 220.

RECOMMENDED AND REJECTED METHODS OF HEALING

5. What methods of healing are recommended to us and which are to be rejected?

The natural methods are: Temperance in eating and drinking, air, light, earth, rest and movement.

"It is not safe to trust to physicians who have not the fear of God before them. Without the influence of divine grace, the hearts of men are 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' [Jer. 17:9.] Self-aggrandizement is their aim. Under cover of the medical profession, what iniquities have been practiced, what delusions supported! The physician may claim to possess great wisdom and marvellous skill, while at the same time his character is abandoned, and his practice contrary to the laws of health. The Lord our God assures us that he is waiting to be gracious; he invites us to call upon him in the day of trouble. How can we turn from Him to trust in an arm of flesh?" – *Testimonies*, vol 5, p. 194.

"The prince of darkness has but appeared under a new guise. The heathen oracles of ages long past have their counterpart in the spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants and fortune tellers of today. The mysteries of heathen worship are replaced by the secret associations and seances, the obscurities and wonders, of the sorcerers of our time. And their disclosures are eagerly received by thousands who refuse to accept light from the Word or the Spirit of God. They speak with scorn of the magicians of old, while the great deceiver laughs in triumph as they yield to his arts under a different form...

"These Satanic agents claim to cure disease. They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, or the so-called 'sympathetic remedies,' while in truth they are but channels for Satan's electric currents. By this means he casts his spell over the bodies and souls of men. –Signs of the Times, March 24, 1887." –*Evangelism*, pp. 608, 609.

EFFECTIVE COUNSEL FOR THE SICK

6. What counsel does the apostle James give to the sick? James 5:14-15 What should be united to this action? James 5:16.

"Those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. It is no denial of faith to co-operate with God, and to place themselves in the condition most favorable to recovery. God has put it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life. This knowledge has been placed within our reach for use. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with natural laws. When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, we can work with all the more energy, thanking God that we have the privilege of co-operating with Him, and asking His blessing on the means which He Himself has provided." –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 231.

7. Who is the source of all healing? Psalms 103:2-4.

FOR REFLECTION

“In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in their hearts and in their homes. The Lord has given me light that when the Israel of today humble themselves before Him, and cleanse the soul temple from all defilement, He will hear their prayers in behalf of the sick and will bless in the use of His remedies for disease. When in faith the human agent does all he can to combat disease, using the simple methods of treatment that God has provided, his efforts will be blessed of God.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 138.

5

Sabbath, July 31, 2004

General Health Laws

STRUCTURE

- Special direction
- Correct breathing
- The best diet
- The necessity of exercise

SPECIAL DIRECTION

- 1. What must a Christian always keep in mind in his daily life? 1 Corinthians 6:19.**

2. What direction should be given to our members so that they may have a life full of hope and success? Romans 8: 13-14.

“Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

3. What should be a firm goal in our daily living? 1 Corinthians 10:31.

CORRECT BREATHING

4. What does man need in order to live?

“In order to have good blood, we must breathe well. Full, deep inspirations of pure air which fill the lungs with oxygen, purify the blood. They impart to it a bright color, and send it, a life-giving current, to every part of the body. A good respiration soothes the nerves; it stimulates the appetite and renders digestion more perfect; and it induces sound, refreshing sleep.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 272.

THE BEST DIET

5. According to the original plan of God, what should our diet consist of? Genesis 1:29; 3:18 What foods are not recommended to us because they are unhealthy?

“Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 380.

“Flesh meats, butter, cheese, rich pastry, spiced foods, and condiments are freely partaken of by both old and young. These things do their work in deranging the stomach, exciting the nerves, and enfeebling the intellect. The blood-making organs cannot convert such things into good blood. The grease cooked in the food renders it difficult of digestion. The effect of cheese is deleterious.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 368.

“For use in bread making, the superfine white flour is not the best. Its use is neither healthful nor economical. Fine-flour bread is lacking in nutritive elements to be found in bread made from the whole wheat. It is a frequent cause of constipation and other unhealthful conditions.

“Regularity in eating is very important for health of body and serenity of mind. Never should a morsel of food pass the lips between meals.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, pp. 320, 180.

THE NEED FOR EXERCISE

6. What is necessary for us to do in order to have health? Exodus 20:9.

“If the happiness of man consisted in doing nothing, the Creator would not have given Adam his appointed work. Man was to find happiness in labor, as well as in meditation.” —*Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1082.

7. What should we not be, with respect to our dietary duties? Romans 12:11; Proverbs 10:4.

FOR REFLECTION

“Knowledge must be gained in regard to how to eat, and drink, and dress so as to preserve health. Sickness is caused by violating the laws of health; it is the result of violating nature’s law. Our first duty, one which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men, is to obey the laws of God, which include the laws of health.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 22.

Faithful Health Reformers

STRUCTURE

- Exemplary youth in the Babylonian Court
- Forerunner for Jesus in prophecy
- John the Baptist and his way of living
- An example to imitate

EXEMPLARY YOUTH IN THE BABYLONIAN COURT

1. **Who in the Old Testament was a wonderful example in his way of life? Daniel 1:8.**

“The life of Daniel is an inspired illustration of what constitutes a sanctified character. It presents a lesson for all, and especially for the young. A strict compliance with the requirements of God is beneficial to the health of body and mind.

“In order to reach the highest standard of moral and intellectual attainments, it is necessary to seek wisdom and strength from God and to observe strict temperance in all the habits of life. In the experience of Daniel and his companions we have an instance of the triumph of principle over temptation to indulge the appetite. It shows us that through religious principle young men may triumph over the lusts of the flesh and remain true to God’s requirements, even though it cost them a great sacrifice. --RH, Jan 25, 1881.” –*Mind, Character and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 377.

2. **What position did the four youth take in the Babylonian court? Daniel 1:3-4; 2:49 How did God bless the faithfulness of His children? Daniel 1:15-17.**

“The most promising youth from all the lands subdued by the great conqueror had been gathered at Babylon, yet amid them all, the Hebrew captives were without a rival. The erect form, the firm, elastic step, the fair countenance, the undimmed senses, the untainted breath, –all were so many certificates of good habits– insignia of the nobility with which nature honors those who are obedient to her laws.” –*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 27.

FORERUNNER OF JESUS IN PROPHECY

3. According to prophecy, what important duty did John have to fulfill? Malachi 3:23 (4:5-6); Luke 1:16-17.

“Here the prophet describes the character of the work. Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ, are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ’s first advent.” –*Counsels on Health*, p. 72.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND HIS WAY OF LIVING

4. What are we told about his special way of living? Luke 1: 13-15, 80.

“For years the Lord has been calling the attention of His people to health reform. This is one of the great branches of the work of preparation for the coming of the Son of man. John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord, and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just. He was a representative of those living in these last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. John was a reformer. The angel Gabriel, direct from heaven, gave a discourse upon health reform to the father and mother of John. He said that he should not drink wine or strong drink, and that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 70, 71.

5. What significant testimony did the Saviour give about the life and mission of John? Matthew 3:3-4; 18:7-12.

“John separated himself from friends and from the luxuries of life. The simplicity of his dress, a garment woven of camel’s hair, was a standing rebuke to the extravagance and display of the Jewish priests, and of the people generally. His diet, purely vegetable, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed. . . .” –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 273.

AN EXAMPLE TO IMITATE

6. For whom is John the Baptist a special example?

“He was a representative of those living in the last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. And the same principles of temperance which John practiced should be observed by those who in our day are to warn the world of the coming of the Son of man.” –*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 39.

7. What has the Lord promised to all those who are faithful? Matthew 25:21 On what does He require our faithfulness? Luke 16:10.

FOR REFLECTION

“Our bodies are not our own. God has claims upon us to take care of the habitation He has given us, that we may present our bodies to Him a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. Our bodies belong to Him who made them, and we are in duty bound to become intelligent in regard to the best means of preserving them from decay. If we enfeeble the body by self-gratification, by indulging the appetite, and by dressing in accordance with health-destroying fashions, in order to be in harmony with the world, we become enemies of God. . . .” –*Counsels on Health*, p. 73.

Sabbath, August 14, 2004

Jesus and the Laws of Health

STRUCTURE

- Jesus began his mission with fasting
- Transformation is possible
- Another miracle in time of need
- Lessons about eating and drinking

JESUS BEGAN *HIS* MISSION BY FASTING

1. **What was the duty of Jesus on this earth? Matthew 1:21.**

2. **Through what was sin introduced into this world? Genesis 3:6, 23, 24.**

“With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 185.

3. **Where did Jesus begin His work of redemption? Matthew 4:1-4 What was His way of life?**

“Christ began the work of redemption just where the ruin began. His first test was on the same point where Adam failed. It was through temptations addressed to the appetite that Satan had overcome a large

proportion of the human race, and his success had made him feel that the control of this fallen planet was in his hands. But in Christ he found one who was able to resist him, and he left the field of battle a conquered foe..."—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 16.

"Few luxuries were seen on the table of Joseph and Mary, for they were among the poor and lowly."—*Christian Education*, p. 164.

CHANGE IS ALSO POSSIBLE

4. What was Jesus' attitude towards alcoholic beverages? What did He do in the wedding at Cana? John 2:1-10.

"The unfermented wine that He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. This is the wine that was used by our Saviour and His disciples in the first Communion."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 333.

ANOTHER MIRACLE IN TIME OF NEED

5. What lesson did the Saviour give to his disciples through the means of another miracle? Matthew 14:15-21.

"It was by a miracle of divine power that Christ fed the multitude; yet how humble was the fare provided,—only the fishes and barley loaves that were the daily fare of the fisher folk of Galilee.

"Christ could have spread for the people a rich repast, but food prepared merely for the gratification of appetite would have conveyed no lesson for their good. Through this miracle Christ desired to teach a lesson of simplicity."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 90.

LESSONS ABOUT EATING AND DRINKING

6. What opinion did Jesus express about eating and drinking? Matthew 6:31.

“Jesus, the precious Saviour, talked to His hearers in regard to their common duties of life, their care for dress, and their eating and drinking. He taught them that these things should not become a matter of absorbing interest, as though they must continually carry this burden. He pointed them to the birds and told them that their heavenly Father cares for even the little sparrow. He sustains the worlds, yet cares for the little birds, and how much more will He care for those who are formed in His image. He pointed to the flowers of glowing beauty, invited them to consider these, and declared that in their naked simplicity they outvie the glory of Solomon; and yet they are cut down in a day. Are ye not much better than they? –Manuscript 21, Sept. 27, 1889, diary.” –*This Day with God*, p. 279.

7. What question did Jesus ask His disciples one day? Luke 22:35 What should be our greatest worry? Matthew 6:33.

FOR REFLECTION

“Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord’s first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 122.

The Three Angels' Messages and the Health Reform

STRUCTURE

- To glorify God through our diet
- The third angel's message and holiness
- Overcoming erroneous habits
- Good help for holiness

TO GLORIFY GOD THROUGH OUR DIET

1. **What call does the first angel's message make to humanity? What should be offered to the Creator? Revelation 14:6, 7.**

"To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God (MS 16, 1890)." —*Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 979.

2. **In what way can we honour and praise God? 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; Romans 12:1.**

"In that ancient ritual which was the gospel in symbol, no blemished offering could be brought to God's altar. The sacrifice that was to represent Christ must be spotless. The word of God points to this as an illustration of what His children are to be—'a living sacrifice,' 'holy and without blemish,' 'well-pleasing to God.' Romans 12:1, R.V., margin; Ephesians 5: 27." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 130.

3. What is the purpose of the three angels' messages? Revelation 14:12; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

"The Lord has been calling the attention of His people to health reform. This is one of the great branches of the work of preparation for the coming of the Son of man. John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord. . . . " *—Conflict and Courage*, p. 273.

4. Can the health reform be found amongst the virtues that help us to reach this goal? 2 Peter 1:5-8.

"Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things." *—Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 71.

"Brethren and sisters, we want you to see the importance of this temperance question, and we want our workers to interest themselves in it, and to know that it is just as much connected with the Third angel's message as the right arm is with the body. We ought to make advancement in this work.—Review and Herald, Feb. 14, 1888." *—Temperance*, p. 238.

5. What are the consequences when we transgress the natural laws of our health?

"Men and women cannot violate natural law by indulging depraved appetite and lustful passions, without violating the law of God. Therefore he has permitted the light of health reform to shine upon us, that we may realize the sinfulness of breaking the laws which he has established in our very being. All our enjoyment or suffering may be traced to obedience or transgression of natural law...

"It is as truly a sin to violate the laws of our being as it is to break the Ten commandments. To do either is to break God's laws. Those who transgress the law of God in their physical organism, will be inclined to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai." *—Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp 69, 17.

6. In what manner does the Lord point out that the end of time is upon us? 1 Corinthians 10:6 What goal should all who want to be with Jesus seek?

“Is it not time that all should aim to dispense with flesh foods? How can those who are seeking to become pure, refined, and holy, that they may have the companionship of heavenly angels, continue to use as food anything that has so harmful an effect on soul and body? How can they take the life of God’s creatures that they may consume the flesh as a luxury?” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 380.

7. Through whom can we overcome? Philippians 2:13; 4:13.

FOR REFLECTION

“Ignorance is no excuse now for the transgression of law. The light shines clearly, and none need be ignorant, for the great God Himself is man’s instructor. All are bound by the most sacred obligations to God to heed the sound philosophy and genuine experience which He is now giving them in reference to health reform. He designs that the great subject of health reform shall be agitated, and the public mind deeply stirred to investigate; for it is impossible for men and women, with all their sinful, health-destroying, brain-enervating habits, to discern sacred truth, through which they are to be sanctified, refined, elevated, and made fit for the society of heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 70.

Sabbath, August 28, 2004

Living the Health Reform

STRUCTURE

- Diversity in the church
- Light and our responsibility
- When we do not live according to the light
- Past experiences and present circumstances

DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

1. **How many kinds of people have always been found in church? Matthew 25:1, 2; 24:45-50; Revelation 16:15.**

“There have ever been two classes among those who profess to be followers of Christ. While one class study the Saviour’s life, and earnestly seek to correct their defects and to conform to the Pattern, the other class shun the plain, practical truths which expose their errors. Even in her best estate, and church was not composed wholly of the true, pure, and sincere.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 88, 43.

LIGHT AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY

2. **What is the commission that has been given to the church of Laodicea? Isaiah 60:1,2; 52:7 What special light to the world should the last church here on earth give?**

“I have been shown that the principles that were given us in the early days of the message are as important and should be regarded just as conscientiously today as they were then. There are some who have never followed the light given on the question of diet. It is now time to take the light from under the bushel, and let it shine forth in clear, bright rays.

“The principles of healthful living mean a great deal to us individually and as a people. . . .” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 23.

3. What is the duty of those who impart the last message of grace? 1 Corinthians 9:27.

“As we near the close of time, we must rise higher and still higher upon the question of health reform and Christian temperance, presenting it in a more positive and decided manner. We must strive continually to educate the people, not only by our words, but by our practice. Precept and practice combined have a telling influence.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 443.

WHEN WE DO NOT LIVE ACCORDING TO THE LIGHT

4. How does the Lord express Himself about those who show more interest in satisfying their appetite instead of keeping the health reform? Isaiah 22:13-14.

“Send out into the churches workers who will live the principles of health reform. Let those be sent who can see the necessity of self-denial in appetite, or they will be a snare to the church.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 267.

5. What are the consequences if the light we have received is not valued nor practiced? Revelation 3:14-16.

“I have known something of the benefits to be received by living up to the principles of health reform. I consider it a privilege as well as a duty to be a health reformer.

“Yet I am sorry that there are many of our people who do not strictly follow the light on health reform. Those who in their habit transgress the principles of health, and do not heed the light that the Lord has given them, will surely suffer the consequences.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 493.

“I have felt urged by the Spirit of God to set before several the fact that their suffering and ill health was caused by a disregard of the light given them upon health reform.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 387.

6. Why are the past experiences of the people of Israel written in the Bible? Exodus 16:1-3; I Corinthians 10:6 What warning does the Spirit of Prophecy give us?

“Shall we not bear a decided testimony against the indulgence of perverted appetite? Will any who are ministers of the gospel, proclaiming the most solemn truth ever given to mortals, set an example in returning to the flesh-pots of Egypt? Will those who are supported by the tithe from God’s storehouse permit themselves by self-indulgence to poison the life-giving current flowing through their veins? Will they disregard the light and warnings that God has given them?” —*Testimony Studies on Diet and Foods*, p. 80.

FOR REFLECTION

“We are in a world that is opposed to righteousness, or purity of character, and especially to growth in grace. Wherever we look, we see defilement and corruption, deformity and sin. How opposed is all this to the work that must be accomplished in us just previous to receiving the gift of immortality! God’s elect must stand untainted amid the corruptions teeming around them in these last days. Their bodies must be made holy, their spirits pure. If this work is to be accomplished, it must be undertaken at once, earnestly and understandingly.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 118.

The Importance of Health Reform

STRUCTURE

- Purification and the Three Angels' Messages
- Belonging to the fruits of the Spirit
- Unique Divinity
- The best and the most pure

PURIFICATION AND THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

1. **In what sense do the three angels' messages perform a divine work in us? 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.**

“The health reform, I was shown, is a part of the third angel’s message, and is just as closely connected with it as are the arm and hand with the human body. I saw that we as a people must make an advance move in this great work. Ministers and people must act in concert. God’s people are not prepared for the Loud Cry of the Third angel. They have a work to do for themselves which they should not leave for God to do for them. He has left this work for them to do. It is an individual work; one cannot do it for another.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 32.

2. **What call is directed to us with regard to the soon coming of Jesus? Hebrews 12:14.**

BELONGING TO THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

3. **When will it be possible to reach a holy state? 1 John 3:3.**

“Every true Christian will have control of his appetites and passions. Unless he is free from the bondage of appetite, he cannot be a true, obedient servant of Christ. The indulgence of appetite and passion blunts the effect of truth upon the heart. It is impossible for the spirit and power of the truth to sanctify a man, soul, body, and spirit, when he is controlled by sensual desires...” –*Christian Education*, p. 181.

4. Why are temperance and self-control so important for the Christian? Galatians 5:22.

“Eating, drinking, and dressing all have a direct bearing upon our spiritual advancement.

“The Spirit of God cannot come to our help, and assist us in perfecting Christian characters, while we are indulging our appetites to the injury of health, and while the pride of life controls.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 57.

UNIQUE DIVINITY

5. What kind of people was the apostle Paul warning against? Romans 16:17-18 How did he warn the people of God, in his time? Philippians 3:19.

“Those who transgress the laws of God in their physical organism will not be less slow to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai. Those who will not, after the light has come to them, eat and drink from principle instead of being controlled by appetite, will not be tenacious in regard to being governed by principle in other things. The agitation of the subject of reform in eating and drinking will develop character and will unerringly bring to light those who make a ‘god of their bellies.’” –*Counsels on Health*, p. 39.

THE BEST AND THE MOST PURE

6. What is recommended to us both spiritually and physically as a diet? Philippians 4:8 What are we warned about?

“Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet. They impart nourishment to the body, and give a power of endurance and a vigor of intellect that are not produced by a stimulating diet...

“Bread which is two or three days old is more healthful than new bread. Bread dried in the oven is one of the most wholesome articles of diet.

“Far too much sugar is ordinarily used in food. Cakes, sweet puddings, pastries, jellies, jams, are active causes of indigestion. Especially harmful are the custards and puddings in which milk, eggs, and sugar are the chief ingredients. The free use of milk and sugar taken together should be avoided.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 92, 317, 113.

“If milk is used, it should be thoroughly sterilized; with this precaution, there is less danger of contracting disease from its use. Butter is less harmful when eaten on cold bread than when used in cooking; but, as a rule, it is better to dispense with it altogether. Cheese is still more objectionable; it is wholly unfit for food.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 302.

7. What should always be a firm principle for all believers? 1 Corinthians 10:31.

“We do not mark out any precise line to be followed in diet; but we do say that in countries where there are fruits, grains, and nuts in abundance, flesh food is not the right food for God’s people. I have been instructed that flesh food has a tendency to animalize the nature, to rob men and women of that love and sympathy which they should feel for every one, and to give the lower passions control over the higher powers of the being. If meat eating were ever healthful, it is not safe now. Cancers, tumors, and pulmonary diseases are largely caused by meat eating.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 404.

FOR REFLECTION

“When properly conducted, the health work is an entering wedge, making a way for other truths to reach the heart. When the Third angel’s message is received in its fullness, health reform will be given its place in the councils of the conference, in the work of the church, in the home, at the table, and in all the household arrangements. Then the right arm will serve and protect the body.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 327.

Stimulants and Sedatives

STRUCTURE

- Pure and holy like the temple of God
- The consequence of drinking alcoholic beverages
- A serious lesson
- Royal priesthood

PURE AND HOLY LIKE THE TEMPLE OF GOD

1. **What should every child of God always keep in mind? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.**

“God has bought us, and He claims a throne in each heart. Our minds and bodies must be subordinated to Him, and the natural habits and appetites must be made subservient to the higher wants of the soul. But we can place no dependence upon ourselves in this work. We cannot with safety follow our own guidance. The Holy Spirit must renew and sanctify us. In God’s service there must be no halfway work. (SpT, Series A, No. 7, p. 39).”
—Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1088.

2. **Who desires to dwell in this temple and what are the requirements? John 14:23; Revelation 3:20.**

THE CONSEQUENCE OF DRINKING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

3. **What does the word of God say about wine and alcoholic beverages? Proverbs 23:31, 32.**

“The use of spirituous liquors has the effect to weaken the body, confuse the mind, and debase the morals. It prevents men from realizing the sacredness of holy things or the binding force of God’s requirements.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 361.

4. What consequences are brought about upon the use of forbidden beverages? Proverbs 23:29-30, 33-35 What do we understand by stimulants and sedatives and what attitude must we have towards them?

“Under the head of stimulants and narcotics is classed a great variety of articles that, altogether, used as food or drink irritate the stomach, poison the blood, and excite the nerves. Their use is a positive evil. Men seek the excitement of stimulants, because, for the time, the results are agreeable. But there is always a reaction. The use of unnatural stimulants always tends to excess, and it is an active agent in promoting physical degeneration and decay.

“In this fast age, the less exciting the food, the better. Condiments are injurious in their nature. Mustard, pepper, spices, pickles, and other things of a like character, irritate the stomach and make the blood feverish and impure.

“Food should be prepared in as simple a manner as possible, free from condiments and spices, and even from an undue amount of salt.” –*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 339.

A SERIOUS LESSON

5. What sad example do the scriptures show us about this subject? What did God say to Aaron? Leviticus 10:8-11.

“The fate of the sons of Aaron had been presented before them, and they knew that the use of wine would confuse their senses, that the indulgence of appetite would be cloud their powers of discernment. These particulars were placed on record in the history of the children of Israel as a warning to every youth to avoid all customs and practices and indulgences that would in any way dishonor God.” –*Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1166.

6. What should the church of Christ be in this world? 1 Peter 2:9.

“The same obligation rests upon every follower of Christ. The apostle Peter declares, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” 1 Peter 2:9. We are required by God to preserve every power in the best possible condition, that we may render acceptable service to our Creator. When intoxicants are used, the same effects will follow as in the case of those priests of Israel. The conscience will lose its sensibility to sin, and a process of hardening to iniquity will most certainly take place, till the common and the sacred will lose all difference of significance.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 362.

7. What should everyone who wants to follow Christ do? 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

“The cause of reform calls for men and women whose life practice is an illustration of self-control. It is our practice of the principles we inculcate that gives them weight. The world needs a practical demonstration of what the grace of God can do in restoring to human beings their lost kingship, giving them mastery of themselves. There is nothing that the world needs so much as a knowledge of the gospel’s saving power revealed in Christ-like lives.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 132.

FOR REFLECTION

“I saw that our heavenly Father has bestowed upon us the great blessing of light upon the health reform, that we may obey the claims which He has upon us, and glorify Him in our bodies and spirits, which are His, and finally stand without fault before the throne of God. Our faith requires us to elevate the standard, and take advance steps.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 51.

Moral Purity

STRUCTURE

- Flee passions!
- Victims of temptation
- Tried and found faithful
- The desire of the Lord

FLEE PASSIONS!

1. What warning does the wise Solomon give us? Proverbs 4:23.

“One cherished sin will, little by little, debase the character, bringing all its nobler powers into subjection to the evil desire. The removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the indulgence of one evil habit, one neglect of the high claims of duty, breaks down the defences of the soul and opens the way for Satan to come in and lead us astray. The only safe course is to let our prayers go forth daily from a sincere heart, as did David, ‘Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.’ Psalm 17:5.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 452.

2. What should our attitude towards certain sins be? 2 Peter 1:4, last part.

“Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 519.

3. Has Satan often overcome humans through moral passions? Proverbs 7:26; Numbers 25:1-3 What is the most successful weapon Satan uses?

“The Israelites, who could not be overcome by the arms or by the enchantments of Midian, fell a prey to her harlots. Such is the power that woman, enlisted in the service of Satan, has exerted to entrap and destroy souls. ‘She hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.’ Proverbs 7:26. It was thus that the children of Seth were seduced from their integrity, and the holy seed became corrupt. It was thus that Joseph was tempted. Thus Samson betrayed his strength, the defense of Israel, into the hands of the Philistines. Here David stumbled. And Solomon, the wisest of kings, who had thrice been called the beloved of his God, became a slave of passion, and sacrificed his integrity to the same bewitching power.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 457.

TRIED AND FOUND FAITHFUL

4. With what words does the apostle John admonish us? 1 John 2:12-16.

5. What beautiful example of moral purity is presented to us in the Old Testament? Genesis 39:7-9.

“But Joseph’s faith and integrity were to be tested by fiery trials. His master’s wife endeavored to entice the young man to transgress the law of God. Heretofore he had remained untainted by the corruption teeming in that heathen land; but this temptation, so sudden, so strong, so seductive—how should it be met? Joseph knew well what would be the consequence of resistance. On the one hand were concealment, favor, and rewards; on the other, disgrace, imprisonment, perhaps death. His whole future life depended upon the decision of the moment. Would principle triumph? Would Joseph still be true to God? With inexpressible anxiety, angels looked upon the scene.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217.

- 6. What question should every child of God ask? What is the answer of the Lord? Psalms 24:3-4; Matthew 5:8.**
- 7. What is the duty of all who belong to Jesus Christ? 2 Timothy 2:19; Galatians 5:24.**

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words “flesh” or “fleshly” or “carnal lusts” embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 127.

“Jesus will be the helper of all who put their trust in Him. Those who are connected with Christ have happiness at their command. They follow the path where their Saviour leads, for His sake crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts. They have built their hopes on Christ, and the storms of earth are powerless to sweep them from the sure foundation.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 225.

FOR REFLECTION

“Ample provisions have been made for all who sincerely, earnestly, and thoughtfully set about the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Strength, grace, and glory have been provided through Christ, to be brought by ministering angels to the heirs of salvation. None are so low, so corrupt and vile, that they cannot find in Jesus, who died for them, strength, purity, and righteousness, if they will put away their sins, cease their course of iniquity, and turn with full purpose of heart to the living God. He is waiting to strip them of their garments, stained and polluted by sin, and to put upon them the white, bright robes of righteousness; and He bids them live and not die. In Him they may flourish. Their branches will not wither nor be fruitless. If they abide in Him, they can draw sap and nourishment from Him, be imbued with His Spirit, walk even as He walked, overcome as He overcame, and be exalted to His own right hand.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 453.

*Please,
read the Report from Madagascar on page 45.*

13

Sabbath, September 25, 2004

Eternal Loss or Gain

STRUCTURE

- Each person should fight his own battle
- Passions and Christian life
- False appraisal and defeats
- Reaching the goal

EACH PERSON SHOULD FIGHT HIS OWN BATTLE

1. **Against whom should the children of God fight? Ephesians 6:12.**

“In the Word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being. Those who are under God’s control and who are influenced by the heavenly angels, will be able to discern the crafty workings of the unseen powers of darkness. Those who desire to be in harmony with the heavenly agencies should be intensely in earnest to do God’s will. They must give no place whatever to Satan and his angels.”
—*Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1118.

2. What is the greatest conflict that must be encountered? Hebrews 12:4; James 4:1.

“The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God’s power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset. The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in [the] human nature which we now have.” –*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 140.

PASSIONS AND CHRISTIAN LIFE

3. How did the apostle Paul show the relationship between the body and behaviour? 1 Peter 2:11.

“Many regard this text as a warning against licentiousness only; but it has a broader meaning. It forbids every injurious gratification of appetite or passion. Every perverted appetite becomes a warring lust. Appetite was given us for a good purpose, not to become the minister of death by being perverted, and thus degenerating into ‘lusts which war against the soul.’ “ –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 166.

4. Can those who are not faithful in temperance obtain victory over sin? Philippians 3:18-19.

FALSE APPRAISALS AND DEFEATS

5. What example is given to us about the satisfaction of selfish pleasures? Hebrews 12, 16, 17 Why do so many people renounce the kingdom of God? Genesis 25:33-34.

“Multitudes are selling their birthright for sensual indulgence. Health is sacrificed, the mental faculties are enfeebled, and heaven is forfeited; and all for a mere temporary pleasure--an indulgence at once both weakening and debasing in its character. As Esau awoke to see the folly of his rash exchange when it was too late to recover his loss, so it will be in the day of God with those who have bartered their heir-ship to heaven for selfish gratifications.”
–*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 182.

REACHING THE GOAL

6. What should the objective of every believer be? Matthew 5:48; Leviticus 19:2.

“God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to cooperate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 16.

7. How can we obtain a full victory? Philippians 2:5; Matthew 4:1-4 What is necessary for those who want to be in the new earth? 2 Timothy 2:5; Daniel 7:18.

FOR REFLECTION

“We must strive lawfully, if we would win the boon of eternal life. The path is wide enough, and all who run the race may win the prize. If we create unnatural appetites, and indulge them in any degree, we violate nature’s laws, and enfeebled physical, mental, and moral conditions will result. We are hence unfitted for that persevering, energetic, and hopeful effort which we might have made had we been true to nature’s laws. If we injure a single organ of the body, we rob God of the service we might render to Him. ‘Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ –Review and Herald, Oct. 18, 1881.” –*Temperance*, p. 214.

MISSIONARY REPORT FROM MADAGASCAR

To be read on Sabbath, September 25, 2004

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered Sabbath, October 2, 2004

“For so hath the Lord commanded us, [saying], I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” Acts 13:47.

To our beloved family in the world:

Madagascar is a big island and its total surface area is 587 000 km². It is situated near the southeastern coast of Africa, across from Mozambique, in the Indian Ocean.

Its population of about 15.000.000 inhabitants is made up of a great variety of ethnic groups. There are 18 important groups of generally mixed background, in particular Africans, Arabs and Indonesians. The official languages are Malgache and French; but practically only 20 to 30% of the urban population speaks French. In rural areas only Malgache is spoken.

Concerning religion, a 44% of the people are animists, (specially in the rural areas). The various forms of rites and ceremonies of this ancestral religion are part of the habits of their social life which are also closely related to ritual festivities dedicated to the dead, to the spirits of big personalities of the past and to those of royal background. In some areas, at certain dates, these ceremonies are complemented with the exhumation of a corpse. About 53% of the population is formed by Christians and the predominant ones are protestants (Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Pentecostals, etc) There are not many Catholics. There is a considerable number of Adventists.

The Lord, through His Holy Spirit, put in the heart of our brother F. S. K. Mwakhawawa, from Tanzania, the fervent desire to spread the message of the Reform Movement also in this island. In April 2001, he arrived in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, days after having reached the coast of the island by boat. Divine Providence led our self-sacrificing missionary to contact those people who are now our brothers and sisters.

Pastor Mwakhawawa stayed there for about two months giving conferences and Bible studies about our history and doctrine, and the result was that pastor Desiré Ramavozatovo and the members of the church accepted the true doctrine and decided to join our church. Later on, with the purpose of establishing the work, the Foreign Mission Program of the General Conference made arrangements for brother Daniel Valverde and Ruth Torres to come as missionaries to this country and they arrived in Antananarivo in March 2002. Since then they have been working full time giving seminars, and instructing the members, leaders and workers. They also give Bible courses to those who are interested in the message in order to prepare them for baptism. Besides, they hold conferences and give Bible studies to Adventist brothers, leaders and pastors from different denominations keep the Sabbath in order to present to them the present truth and attract them to who the people of God.

We also have two sisters who are teachers and who accepted the Reform Movement. They have the fervent desire to found church schools to support the work and plans and efforts are being made on this regard .

All our brethren are poor, most of them do not have a steady job, their income is very meagre, and not enough for their basic needs. But, for the sake of God and His work, we make efforts in faith to develop different activities in order to gather funds to buy a plot to build a temple and a headquarter for the mission. It will be impossible for us alone to gather 10.000 dollars (the minimum price for a convenient plot of land).

We do not have means, therefore, we trust in the grace and wonderful promises of the Lord and also in the faith and good will of our generous spiritual family in the whole world. We trust that our brothers and sisters will willingly give us their financial and spiritual support and answer thus our call, just like the apostle Paul did when he was called from Macedonia “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” Acts 16:9) We kindly ask you, in the name of our Saviour Jesus, to make of your offering a sacrifice of love for God’s work in this country. Our Lord will pour His rich blessings upon you, according to His promise, because he who sows generously will reap abundant blessings (2 Corinthians 9:6) May God richly bless your generosity, and may His grace be always our support and guidance. Amen.

On behalf of the brethren and sisters in Madagascar.

—Daniel Valverde C

Regional Representative

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the Fourth Quarter 2004

Christian Service

INTRODUCTION

Have you already asked yourself what your place in God's plan is? Each one of us has a mission, beginning from the simple member of the church the officers, the canvassers, the Bible workers and ministers, the officers of the fields as well as those of the unions and the General Conference. All these institutions exist for a certain specific purpose, to serve. To be constantly active preaching the gospel to the world until the light shines in the different countries and places of the earth, to serve in the church giving the spiritual food necessary for the people to grow, to remember the sick, the orphans, the poor, etc. are all sacred missions to which all of us have been called.

Are we aware of it? How have we fulfilled these duties up until now? Can we say that our life has given fruit at the right time in a satisfactory way? Have the talents we have received multiplied in our hands? Can we give the Lord double from what He has given us or will He one day remove from us what belongs to Him? If so, we cannot say that we were active and faithful servants. It is very important, during this quarter, to examine our Christian service with prayer so as to apply it to all levels for the honour and glory of God and the progress of His holy cause on earth.

To remind us of the privilege each one of us has to cooperate in the wonderful work of God, the inspired writings say:

"There is something for every one to do. Every soul that believes the truth is to stand in his lot and place, saying, 'Here am I; send me.' Isa 6:8.--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 49."—*Christian Service*, p. 10.

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

Every end of a quarter we finish with the study of a series of lessons that bring the world and us closer to the end of all things. May heaven help us to make use of the opportunities we still have. Let us remember brethren that the work will come to its glorious phase when the fully awakened and consecrated church accomplishes an effective and complete service before the Lord. May His Spirit help us so that this may soon be fulfilled.

— *The Brothers of the General Conference*

Sabbath, October 2, 2004

God: The Infinite Source of Love

OBJECTIVES

- To discover and prove that God is the giver of everything that is good and that He serves the entire universe from His exalted position.
- To help apply to our life of faith the lessons learnt as a result of studying this lesson.

GOD: THE UNIVERSAL GIVER

1. Why should we praise God? Psalms 148.

“God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering to others. ‘He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ Matthew 5:45.” *—The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 359.

2. What motivated God to create us? Isaiah 45:18; Genesis 1: 26, 28; 2:15.

“It was the design of God that man should find happiness in the employment of tending the things He had created, and that his wants should be met with the fruits of the garden.” *—The Adventist Home*, p. 27.

3. In what sense is the work of creation a work of love? Give a couple of examples as evidence. For instance:

- God gave man life. Genesis 2:7.
- God gave man the Sabbath so that he could refresh himself by resting and contemplating the work of creation. Genesis 2:1-3; 1:29; 2:21-22; Psalms 19:1-4.

“The beauty that clothes the earth is token of God’s love. We may behold it in the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in the opening buds and the delicate flowers. All speak to us of God...”

“God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance...”

“In mental and physical activity Adam found one of the highest pleasures of his holy existence.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 48-50.

AN UNSELFISH SERVICE

- 4. Did God stop helping man and woman even after they had disobeyed Him? What did He do to show His selfless love to our first parents? Genesis 3:8-9; 3:21.**

- 5. What was the greatest evidence of God’s love towards fallen humanity? Genesis 3:15; John 3:16.**

“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.

A COMPLETE SURRENDER

- 6. What is one of the most important characteristics of God’s devotion and complete service towards all of his children? Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 49:15.**

“With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you give place to doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our heavenly Father. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner, and He gave Himself in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. What stronger or more tender language could have been employed than He has chosen in which to express His love toward us? He declares, ‘Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.’ Isaiah 49:15.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 54.

REFLECTION

7. What kind of surrender or service to God do we give? How should it be? 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:11.

SUMMARY

- God is the Creator of the universe and of everything we see. He has also created us and keeps everything running with His power.
 - God is the infinite source of giving.
 - God created us because He wants to share with us all that is His, and He wants us to be happy, because He loves us. The example of the couple that decided to have a child as a fruit of their prolonged love, to share with Him all the things that belong to them can be given.
 - Upon giving us life, food, the day of rest, etc., God showed man that He loved him.
 - The sacrifice of Christ is the greatest evidence of God’s love.
 - His redeeming work includes all of humanity.
-

Christ: Mediator between God and Man

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that the work of Christ covers many aspects:
 - To show through our example the wonderful character of the Father.
 - To redeem fallen man.
 - To know in what manner Christ accomplished this work of surrender and service in the time of the Old Testament.
 - To study the culminating moment of God's "service" to man.

THE DIVINE COMMUNICATOR

1. **Since it was possible for man to fall, what was decided in His favour in the heavenly courts? I Peter 1:18-20.**

"Christ was not alone in making His great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the covenant made between Him and His Father before the foundation of the world was laid. With clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry.

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity.

The more we consider this subject, the greater depths we find, and yet there are depths that we do not reach as we study the Redeemer's glory. It is the glory of the Prince of life, and the mightiest powers of man cannot reach it. The angels themselves desire to look into this mysterious and wonderful theme, the redemption of the human race." *—The Faith I Live By*, pp.76, 77.

2. What works did Christ accomplish in favour of man since the plan of salvation was created? 1 Peter 1:10-11; 1 Corinthians 10:4.

“In all these revelations of the divine presence the glory of God was manifested through Christ. Not alone at the Saviour’s advent, but through all the ages after the Fall and the promise of redemption, ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself’ 2 Corinthians 5:19...The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God.

All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

“Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ. –ST Sept. 14, 1882.” –*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1061.

3. Who was that being that in various forms and in particular circumstances was revealed in the Old Testament? Exodus 3: 1-6; 13:21-22; 23:20-21.

“All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man’s Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face.

Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness--the Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host--but it was He who gave the law to Israel. Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father’s law. It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

“Christ is the one through whom God has at all times revealed Himself to man. ‘But us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all

things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.' 1 Corinthians 8:6. This is He [Moses], that was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: 'Who received the lively oracles to give unto us.' Acts 7:38. This Angel was the Angel of God's presence (Isaiah 63:9), the Angel in whom was the Name of the Great Jehovah (Exodus 23:20-23). The expression can refer to no other than the Son of God.

Again: Christ is called the Word of God. John 1:1-3. He is so called because God gave his revelations to man in all ages through Christ. It was His Spirit that inspired the prophets. 1 Peter 1:10, 11. He was revealed to them as the Angel of Jehovah, the Captain of the Lord's Host, Michael the Archangel." *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 761.

CHRIST: KING AND SERVANT

- 4. What is the culminating phase of Christ's revelation? John 1:14.**

- 5. What example did Jesus give us when He decided to become man? 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-8.**

"Meek and lowly was the life of Christ. He chose this life that He might help the human family. He did not take His place upon a throne as Commander of the whole earth. He laid aside His royal robe, He laid off His kingly crown, that He might be made one of the human family. He took not on Him the nature of angels. His work was not the priestly office after the appointments of men. It was impossible for man to understand His exalted position, unless the Holy Spirit should make it known. For our sake, He clothed His divinity with humanity, and stepped down from the royal throne. He resigned His position as Commander in the heavenly courts, and for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. Thus, He hid His glory under the guise of humanity, that He might touch humanity with His divine, transforming power. —Manuscript 24, Feb. 22, 1898." *—The Upward Look*, p. 67.

- 6. What does it mean that Christ is the Word? John 1:1, 14.**

7. What purpose did Christ's work have, besides the redemption of fallen man? John 13:15.

"This ideal of ministry the Father committed to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, by His example to teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 359.

REFLECTION

8. What purpose does or should our life have? Isaiah 52:7.

"Christ's chief work was in ministering to the poor, the needy, and the ignorant. In simplicity He opened before them the blessing they might receive, and thus aroused a soul hunger for the bread of life. Christ's life is an example to all His followers. It is the duty of all who have learned the way of life to teach others what it means to believe in the Word of God. There are many now in the shadow of death who need to be instructed in the truths of the gospel. Nearly the whole world is lying in wickedness. Yet we have words of hope for those who sit in darkness. –Review and Herald, May 9, 1912." –*Welfare Ministry*, p. 59.

SUMMARY

- Before God created man, the plan of salvation was created out of love, in case man were to sin.
 - The plan of salvation was put into effect right after the fall.
 - Christ communicated with the men and women of the Old Testament and fulfilled a service of love, with the purpose of making the character of the Father known to others and to vindicate the authority and holiness of the divine law.
 - Christ used different ways and methods to communicate and benefit His children in the Old Testament.
 - The culminating point of His revelation can be seen in His incarnation.
 - His life was meek and humble.
 - Christ taught us by His example how we should serve others.
-

Christ: The Provider of the Bread of Life

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage believers to always have Jesus as an example in all our service.
- To show once again as in the previous lesson, that Christ revealed the character of the Father in everything He did.
- To demonstrate that in the work of Christ's service, the presentation of sacred truth was fundamental.
- To analyze the fact that when Christ helped the needy He was showing them through His example the manifest principles of the Holy Scriptures.

FOLLOWING THE MASTER

1. **What should we as Christians do with great interest in order to learn how to serve as our great teacher did? John 12:26.**

“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me. This is the rule given in the Word of God. By studying the life of Christ, let the workers find out how He lived and worked. Let them strive each day to live the life of Christ, seeking to know the way of the Lord. —Manuscript 75, 1900.” —*Evangelism*, p. 686.

MINISTERING THE BREAD OF LIFE

2. **What was one of the main objectives of Christ's ministry? John 17:25-26.**

“Christ came into the world to represent the Father to man; for Satan had presented Him before the world in a false light. Because God is a God of justice, of terrible majesty, who has power to destroy as well as to preserve man, Satan caused men to regard Him with fear, to look upon Him as a tyrant. Jesus had been with the Father from the everlasting ages, before the creation of man, and He came to reveal the Father, declaring, ‘God is love’. Jesus represented God as a kind Father, who careth for the subjects of His kingdom. He declared that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the Father, and that the children of men are of more value in His sight than many sparrows, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered.” *—Lift Him Up*, p. 36.

3. What did the Lord Jesus consider necessary in His work for humanity and why was it so important? John 8:31-32; Psalms 119:105.

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

“The Bible is the standard by which to test the claims of all who profess sanctification. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be sanctified through the truth, and He says, ‘Thy word is truth’ (John 17:17); while the psalmist declares, ‘Thy law is the truth’ (Psalm 119:142). All whom God is leading will manifest a high regard for the Scriptures in which His voice is heard. The Bible will be to them ‘profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’ (2 Timothy 3:16). ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits’ (Matthew 7:16).” *—Faith and Works*, p. 51.

4. In the Sabbath School, analyze each one of these verses that show the importance of the Bible in the work for our neighbour. Would you add any? If so, which one? 1 John 4: 8; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

5. In which way are the preaching of the gospel and social work related in Christ's ministry? Matthew 4:17; Mark 10:45; Luke 9:11.

"At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, 'It is written.' To every suggestion of the adversary, he opposed the wisdom and power of the Word."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 51.

"Christ was not exclusive...In His contact with men He did not ask, What is your creed? To what church do you belong? He exercised His helping power in behalf of all who needed help...He would give a cup of cold water, and would quietly place His own meal in their hands. As He relieved their sufferings, the truths He taught were associated with His acts of mercy, and were thus riveted in the memory.

"The gospel places a high value upon humanity as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and it teaches a tender regard for the wants and woes of man."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 86, 87, 286.

6. Why is it so important that we learn how to serve our neighbour as Christ did? Matthew 5:16; 25:34-40.

"Christ came and set the example in sacrificing, and if we are Christ's, then we will do the works of Christ. Instead of pleasing ourselves, we will be seeking to do others good, and to impart benefits to suffering humanity. And unless this is done, we cannot expect to have a part with Christ."—*The Upward Look*, p. 374.

7. Are there people who may have performed a certain service for their neighbour and yet will be reprimanded by God? Why? Matthew 7:21-23.

SUMMARY

- The believer must have Christ as a model and should study His life and works in order to minister in an efficient way.
- Christ always exalted His Father and revealed His character through His own example.

- Christ based His life on the teachings of the Word of God and by precept and example taught the sacred truth, because only the truth— such as is revealed in the Bible— can elevate humanity.
- Only this kind of service can be successful.
- Selfish ministry, without obedience to God, without faith, without consideration of the spiritual need of those who suffer; is not the way of life.

4

Sabbath, October 24, 2004

Christ: The Physician of the Soul and the Spirit

OBJECTIVES

- To prove how Christ, in ministering to suffering humanity, kept these aspects in mind.
- To learn how the mind can influence the body in a very noticeable way and viceversa.
- To encourage the members of the church to bring souls to the feet of Christ, in whom there is healing for the soul.

MAN AS A WHOLE

- 1. To what components of the human being is the action of the Holy Spirit and the word of God directed, and how do they prepare us to minister to our neighbour? 1 Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.**

“Our bodies, our souls, our lives, are His, not only because they are His free gift, but because He constantly supplies us with His benefits,

and gives us strength to use our faculties. By returning to Him His own, by willingly laboring for Him, we show that we recognize our dependence upon Him (RH Nov. 24, 1896). “—*Bible Commentaries*, vol. 7, p. 909.

“It is impossible for the spirit and power of the truth to sanctify a man, soul, body, and spirit, when he is controlled by sensual desires. —Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, pp. 75-80.” —Christian Education, p. 181.

“Christ was the mighty Healer of all spiritual and physical maladies.” —The Upward Look, p. 26.

SIN DESTROYS

2. What do the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us about psychosomatic diseases? Proverbs 17:22.

“Remorse for sin sometimes undermines the constitution and unbalances the mind.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 324.

“The relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.

“Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. Many imagine that every slight exposure will cause illness, and the evil effect is produced because it is expected. Many die from disease, the cause of which is wholly imaginary.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 344.

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST’S MINISTRY

3. What did the prophet Isaiah prophesy about the character and work of Christ? Isaiah 61:1-3; 42:3 35:4-6.

“We are to labour both for the health of the body and for the saving of the soul. Our mission is the same as that of our Master, of whom it is written that He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by Satan.... As we follow Christ’s example of labour for the good of others, we shall awaken their interest in the God whom we love and serve.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 207.

FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION

- 4. What examples did Jesus give to teach us how to come out of our disobedient and rebellious condition? Luke 18:13-14; 15:17-24.**

- 5. Besides recognition and confession of our sins, what must we be careful to avoid so that we will not backslide or return to the condition of spiritual slavery? John 5:14; 8:11.**

THE RE-INTEGRATION TO HOPE AND LIFE

- 6. What did people also need in that time and what did they find in Christ? Mark 2:3-5; Luke 23:40-43.**

“The Saviour looked upon the mournful countenance, and saw the pleading eyes fixed upon Him. He understood the case; He had drawn to Himself that perplexed and doubting spirit. While the paralytic was yet at home, the Saviour had brought conviction to his conscience. When he repented of his sins, and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, the life-giving mercies of the Saviour had first blessed his longing heart. Jesus had watched the first glimmer of faith grow into a belief that He was the sinner’s only helper, and had seen it grow stronger with every effort to come into His presence.”

“Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer’s ear, the Saviour said, ‘Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.’

“The burden of despair rolls from the sick man’s soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed. The helpless paralytic is healed! the guilty sinner is pardoned!” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 268.

“When condemned for his crime, the thief had become hopeless and despairing; but strange, tender thoughts now spring up. He calls to mind all he has heard of Jesus, how He has healed the sick and pardoned sin. He has heard the words of those who believed in Jesus and followed Him weeping. He has seen and read the title above the Saviour’s head. He has heard the passers-by repeat it, some with grieved, quivering lips, others with jesting and mockery. The Holy Spirit illuminates his mind, and little

by little the chain of evidence is joined together. In Jesus, bruised, mocked, and hanging upon the cross, he sees the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul casts himself upon a dying Saviour. 'Lord, remember me,' he cries, 'when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.'

"Quickly the answer came. Soft and melodious the tone, full of love, compassion, and power the words: Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 750.

"To the penitent thief came the perfect peace of acceptance with God."
—Conflict and Courage, p. 326.

CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS BRINGS PEACE

7. What do people need today and what can we do to lighten the burden of sin that consumes so many and brings them to a desperate state? Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 11:28-29.

"There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there."—*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 418.

"Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, 'The Desire of all nations', is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

REFLECTION

- What is each one of us doing to bring the peace of Christ to every heart?

SUMMARY

- The Bible considers man as a being made up of spirit, soul and body.
- When our Lord Jesus ministered to men He remembered their physical and spiritual needs.
- Spiritual disturbances ruin the body and produce much mental suffering.

- Jesus lived, died and resurrected and is now an advocate before the Father to raise sinful, fallen man.
- We must teach souls to turn to Christ in whom they shall find forgiveness and relief from the burden of sin.

5

Sabbath, October 30, 2004

Christ: The physician of the body

OBJECTIVES

- To confirm the medical-missionary work that Christ did.
- To study the reason for His ministry in favour of the suffering ones.
- To understand what was the belief that was held in Christ's time about sickness.
- To apply the same zeal that the Master had, to our ministry for the suffering ones.

A RESTORING WORK

1. What superior work did Jesus accomplish in His ministry for His neighbour? Matthew 4:23, 24; 14:36.

“During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching.

“Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He ‘took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,’ that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 19, 17.

2. What did Jesus see in every suffering person with whom He came in contact? Luke 19:10.

“He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the saving remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson that was appropriate to the time and the circumstances. He sought to inspire with hope the most rough and unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. Often He met those who had drifted under Satan’s control, and who had no power to break from his snare. To such a one, discouraged, sick, tempted, and fallen, Jesus would speak words of tenderest pity, words that were needed and could be understood.... Jesus was the healer of the body as well as of the soul. He was interested in every phase of suffering that came under His notice, and to every sufferer He brought relief, His kind words having a soothing balm. None could say that He had worked a miracle; but virtue –the healing power of love– went out from Him to the sick and distressed. Thus in an unobtrusive way He worked for the people from His very childhood. And this was why, after His public ministry began, so many heard Him gladly.” –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 91, 92.

- 3. What criteria and attitude did the priests and teachers in the time of Christ have concerning the sick and suffering ones in general? John 9:34; Luke 13:1-5.**

“It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God’s law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,--as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner....Suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 471.

- 4. What did Christ do with all who came to Him in search of help? John 6:37; Matthew 15:30-31.**

FROM SLAVERY TO LIBERTY AND SERVICE

- 5. To whom did Jesus also extend His service in order to recuperate liberty and health? Matthew 17:15-18.**

- 6. What extraordinary transformation was seen in the life of a man who was completely enslaved by the forces of evil? Mark 5:1-12; 15-20.**

REFLECTION

- What kind of medical missionary work is each one of us doing?**

SUMMARY

- The Lord Jesus dedicated a lot of His ministerial time to physically restore the sick.
 - Medical Missionary service was of vital importance to Christ and was to go forward together with the gospel.
 - One of the reasons for medical missionary work is that God wants to lessen humanity's suffering.
 - The Jews thought that the disease of an individual was proof that he had committed a great sin or perhaps many terrible sins for which he was being severely punished.
 - Christ came to give dignity to man and to elevate him to a level where he might enjoy inner peace and physical health.
-

Christ: His Methodology for Saving Souls

OBJECTIVES

- To study other aspects of the methodology that Christ used in His service for humanity.
- To give it a personal application.

CHRIST IN *HIS* TREATMENT OF SOULS

- 1. What other services did Jesus accomplish for His neighbour? Ezekiel 34:16 first part; John 10:9-11.**

“All day He ministered to those who came to Him; in the evening He gave attention to such as through the day must toil to earn a pittance for the support of their families.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p 17.

- 2. For whom did Jesus show interest and much sympathy and love? Matthew 9:13.**

“His presence brought a purer atmosphere into the home, and His life was as leaven working amid the elements of society. Harmless and undefiled, He walked among the thoughtless, the rude, the uncourteous; amid the unjust publicans, the unrighteous Samaritans, the heathen soldiers, the rough peasants, and the mixed multitude. He spoke a word of sympathy here, and a word there, as He saw men weary, and compelled to bear heavy burdens. He shared their burdens, and repeated to them the lessons He had learned from nature of the love, the kindness, the goodness of God.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 237-238.

“When He met a funeral, He did not pass by indifferently. Sadness came over “His face as He looked upon death, and He wept with the mourners.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 90.

3. What was Christ always willing to impart to the discouraged? Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34.

“What Christ was in His life on this earth, that every Christian should be. He is our example, not only in His spotless purity but in His patience, gentleness, and winsomeness of disposition. He was as firm as a rock where truth and duty were concerned, but He was invariably kind and courteous. His life was a perfect illustration of true courtesy. He had ever a kind look and a word of comfort for the needy and oppressed.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 237.

4. What did Jesus practice when dealing with people? Romans 2:4; Galatians 5:22.

“When those for whom you labor do not exactly meet your mind, you often say in your heart, ‘Let them go; they are not worth saving.’ What if Christ had treated poor outcasts in a similar manner? He died to save miserable sinners.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 132

“Work disinterestedly, lovingly, patiently, for all with whom you are brought into contact. Show no impatience.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 41.

“He was always patient.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 19.

5. What characterized our Lord Jesus Christ? Luke 10:21; John 15:11.

“His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining but ever one of peaceful serenity. His heart was a well-spring of life, and wherever He went He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 120.

“Christ was often heard singing hymns of praise; and yet I have heard persons say, ‘Christ never smiled.’ How mistaken their ideas in regard to the Saviour! There was joy in His heart. We learn from the Word that there is joy among the heavenly angels over one repentant sinner, and that the Lord Himself rejoices over His church with singing. —*Ibid.*, Nov. 11, 1902.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 93.

6. Did He permit Himself to be discouraged with the souls He worked with? Isaiah 42:4.

“The Saviour was an untiring worker.” —*Christian Service*, p. 232.

“We become too easily discouraged over the souls who do not at once respond to our efforts. Never should we cease to labor for a soul while there is one gleam of hope. Precious souls cost our self-sacrificing Redeemer too dear a price to be lightly given up to the tempter’s power.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 168.

7. What did the Lord Jesus manifest in a wonderful way in His treatment of people? Matthew 12:20.

“In the work of soul-winning, great tact and wisdom are needed. The Saviour never suppressed the truth, but He uttered it always in love. In His intercourse with others, He exercised the greatest tact, and He was always kind and thoughtful. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave unnecessary pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He never made truth cruel, but ever manifested a deep tenderness for humanity. Every soul was precious in His sight.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 117.

SUMMARY

- Jesus Christ, in His treatment of souls did not behave in an arbitrary, careless, and unexpected manner.
- He took much care to put Himself in the place of others, that is to say to identify Himself with others; He took advantage of every opportunity to serve His neighbour.
- He served His neighbour ceaselessly with sympathy and love, imparting encouragement and strength to those who needed it.
- He exercised patience with those who were slow to understand and act.
- Tact was seen as a very special trait in His treatment of others.

The Holy Spirit and His Work of Service

OBJECTIVES

- To prove how important and transcendental has been the work of the Holy Spirit in ancient times.
- To motivate every believer to seek unity with his brethren.
- To confirm that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was decisive in motivating the ministry of the disciples of Christ in the New Testament.

SERVING FROM THE BEGINNING

- 1. Did the Holy Spirit play an active role in the work of creation? Mention a Bible verse or two that shows this.**
- 2. Besides the text in Nehemiah 9:20, search other ones that mention the role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.**

“From the beginning God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race...The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God’s faithful children in every succeeding age.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

WORK FROM ON HIGH

- 3. What was the promise Jesus made to His disciples regarding the Holy Spirit? John 14:15-17.**

4. What spiritual condition did they need to have in order to receive the Holy Spirit? Psalms 133; Acts 1:14; 2:1.

“When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, ‘Ye are clean’. Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable.” *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

“Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away.” *—Evangelism*, p. 698.

5. How important was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in motivating the work of service for humanity that Jesus gave to the disciples? Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; Mark 16:20.

“After Christ’s ascension, the disciples were gathered together in one place to make humble supplication to God. And after ten days of heart searching and self-examination, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, as though God desired to show His people that it was His prerogative to bless them with the choicest of heaven’s blessings. ... The idolatry that had been mingled with the worship of the people was overthrown. New territory was added to the kingdom of God. Places that had been barren and desolate sounded forth His praises... *—Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902.” *—Evangelism*, p. 698.

“The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day. Signs of the Times, Feb. 17, 1914.” *—Evangelism*, p. 699.

6. What great power can be seen in the proclamation of the message when the servants of the Lord work under the celestial influence of the Holy Spirit? Acts 4:8-13.

“Notwithstanding the fierce opposition that the disciples met, in a short time the gospel of the kingdom had been sounded to all the inhabited parts of the earth.” –*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 15.

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

A PROFOUND AND EXTENSIVE WORK

7. What help do we receive from the Holy Spirit if we allow Him to cooperate with us in our missionary efforts?

- He convinces us of sin, of righteousness and judgement. John 16:8.
- He guides us into truth. John 16:13-14.
- He strengthens us for the daily battle and activity of life. Acts 9:31.
- He testifies that we are the children of God. Romans 8:16.
- He pours out the love of God in us. Romans 5:5.
- He works in the transformation of the character. Ezekiel 36:26-27.
- He invests us with power. Luke 24:49.

“The Holy Spirit is an effective helper in restoring the image of God in the human soul, ...” –*Counsels to Teachers, Parents and Students*, p. 67.

SUMMARY

- The Holy Spirit has always been active, both in the work of creation as well as in the work of redemption.
- It was the Holy Spirit that inspired the prophets and guided, encouraged and sustained the people of God in the Old Testament.
- His work is very extensive and profound.
- Christ promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit.
- The reception of the Holy Spirit required from them a special condition that included unity and fraternal love.
- The Christian service that they gave to humanity in their time after the reception of the Holy Spirit was one of immeasurable value and had great results. He (The Holy Spirit) wishes to do the same today through you.

Sabbath, November 20, 2004

The Church: Recipient of the Gifts of the Spirit

OBJECTIVES

- To study what kind of service the disciples of Christ had to accomplish.
- To understand that without the Holy Spirit, human potential is inefficient in the work of spreading the gospel.
- To understand that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the church for the edification of the body of the believers so that they could work with all manner of people.
- To discern the kinds of gifts that the Holy Spirit gave to the church.

FOLLOWING IN THE MASTER'S FOOTSTEPS

- 1. For what purpose were the disciples of Christ commissioned?
Matthew 10:7-8; 28:18-20; Luke 10:8-9.**

“After Christ’s ascension the same work was continued. The scenes of His own ministry were repeated. ‘Out of the cities round about’ there came a multitude ‘unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.’ Acts 5:16.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 140.

FIT TO SERVE

- 2. What did they need so that they could fulfill this extensive service for humanity? James 1:5; Ephesians 4:8; John 16:7.**

“The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 805.

“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. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ’s ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, ‘Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.’ Acts 5:28.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

THE CHURCH: THE BODY OF CHRIST

- 3. To what does the apostle Paul compare the church in the majority of his epistles? Romans 12:5; Colossians 1:17-18.**

- 4. What is so special about the human body? 1 Corinthians 12:14-23.**

- 5. In what sense is the church like the human body and what kinds of gifts did the Holy Spirit give to the church? Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28.**

“From the endless variety of plants and flowers, we may learn an important lesson. All blossoms are not the same in form or color. Some possess healing virtues. Some are always fragrant. There are professing Christians who think it their duty to make every Christian like themselves. This is man’s plan, not the plan of God. In the church of God there is room for characters as varied as are the flowers in a garden. In His spiritual garden there are many varieties of flowers. –Letter 95, 1902.” –*Evangelism*, p. 99.

SERVING YOUR NEIGHBOUR

- 6. Why does the Holy Spirit give His gifts to the church? 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.**

“God dispenses His gifts as it pleases Him. He bestows one gift upon one, and another gift upon another, but all for the good of the whole body. It is in God’s order that some shall be of service in one line of work, and others in other lines –all working under the selfsame Spirit. The recognition of this plan will be a safeguard against emulation, pride, envy, or contempt of one another. It will strengthen unity and mutual love.” –*Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students*, p. 314.

7. Are there people in the church who have not received a single gift? Matthew 25:14-15.

“All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.” –*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 327.

REFLECTION

- What gifts have I received from the Lord? Am I willing to use them for His service?

SUMMARY

- Just as the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished a work of self-sacrifice for humanity, the disciples of Christ in the early church were called to follow in the Master’s footsteps.
 - The task that Christ assigned to them was of such extent and reach that they greatly needed the help of the Holy Spirit, because on their own they would not have been able to accomplish anything with success.
 - Just as the human body is composed of different organs, each one fulfilling his function, so is the church made up of many members.
 - Each member of the body of Christ has received a gift, or many gifts to be put to the service of his neighbour so that it may contribute to the advancement of the gospel.
-

Sabbath, November 27, 2004

The Church: A Missionary Instrument

OBJECTIVES

- To understand why Jesus founded the church.
- To be conscious of the mission that each one of us as members of the church has to fulfill before God and man.
- To understand the role that talents (gifts) play in the spreading of the gospel.
- To value the importance of love in the duty of Christian service.
- To accomplish a practical application of the parable of the talents.

CHRIST'S MOTIVATION FOR FOUNDING THE CHURCH

1. **Why was the church founded and how must it accomplish its mission? Matthew 5:13-16.**

“The church is organized for service; and in a life of service to Christ, connection with the church is one of the first steps. Loyalty to Christ demands the faithful performance of church duties. This is an important part of one’s training; and in a church imbued with the Master’s life, it will lead directly to effort for the world without.” —*Education*, p. 268.

2. **Therefore, what solemn responsibility falls upon each one of us? 1 Corinthians 9:16.**

“Since His ascension Christ has carried forward His work on the earth by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men and ministers to their needs. The great Head of the church superintends His work through the instrumentality of men ordained by God to act as His representatives. The position of those who have been called of God to labour in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church, is one of grave responsibility.

In Christ's stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God, and they can fulfill their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 360.

CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT

3. What manner of disposition should we show in our service towards our neighbour? Ephesians 6:6-8; Colossians 3:23-24.

"Should not every soul enter into the service of God, seeking to improve on the talents that have been entrusted to him, that they may be returned to God with usury?" —*This Day with God*, p. 255.

"This is the spirit of all true service for God. Through a lack of this spirit, many who appear to be first will become last, while those who possess it, though accounted last, will become first." —*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 403.

THE WILLINGNESS TO SERVE

4. What is the most important thing to remember when serving our neighbour? 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

"Love and loyalty to Christ are the spring of all true service. In the heart touched by His love, there is begotten a desire to work for Him. Let this desire be encouraged and rightly guided. Whether in the home, the neighborhood, or the school, the presence of the poor, the afflicted, the ignorant, or the unfortunate should be regarded, not as a misfortune, but as affording precious opportunity for service." —*Education*, p. 268.

5. What does God value from the Christian in His work and service? 1 Samuel 16:7.

"Christ does not estimate the man by the amount of work he does, but by the spirit in which the work is performed. When He sees men lifting the burdens, trying to carry them in lowliness of mind, with distrust of self and with reliance upon Him, He adds to their work His perfection and sufficiency, and it is accepted of the Father." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 23.

SUMMARY

- Christ founded His church so that it would be a channel imparting to the world the blessings of the gospel.
 - The responsibility falls upon all of us, not only upon the leaders.
 - The capabilities God has given us should be cultivated so that they will not die.
 - Christian service should be always motivated by love.
-

10

Sabbath, December 4, 2004

The Church and its Gifts

First part

OBJECTIVES

- To assume the responsibility that all members of the church have of sharing the message of salvation through active service, according to the gifts we have received.
- To discover the application of some of the gifts given by God to the church.

A MISSION FOR ALL

- 1. What should the church do in this time and who must carry out this mission besides ministers? 1 Peter 2:9. What risks can we encounter if we don't cooperate with God? Matthew 25: 30.**

“Your voice, your influence, your time, –all these are gifts from God, and are to be used in winning souls to Christ.–Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 38.”
–*Christian Service*, p. 19.

“We should all be workers together with God.”—*Christian Service*, p. 10.

“We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it. Those who refuse to co-operate with God on earth would not co-operate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven.”—*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 280.

2. What role do talents take in this task and what spirit should we manifest? Ephesians 4:11-15.

“Different gifts are imparted to different ones, that the workers may feel their need of one another. God bestows these gifts, and they are employed in His service, not to glorify the possessor, not to uplift man, but to uplift the world’s Redeemer. They are to be used for the good of all mankind, by representing the truth, not testifying to a falsehood...In every word and act, kindness and love will be revealed.”—*Signs of the Times*, March 15, 1910.

THE TALENT OF SPEECH

3. What is one of the most powerful talents that God has given us so that we may serve our neighbour? John 7:46; Nehemiah 8:8.

“Every person should learn to control the voice.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 87.

“The tones of the voice have much to do in affecting the hearts of those that hear.—Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 615.”—*Evangelism*, p. 666.

4. What should we consider when we speak? James 3:3-10.

Make comments on the following verses and their meaning, since they present to us what we must consider and avoid when we communicate with others.

- Ephesians 4:29.
- Proverbs 29:20.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5.
- 2 Peter 2:18.
- Proverbs 25:11.
- Proverbs 15:1.
- Colossians 4:6 (5).

5. Since the function of every pastor, leader, evangelist, Sabbath school teacher, etc, involves a great responsibility before the church and society, what should we do?

MUSIC

6. What gift should also be considered in church and why? 2 Chronicles 29:25-29, Zephaniah 3:17.

“There should be much more interest in voice culture than is now generally manifested. Students who have learned to sing sweet gospel songs with melody and distinctness can do much good as singing evangelists. They will find many opportunities to use the talent that God has given them, carrying melody and sunshine into many lonely places darkened by sin and sorrow and affliction, singing to those who seldom have church privileges. –Review and Herald, Aug. 27, 1903.” –*Evangelism*, p. 504.

“Music is of heavenly origin... There is something peculiarly sacred in the human voice. Its harmony and its subdued and heaven-inspired pathos exceeds every musical instrument. Vocal music is one of God’s gifts to men, an instrument that cannot be surpassed or equaled when God’s love abounds in the soul. Singing with the spirit and the understanding also is a great addition to devotional services in the house of God.” –*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 335.

7. Mention some of the benefits of good music, considering both vocal and instrumental music? Ephesians 5:19; Psalms 150.

It is a way of reaching souls: “...go out into the highways and hedges. Endeavor to reach the higher as well as the lower classes. Enter the homes of the rich as well as the poor and, as you have opportunity, ask, ‘Would

you be pleased to have us sing some gospel hymns?" Then as hearts are softened, the way may open for you to offer a few words of prayer for the blessing of God. Not many will refuse to listen. Such ministry is genuine missionary work." —*Counsels to Teachers, Parents and Students*, p. 548.

It is has educational power: "Song is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart. —Review and Herald, June 6, 1912." —*Evangelism*, p. 500.

SUMMARY

- The church has the sacred mission of making known the message of salvation to a world that is perishing, which is to say that it must minister to hurting humanity just as Jesus ministered to it.
- We are all included and are held responsible in this mission.
- The gifts of speech and music are very important for reaching out to souls and obtaining other spiritual benefits.
- He testimonies give us enough facts about the way Jesus spoke.

11

Sabbath, December 11, 2004

The Church and its Gifts

Second Part

OBJECTIVES

- To understand why it is important to follow the principles of Health Reform and make them known to the world.
- To take our responsibility in this area.
- To show that many different activities may be done, adapted to every individual, group or church, to make the health principles known to others.
- To study other useful and important gifts in the church and see how they may be applied.

1. Why is the gift of healing so important in the church? 3 John 2.

“The work of health reform is the Lord’s means for lessening suffering in our world.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 456.

2. Although it is doctors who are supposed to work in the area of health since they are qualified to do this, how can the ministry and the people help in this medical missionary work? 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

“One important part of the work of the ministry is to faithfully present to the people the health reform.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, p. 74.

“There is a great work to be done in bringing the principles of health reform to the notice of the people. Public meetings should be held to introduce the subject, and schools should be held in which those who are interested can be told more particularly about our health foods and of how a wholesome, nourishing, appetizing diet can be provided without the use of meat, tea, or coffee.” —*Evangelism*, p. 534.

“The medical missionary work is as the right arm of the third angel’s message which must be proclaimed to a fallen world; and physicians, managers, and workers in any line, in acting faithfully their part, are doing the work of the message.” —CH, p. 331.

Canvassing. “Circulate the books that give instruction in regard to healthful living... There should be more earnest efforts made to enlighten the people upon the great subject of health reform. Tracts of four, eight, twelve, sixteen, and more pages, containing pointed, well-written articles on this great question, should be scattered like the leaves of autumn.” —*Counsels on Diet and Food*, pp. 461, 462.

“More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications. —Review and Herald, Nov. 10, 1885” —*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 151.

3. In what other way does Health Reform help us in the preaching of the gospel? Mark 10:46-52.

“I have been shown that in giving attention to this branch of the work you remove a large amount of prejudice from many minds, that has barred the way to their receiving the truth and reading the publications setting forth the truth which we believe.” —*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 133.

PRAYER

4. What must never be neglected in the ministry for souls? James 5:14-15; Matthew 5:44; 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

“In prayer for the sick it should be remembered that ‘we know not what we should pray for as we ought.’ Romans 8:26. We do not know whether the blessing we desire will be best or not. Therefore our prayers should include this thought: ‘Lord, thou knowest every secret of the soul. Thou art acquainted with these persons. Jesus, their Advocate, gave His life for them. His love for them is greater than ours can possibly be. If, therefore, it is for Thy glory and the good of the afflicted ones, we ask, in the name of Jesus, that they may be restored to health. If it be not Thy will that they may be restored, we ask that Thy grace may comfort and Thy presence sustain them in their sufferings.’” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 229.

HOSPITALITY

5. What recompense can those who practice hospitality hope to have? Hebrews 13:2.

“Even in our day angels in human form enter the homes of men and are entertained by them. And Christians who live in the light of God’s countenance are always accompanied by unseen angels, and these holy beings leave behind them a blessing in our homes.

“‘A lover of hospitality’ is among the specifications given by the Holy Spirit as marking one who is to bear responsibility in the church. And to the whole church is given the injunction: ‘Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.’” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 445.

- 6. In what way can the brethren and sisters who have the gift of ministering, manual ability, artistic creativity, and facility for learning foreign languages serve the cause? 2 Kings 12:11-14; Exodus 31:1-11.**
- 7. What marvellous result was brought upon the health of a person by the faith and the counsel of a humble girl faithful to God? 2 Kings 5:1-17.**

REFLECTION

- Can the activities of service that help to find contacts and conquer hearts free us from the responsibility of speaking to souls about Jesus and explaining the gospel to them?

SUMMARY

- Through Health Reform God desires to lessen the suffering of the world.
 - All the members of the church, along with doctors, should make a decided effort to make known the health message since it is the right arm of the third angel's message.
 - The presentation of Health Reform will open doors and hearts to the message of salvation.
 - All the other gifts, like prayer, hospitality, service, manual abilities, artistic creativity, etc, should all be for the glory of God, edification of the church and blessing to the world.
-

Angels: Ministering Spirits

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the service that the angels of God do and what their relationship is to us.

SERVING HUMANITY

1. **What work do the angels have in the plan of redemption? Hebrews 1:14.**

“Those who labor for the good of others are working in union with the heavenly angels. They have their constant companionship, their unceasing ministry.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 515.

“The angels of glory find their joy in giving, —giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 21.

WE ARE NOT ALONE

2. **What should we all know in our work and service for humanity? Genesis 28:12-13.**

“We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angels. It would be well to remember that every true child of God has the co-operation of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim, and angels that excel in strength, stand at God’s right hand, ‘all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation’. Hebrews 1:14.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 154.

- 3. In difficult moments of trial and agony, who went to comfort and strengthen Jesus in Gethsemane? Luke 22:43.**

PROTECTED AND FREED

- 4. What mission do the angels have, besides helping us to serve others? Psalms 34:7.**

“Angels of light and power are ever near to protect, to comfort, to heal, to instruct, to inspire. The highest education, the truest culture, and the most exalted service possible to human beings in this world are theirs. –Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 307, 308. (1900)” –*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 110.

“We cannot see them personally; nevertheless they are with us, guiding, directing, protecting.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 152.

- 5. Can the angels make themselves visible, or are they always hidden from our view? Luke 1:11-12; John 20:12.**

“Again and again have angels talked with men as a man speaketh with a friend, and led them to places of security. Again and again have the encouraging words of angels renewed the drooping spirits of the faithful and, carrying their minds above the things of earth, caused them to behold by faith the white robes, the crowns, the palm branches of victory, which overcomers will receive when they surround the great white throne.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

NOT TO GRIEVE THE ANGELS

- 6. Is it possible that angels or the Spirit of God abandon people or places because of certain reasons? Ezekiel 10:18, 19; 11:22-23; Genesis 6:3 first part; Ephesians 4:30.**

“A silent witness guards every soul that lives, seeking to win and draw him to Christ. The angels never leave the tempted one a prey to the enemy who would destroy the souls of men if permitted to do so. As long as there is hope, until they resist the Holy Spirit to their eternal ruin, men are guarded by heavenly intelligences.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 23.

READY TO HELP US

7. How many angels exist and what are they willing to do? Revelation 5:11.

“Thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are waiting to co-operate with members of our churches in communicating the light that God has generously given, that a people may be prepared for the coming of Christ. ‘Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation’. Let every family seek the Lord in earnest prayer for help to do the work of God.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 129.

REFLECTION

- Am I cooperating with my accompanying angel in the work of presenting Christ to the world or am I instead grieving Him?

SUMMARY

- The angels of God have been commissioned to help man.
 - When we faithfully accomplish our Christian service, angels are at our side to help us; they also encourage us in our battle against sin.
 - We all have a guardian angel or companion.
 - Angels sometimes become visible.
 - Angels can become grieved when we put resistance to the Holy Spirit.
 - Myriads and myriads of angels are willing to help us.
-

*Please,
read the Report of the General Conference
Good Samaritan Department on page 91.*

13

Sabbath, December 25, 2004

Service Rewarded

OBJECTIVES

- To confirm all of the promises that the Lord Jesus has made for all those who serve Him.
- To obtain benefit from them.
- To encourage people to serve in the church so as to have joy, unity, and receive the promised latter rain.

FOR THE CHURCH TO BE HAPPY

- 1. What motivation does the Lord expect us to have in our service to our neighbour, and particularly in His holy work? Colossians 3:23; Ephesians: 6:6-8.**

- 2. How can the church be happy? 1 Corinthians 9:7.**

“Those who give their lives to Christlike ministry know the meaning of true happiness. Their interests and their prayers reach far beyond self. They themselves are growing as they try to help others... Such ones

receive wisdom from heaven. They become more and more identified with Christ in all His plans. There is no opportunity for spiritual stagnation.”
–*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 42.

“The church that engages successfully in this work, is a happy church.”
–*Christian Service*, p. 269.

3. Who shall receive the latter rain? Psalm 24:3-5; Matthew 25:45-47.

“When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.–*Review and Herald*, July 21, 1896.”
–*Evangelism*, p. 699.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

4. What will be the fruit of a soul that has been saved from error and what shall be given to those who have laboured in this great work? Psalms 126:6; Matthew 25:21.

“Resort to prayer, persuade in meekness and lowliness of spirit those who oppose themselves. One soul saved from error, and brought under the banner of Christ, will cause joy in heaven, and place a star in your crown of rejoicing. A soul saved will, through his godly influence, bring other souls to a knowledge of salvation, and thus the work will multiply, and only the revealings of the day of judgment will make manifest the extent of the work.

Do not hesitate to work for the Lord because you think you can do but little. Do your little with fidelity; for God will work with your efforts. He will write your name in the book of life as one worthy to enter into the joy of the Lord.”–*Messages to Young People*, p. 23.

5. What is the secret of obtaining success in the work we have to undertake? John 15:4-5; Psalms 133.

“The secret of our success in the work of God will be found in the harmonious working of our people. There must be concentrated action. Every member of the body of Christ must act his part in the cause of God, according to the ability that God has given him. We must press together against obstructions and difficulties, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart. –Review and Herald, Dec. 2, 1890.” –*Christian Service*, p. 75.

“If Christians were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world. –Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 221.” –*Christian Service*, p. 75.

A GREAT REWARD FOR THE FAITHFUL

6. What has the Lord promised to those who cooperate with Him in the salvation of souls? Matthew 28:19-20, Haggai 2:4.

“Christ did not tell His disciples that their work would be easy. He showed them the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against them. They would have to fight ‘against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.’ Ephesians 6:12. But they would not be left to fight alone. He assured them that He would be with them; and that if they would go forth in faith, they should move under the shield of Omnipotence. He bade them be brave and strong; for One mightier than angels would be in their ranks—the General of the armies of heaven. He made full provision for the prosecution of their work and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe and be assured that My presence will be with you even there. Labour in faith and confidence; for the time will never come when I will forsake you. I will be with you always, helping you to perform your duty, guiding, comforting, sanctifying, sustaining you, giving you success in speaking words that shall draw the attention of others to heaven.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 29.

7. What reward shall receive those who have faithfully served the Master, no matter how simple and humble their contribution was? Mark 10:28-30; Daniel 12:3.

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

SUMMARY

- Jesus shall always be beside those who serve Him faithfully.
 - The church will be able to reach its ideal of happiness only when the majority of the members get involved in the work of saving souls.
 - Those who fulfill their role as missionary and become consecrated to the Lord will receive the latter rain.
 - The secret of success is found in working unitedly with Christ and with our brethren.
-

**MISSIONARY REPORT
OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
GOOD SAMARITAN DEPARTMENT**

To be read on Sabbath, December 25, 2004

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered Sabbath, January 1, 2005

Dear brothers and sisters,

“Blessed [be] the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed [be] his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled [with] his glory; Amen, and Amen.” Psalm 72:18, 19.

It is a big privilege to greet you in the name of the Lord and to share with you our experiences in the work of assistance of the Good Samaritan.

Ten years have gone by since the department was created and we want to thank the Lord, from the bottom of our hearts, for His guidance and blessings, and all brothers and sisters who faithfully and generously have made this work possible, and to give you a retrospective view of what has been done until today. As you well know, we take care of the needs of the poorest members of our community.

As years go by and the work grows more and more and new fields are opened we receive more requests for help and projects that require our support.

The needs in the countries of the third world are ever increasing. We continuously receive demands for medical assistance, hospitalisation and surgery. The list of widows, orphans and old people who survive thank to the generosity of others, increases too.

As the people of God, called to reveal the same mercy and spirit of self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we are given the possibility to cooperate with Him by making a good administration of the means He gave us.

The servant of the Lord writes: “God suffers His poor to be in the borders of every church. They are always to be among us, and the Lord places upon the members of every church a personal responsibility to care for them. We are not to lay our responsibility upon others. Toward those within our own borders we are to manifest the same love and sympathy that Christ would manifest were He in our place.” –*Welfare Ministry*, p. 181.

Our wish is that we join our hands, hearts and strength and organize ourselves so that the work may be more effective. We propose to each church to choose one or more persons in charge of promoting this work, encouraging the members to contribute regularly to relieve the suffering of our brothers and sisters around the world. It is convenient also for the field or union to have its people, faithful and pious members to gather the funds from all churches and sent them to our bank accounts either in Italy, Germany or U.S.A.

In the Spirit of Prophecy we read: "In every church there should be established a treasury for the poor. Then let each member present a thank offering to God once a week or once a month, as is most convenient. This offering will express our gratitude for the gifts of health, of food, and of comfortable clothing. And according as God has blessed us with these comforts will we lay by for the poor, the suffering, and the distressed. I would call the attention of our brethren specially to this point. Remember the poor. Forgo some of your luxuries, yea, even comforts, and help those who can obtain only the most meagre food and clothing. In doing for them you are doing for Jesus in the person of His saints. He identifies Himself with suffering humanity. Do not wait until your imaginary wants are all satisfied. Do not trust to your feelings and give when you feel like it and withhold when you do not feel like it. Give regularly, either ten, twenty, or fifty cents a week, as you would like to see upon the heavenly record in the day of God. —Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 150, 151." —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 272.

You will surely rejoice to know that thanks to your acts of generosity our brothers have bread on their table, illiteracy does not grow in our ranks and you will experience what apostle Paul expressed when he remembered what the Lord Jesus had said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20: 35) Besides, the Lord will pour His blessings upon you because he who helps the poor lends to God. Proverbs 9:17.

"The small streams of beneficence must be ever kept flowing into the treasury. God's providence is far ahead, moving onward much faster than our liberalities." —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 268.

May the Lord help us to come closer to Him in the person of the needy. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

—*The Good Samaritan Team*