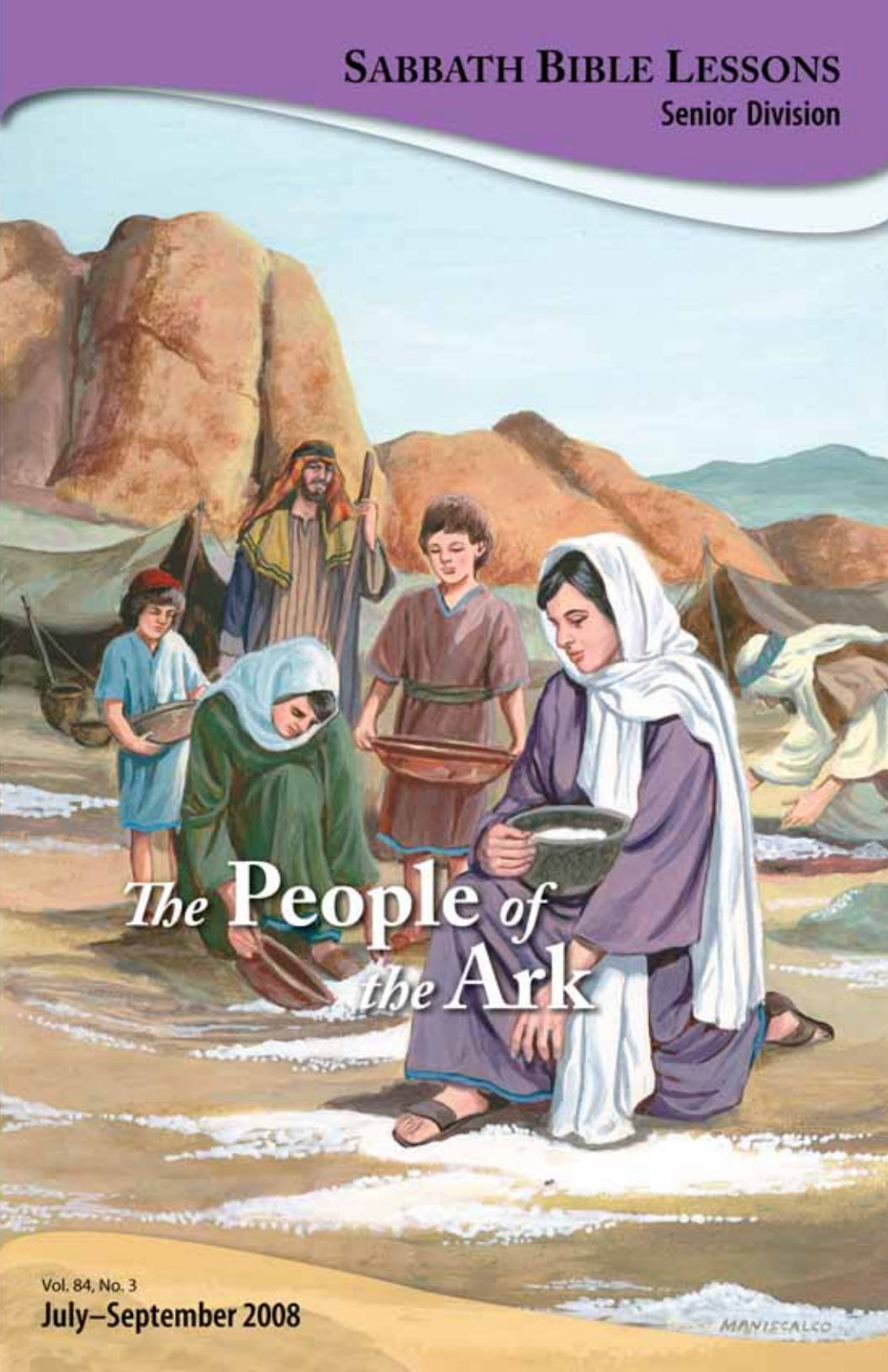


SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division

An illustration depicting a scene from the Bible, likely Noah's Ark. In the foreground, a woman in a purple robe and white headscarf is kneeling on a sandy beach, washing a dark bowl in the surf. To her left, another woman in a green robe and light blue headscarf is also kneeling, washing a brown bowl. In the background, a man with a long red beard and a yellow and blue robe stands holding a staff. A young boy in a brown tunic stands next to him, holding a brown bowl. To the left, a young girl in a blue dress and red headscarf stands holding a brown bowl. In the far background, another person is visible, bent over and washing clothes. The setting is a beach with large, brown, rocky hills in the background under a light blue sky. The title 'The People of the Ark' is written in a large, white, serif font across the middle of the illustration.

The People of the Ark

Vol. 84, No. 3

July–September 2008

MANIECALCO

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

Illustrations: Joe Maniscalco on front cover; Map-Resources on pp. 4, 60, 84; MGM on 35, 84; PhotoDisc on back cover.

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Foreword

During the next two quarters, Sabbath school students around the world will be studying *The People of the Ark* followed by *The City of Refuge*. These two quarterlies are designed to bring us highly relevant insights on the experience of ancient Israel in preparing for the Promised Land in their day—and to present us with important parallels for the eternal Promised Land so soon to come in our day.

“The history of the wilderness life of Israel was chronicled for the benefit of the Israel of God till the close of time. The record of God’s dealing with the wanderers of the desert in all their marchings to and fro, in their exposure to hunger, thirst, and weariness, and in the striking manifestations of His power for their relief, is fraught with warning and instruction for His people in all ages. The varied experience of the Hebrews was a school of preparation for their promised home in Canaan. God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

One key component throughout Israel’s wilderness journey was the sacred Ark of the Covenant. Called to be distinct among all nations, the Israelites were to be recognized as God’s chosen people throughout the world solely because of their worship of the Creator of heaven and earth—the one and only true God, the Lord Jehovah. The Ark of the Covenant was given as a monumental symbol of their faith. Beneath the mercy seat and inside that ark were three items:

1. The tables of stone on which God wrote the Ten Commandments.
2. A pot of manna.
3. Aaron’s budded rod.

These items were highly significant in their meaning and implications. It is also important to keep in mind that “the ark of the earthly sanctuary was the pattern of the true ark in heaven” (*The Signs of the Times*, June 24, 1880).

In this quarterly, *The People of the Ark*, we will introduce the first two items in the ark, and next quarter in *The City of Refuge* we will add the third item. As believers looking earnestly to the heavenly sanctuary, we certainly need to understand what is inside that Ark of the Covenant and what it means for us!

—*The General Conference Sabbath School Department*

First Sabbath Offering

for Russia

The territory of Russia is 17,075,400 square km². There are 85 regions in it (provinces, states, territories, and autonomous districts). It's a pity that only in 21 of them there are Christians who know the present Bible truth. Very often there are only a few members in the whole region.



The country has a population of 145 million people. They belong to some 160 ethnic groups: 79.8% Russian, 3.8% Tatar, 2% Ukrainian, 1.2% Bashkir, 11% Chuvash, 0.9% Chechens, 0.8% Armenian, and 10.3% unspecified.

The religions of the country are: Russian Orthodox, Islam, Protestants (Lutherans, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Jehovah Witnesses), Buddhists (mostly in Tuva, Buriatia, and Kalmykia), Jews, and Roman Catholics. Sixty percent of the population are atheists.

At the present time there are wonderful possibilities for missionary work. Thanks to the offerings of some local believers and from fellow believers all over the world we built the church in Yekaterinburg, the capital of the Ural Region that is in great need of missionary work. But to bring the message to different parts of this Russian region and send the missionaries there, we need much help at this time. By the grace of the Lord we still have some time to preach the Gospel, and we want to use it for the salvation of souls that have never heard the present truth.

To fulfill this missionary plan we are asking for your help in prayers and finances.

May God bless everyone who is ready to donate for this important missionary endeavor!

Your brethren and sisters from the Russian Field

Going on to Perfection

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1).

“We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 565.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 529–538.

Sunday

June 29

1. BABIES IN CHRIST

- a. How does an individual become a Christian? John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23.

“The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 67.

“When truth becomes an abiding principle in the life, the soul is ‘born again.’ . . . This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the Word of God. When by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 520.

- b. What type of experience did the believers at Ephesus enjoy at the very beginning of their Christian life? Revelation 2:2, 3; Acts 4:32–34.

“After the descent of the Holy Spirit the disciples went forth to proclaim a risen Saviour, their one desire the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of the communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth’s sake. In their daily association with one another they revealed the love that Christ had commanded them to reveal. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 241.

2. GROWING UP

a. What do we expect from babies as they age? 1 Peter 2:2.

“In giving us the privilege of studying His word, the Lord has set before us a rich banquet. Many are the benefits derived from feasting on His word, which is represented by Him as His flesh and blood, His spirit and life. By partaking of this word our spiritual strength is increased; we grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. Habits of self-control are formed and strengthened. The infirmities of childhood—fretfulness, willfulness, selfishness, hasty words, passionate acts—disappear, and in their place are developed the graces of Christian manhood and womanhood.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 207.

b. Spiritually speaking, how important is proper food intake in the growth of a child? 2 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:14, 15.

“The work of sanctification begins in the home. Those who are Christians in the home will be Christians in the church and in the world.”—*My Life Today*, p. 261.

“If as newborn babes you desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, you will have no appetite to partake of a dish of evil speaking, but all such food will be at once rejected, because those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious cannot partake of the dish of nonsense, and folly, and backbiting. They will say decidedly, ‘Take this dish away. I do not want to eat such food. It is not the bread from heaven. It is eating and drinking the very spirit of the devil; for it is his business to be an accuser of the brethren.’”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 458.

“As [God’s hungry, thirsting people] feed upon [God’s] word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God’ (Matthew 4:4). This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.

3. LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. How does God treat those who have a limited amount of knowledge in the present truth? Acts 17:30; James 4:17.
-

“Said the angel: ‘If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no light for them to reject.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 116.

- b. What is expected of those who are privileged to hear and understand the truth? Proverbs 4:18; Hebrews 6:1.
-

“It is a sad thing when a people claiming to be reformers cease to reform.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 185.

“God requires of His people according to the grace and truth given them. All His righteous demands must be fully met. Accountable beings must walk in the light that shines upon them. If they fail to do this, their light becomes darkness, and their darkness is great in the same degree as their light was abundant.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 123.

“The word of the Lord, spoken through His servants, is received by many with questionings and fears. And many will defer their obedience to the warning and reproofs given, waiting till every shadow of uncertainty is removed from their minds. The unbelief that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to the evidence that God is pleased to give. He requires of His people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not upon perfect knowledge. Those followers of Christ who accept the light that God sends them must obey the voice of God speaking to them when there are many other voices crying out against it. It requires discernment to distinguish the voice of God.

“Those who will not act when the Lord calls upon them, but who wait for more certain evidence and more favorable opportunities, will walk in darkness, for the light will be withdrawn. The evidence given one day, if rejected, may never be repeated.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 258.

4. REJECTING KNOWLEDGE

- a. Does punishment and destruction come to a people because of a lack of knowledge—or is it through a rejection of the knowledge that God gives us? Hosea 4:6.
-

“It is not for lack of knowledge that God’s people are now perishing. They will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, but which has been neglected or refused, will condemn them. Those who never had the light to reject will not be in condemnation. What more could have been done for God’s vineyard than has been done? Light, precious light, shines upon God’s people; but it will not save them unless they consent to be saved by it, fully live up to it, and transmit it to others in darkness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 123.

- b. How dangerous is neglecting to follow the light we are privileged to receive? Galatians 3:1.
-

“Religious knowledge has accumulated, and this has increased corresponding obligations. Great light has been shining upon the church, and by it they are condemned because they refuse to walk in it. If they were blind they would be without sin. But they have seen light and have heard much truth, yet are not wise and holy. Many have for years made no advancement in knowledge and true holiness. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are going back to the darkness and bondage of Egypt. Their minds are not exercised unto godliness and true holiness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 123, 124.

“God requires of us according to the grace that He has bestowed upon us, and He will not accept less than He claims. All His righteous demands must be fully met. In order for us to discharge our responsibilities, we must stand on that elevated ground which the order and advancement of holy, sacred truth has prepared for us.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 65.

“Every person who cherishes a known error, in faith or practice, is under the power of sorcery, and is practicing sorcery upon others. Satan employs him to mislead other souls.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 18, 1882.

5. NO STOPPING GROUND

- a. **How are we to maintain continual development as we walk with Jesus? Hebrews 13:12; Philippians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:4.**

“The Word of Christ is the bread of life that is furnished for every soul that liveth. To refuse to eat this bread is death. He that neglects to partake of the Word of God shall not see life. Receiving the Word is believing the Word, and this is eating Christ’s flesh, drinking His blood. To dwell and abide in Christ is to dwell and abide in His Word; it is to bring heart and character into conformity to His commands.”—*The Southern Work*, p. 52.

- b. **To what extent are we to continue our growth? Hebrews 6:1; Matthew 5:48.**

“Let us be growing Christians. We are not to stand still. We are to be in advance today of what we were yesterday; every day learning to be more trustful, more fully relying upon Jesus. Thus we are to grow up. You do not at one bound reach perfection; sanctification is the work of a lifetime.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 193.

“Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 505.

“The Lord chooses His own agents, and each day under different circumstances He gives them a trial in His plan of operation. In each true-hearted endeavor to work out His plan, He chooses His agents not because they are perfect but because, through a connection with Him, they may gain perfection.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 330.

- c. **How can we see ourselves as we really are? Isaiah 6:1, 5; 2 Corinthians 13:5.**

“Every follower of Christ should daily examine himself, that he may become perfectly acquainted with his own conduct.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 511.

“The more experience we gain, the nearer we draw toward the pure light of heaven, the more shall we discern in ourselves that needs reforming.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 542.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. When we are truly dedicated to our Saviour, how will our priorities change?
- b. For proper spiritual growth, of what type of food do we need to partake?
- c. As reformers by name, are we—am I—continuing the process of true reformation?
- d. What is the true cause of destruction?
- e. At what point can we rest satisfied in our Christian journey?

“We may all do a good work in blessing others if we will seek counsel of God and follow on in obedience and faith. The path of the just is progressive, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. The divine illumination will increase more and more, corresponding with our onward movements, qualifying us to meet the responsibilities and emergencies before us.

“When trials press you, when despondency and dark unbelief control your thoughts, when selfishness molds your actions, you do not see your need of God and of a deep and thorough knowledge of His will. You know not the will of God, neither can you know it while you live for self. You rely upon your good intentions and resolutions, and the principal sum of life is composed of resolutions made and resolutions broken. What you all need is to die to self, cease clinging to self, and surrender to God. Gladly would I comfort you if I could. Gladly would I praise your good qualities, good purposes, and good acts; but God was not pleased to show me these. He presented before me the hindrances to your gaining the noble, elevated character of holiness needful for you to have that you may not lose the heavenly rest and immortal glory He would have you attain. Look away from yourselves to Jesus. He is all and in all. The merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour will avail to cleanse from the least and greatest sin. In trusting faith commit the keeping of your souls to God as unto a faithful Creator. Be not continually in fear and apprehension that God will leave you. He never will unless you depart from Him. Christ will come in and dwell with you if you will open the door of your hearts to Him. There may be perfect harmony between you and the Father and His Son if you will die to self and live unto God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 542, 543.

Lessons From the Wilderness

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”—*The General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 29, 1893.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 124–133.

Sunday

July 6

1. HISTORY

- a. What was a very old custom among God’s people when extraordinary events took place, and why? 1 Samuel 7:12; Joshua 4:5–7; Malachi 3:16.

“Every deliverance, every blessing, that God in the past has granted to His people, should be kept fresh in memory’s hall as a sure pledge of further and richer, increasing blessings that He will bestow. The Lord’s blessings are adapted to the needs of His people.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1183.

- b. Why is the study of history so important? Ecclesiastes 1:9; Romans 15:4.

“Every part of the Bible is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The Old Testament no less than the New should receive attention. As we study the Old Testament we shall find living springs bubbling up where the careless reader discerns only a desert.”—*Education*, p. 191.

“The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God’s dealing with men are ever the same.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 343.

2. ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS

- a. What specific Bible history is symbolic of God's people approaching the final days of earth's history? 1 Corinthians 10:6–15.
-

"The experience of Christians in these days is much like the travels of ancient Israel. Please read 1 Corinthians 10, especially from the 6th to the 15th verse."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 284.

- b. How did Satan manage to bar Israel from entering the Promised Land? What was his aim, and how is this a warning to us? Hebrews 3:9–12, 16, 17.
-

"Satan was determined to keep his hold on the land of Canaan, and when it was made the habitation of the children of Israel, and the law of God was made the law of the land, he hated Israel with a cruel and malignant hatred and plotted their destruction. Through the agency of evil spirits strange gods were introduced; and because of transgression, the chosen people were finally scattered from the Land of Promise."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 688, 689.

"The sin of unbelief, by which their confidence in the Son of God was destroyed, led Israel far astray. At the very time when they should have been praising God and magnifying the name of the Lord, talking of His goodness, telling of His power, they were found in unbelief, and full of murmuring and complaint. The deceiver was seeking through every means possible to sow discord among them, to create envy and hatred in their hearts against Moses, and to stir up rebellion against God."—*The Signs of the Times*, April 25, 1895.

"Some are always anticipating evil or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. The obstacles they encounter, instead of leading them to seek help from God, the only Source of strength, separate them from Him, because they awaken unrest and repining.

"Do we well to be thus unbelieving? Why should we be ungrateful and distrustful? Jesus is our friend; all heaven is interested in our welfare; and our anxiety and fear grieve the Holy Spirit of God. We should not indulge in a solicitude that only frets and wears us, but does not help us to bear trials. No place should be given to that distrust of God which leads us to make a preparation against future want the chief pursuit of life, as though our happiness consisted in these earthly things."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 293, 294.

3. A SEPARATED PEOPLE

- a. Since God's principles are distinct from the principles of the world, what is He calling for among us? Amos 3:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Mark 14:38.
-

"Our holy faith cries out, Separation."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 240.

"Christ's followers are required to come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and they have the promise of being the sons and daughters of the Most High, members of the royal family. But if the conditions are not complied with on their part, they will not, cannot, realize the fulfillment of the promise."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 441.

"This history [of evil spirits introducing strange gods to cause God's chosen people to transgress] Satan is striving to repeat in our day. God is leading His people out from the abominations of the world, that they may keep His law; and because of this, the rage of 'the accuser of our brethren' knows no bounds. . . . The antitypical land of promise is just before us, and Satan is determined to destroy the people of God and cut them off from their inheritance."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 689.

- b. What is the result of voluntary unity with the world? James 4:4.
-

"Whoever voluntarily enters into such [ungodly] relations will feel it necessary to conform, to some degree, to the habits and customs of his companions. The time thus spent is worse than wasted. Thoughts are entertained and words are spoken that tend to break down the strongholds of principle and to weaken the citadel of the soul."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 563.

"To parents who are living in the cities, the Lord is sending the warning cry, Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the cities as fast as possible."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 400.

- c. What question should we ask ourselves? 2 Corinthians 13:5.

"It is the duty of every child of God to inquire: 'Wherein am I separate from the world?' Let us suffer a little inconvenience, and be on the safe side."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 278.

4. THE MODERN RED SEA

- a. **Why was Israel's 40-year wilderness wandering needed? Numbers 32:11–13.**

“[Most of the Israelites] had complained at nothing, and now God gave them cause to weep. Had they mourned for their sin when it was faithfully laid before them, this sentence [to wander in the wilderness for forty years] would not have been pronounced.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 392.

- b. **What marked the entrance into Israel's time of testing in the wilderness, and what marked its conclusion? Exodus 14:21, 22, 29–30; Joshua 3:15–17; 4:18. How is this paralleled in the history of the Advent believers?**

“The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But ‘they could not enter in because of unbelief’ (Hebrews 3:19). Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 457, 458.

5. SIMILAR TRIALS

- a. **What types of issues will the people of God be facing in these last days? Numbers 11:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6.**

“It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in ‘because of unbelief.’ Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—*Evangelism*, p. 696.

- b. **Lust was the problem the Israelites faced in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:6). In this context, what lust will we be facing in our time? Philippians 3:19; 1 Samuel 15:23.**

“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.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 377, 378.

“With the history of the children of Israel before us, let us take heed, and not be found committing the same sins, following in the same way of unbelief and rebellion.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 18, 1893.

THOUGHT AND REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. How can the study of history be of great value to us?
- b. What Bible history is cited as a type for God's church in the last days?
- c. How does voluntary association with unbelievers affect believers?
- d. What event in the history of modern Israel compares to the crossing of the Red Sea?
- e. What are the sins that delay the second coming of Christ?

"It was not the teaching of the schools of Egypt that enabled Moses to triumph over his enemies, but an ever-abiding, unflinching faith, a faith that did not fail under the most trying circumstances. At the command of God, Moses advanced, although apparently there was nothing ahead for his feet to tread upon. More than a million people were depending on him, and he led them forward step by step, day by day. God permitted these lonely travels through the wilderness that His people might obtain an experience in enduring hardship, and that when they were in peril they might know that there was relief and deliverance in God alone. Thus they might learn to know and to trust God, and to serve Him with a living faith."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 408, 409.

"Temptations will come to us in the most seductive guise, but it is at our peril that we turn from the plain command of God to follow the assertions of men. To follow the word of the Lord, to embrace the truth, involves cross-bearing and self-denial; but it is not safe to do otherwise than to bear the cross. As you see the light, walk in the light. Let a solemn, unalterable purpose take possession of you, and resolve in the strength and grace of God, that henceforth you will live for Him, and that no earthly consideration shall persuade you to disown the divine law of ten commandments, and thus disown your Saviour and your God. Seek your counsel of God, and you will find that the path of obedience to His commandments is the path of the just, that 'shineth more and more unto the perfect day' (Proverbs 4:18).

"The first step in the path of obedience is to surrender the will to God. This may seem a difficult thing to do; for Satan will present every possible objection, and will manufacture difficulties, and magnify perplexities before the mind; but take the first step, and the next step on the ladder of progress will be easier. The ladder of progress must be climbed round by round; but God is above the ladder, and His glory will illuminate every step of advancement. The path of faith and self-denial is an upward path; its way is heavenward, and as you advance, the misleading clouds of doubt and evil will be left behind."—*The Review and Herald*, October 9, 1894.

Following the Ark

“When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it” (Joshua 3:3).

“Study carefully the experiences of Israel in their travels to Canaan. Study the third and fourth chapters of Joshua, recording their preparation for and passage over the Jordan into the promised land.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 994.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 348, 349; 481–486.

Sunday

July 13

1. RECEIVING GUIDANCE

- a. **Where did the children of Israel encamp before crossing into the Promised Land? Joshua 3:1.**

“The Israelites were still encamped on the east side of Jordan, which presented the first barrier to the occupation of Canaan. ‘Arise,’ had been the first message of God to Joshua, ‘go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them’ (Joshua 1:2). No instruction was given as to the way in which they were to make the passage. Joshua knew, however, that whatever God should command, He would make a way for His people to perform, and in this faith the intrepid leader at once began his arrangements for an advance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 482.

- b. **During the time of their preparation for the longed-for crossing, what event were the people waiting for as the signal for advance? Joshua 3:2, 3.**

“The ‘ark of the covenant’ was to lead the way before the host. When [the Israelites] should see the token of Jehovah’s presence, borne by the priests, remove from its place in the center of the camp, and advance toward the river, then they were to remove from their place, ‘and go after it.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 483, 484.

2. THE SYMBOL OF GOD'S PRESENCE

- a. Why was a great space required between the ark and the congregation? What were they to follow in order to have absolute safety? Joshua 3:4.
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"At the appointed time began the onward movement, the ark, borne upon the shoulders of the priests, leading the van. The people had been directed to fall back, so that there was a vacant space of more than half a mile about the ark. All watched with deep interest as the priests advanced down the bank of the Jordan."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 484.

- b. What was God preparing to show them once again as they continued their journey? Joshua 3:5.
-

"Leaving their encampment in the acacia groves of Shittim, the host descended to the border of the Jordan. All knew, however, that without divine aid they could not hope to make the passage. At this time of the year—in the spring season—the melting snows of the mountains had so raised the Jordan that the river overflowed its banks, making it impossible to cross at the usual fording places. God willed that the passage of Israel over Jordan should be miraculous. Joshua, by divine direction, commanded the people to sanctify themselves; they must put away their sins and free themselves from all outward impurity; 'for tomorrow,' he said, 'the Lord will do wonders among you.'"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 483.

- c. At the time of the remarkable event, what commands of Joshua prepared the people to move in an orderly and godly fashion? Joshua 3:6, 7.
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"When ancient Israel journeyed, the ark of the covenant went before them. Beneath the mercy seat, which was the cover of the ark, were the tables of the law. The ark was a symbol of the presence of God; and the glory of the Lord, which is His righteousness, shall be the rearward of His people"—*The Review and Herald*, February 20, 1894.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE JORDAN MIRACLE

- a. How was the miraculous crossing of the Jordan going to give the people an assurance of victory in their future endeavors to conquer the Promised Land? Joshua 3:8–10.
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“When the tidings that God had stayed the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, reached the kings of the Amorites and of the Canaanites, their hearts melted with fear. The Hebrews had already slain the five kings of Midian, the powerful Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og of Bashan, and now the passage over the swollen and impetuous Jordan filled all the surrounding nations with terror. To the Canaanites, to all Israel, and to Joshua himself, unmistakable evidence had been given that the living God, the King of heaven and earth, was among His people, and that He would not fail them nor forsake them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 485.

- b. What can we learn from the way some were called to take the lead in exercising faith by entering the turbulent waters of Jordan? Joshua 3:14, 15.
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“The priests obeyed the commands of their leader and went before the people, carrying the ark of the covenant. The Hebrew hosts took up the line of march and followed this symbol of the divine presence. The wide column filed down the bank of Jordan, and, as the feet of the priests were dipped in the brim of the river, the water was cut off from above, and the volume below rolled on, leaving the bed of the stream dry. The priests passed on, bearing the ark of God, and Israel followed in the rear. Halfway over Jordan the priests were commanded to stand still in the channel of the river till all the Hebrew host had crossed over. This was to impress upon their minds more forcibly the fact that the power which stayed the waters of Jordan was the same that enabled their fathers to cross the Red Sea forty years before.”—*Testimonies*, p. vol. 4, p. 157.

“Young men who have never made a success in the temporal duties of life will be equally unprepared to engage in the higher duties. A religious experience is gained only through conflict, through disappointment, through severe discipline of self, through earnest prayer. The steps to heaven must be taken one at a time, and every advance step gives strength for the next.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 100.

4. MEMORIALS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- a. As the Israelites moved forward in faith, what miracle made it possible for the entire people to cross over into the land of Canaan? Joshua 3:11–17.
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“[The congregation] saw [the priests] with the sacred ark move steadily forward toward the angry, surging stream, till the feet of the bearers were dipped into the waters. Then suddenly the tide above was swept back, while the current below flowed on, and the bed of the river was laid bare.

“At the divine command the priests advanced to the middle of the channel and stood there while the entire host descended and crossed to the farther side. Thus was impressed upon the minds of all Israel the fact that the power that stayed the waters of Jordan was the same that had opened the Red Sea to their fathers forty years before. When the people had all passed over, the ark itself was borne to the western shore. No sooner had it reached a place of security, and ‘the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up unto the dry land,’ than the imprisoned waters, being set free, rushed down, a resistless flood, in the natural channel of the stream.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 484.

- b. What did God request once the people had crossed the river? Joshua 4:1–5. Why do we need tangible reminders of God's miracles? Revelation 12:11.
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“All should have something to say for the Lord, for by so doing they will be blest. A book of remembrance is written of those who do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but speak often one to another. The remnant are to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Some expect to overcome alone by the blood of the Lamb, without making any special effort of their own. I saw that God has been merciful in giving us the power of speech. He has given us a tongue, and we are accountable to Him for its use. We should glorify God with our mouth, speaking in honor of the truth and of His unbounded mercy, and overcome by the word of our testimony through the blood of the Lamb.”—*Early Writings*, p. 114.

“We become overcomers by helping others to overcome, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 974.

5. A PLACE OF COMMUNION

- a. **What was the purpose of the twelve stones that needed to be picked up from the midst of the Jordan's dry riverbed? Joshua 4:6-10, 20-24.**

"Coming generations were not to be without a witness to this great miracle [of crossing the Jordan]. While the priests bearing the ark were still in the midst of Jordan, twelve men previously chosen, one from each tribe, took up each a stone from the river bed where the priests were standing, and carried it over to the western side. These stones were to be set up as a monument in the first camping place beyond the river."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 484.

- b. **What was the first thing that entered the river, and what was the last thing that came out? Joshua 3:15; 4:18. Why do we need to keep our eyes on the ark of God? Numbers 10:33.**

"In all the journeyings of Israel, 'the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, . . . to search out a resting place for them' (Numbers 10:33). Borne by the sons of Kohath, the sacred chest containing God's holy law was to lead the van. Before it went Moses and Aaron; and the priests, bearing silver trumpets, were stationed near. These priests received directions from Moses, which they communicated to the people by the trumpets. It was the duty of the leaders of each company to give definite directions concerning all the movements to be made, as indicated by the trumpets. Whoever neglected to comply with the directions given was punished with death.

"God is a God of order. Everything connected with heaven is in perfect order; subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. Success can only attend order and harmonious action. God requires order and system in His work now no less than in the days of Israel. All who are working for Him are to labor intelligently, not in a careless, haphazard manner. He would have His work done with faith and exactness, that He may place the seal of His approval upon it."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 375, 376.

- c. **Where was the communication center with God found among His ancient people? Exodus 25:21, 22. Through what source do we have access to such a center today? 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:16.**

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. In their travels, upon what were the Israelites expected to keep their eye in order to be found faithful in every trying situation?
- b. What was associated with the ark that made it so important?
- c. What did God design to have the new generation experience as they entered the Promised Land through a miracle?
- d. What is the purpose of erecting memorials or reminders of special events in our life?
- e. If we want to be preserved, at what do we need to keep looking?

"We need to keep the heart and mind in training, by refreshing the memory with the lessons that the Lord taught His ancient people. Then to us, as He designed it should be to them, the teachings of His Word will ever be interesting and impressive."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 994.

"Every deliverance, every blessing, that God in the past has granted to His people, should be kept fresh in memory's hall as a sure pledge of further and richer, increasing blessings that He will bestow. The Lord's blessings are adapted to the needs of His people."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 1183.

"God permitted His ark to be taken by [Israel's] enemies the Philistines in the days of Eli], to show Israel how vain it was to trust in the ark, the symbol of His presence, while they were profaning the commandments contained in the ark. God would humble them by removing from them that sacred ark, their boasted strength and confidence."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 404.

"Israel trusted in the ark of God and worshipped it instead of the God which the ark represented. And the Lord removed from His people the symbol of His presence, the assurance to them of the presence and power of God. Then the Jewish nation no longer stood as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. They had forgotten their God, and were scattered into all parts of the world. Those who were loyal and steadfast and true in obedience to His commandments, the Lord favored. . . . Even in the land of their captivity was the Lord God revealed. For all who were faithful, wherever they were, the way was left open to approach God through prayer and supplication and heavenly communion."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 210.

"How few are aware that they have darling idols, that they have cherished sins! God sees these sins to which you may be blinded, and He works with His pruning knife to strike deep and separate these cherished sins from you. You all want to choose for yourselves the process of purification."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 543.

Statutes and Judgments

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments” (Malachi 4:4).

“That God who reads the hearts of everyone, will bring to light hidden things of darkness where they are often least suspected, that stumbling blocks which have hindered the progress of truth may be removed, and God have a clean and holy people to declare His statutes and judgments.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 333.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 307–310, 824.

Sunday

July 20

1. GOD'S LAW IN OUR LIFE

- a. **What item in the ark of the covenant reveals the character of our Creator? Matthew 22:36–40; 1 John 4:7, 8; 5:3.**

“The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 52.

“God has set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory.”—*Ibid.*, p. 207.

- b. **Besides a clear understanding and belief of the truth, what else do we need in order to be saved? Matthew 5:20; 19:17–19; James 2:10; Galatians 5:6.**

“You may believe all the truth; yet if its principles are not carried out in your lives, your profession will not save you.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 161.

“The righteousness which Christ taught is conformity of heart and life to the revealed will of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 310.

2. CLARIFYING THE DECALOGUE

- a. **Because of God's great love for those who had lost their understanding of His law, what further clarification did He send? Deuteronomy 4:1, 2.**
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"[God] came still closer to His people, who were so readily led astray, and would not leave them with merely the ten precepts of the Decalogue. He commanded Moses to write, as He should bid him, judgments and laws, giving minute directions in regard to what He required them to perform, and thereby guarded the ten precepts which He had engraved upon the tables of stone. These specific directions and requirements were given to draw erring man to the obedience of the moral law, which he is so prone to transgress.

"If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved in the ark by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a token or pledge, they would never have gone into idolatry, nor been suffered to go down into Egypt, and there would have been no necessity of God's proclaiming His law from Sinai and engraving it upon tables of stone and guarding it by definite directions in the judgments and statutes given to Moses.

"Moses wrote these judgments and statutes from the mouth of God while he was with Him in the mount. If the people of God had obeyed the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the specific directions given to Moses, which he wrote in a book, relative to their duty to God and to one another. The definite directions which the Lord gave to Moses in regard to the duty of His people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the Ten Commandments simplified and given in a definite manner, that they need not err."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 264, 265.

- b. **Since the statutes simply explain God's law, do they include more than the writings of Moses? Isaiah 8:20; 2 Kings 17:13; Luke 24:44, 45. Would they be included in the restoration of the breach in the law? Isaiah 58:12.**
-

"The law of God has been given for the regulation of our conduct, and it is far reaching in its principles. There is no sin, no work of unrighteousness, that escapes the condemnation of the law. The great statute book is truth, and truth only."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 316.

3. STATUTES THAT ARE NOT GOOD

- a. Did God ever give statutes that were not designed for the benefit of humanity—and if so, why? Ezekiel 20:19–26; Psalm 81:11, 12. Name one such example regarding the use of flesh meats. Deuteronomy 12:20, 21.

“In this instance [when quails were blown into the Israelite camp], the Lord gave the people that which was not for their best good, because they would have it. They would not submit to receive from the Lord only those things which would prove for their good.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 377.

“Because [the Israelites] were so determined to have the flesh of dead animals, [God] gave them the very diet He had withheld from them.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 277.

- b. Why does God give certain laws that are in conflict with His eternal principles? Ezekiel 14:1–5; Mark 10:5.

“Sin is the transgression of the law, and the arm that is now mighty to save will be strong to punish when the transgressor passes the bounds that limit divine forbearance. He who refuses to seek for life, who will not search the Scriptures to see what is truth, lest he should be condemned in his practices, will be left to blindness of mind and to the deceptions of Satan. To the same degree that the penitent and obedient are shielded by God’s love, the impenitent and disobedient will be left to the result of their own ignorance and hardness of heart, because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 313.

“God is no respecter of persons; but in every generation they that fear the Lord and work righteousness are accepted of Him; while those who are murmuring, unbelieving, and rebellious, will not have His favor or the blessings promised to those who love the truth and walk in it. Those who have the light and do not follow it, but disregard the requirements of God, will find that their blessings will be changed into curses, and their mercies into judgments. God would have us learn humility and obedience as we read the history of ancient Israel, who were His chosen and peculiar people, but who brought their own destruction by following their own ways.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 379.

4. EXAMPLES OF GOOD STATUTES

- a. Since some of the good statutes have to do with dietary reform, what is the result of obeying them? Genesis 1:29; Exodus 15:25, 26.
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“The importance of caring for the health should be taught as a Bible requirement. Perfect obedience to God’s commands calls for conformity to the laws of the being.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 295.

“[The Lord] made a covenant with [His people], if they would obey Him in all things, He would preserve them from disease.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 412.

- b. How does the New Testament show that the health statutes affect both body and soul? 3 John 2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.
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“In the preparation of a people for the Lord’s second coming a great work is to be accomplished through the promulgation of health principles. The people are to be instructed in regard to the needs of the physical organism and the value of healthful living as taught in the Scriptures, that the bodies which God has created may be presented to Him a living sacrifice, fitted to render Him acceptable service. There is a great work to be done for suffering humanity in relieving their sufferings by the use of the natural agencies that God has provided and in teaching them how to prevent sickness by the regulation of the appetites and passions. The people should be taught that transgression of the laws of nature is transgression of the laws of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 224, 225.

“The science of education includes as full a knowledge of physiology as can be obtained. No one can properly understand his obligations to God unless he understands clearly his obligations to himself as God’s property. He who remains in sinful ignorance of the laws of life and health, or who willfully violates these laws, sins against God.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 295.

“Let it ever be kept before the mind that the great object of hygienic reform is to secure the highest possible development of mind and soul and body. All the laws of nature—which are the laws of God—are designed for our good. Obedience to them will promote our happiness in this life, and will aid us in a preparation for the life to come.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 120.

5. ETERNAL STATUTES

- a. **What is said about the statutes in these last days—and the results which follow if God’s people obey them? Malachi 4:2, 4.**

“In consequence of continual transgression, the moral law was repeated in awful grandeur from Sinai. Christ gave to Moses religious precepts which were to govern everyday life. These statutes were explicitly given to guard the ten commandments. They were not shadowy types to pass away with the death of Christ. They were to be binding upon men in every age as long as time should last. These commands were enforced by the power of the moral law, and they clearly and definitely explained that law.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1104.

“As men, women, and children proclaim the gospel, the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see His statutes, and will write upon the hearts of the truly penitent His law. The animating Spirit of God, working through human agencies, leads the believers to be of one mind, one soul, unitedly loving God and keeping His commandment—preparing here below for translation.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 984.

- b. **Why are these statutes part of the restoration to be accomplished by the Elijah people in the last days? Malachi 4:5, 6; Matthew 11:14.**

“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. The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. 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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 62.

“Many are not obeying the commandments of God, yet they profess so to do. If they would be faithful to obey all the statutes of God they would have a power which would carry conviction to the hearts of the unbelieving.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 446, 447.

“The instructions given to Moses for ancient Israel, with their sharp, rigid outlines, are to be studied and obeyed by the people of God today.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1103.

“How can we pass on so indifferently, choosing our own course, following the sight of our own eyes, and departing farther and farther from God, as did the Hebrews? God cannot do great things for His people because of their hardness of heart and sinful unbelief.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 379.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why does God expect more than a mere intellectual assent to the truth?
- b. How did God reacquaint His people with the principles of His law?
- c. Because of rebellion against the revealed will of God, what was introduced to His people, and what were the results?
- d. What are some specific examples of the good statutes?
- e. Before Christ returns, what is included in the restoration process?

“From Genesis to Revelation the conditions upon which eternal life is promised, are made plain. God requires that those who shall enter heaven shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Keep my commandments and live, is the requirement of God. But one says, ‘My conscience does not condemn me in not keeping the commandments of God.’ But in the word of God we read that there are good and bad consciences and the fact that your conscience does not condemn you in not keeping the law of God, does not prove that you are uncondemned in His sight. Take your conscience to the word of God, and see if your life and character are in accordance with the standard of righteousness which God has there revealed. You can then determine whether or not you have an intelligent faith, and what manner of conscience is yours. The conscience of man cannot be trusted unless it is under the influence of divine grace. Satan takes advantage of an unenlightened conscience, and thereby leads men into all manner of delusions because they have not made the word of God their counselor.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901.

“The statutes concerning marriage, inheritance, and strict justice in deal with one another were peculiar and contrary to the customs and manners of other nations, and were designed of God to keep His people separate from other nations. The necessity of this, to preserve the people of God from becoming like the nations who had not the love and fear of God, is the same in this corrupt age, when the transgression of God’s law prevails and idolatry exists to a fearful extent. If ancient Israel needed such security, we need it more, to keep us from being utterly confounded with the transgressors of God’s law. The hearts of men are so prone to depart from God that there is a necessity for restraint and discipline.”—*Ibid.*, May 6, 1875.

“We have the example of ancient Israel, and the warning for us not to do as they did. Their history of unbelief and rebellion is left on record as a special warning that we should not follow their example of murmuring at God’s requirements.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 172.

First Sabbath Offering



for the missionary schools around the world

How great is the need for training! God's mandate in these last days is to educate and train an army of young men and women in such a way that they will be consistent, well-balanced Christians, able to understand and explain the Scriptures. With

the great work before us of enlightening the world, it is our duty to search earnestly the sacred word, that we may know what is truth, and be able to present it to others intelligently.

"In every land the want of education among our workers is painfully apparent. We realize that education is not only necessary to the proper fulfillment of the duties of domestic life, but necessary for success in all branches of usefulness.

"In view of the need of education for the work of God, and for the successful fulfillment of the various responsibilities of life, how thankful should we be that a school is about to be opened in _____ under the direction of earnest believers in the truth for this time. For the success of this new enterprise, for the benefit it will bring to you and your children, let all our brethren and sisters now take hold heartily to cooperate with those who have come to bear the burden of the work."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 202.

Brethren and sisters, by His grace God has opened the way for a few missionary schools to be established to prepare the youth to labor in His vineyard. Since the message of reformation has almost reached the different corners of the world, we are in great need of more trained workers. Therefore, more missionary schools are needed around the world.

On August 2, 2008, kindly remember this important cause with your help, so that this vital need can be fulfilled. May the Lord bless you abundantly.

M. Natarajan, GC Education Secretary

Two Laws

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).

“[Galatians 3:24 quoted.] . . . The Holy Spirit through the apostle [Paul] is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 234.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363–373.

Sunday

July 27

1. THE ETERNAL MORAL LAW

- a. **What was one of the purposes for which Jesus came into the world? From what does He save us? Matthew 1:21. How can we recognize sin in our life? Romans 3:20; 7:7, 12; Psalm 19:7.**

“It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 763.

“By [Christ’s] perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312.

“Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin and feel no need of repentance.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 468.

- b. **How did Christ relate to the moral law? Isaiah 42:21; Matthew 5:17–20, 27, 28. Luke 16:17, 18. What did Paul write about the moral law? Romans 2:12, 13, 17, 21–27; 3:31; 8:7.**

“Satan is seeking to destroy the force of the Ten Commandments, urging his agents to declare that Christ nailed them to His cross. The cross is an immutable argument of the unchangeable character of the law of God. Christ died in order that a way might be provided for saving the sinner, in meeting the demands of the broken law.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 12, 1896.

2. WHICH IS WHICH?

a. Which law is called “a schoolmaster,” and why? Galatians 3:24.

“When the mind is drawn to the cross of Calvary, Christ by imperfect sight is discerned on the shameful cross. Why did He die? In consequence of sin. What is sin? The transgression of the law. Then the eyes are open to see the character of sin. The law is broken but cannot pardon the transgressor. It is our schoolmaster, condemning to punishment. Where is the remedy? The law drives us to Christ, who was hanged upon the cross that He might be able to impart His righteousness to fallen, sinful man.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 341.

“What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments.

“Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The death of Abel was in consequence of Cain’s refusing to accept God’s plan in the school of obedience to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ typified by the sacrificial offerings pointing to Christ. Cain refused the shedding of blood which symbolized the blood of Christ to be shed for the world. This whole ceremony was prepared by God, and Christ became the foundation of the whole system. This is the beginning of its work as the schoolmaster to bring sinful human agents to a consideration of Christ the Foundation of the whole Jewish economy.

“All who did service in connection with the sanctuary were being educated constantly in regard to the intervention of Christ in behalf of the human race. This service was designed to create in every heart a love for the law of God, which is the law of His kingdom. The sacrificial offering was to be an object lesson of the love of God revealed in Christ—in the suffering, dying victim, who took upon Himself the sin of which man was guilty, the innocent being made sin for us.”—*Ibid.*, p. 233.

b. What does the Bible say about the ceremonial law? Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 10:1.

“The ceremonial law was to answer a particular purpose in Christ’s plan for the salvation of the race. The typical system of sacrifices and offerings was established that through these services the sinner might discern the great offering, Christ.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 106.

3. SHADOWS OF THINGS TO COME

- a. Why did the ceremonial law—the shadow of future things—come to an end? Colossians 2:16, 17, 20; Hebrews 10:4; 9:11, 12, 15.
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“There are many who try to blend these two [legal] systems, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ ‘took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross’ (Colossians 2:14).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 365.

“God’s people, whom He calls His peculiar treasure, were privileged with a twofold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, given because of man’s transgression of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption. Each is clear and distinct from the other.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1094.

- b. Who was among the first to offer an animal sacrifice, and what did this represent? Hebrews 11:4; John 1:29; Hebrews 9:28.
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“The typical service and the ceremonies connected with it were abolished at the cross. The great antitypical Lamb of God had become an offering for guilty man, and the shadow ceased in the substance.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1061.

“Our Saviour, in His life and death, fulfilled all the prophecies pointing to Himself, and was the substance of all the types and shadows signified.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 231.

4. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IN SYMBOLS

- a. Why were animal sacrifices required? Hebrews 9:22; 10:10–14.

“In the plan of redemption there must be the shedding of blood, for death must come in consequence of man’s sin. The beasts for sacrificial offerings were to prefigure Christ. In the slain victim, man was to see the fulfillment for the time being of God’s word, ‘Ye shall surely die.’ And the flowing of the blood from the victim would also signify an atonement.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 3, 1874.

“The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

- b. After the children of Israel had suffered under bondage in Egypt, what special service was introduced to be more specific in the representation of Jesus Christ? Leviticus 23:5; 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8.

“It was Christ’s desire to leave to His disciples an ordinance that would do for them the very thing they needed—that would serve to disentangle them from the rites and ceremonies which they had hitherto engaged in as essential, and which the reception of the gospel made no longer of any force. To continue these rites would be an insult to Jehovah.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1139, 1140.

“[Christ] kept the moral law and exalted it by answering its claims as man’s representative. Those of Israel who turned to the Lord, and accepted Christ as the reality shadowed forth by the typical sacrifices, discerned the end of that which was to be abolished.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 231.

- c. What was the blood of animals unable to accomplish? Hebrews 7:19; 10:4. How only is complete cleansing obtained? Acts 4:12; 9:43; John 1:19.
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5. DONE AWAY

- a. **On many occasions in the history of the Jewish nation, what was so very difficult for them to understand? Isaiah 1:11–15. Why? Isaiah 1:6. What did the early Christians therefore understand?**

“The Jews had prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services; and they concluded that as God once specified the Hebrew manner of worship, it was impossible that He should ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. They decided that Christianity must connect itself with the Jewish laws and ceremonies. They were slow to discern to the end of that which had been abolished by the death of Christ, and to perceive that all their sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type had met its antitype rendering valueless the divinely appointed ceremonies and sacrifices of the Jewish religion.”—*Sketches From the Life of Paul*, pp. 64, 65.

“[Paul] knew that the typical ceremonies must soon altogether cease, since that which they had shadowed forth had come to pass, and the light of the gospel was shedding its glory upon the Jewish religion, giving a new significance to its ancient rites.”—*Ibid.*, p. 65.

“[In Acts 15:13–29], . . . it was [the apostle James’] sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, be not in any wise urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 69.

- b. **While the Jews used the sacrificial system as a license to sin, what type of sacrifices was God really seeking? Psalm 51:17–19; Isaiah 1:16–18.**

“Paul did not bind himself nor his converts to the ceremonies and customs of the Jews, with their varied forms, types, and sacrifices; for he recognized that the perfect and final offering had been made in the death of the Son of God. The age of clearer light and knowledge had now come. And although the early education of Paul had blinded his eyes to this light, and led him to bitterly oppose the work of God, yet the revelation of Christ to him while on his way to Damascus had changed the whole current of his life. His character and works had now become a remarkable illustration of those of his divine Lord. His teaching led the mind to a more active spiritual life, that carried the believer above mere ceremonies. . . .

“He preached the cross of Christ.”—*Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 105.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why do we need to have a clear understanding of the principles of the Ten Commandments?
- b. Why did the death of Christ make the entire ceremonial law no longer valid?
- c. What are we actually doing if we continue to keep the ceremonial law—including the Passover—after the crucifixion?
- d. Whose blood do we need in order to have actual cleansing from sin?
- e. Because there are statutes directly connected to the ceremonial law, as well as to the moral law, which ones are we to study and implement today?

“The Jews had become familiar with the offering of blood, and had almost lost sight of the fact that it was sin which made necessary all this shedding of the blood of beasts. They did not discern that it prefigured the blood of God’s dear Son, which was to be shed for the life of the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 589, 590.

“The moral law was never a type or a shadow. It existed before man’s creation, and will endure as long as God’s throne remains. God could not change nor alter one precept of His law in order to save man; for the law is the foundation of His government. It is unchangeable, unalterable, infinite, and eternal. In order for man to be saved, and for the honor of the law to be maintained, it was necessary for the Son of God to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He died for us on Calvary. His death shows the wonderful love of God for man, and the immutability of His law.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 239, 240.

“The Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes.”—*Early Writings*, p. 33.

“After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering, the ceremonial law could have no force. Yet it was connected with the moral law, and was glorious. The whole bore the stamp of divinity, and expressed the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God. And if the ministration of the dispensation to be done away was glorious, how much more must the reality be glorious, when Christ was revealed, giving His life-giving, sanctifying Spirit to all who believe?”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 147.

The Pot of Manna

“There was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant” (Hebrews 9:2–4).

“In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. . . . In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book.”—*Early Writings*, p. 32.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 291–297.
Early Writings, pp. 32, 33.

Sunday

August 3

1. DELIVERANCE

- a. What was one of the most important events in the history of Israel, and how was it commemorated each year? Exodus 12:11.**

“The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 652.

- b. How long did it take to go from Egypt to the wilderness of Sin (which is between Elim and Sinai)? Exodus 15:27; 16:1.**

“[At Elim the people] remained several days before entering the wilderness of Sin. When they had been a month absent from Egypt, they made their first encampment in the wilderness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 292.

2. MURMURING

- a. **Arriving at their next major resting point, what was the very first thing the children of Israel began to do, showing their complete sense of insecurity? Exodus 16:2.**
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“[The Israelites’] store of provisions had now begun to fail. There was scanty herbage in the wilderness, and their flocks were diminishing. How was food to be supplied for these vast multitudes? Doubts filled their hearts, and again they murmured. Even the rulers and elders of the people joined in complaining against the leaders of God’s appointment. . . .

“They had not as yet suffered from hunger; their present wants were supplied, but they feared for the future. They could not understand how these vast multitudes were to subsist in their travels through the wilderness, and in imagination they saw their children famishing. The Lord permitted difficulties to surround them, and their supply of food to be cut short, that their hearts might turn to Him who had hitherto been their Deliverer. If in their want they would call upon Him, He would still grant them manifest tokens of His love and care. He had promised that if they would obey His commandments, no disease should come upon them, and it was sinful unbelief on their part to anticipate that they or their children might die for hunger.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 292.

- b. **As we consider all the murmurings during the wilderness sojourn, who was the real target of such grumblings? If we murmur today, who is the real target of our complaints? Exodus 16:6–10.**
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“God is displeased with the disposition that some have to murmur against those who have fought the heaviest battles for them, and who endured so much in the beginning of the message, when the work went hard. The experienced laborers—those who toiled under the weight and the oppressive burdens when there were but few to help bear them—God regards; and He has a jealous care for those who have proved faithful. He is displeased with those who are ready to find fault with and reproach the servants of God who have grown gray in building up the cause of present truth. Your reproaches and murmurings, young men, will surely stand against you in the day of God.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 318.

3. QUAILS FOR A DAY

- a. After only a month on their journey, what were the Israelites already lusting for, showing how controlling our evil desires can become? Exodus 16:3.
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“In Egypt [the Israelites’] taste had become perverted. God designed to restore their appetite to a pure, healthy state, in order that they might enjoy the simple fruits that were given to Adam and Eve in Eden. He was about to establish them in a second Eden, a goodly land, where they might enjoy the fruits and grains that He would provide for them. He purposed to remove the feverish diet upon which they had subsisted in Egypt; for He wished them to be in perfect health and soundness when they entered the goodly land.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1102.

- b. With what did God supply their needs and wants? Exodus 16:11–15. What should we learn from His step-by-step method of leading?
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“We cannot expect worldlings to accept at once that which our people have been years in learning. Even now there are many of our ministers who do not practice health reform, notwithstanding the light they have had. We cannot expect those who do not realize the need of abstemiousness in diet, who have had no practical experiences on this subject, to take at once the wide step between self-indulgence in eating and the most strenuous diet in health reform.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 288.

- c. How long were quails provided? Is there a record of any negative results from eating flesh food at that time? Exodus 16:12.
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“At the giving of the manna, just before Israel reached Sinai, the Lord had granted them flesh in answer to their clamors; but it was furnished them for only one day.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 378.

“Murmuring and tumults had been frequent during the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai, but in pity for their ignorance and blindness God had not then visited the sin with judgments.” —*Ibid.*, p. 379.

4. LESSONS FROM THE MANNA

- a. What was the manna like, how long was it to be used, and why? Numbers 11:7–9; Exodus 16:35; Joshua 5:10–12.

“For forty years [the children of Israel] were daily reminded by this miraculous provision, of God’s unfailing care and tender love.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 297.

- b. What was the main purpose of this miraculous provision? Exodus 16:4 (last part); Psalm 105:45; James 1:2–4, 12.

“God’s children are always being tested in the furnace of affliction. If they endure the first trial, it is not necessary for them to pass through a similar ordeal the second time; but if they fail, the trial is brought to them again and again, each time being still more trying and severe. . . .

“Sorrow and trial must come to all, and is beautiful only as it works to polish, to sanctify, and refine the soul as a fit instrument to do service for the Lord.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1146.

- c. How was this a test on the seventh-day Sabbath? Exodus 16:5, 16–20, 22–26.

“A threefold miracle was wrought in honor of the Sabbath, even before the law was given on Sinai. A double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none upon the Sabbath, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time, it became unfit for food. Here is conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was instituted at creation.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1884.

- d. How does this experience show that the children of Israel already understood the law before reaching Mount Sinai? Exodus 16:27–30.
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5. A POT PRESERVED AS A MEMORIAL

- a. Because of God's monumental miracle in the dry desert, what did He give for a continual reminder of His miraculous provisions? Exodus 16:32, 33.

- b. Where was this pot of manna placed? How then are we to consider healthful diet in relation to the Decalogue? Exodus 16:34; Hebrews 9:3, 4.

"In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. . . . In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book."—*Early Writings*, p. 32.

"In the ark, beneath where the angels' wings were spread, was a golden pot of manna, of a yellowish cast; and I saw a rod, which Jesus said was Aaron's; I saw it bud, blossom, and bear fruit."—*A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 16.

- c. What does this manna preservation also tell us about our obligation to heed the instructions relating to the Sabbath? Exodus 16:23.

"The Lord is no less particular now in regard to His Sabbath than when He gave the foregoing special directions to the children of Israel. He required them to bake that which they would bake, and seethe (that is, boil) that which they would seethe, on the sixth day, preparatory to the rest of the Sabbath. Those who neglect to prepare for the Sabbath on the sixth day, and who cook food upon the Sabbath, violate the fourth commandment and are transgressors of God's law. All who are really anxious to observe the Sabbath according to the commandment will not cook any food upon the Sabbath. They will, in the fear of that God who gave His law from Sinai, deny themselves, and eat food prepared upon the sixth day, even if it is not so palatable. God forbade the children of Israel baking and boiling upon the Sabbath. That prohibition should be regarded by every Sabbath-keeper, as a solemn injunction from Jehovah to them. The Lord would guard His people from indulging in gluttony upon the Sabbath, which He has set apart for sacred meditation and worship."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 225, 226.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why does insecurity over the future too often trigger fear in us, causing us to murmur against God and His chosen leaders?
- b. How long was flesh given, compared to manna?
- c. How does God lead people in progressive steps of reform?
- d. What does the manna experience teach us about Sabbathkeeping?
- e. What should we learn from the fact that the manna was placed in the ark?

“Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. . . . Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 187.

Lusting After Flesh Meat

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

“When persons are spoken to on the subject of health, they often say, ‘We know a great deal better than we do.’ They do not realize that they are accountable for every ray of light in regard to their physical well-being, and that their every habit is open to the inspection of God.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 19.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 369–379.

Sunday

August 10

1. GOD HAD A PLAN

- a. When did the Israelites arrive at the great educational center of the wilderness, and what did God expect them to become? Exodus 19:1–6; Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Peter 2:9.

“Soon after the encampment at Sinai, Moses was called up into the mountain to meet with God. Alone he climbed the steep and rugged path, and drew near to the cloud that marked the place of Jehovah’s presence. Israel was now to be taken into a close and peculiar relation to the Most High—to be incorporated as a church and a nation under the government of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 303.

“[The Israelities’] obedience to the law of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world. He who could give them wisdom and skill in all cunning work would continue to be their teacher, and would ennoble and elevate them through obedience to His laws. If obedient, they would be preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations, and would be blessed with vigor of intellect. The glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their prosperity. They were to be a kingdom of priests and princes. God furnished them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 288.

2. THE “SCHOOL” AT SINAI

- a. What principles were the children of Israel to learn while encamped around Mount Sinai? Exodus 19:10, 11; 20:1–17.
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“The people were to be impressed that everything connected with the service of God must be regarded with the greatest reverence. . . . Their person and their clothing must be freed from impurity. And as Moses should point out their sins, they were to devote themselves to humiliation, fasting, and prayer, that their hearts might be cleansed from iniquity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 303, 304.

- b. What can we learn from Israel as we seek to help others in matters of health? Psalm 78:24.
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“In all cases educate the conscience, enlist the will, supply good, wholesome food, and the change will be readily made, and the demand for flesh will soon cease.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 317.

- c. As soon as Israel departed from Sinai, after what did they again lust? Numbers 11:4–6. How is this a warning to us?
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“God continued to feed the Hebrew host with the bread rained from heaven; but they were not satisfied. Their depraved appetites craved meat, which God in His wisdom had withheld, in a great measure, from them. . . . Satan, the author of disease and misery, will approach God’s people where he can have the greatest success. He has controlled the appetite in a great measure from the time of his successful experiment with Eve, in leading her to eat the forbidden fruit. He came with his temptations first to the mixed multitude, the believing Egyptians, and stirred them up to seditious murmurings. They would not be content with the healthful food which God had provided for them. Their depraved appetites craved a greater variety, especially flesh meats.

“This murmuring soon infected nearly the whole body of the people. At first, God did not gratify their lustful appetites, but caused His judgments to come upon them, and consumed the most guilty by lightning from heaven. Yet this, instead of humbling them, only seemed to increase their murmurings.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 375, 376.

3. LUSTING AFTER FLESH FOOD AGAIN

- a. What type of flesh did the Israelites desire? Numbers 11:5; 1 Corinthians 15:39. Have fish also been affected by the curse of pollution in our days?

“The Lord’s curse is upon the earth, upon man, upon beasts, upon the fish in the sea; and as transgression becomes almost universal, the curse will be permitted to become as broad and as deep as the transgression. Disease is contracted by the use of meat.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 411.

- b. Although other foods are also mentioned, after what did the people actually lust? Numbers 11:10–13, 21–23, 31, 32.

- c. How long did they eat flesh on this occasion, compared to the first? Exodus 16:12; Numbers 11:18–20.

“Once before, when [the Israelites] received the manna just before they reached Sinai, the Lord had answered their clamors for flesh meat. They ate of it only one day, however, and then it was withheld because it was not the best article of food for them. Their murmurings now reflected upon the wisdom of God, as though He did not know just what they needed while travelling in the wilderness. The enemy perverted their imagination.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 12, 1880.

“The Lord understood what influence flesheating would have upon the human system. He would have a people that would, in their physical appearance, bear the divine credentials, notwithstanding their long journey. . . .

“Must the vegetables be animalized, must they be incorporated in the systems of animals before we get them? Must we obtain our vegetable diet by eating the flesh of dead creatures? God provided fruit in its natural state for our first parents. He gave to Adam charge of the garden, to dress it and to care for it, saying, ‘To you it shall be for meat’ (Genesis 1:29). One animal was not to destroy another animal for food. After the Fall, the eating of flesh was suffered in order to shorten the period of the existence of the long-lived race. It was allowed because of the hardness of the hearts of men.”—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 46.

4. SUFFERING CONSEQUENCES

- a. Because the Israelites had received great light, what did they have to suffer due to their willful departure from God's plan? Numbers 11:33, 34; Psalm 78:30, 31; 1 Corinthians 10:5, 6, 9–11.

"[The Israelites] gave themselves up to seditious murmurings against Moses, and against the Lord, because they did not receive those things which would prove an injury to them. Their depraved appetites controlled them, and God gave them fleshmeats, as they desired, and let them suffer the results of gratifying their lustful appetites. Burning fevers cut down very large numbers of the people. Those who had been the most guilty in their murmurings were slain as soon as they tasted the meat for which they had lusted. If they had submitted to have the Lord select their food for them, and had been thankful and satisfied with food which they could eat freely of without injury, they would not have lost the favor of God, and then been punished for their rebellious murmurings by great numbers of them being slain."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 284, 285.

"Self-denial is considered by some to be real suffering. Depraved appetites are indulged. And a restraint upon the unhealthy appetites would lead even many professed Christians to now start back, as though actual starvation would be the consequence of a plain diet. And, like the children of Israel, they would prefer slavery, diseased bodies, and even death, rather than to be deprived of the flesh pots. Bread and water is all that is promised to the remnant in the time of trouble."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 224.

- b. After Sinai, did God consider the Israelites ignorant? Acts 17:30; James 4:17; John 9:41.

"Murmuring and tumults had been frequent during the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai, but in pity for their ignorance and blindness God had not then visited the sin with judgments. But since that time He had revealed Himself to them at Horeb. They had received great light, as they had been witnesses to the majesty, the power, and the mercy of God; and their unbelief and discontent incurred the greater guilt. Furthermore, they had covenanted to accept Jehovah as their king and to obey His authority. Their murmuring was now rebellion, and as such it must receive prompt and signal punishment, if Israel was to be preserved from anarchy and ruin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 379.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY: EATING FLESH BECAME A SIN

- a. How does the psalmist summarize the Hebrews' two experiences in the wilderness with flesh foods? Psalm 78:18–29.

“[Satan] has controlled the appetite in a great measure from the time of his successful experiment with Eve, in leading her to eat the forbidden fruit. He came with his temptations first to the mixed multitude, the believing Egyptians, and stirred them up to seditious murmurings. They would not be content with the healthful food which God had provided for them. Their depraved appetites craved a greater variety, especially flesh meats.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 375, 376.

“Any violation of the laws of nature is a violation of the law of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1105.

“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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 150.

- b. How is the specific record of Israel's murmuring summarized by Inspiration? Psalm 78:17, 32. What warning should we heed? 1 Corinthians 10:5, 6; Isaiah 22:12–14 (cf Isaiah 22:20–22; Revelation 3:7).

“It is a duty to know how to preserve the body in the very best condition of health, and it is a sacred duty to live up to the light which God has graciously given. If we close our eyes to the light for fear we shall see our wrongs, which we are unwilling to forsake, our sins are not lessened but increased. If light is turned from in one case, it will be disregarded in another. It is just as much sin to violate the laws of our being as to break one of the Ten Commandments, for we cannot do either without breaking God's law. We cannot love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength while we are loving our appetites, our tastes, a great deal better than we love the Lord. We are daily lessening our strength to glorify God, when He requires all our strength, all our mind.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 70.

“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 69.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why did God have the Israelites spend nearly a year at Mount Sinai?
- b. Who were usually the first ones to murmur, and what were they specifically desiring?
- c. In an attempt to cure the people of lusting after flesh meats, how long were they given it on the second occasion?
- d. Who suffered the greatest consequences of this disobedience?
- e. Why must the use of flesh be discarded by those who know the present truth?

"If the Israelites had been given the diet to which they had been accustomed while in Egypt, they would have exhibited the unmanageable spirit that the world is exhibiting today. In the diet of men and women in this age there are included many things that the Lord would not have permitted the children of Israel to eat. The human family as it is today is an illustration of what the children of Israel would have been if God had allowed them to eat the food and follow the habits and customs of the Egyptians."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1102.

"Many say, I know that we have wrong habits that are injuring our health; but our habits have become formed, and it is next to impossible to change and do even as well as we know. By hurtful indulgences these are working against their own highest interest and happiness in this life, and are, in so doing, disqualifying themselves to obtain the future life. Many who are enlightened still follow in a course of transgression, excusing themselves that it is very inconvenient to be singular. Because the world at large choose to war against themselves and their highest earthly and eternal interest, they who know better venture to do the same, disregarding the light and knowledge which hold them responsible for the result of their violation of nature's laws. God is not responsible for the suffering which follows the nonconformity to natural law and moral obligations to Him. Enlightened transgressors are the worst of sinners, for they choose darkness rather than light. The laws that govern physical life, they may understand if they will; but the desire with them is so strong to follow popular, sensual indulgences of the day that are in opposition to physical and moral health, that they are insensible to its importance, and will not impress it upon others either by precept or example.

"Their neglect of this important subject exposes them to a fearful accountability. Not only are they suffering themselves the penalty of nature's violated law, but their example is leading others in the same course of transgression."—*The Health Reformer*, October 1, 1871.

The Pot of Manna Rejected

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16).

“True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful. There are few who realize as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562.

Suggested Reading: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 297, 452, 453, 19–22.

Sunday

August 17

1. THE ORIGINAL DIET

- a. As God is the Maker of the human organism, what type of diet did He design for His masterpiece of creation? Genesis 1:29.

“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 Foods*, p. 373.

“The diet appointed man in the beginning did not include animal food.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 311.

- b. What types of food became necessary once sin entered this world? Genesis 3:18; Psalm 104:14.

“Vegetables, fruits, and grains should compose our diet. Not an ounce of flesh meat should enter our stomachs. The eating of flesh is unnatural. We are to return to God’s original purpose in the creation of man.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 380.

2. A TEMPORARY CONCESSION

- a. **When—and under what circumstances—did the use of flesh food begin to be allowed? Genesis 8:13–19; 9:3, 4. How did the human lifespan change after that time? Compare Genesis 9:29; 11:32; 25:7; Psalm 90:10.**
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“Not till after the Flood, when every green thing on the earth had been destroyed, did man receive permission to eat flesh.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 311.

“After the Flood the people ate largely of animal food. God saw that the ways of man were corrupt, and that he was disposed to exalt himself proudly against his Creator and to follow the inclinations of his own heart. And He permitted that long-lived race to eat animal food to shorten their sinful lives.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 373.

- b. **Even during that time of permissiveness, what items were strictly forbidden under any circumstances? Genesis 9:4, 5; Leviticus 3:17; 7:26, 27; Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25. Why?**
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“Of the meats permitted, the eating of the fat and the blood was strictly forbidden.

“Only such animals could be used for food as were in good condition. No creature that was torn, that had died of itself, or from which the blood had not been carefully drained, could be used as food.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 312.

“The meat is served reeking with fat, because it suits the perverted taste. Both the blood and the fat of animals are consumed as a luxury. But the Lord gave special directions that these should not be eaten. Why? Because their use would make a diseased current of blood in the human system.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 393, 394.

- c. **In the wilderness, what was God attempting to restore among His people, and what were to be the results? Jeremiah 6:16 (first part). What work is to be accomplished before Christ’s return? Isaiah 58:12; Acts 3:20, 21.**

“Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to his original design—that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 380.

3. CLEAN/UNCLEAN: NEITHER WAS TRULY GOOD

- a. How did the Hebrews distinguish the types of flesh that were permitted as food from those that were forbidden for being very unhealthy? Leviticus 11:1–42; Deuteronomy 14:3–21.
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“The distinction between articles of food as clean and unclean was not a merely ceremonial and arbitrary regulation, but was based upon sanitary principles. To the observance of this distinction may be traced, in a great degree, the marvelous vitality which for thousands of years has distinguished the Jewish people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562.

“Upon their settlement in Canaan, the Israelites were permitted the use of animal food, but under careful restrictions which tended to lessen the evil results. The use of swine’s flesh was prohibited, as also of other animals and of birds and fish whose flesh was pronounced unclean.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 311, 312.

- b. How do we know that the use of flesh—even of the clean meats—was still displeasing to God and was never for the benefit of His chosen people—physically or spiritually? Compare Deuteronomy 12:20; Psalm 106:15.
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“The disregard for the Lord’s special directions has brought a variety of difficulties and diseases upon human beings. . . . If they introduce into their systems that which cannot make good flesh and blood, they must endure the results of their disregard of God’s word.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 394.

“By departing from the plan divinely appointed for their diet, the Israelites suffered great loss. They desired a flesh diet, and they reaped its results. They did not reach God’s ideal of character or fulfill His purpose. The Lord ‘gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul’ (Psalm 106:15). They valued the earthly above the spiritual, and the sacred preeminence which was His purpose for them they did not attain.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 312.

- c. What must be expected by those who defy God by eating very unhealthy flesh? Isaiah 66:15–17 (cf 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9).
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4. TAKEN OUT OF THE ARK!

- a. What did the Israelites continually do with God's plan symbolized by the pot of manna? Jeremiah 6:16 (last part); Ezekiel 20:23, 24.

"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.' It was only because of their discontent and their murmuring 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 nonflesh diet was never heartily accepted. It continued to be the cause of discontent and murmuring, open or secret, and it was not made permanent."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 311.

- b. As a result of Israel's continual rejection of God's plan, what item was the only one remaining in the ark of the covenant when Solomon's temple was dedicated? 1 Kings 8:9; 2 Chronicles 5:10.

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- c. How are many modern Israelites repeating the mistake of ancient Israel? 1 Corinthians 10:6.

"God gave the light on health reform, and those who rejected it rejected God. One and another who knew better said that it all came from Dr. Kellogg, and they made war upon him."—*The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1903.

"Flesh meat is not necessary for the health and strength of mind or body. If the Lord had not furnished all that is essential in the vegetable world, there would be an excuse for meat eating, but animals are now so diseased that it is now really dangerous; it is unclean to eat meat. Flesh meat formed no part of the food provided for man in the beginning. It was after the transgression and fall, when death was to be man's portion, that God permitted that long lived race to eat the flesh of clean animals."—*The Kress Collection*, p. 21.

5. THE ARK REMOVED FROM ISRAEL

- a. Although God tried to work with Israel even after they had rejected the pot of manna and kept only the tables of stone, how did they eventually react to the Ten Commandments themselves? Jeremiah 7:4–12; 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16.

- b. As a result of the rejection of the Ten Commandments from the ark of the covenant, what did God finally do with the temple as well as the ark itself? Jeremiah 7:13–16; 25:7–11; 2 Chronicles 36:17–20.

“Because of the sins of Israel, the calamity which God said should come upon the temple if His people departed from Him was fulfilled some hundreds of years after the temple was built. . . .

“Because of Israel’s transgression of the commandments of God, and their wicked acts, God suffered them to go into captivity, to humble and punish them. Before the temple was destroyed, God made known to a few of His faithful servants the fate of the temple, which was the pride of Israel, and which they regarded with idolatry, while they were sinning against God. He also revealed to them the captivity of Israel. These righteous men, just before the destruction of the temple, removed the sacred ark containing the tables of stone, and, with mourning and sadness, secreted it in a cave where it was to be hid from the people of Israel, because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. That sacred ark is yet hid. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 414.

- c. What ray of hope was prophesied in that dark era? Malachi 4:5. Explain the twofold fulfillment of this prophecy. Matthew 17:11–13.

“[John’s] diet, purely vegetable, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed. . . . 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. The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 62.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. What diet did God try to restore among the Israelites?
- b. What is the difference between the clean and the unclean meats? What was forbidden to all generations?
- c. How do we know that the people of Israel sinned by demanding flesh?
- d. Because of the continual rejection of dietary reforms among the Hebrews, what was finally removed from the ark?
- e. What eventually happened to the ark of the covenant itself as a result of continual rejection of the principles contained therein?

"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. 'Behold,' He said, 'I have given you every herb yielding seed, . . . and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food' (Genesis 1:29, ARV). Upon leaving Eden to gain his livelihood by tilling the earth under the curse of sin, man received permission to eat also 'the herb of the field' (Genesis 3:18).

"Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 295, 296.

"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? Let them, rather, return to the wholesome and delicious food given to man in the beginning."—*Ibid.*, p. 317.

"Although Christ was suffering the keenest pangs of hunger, He withstood the temptation. He repulsed Satan with the same scripture He had given Moses to repeat to rebellious Israel when their diet was restricted and they were clamoring for flesh meats in the wilderness, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4). In this declaration, and also by His example, Christ would show man that hunger for temporal food was not the greatest calamity that could befall him."—*Confrontation*, p. 43.

The Modern Pot of Manna

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (Revelation 11:19).

“The light that God has given and will continue to give on the food question is to be to His people today what the manna was to the children of Israel.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 269.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 311–317.

Sunday

August 24

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY

- a. What is one of the first points of truth to be accepted near the beginning of one's Christian experience? 3 John 2; Galatians 5:22, 23.

“When the message comes to those who have not heard the truth for this time, they see that a great reformation must take place in their diet. They see that they must put away flesh food, because it creates an appetite for liquor, and fills the system with disease. By meat eating, the physical, mental, and moral powers are weakened.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 268, 269.

“Discard everything detrimental to health. Use simple, wholesome food. Fruit is excellent, and saves much cooking. Discard rich pastries, cakes, desserts, and the other dishes prepared to tempt the appetite. Eat fewer kinds of food at one meal, and eat with thanksgiving.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 274.

- b. Why does health reform play such an active and important part in one's life as a believer? 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

“There are but few as yet who are aroused sufficiently to understand how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their characters, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 488, 489.

2. THE ARK RESTORED TO GOD'S PEOPLE

- a. What prophecy speaks about the ark of the covenant being restored once again to the true people of God? Where is this ark at the present time, and what is found inside it? Revelation 11:18, 19; Hebrews 9:3, 4, 23, 24.

“The Lord gave me the following view in 1847. . . .

“In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with its wings spread out over it. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward. Between the angels was a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt. Jesus stood by the ark, and as the saints' prayers came up to Him, the incense in the censer would smoke, and He would offer up their prayers with the smoke of the incense to His Father. In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book.”—*Early Writings*, p. 32.

- b. Once God entrusts the ark to a people, are they guaranteed to keep it forever no matter what they do? Romans 11:17–24.

“It may be that ere long all prophesyings among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers.

“When God shall work His strange work on the earth, when holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people. Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! Oh, that our people may, as did Nineveh, repent with all their might and believe with all their heart, that God may turn away His fierce anger from them.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 77, 78.

- c. What promise can give us a constant assurance that God will always have a people to bear the ark? Romans 9:27; 11:1–5.

“Satan has laid every measure possible that nothing shall come among us as a people to reprove and rebuke us, and exhort us to put away our errors. But there is a people who will bear the ark of God. Some will go out from among us who will bear the ark no longer. But these cannot make walls to obstruct the truth; for it will go onward and upward to the end.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 411.

3. DIET DURING THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

- a. What day are we living in as we approach the close of time? Isaiah 22:12, 20, 22; Revelation 3:7.
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“None [those who had studied the subject of the sanctuary] could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God’s law and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Here was the secret of the bitter and determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scriptures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Men sought to close the door which God had opened, and to open the door which He had closed. But ‘He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth,’ had declared: ‘Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it’ (Revelation 3:7, 8). Christ had opened the door, or ministration, of the most holy place.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 435.

- b. What practice on that specific day provides insight on how to observe the antitypical day of atonement? Leviticus 23:28, 29.
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“The true fasting which should be recommended to all is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 90.

- c. What will happen to those who, knowing the light, persist in eating flesh in the antitypical day of atonement? Isaiah 22:13, 14; (cf Leviticus 23:27–30; Psalm 106:14, 15).
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“It has been clearly presented to me that God’s people are to take a firm stand against meat eating. Would God for thirty years give His people the message that if they desire to have pure blood and clear minds, they must give up the use of flesh meat, if He did not want them to heed this message? By the use of flesh meats the animal nature is strengthened and the spiritual nature weakened.”—*Counsels on the Diet of Foods*, p. 383.

4. REFORMATION IN THE MINISTRY

- a. What kind of ministry do we need to prepare a people to face the final crisis of this world's history? Ezekiel 44:23.

"Only those who appreciate these principles, and have been trained to care for their bodies intelligently and in the fear of God, should be chosen to take responsibilities in this work. Those who have been long in the truth, yet who cannot distinguish between the pure principles of righteousness and the principles of evil, whose understanding in regard to justice, mercy, and the love of God is clouded, should be relieved of responsibilities. Every church needs a clear, sharp testimony, giving the trumpet a certain sound."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 375.

"God calls at this time for laborers whose interests are fully identified with His work and His cause. The ministers engaged in this work must be energized by the spirit and power of the truths they preach, and then they will have an influence. The people will seldom rise higher than their minister."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 645.

"For every offense committed against the laws of health, the transgressor must pay the penalty in his own body."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 409.

"We have been given the work of advancing health reform. . . .

"Beware how you place yourself in opposition to the work of health reform. It will go forward; for it is the Lord's means of lessening the suffering in our world, and of purifying His people."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 38.

- b. Is it possible to faithfully lead God's people without leading by example? Leviticus 10:8–11; 1 Corinthians 11:1.

"No man should be set apart as a teacher of the people while his own teaching or example contradicts the testimony God has given His servants to bear in regard to diet, for this will bring confusion. His disregard of health reform unfits him to stand as the Lord's messenger."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 378.

"A reformation is needed among the people, but it should first begin its purifying work with the ministers. . . .

"One important part of the work of the ministry is to faithfully present to the people the health reform as it stands connected with the third angel's message as part and parcel of the same work. They should not fail to adopt it themselves, and should urge it upon all who profess to believe the truth."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 469, 470.

5. PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND COMING

- a. What type of dietary practices are needed by the faithful as a whole before the second coming of Jesus? 1 Corinthians 9:25–27.

“Had [the Israelites] been willing to deny appetite in obedience to [God’s] 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.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 378.

“Every careless action, any abuse put upon the wonderful mechanism by disregarding [God’s] specified laws of the human habitation is a violation of God’s law. This law embraces the treatment of the entire being.”—*Healthful Living*, p. 20.

“Adam fell by the indulgence of appetite; Christ overcame by the denial of appetite. And our only hope of regaining Eden is through firm self-control.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 167.

“Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design—that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth. Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavor to work steadily toward it. I cannot think that in the practice of flesh eating we are in harmony with the light which God has been pleased to give us. All who are connected with our health institutions especially should be educating themselves to subsist on fruits, grains, and vegetables.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 119.

- b. What type of character does this translation diet foster? Ephesians 5:26, 27.

“It is impossible for those who indulge the appetite to attain to Christian perfection.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 400.

“Men need to think less about what they shall eat and drink, of temporal food, and much more in regard to the food from heaven, that will give tone and vitality to the whole religious experience.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 90.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. What is the relationship between one's diet and spirituality?
- b. As the people of God have entered the final period of the Christian era, what has been preserved in heaven to guide them during this time?
- c. What restriction was placed on Israel on the Day of Atonement? How are we to fulfill its antitype today?
- d. In order for true reformation to succeed, where must it begin?
- e. How does our diet prepare us for translation to our heavenly home?

"The unbelief and murmurings of the children of Israel illustrate the people of God now upon the earth. Many look back to them, and marvel at their unbelief and continual murmurings, after the Lord had done so much for them, in giving them repeated evidences of His love and care for them. They think that they should not have proved ungrateful. But some who thus think, murmur and repine at things of less consequence. They do not know themselves. God frequently proves them, and tries their faith in small things; and they do not endure the trial any better than did ancient Israel."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 223.

"Those who indulge appetite . . . need to wake up and reason from cause to effect. They need to realize that they are disease producers because of their ignorance upon the subject of proper eating, drinking, and dressing."—*Temperance*, p. 196.

"Modern Israel are in greater danger of forgetting God and being led into idolatry than were His ancient people. Many idols are worshipped, even by professed Sabbathkeepers. God especially charged His ancient people to guard against idolatry, for if they should be led away from serving the living God, His curse would rest upon them, while if they would love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might, He would abundantly bless them in basket and in store, and would remove sickness from the midst of them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 609.

"In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding—men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar. When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the word of the Lord; they will lift up their voice like a trumpet. The truth will not be diminished or lose its power in their hands. They will show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 411.

"Our God is a jealous God, He will have a clean, pure and holy people."—*The Review and Herald*, June 12, 1855.

First Sabbath Offering

for Los Angeles,
California, USA

Dear fellow believers:

I begin this appeal by greeting you with the words of Ezekiel 36:26, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

Los Angeles is one of the most powerful economical engines of the state of California. It is a city where the population reaches the level of 21 million. Here you can meet one of the highest varieties of cultures and ethnic conglomerates in the world. Similar to Capernaum, the historical city where Jesus preached the gospel, Los Angeles is a very strategic geo-social environment where the gospel can be preached.

The Reform Movement began the work in this city many decades ago. Today we are facing one of the most difficult problems you can imagine—money. Our church is growing very rapidly there. The Monterey Park church is a very active unit of the South West U.S. Field. The members of this church have made efforts for years to donate money for this project, but it is never enough because of the continual increase of the prices in the real estate market. Los Angeles is one of the most expensive cities in the world. We rent a church from another denomination, but the cost is very high. We have over 100 persons gathering together at that chapel every week. The brethren and sisters in that area have committed everything they have for this project. Now is the time to lift their hands and ask for help.

We appreciate your efforts in helping the brethren in Monterey Park buy a church of their own, and we thank you.

Your servant in the Lord's vineyard,

Liviu Tudoroiu, South West U.S. Field leader



What Is Health Reform?

“Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!” (Ecclesiastes 10:17).

“Every law governing the human machinery is to be considered just as truly divine in origin, in character, and in importance as the word of God.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 17.

Suggested Reading: *Medical Ministry*, pp. 259–284.

Sunday

August 31

1. PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH REFORM

- a. **How far does our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being depend on our obedience to the principles of health reform? Deuteronomy 5:33; 6:5; 30:16, 19.**

“True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562.

- b. **What is often associated with the removal of something bad (evil) in the system without proper replacement? 2 Peter 2:22. How is it possible to successfully separate from those things that are not good for us? Deuteronomy 11:22–28.**

“When flesh food is discarded, its place should be supplied with a variety of grains, nuts, vegetables, and fruits that will be both nourishing and appetizing. This is especially necessary in the case of those who are weak or who are taxed with continuous labor. In some countries where poverty abounds, flesh is the cheapest food. Under these circumstances the change will be made with greater difficulty; but it can be effected. We should, however, consider the situation of the people and the power of lifelong habit, and should be careful not to urge even right ideas unduly. None should be urged to make the change abruptly. The place of meat should be supplied with wholesome foods that are inexpensive. In this matter very much depends on the cook.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 316, 317.

2. NATURE'S ABUNDANT SUPPLY

a. Where was our first parents' home? Genesis 2:8.

"The home of our first parents was to be a pattern for other homes as their children should go forth to occupy the earth. That home, beautified by the hand of God Himself, was not a gorgeous palace. Men, in their pride, delight in magnificent and costly edifices and glory in the works of their own hands; but God placed Adam in a garden. This was his dwelling."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 49.

b. Why were Adam and Eve placed in such lovely, natural surroundings, and what were they to realize about it? Genesis 2:9; 1:29. What change took place after the Fall? Genesis 3:18, 19; Psalm 104:13–15.

"Nature's abundant supply of fruits, nuts, and grains is ample, and year by year the products of all lands are more generally distributed to all, by the increased facilities for transportation. As a result many articles of food which a few years ago were regarded as expensive luxuries are now within the reach of all as foods for everyday use. This is especially the case with dried and canned fruits."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 297.

"God is working in behalf of His people. He does not desire them to be without resources. He is bringing them back to the diet originally given to man. Their diet is to consist of the foods made from the materials He has provided."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 125.

"Spend less time over the cookstove, preparing food to tempt the appetite, and thus wearing out the strength given you of God to be used for a better purpose. A plain, nourishing diet will not require so great an amount of labor. We should devote more time to humble, earnest prayer to God for wisdom to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The health of the mind is dependent upon the health of the body. As Christian parents, we are bound to train our children in reference to the laws of life. We should instruct them, by precept and example, that we do not live to eat, but that we eat to live. We should encourage in our children a love for nobleness of mind and a pure, virtuous character. In order to strengthen in them the moral perceptions, the love of spiritual things, we must regulate the manner of our living, dispense with animal food, and use grains, vegetables, and fruits as articles of diet."—*A Solemn Appeal*, p. 66.

3. PITFALLS IN REFORMATION

- a. As sinful creatures, against what tendency do we have to be continually on guard? Deuteronomy 5:32; Proverbs 4:27. How is this same tendency seen in regard to principles of health reform?

“Careful attention should be given to the proper use of nut foods. Some kinds of nuts are not so wholesome as others. Do not reduce the bill of fare to a few articles composed largely of nut foods. These foods should not be used too freely. If they were used more sparingly by some, the results would be more satisfactory. As combined in large proportions with other articles in some of the recipes given, they make the food so rich that the system cannot properly assimilate it.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 364.

“Let us make intelligent advancement in simplifying our diet. In the providence of God, every country produces articles of food containing the nourishment necessary for the upbuilding of the system. These may be made into healthful, appetizing dishes.”—*Ibid.*, p. 94.

“There are many now under the shadow of death who have prepared to do a work for the Master, but who have not felt that a sacred obligation rested upon them to observe the laws of health. The laws of the physical system are indeed the laws of God, but this fact seems to have been forgotten. Some have limited themselves to a diet that cannot sustain them in health. They have not provided nourishing food to take the place of injurious articles; and they have not considered that tact and ingenuity must be exercised in preparing food in the most healthful manner. The system must be properly nourished in order to perform its work. It is contrary to health reform, after cutting off the great variety of unwholesome dishes, to go to the opposite extreme, reducing the quantity and quality of the food to a low standard. Instead of health reform this is health deform.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 373, 374.

- b. What problem do those who are living in the Laodicea period face? Revelation 3:14, 15. What should we do about this?
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“Let all examine their own practices to see if they are not indulging in that which is a positive injury to them. Let them dispense with every unhealthful gratification in eating and drinking.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 371.

4. THE PROCESS OF REFORMATION

- a. What basic principle of the Christian life applies also in regard to changes in dietary habits? Matthew 7:13, 14; Luke 13:23, 24; Philipians 2:12.

“Only when we are intelligent in regard to the principles of health reform, can we be fully aroused to see the evils resulting from an improper diet. Those who, after seeing their mistakes, have courage to change their habits will find that the reformatory process requires a struggle and much perseverance. But when correct tastes are formed, they will realize that the use of food which they have formerly regarded as harmless was slowly but surely laying the foundation for dyspepsia and other diseases.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 273.

- b. At times, what is necessary in this struggle to overcome the appetite? Matthew 16:24; 17:21.

“Persons who have indulged their appetite to eat freely of meat, highly seasoned gravies, and various kinds of rich cakes and preserves, cannot immediately relish a plain, wholesome, and nutritious diet. Their taste is so perverted they have no appetite for a wholesome diet of fruits, plain bread, and vegetables. They need not expect to relish at first food so different from that which they have been indulging themselves to eat. If they cannot at first enjoy plain food, they should fast until they can. That fast will prove to them of greater benefit than medicine, for the abused stomach will find that rest which it has long needed, and real hunger can be satisfied with a plain diet. It will take time for the taste to recover from the abuses which it has received, and to gain its natural tone. But perseverance in a self-denying course of eating and drinking will soon make plain, wholesome food palatable. . . .

“All who feel their need for His Spirit to educate and discipline self and to properly train their children, will deny self, and take up the cross and follow Jesus.

“For certain things fasting and prayer are recommended and appropriate. In the hand of God they are a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind. We obtain answers to our prayers because we humble our souls before God. If our appetites clamor for the flesh of dead animals, it is a necessity to fast and pray for the Lord to give His grace to deny fleshly lusts which war against the soul.”—*Medical Ministry*, pp. 282, 283.

5. WISDOM TO CHANGE

- a. When we consider the pitfalls and perseverance required in reforming our diet, how is it possible to achieve the right balance that leads to eternal life? Proverbs 2:6, 7; 4:7; James 1:5.

“The Lord will teach many in all parts of the world to combine fruits, grains, and vegetables into foods that will sustain life and will not bring disease. Those who have never seen the recipes for making the health foods now on the market will work intelligently, experimenting with the food productions of the earth, and will be given light regarding the use of these productions. The Lord will show them what to do. He who gives skill and understanding to His people in one part of the world will give skill and understanding to His people in other parts of the world. It is His design that the food treasurers of each country shall be so prepared that they can be used in the countries for which they are suited. As God gave manna from heaven to sustain the children of Israel, so He will now give His people in different places skill and wisdom to use the productions of these countries in preparing foods to take the place of meat.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 124.

“The conscience must be aroused to the duty of practicing the principles of true reform. God requires that His people shall be temperate in all things. Unless they practice true temperance, they will not, they cannot, be susceptible to the sanctifying influence of the truth.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 451.

- b. What kind of commitment is needed to maintain health? Philip-
pians 4:13.

“In our work more attention should be given to the temperance reform. Every duty that calls for reform involves repentance, faith, and obedience. It means the uplifting of the soul to a new and nobler life. Thus every true reform has its place in the work of the third angel’s message. Especially does the temperance reform demand our attention and support. At our camp meetings we should call attention to this work and make it a living issue. We should present to the people the principles of true temperance and call for signers to the temperance pledge. Careful attention should be given to those who are enslaved by evil habits. We must lead them to the cross of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 110.

- c. What must we consider when struggling with lifestyle changes? Job 14:4; Romans 7:24, 25; 1 Corinthians 15:57.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. How can we best describe the true principles of temperance?
- b. What has God provided abundantly in nature to supply all our temporal needs?
- c. Against what dangers do we need to be on guard, especially as we become zealous on the subject of health?
- d. What are some steps we can successfully take in changing our diet and lifestyle in accordance with the plan God designed in the beginning?
- e. What do we desperately need in order to fulfill God's plan in diet as well as in other areas of our life?

"The laws governing the physical nature are as truly divine in their origin and character as the law of the Ten Commandments. . . .

"A violation of these laws is a violation of the immutable law of God, and the penalty will surely follow."—*Healthful Living*, p. 21.

"To transgress [God's] law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin."—*Education*, p. 100.

"There are many ways of practicing the healing art; but there is only one way that Heaven approves. God's remedies are the simple agencies of nature, that will not tax or debilitate the system through their powerful properties. Pure air and water, cleanliness, a proper diet, purity of life, and a firm trust in God, are remedies for the want of which thousands are dying; yet these remedies are going out of date because their skillful use requires work that the people do not appreciate. Fresh air, exercise, pure water, and clean, sweet premises, are within the reach of all, with but little expense; but drugs are expensive, both in the outlay of means, and the effect produced upon the system."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 301.

"The Lord plainly told His people that every blessing would come to them if they would keep His commandments, and be a peculiar people. He warned them through Moses in the wilderness, specifying that health would be the reward of obedience."—*Ibid.* p. 375.

"The light that God has given and will continue to give on the food question is to be to His people today what the manna was to the children of Israel. The manna fell from heaven, and the people were told to gather it and prepare it to be eaten. So in the different countries of the world, light will be given to the Lord's people, and health foods suited to these countries will be prepared."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 267.

Identifying God's People

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

"What compassion, what matchless love, has God shown to us, lost sinners, in connecting us with Himself, to be to Him a peculiar treasure!"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 289.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 283–287;
Ibid., vol. 4, p. 180.

Sunday

September 7

1. A PECULIAR PEOPLE

- a. From all the world's inhabitants, who are recognized as God's true people? 1 Peter 2:9; Malachi 3:17, 18.

- b. What makes God's people peculiar, and how is this privilege blessed? Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:16–19. How do we know this distinction encompasses our dietary choices? Exodus 15:26.

"Our habits of eating and drinking show whether we are of the world or among the number whom the Lord by His mighty cleaver of truth has separated from the world. These are His peculiar people, zealous of good works. . . . In the case of Daniel and his three companions there are sermons upon health reform. God has spoken in the history of the children of Israel, from whom for their good He sought to withhold a flesh diet. He fed them with bread from heaven."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 372.

"We shall soon reach a time when we must understand the meaning of a simple diet. The time is not far hence when we shall be obliged to adopt a diet very different from our present diet."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 281.

2. LEADING UP THE NARROW PATH

- a. What relationship should exist between the leaders and the flock entrusted to their care? 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:2–4.

“Let not any of our ministers set an evil example in the eating of flesh meat. Let them and their families live up to the light of health reform.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 281.

- b. How does the knowledge of the truth, including health reform, affect our salvation and that of those who are watching us? 1 Timothy 4:16.

“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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 112.

- c. Where does obedience to God’s laws—including His natural laws—lead? Isaiah 1:19; 1 Peter 1:14–16.

“[1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 quoted.] Yes, we are God’s property, and the path of obedience to nature’s laws is the direct path to heaven. He who is converted from errors in eating, drinking, and dressing is being prepared to hear and receive the truth into a good and willing heart.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

- d. How does God purify His people? Isaiah 48:10; 1 Peter 1:22; John 16:13.
- e. What calls did Joshua and Elijah make to ensure Israel’s faithfulness? Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21. How is it possible to make the same type of call for a temperance pledge?

“The importance of caring for the health should be taught as a Bible requirement. Perfect obedience to God’s commands calls for conformity to the laws of the being. . . . No one can properly understand his obligations to God unless he understands clearly his obligations to himself as God’s property. He who remains in sinful ignorance of the laws of life and health, or who willfully violates these laws, sins against God.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 295.

3. PURIFICATION AND FINAL SEPARATION

- a. What will happen to all who persist in evil habits? Hosea 4:17.
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“Many who are now only half converted on the question of meat eating will go from God’s people to walk no more with them.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 382 (1902).

- b. What ultimately happens to the “candlestick” of a church that continue in wrongdoing? Revelation 2:5; 3:16.
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“God calls upon His ministers to carry forward a work of decided reform. He is seeking to lead His people to a higher plane of action. Let the church arise and shine. Let every family practice self-denial, doing all they can to improve their own condition. Those who are truly on the Lord’s side will be self-denying and self-sacrificing. They will eat and drink to the glory of God, refusing to corrupt soul and body by intemperance. Then the condition of the church will testify that her light has not been removed. But if church members do not act the part God has assigned them, the movement of health reform will go on without them, and it will be seen that God has removed their candlestick out of its place. Those who refuse to receive and practice the light will be left in the background.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 339.

- c. What kind of people will be ready to see Christ? Ephesians 5:25–27.
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“If meat is discarded, if the taste is not educated in that direction, if a liking for fruits and grains is encouraged, it will soon be as God in the beginning designed it should be. No meat will be used by His people.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 82.

“The Lord would bring His people into a position where they will not touch or taste the flesh of dead animals. . . . There is no safety in the eating of the flesh of dead animals, and in a short time the milk of the cows will also be excluded from the diet of God’s command-ment-keeping people. In a short time it will not be safe to use anything that comes from the animal creation. Those who take God at His word, and obey His commandments with the whole heart, will be blessed. He will be their shield of protection. But the Lord will not be trifled with.”—*Ibid.*, p. 411.

4. SERIOUS PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY

- a. Of the many Bible promises, which ones have brought special hope and courage during the difficult times of God's church in all ages? 2 Peter 1:4; Matthew 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13.
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- b. What work is Jesus doing in the heavenly sanctuary in order for His people to spend eternity with Him? John 14:1–3; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25.
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- c. What is included in our preparation to meet Christ? 1 John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1.
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“In our work more attention should be given to the temperance reform. Every duty that calls for reform involves repentance, faith, and obedience. It means the uplifting of the soul to a new and nobler life. Thus every true reform has its place in the work of the third angel's message. Especially does the temperance reform demand our attention and support. At our camp meetings we should call attention to this work and make it a living issue. We should present to the people the principles of true temperance and call for signers to the temperance pledge. Careful attention should be given to those who are enslaved by evil habits. We must lead them to the cross of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 110.

“Satan has laid every measure possible that nothing shall come among us as a people to reprove and rebuke us, and exhort us to put away our errors. But there is a people who will bear the ark of God. Some will go out from among us who will bear the ark no longer. But these cannot make walls to obstruct the truth; for it will go onward and upward to the end. In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding. . . . When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the word of the Lord; they will lift up their voice like a trumpet. The truth will not be diminished or lose its power in their hands. They will show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 411.

5. LET US REDEEM THE TIME

- a. Why has the return of Christ been delayed for so many years?
2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4.

“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But ‘they could not enter in because of unbelief’ (Hebrews 3:19). Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

“Why has the Lord so long delayed His coming? The whole host of heaven is waiting to fulfil the last work for this lost world, and yet the work waits. It is because the few who profess to have the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps, have not become burning and shining lights in the world. It is because missionaries are few.”—*Maranatha*, p. 55.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. In what specific areas will God’s remnant be a peculiar people?
- b. How should church officers take a leading role in health reform?
- c. What will the presentation of the correct principles of health reform produce among the people?
- d. When we understand the health message principles, what should we be ready to sign?
- e. How does our diet relate to our preparation for the second coming of Jesus?

Advancing and Growing in the Present Truth

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth” (2 Peter 1:12).

“Contemplating Christ and His righteousness leaves no room for self-righteousness, for the glorifying of self. . . . There is continual advancement in every stage of the knowledge of Christ”—*Our High Calling*, p. 60.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 169, 170.

Sunday

September 14

1. CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM: SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

- a. How are the Abrahamic promises to be understood by believers who seriously seek to follow Christ and inherit the Promised Land? Romans 4:9, 13; Galatians 3:29; John 8:39.

“The Pharisees had declared themselves the children of Abraham. Jesus told them that this claim could be established only by doing the works of Abraham. The true children of Abraham would live, as he did, a life of obedience to God. . . . A mere lineal descent from Abraham was of no value. Without a spiritual connection with him, which would be manifested in possessing the same spirit, and doing the same works, they were not his children.

“This principle bears with equal weight upon a question that has long agitated the Christian world—the question of apostolic succession. Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character. So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, but upon spiritual relationship. A life actuated by the apostles’ spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 466, 467.

2. THE LIGHT SHINES MORE AND MORE

- a. In what sense should we be warned by the default of ancient Israel? Hebrews 3:19.
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“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 69.

- b. What characterizes the heirs of the new earth? Psalm 37:11; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2.
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- c. What truths must we accept today if we genuinely seek that better land? How is each generation privileged to be entrusted with greater light? 2 Peter 1:12; Jude 3, 20, 21.
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“Opposition is the lot of all whom God employs to present truths specially applicable to their time. There was a present truth in the days of Luther—a truth at that time of special importance; there is a present truth for the church today.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 143.

“Each will be judged by the light given him.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 153.

- d. In God’s plan to restore the truth to His people little by little, what special point of the “present truth” has He revealed to them in these last days? Proverbs 4:18; Isaiah 58:12–14 (cf Isaiah 61:1–4).
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“Since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God’s people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question. . . .

“The present test on the Sabbath could not come until the mediation of Jesus in the holy place was finished and He had passed within the second veil.”—*Early Writings*, p. 42.

3. ADVANCEMENT IN HEALTH REFORM

- a. In 1858, how was swine's flesh considered by the Advent believers, and what was Sister White's message at that time?

"I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test, and your actions have plainly shown your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter. He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His *church* their duty."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 206, 207.

- b. How does a footnote written by James White aid us in understanding the context of the above statement? Romans 13:11, 12, 14.

"This remarkable testimony was written October 21, 1858, nearly five years before the great vision of 1863, in which the light upon health reform was given. When the right time came, the subject was given in a manner to move all our people. How wonderful are the wisdom and goodness of God! It might be as wrong to crowd the milk, salt, and sugar question now, as the pork question in 1858."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 206. [J.W., note to second edition.]

- c. How does God lead His people progressively in the knowledge of the truth? John 16:13; Ephesians 4:11–15.

"God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading His people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead. I saw that the angels of God would lead His people no faster than they could receive and act upon the important truths that are communicated to them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 207.

4. DISCERNING PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S WORD

- a. How are we to “go on unto perfection” (Hebrews 6:1)? Proverbs 4:18; 2 Peter 1:3–8.

“The apostle [Peter] presents before the believers the ladder of Christian progress, every step of which represents advancement in the knowledge of God, and in the climbing of which there is to be no standstill.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530.

- b. What misunderstanding has entered the Christian world regarding unclean foods? Acts 10:10–16.

- c. How did God reveal the real meaning of this vision? Acts 10:17–20, 28.

“By the vision of the sheet and its contents, let down from heaven, Peter was to be divested of his settled prejudices against the Gentiles; to understand that, through Christ, heathen nations were made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the Jews, and were to be thus benefited equally with them. Some have urged that this vision was to signify that God had removed his prohibition from the use of the flesh of animals which he had formerly pronounced unclean; and that therefore swines’ flesh was fit for food. This is a very narrow and altogether erroneous interpretation, and is plainly contradicted in the Scriptural account of the vision and its consequences.

“The vision of all manner of live beasts, which the sheet contained, and of which Peter was commanded to kill and eat, being assured that what God had cleansed should not be called common or unclean by him, was simply an illustration presenting to his mind the true position of the Gentiles; that by the death of Christ they were made fellow heirs with the Israel of God. It conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. His labors had heretofore been confined entirely to the Jews; and he had looked upon the Gentiles as an unclean race, and excluded from the promises of God. His mind was now being led to comprehend the worldwide extent of the plan of God.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 327, 328.

5. A STEP TAKEN UPWARD

- a. How did a more advanced, rediscovered biblical light inspire a change in the position of believers in the third angel's message? Deuteronomy 14:8; Isaiah 65:3, 4; 66:17.

"God has given you light and knowledge, which you have professed to believe came direct from Him, instructing you to deny appetite. You know that the use of swine's flesh is contrary to His express command, given not because He wished to especially show His authority, but because it would be injurious to those who should eat it. Its use would cause the blood to become impure, so that scrofula and other humors would corrupt the system, and the whole organism would suffer. Especially would the fine, sensitive nerves of the brain become enfeebled and so beclouded that sacred things would not be discerned, but be placed upon the low level with common things. Light showing that disease is caused by using this gross article of food has come just as soon as God's people could bear it. Have you heeded the light?"—*Testimonies* [1868], vol. 2, p. 96.

"The tissues of the swine swarm with parasites. Of the swine God said, 'It is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcass' (Deuteronomy 14:8). This command was given because swine's flesh is unfit for food. Swine are scavengers, and this is the only use they were intended to serve. Never, under any circumstances, was their flesh to be eaten by human beings. It is impossible for the flesh of any living creature to be wholesome when filth is its natural element and when it feeds upon every detestable thing."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 313, 314.

- b. Why do we need health reform in our preparation for the second coming of Christ? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:14.

"Our bodies are composed of what we eat; and by partaking of nourishing food, we have good blood, firm muscles, and vigorous health. . . . When the day dawns, the light is faint and subdued; but as the sun rises, its light increases and strengthens, until its rays reach the perfect day. This is the way in which the Christian's light is to increase. We are to know more of Christ today than we knew yesterday; we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; we are to trust Him more in trial."—*The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1891.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why has Christ's second coming been so long delayed?
- b. Do I really understand that the truth of God is progressive, advancing light—and that I need to reflect Abraham's attitude of stepping forward by faith when brighter beams shine upon me?
- c. How do we see the progress of advancing in greater light in regard to the eating of pork and all other unclean foods?
- d. Why is light revealed in stages rather than all at once?
- e. What is the only useful purpose for swine?

"There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is '*present truth*' that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul."—*Early Writings*, p. 63.

"We should not measure ourselves by the world, nor by the opinions of men, nor by what we were before we embraced the truth. But our faith and position in the world, as they now are, must be compared with what they would have been if our course had been continually onward and upward since we professed to be followers of Christ."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 406.

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

"This is the will of God concerning every human being, even your sanctification. In urging our way upward, heavenward, every faculty must be kept in the most healthy condition, to do the most faithful service. The powers with which God has endowed men are to be put to the stretch."—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 207.

"Let us plead with the Lord in the home and in the church, that we may be of good courage, and may go forward step by step, onward and upward toward heaven."—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 249.

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

Preparing for Eternity

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

“If we would have health, we must live for it. If we perfect Christian character, we must live for it.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 241.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 427.

Sunday

September 21

1. DIET REFORM, A PROGRESSIVE PLAN

- a. During the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, what test would have been too early for SDA's? Why? Ecclesiastes 3:1.

“My brother, you are not to make a test for the people of God upon the question of diet.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 288.

“We do not mark out any precise line to be followed in diet. . . . We are not to make the use of flesh food a test of fellowship. . . . The time has not yet come to prescribe the strictest diet.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 159, 163.

- b. What plan were God's people instructed to follow concerning the diet reform? 1 Corinthians 10:31.

“As we near the close of time we must rise higher and still higher upon the question of health reform and Christian temperance.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 112.

“Let the diet reform be progressive. Let the people be taught how to prepare food without the use of milk or butter . . . because disease in animals is increasing. . . . The time is near when . . . the whole animal creation will groan under the diseases that curse our earth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 135.

2. IN THE EARLY 1900'S

a. What caution was recommended in the early 1900's?

"As I preach the gospel to the poor, I am instructed to tell them to eat that food which is most nourishing. I cannot say to them: 'You must not eat eggs, or milk, or cream. You must use no butter in the preparation of food.' The gospel must be preached to the poor, but the time has not yet come to prescribe the strictest diet."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 163.

b. What appeal was made at the 1901 General Conference Session?

"We want the pervading truth of God's word to get hold of every one of our people before this conference is over. We want them to understand that the flesh of animals is not the proper food for them to eat. Such a diet cultivates the animal passions in them and their children. God wants us to educate our children in right habits of eating, dressing, and working. He wants us to do what we can to repair the broken-down machinery."—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901.

c. Because the health message was rejected by many in the leadership, what warning did God give to the church in 1903? What additional warning did the Lord send them?

"God does not endorse the efforts put forth by different ones to make the work of Dr. Kellogg as hard as possible in order to build themselves up. God gave the light on health reform, and those who rejected it rejected God. One and another who knew better said that it all came from Dr. Kellogg, and they made war upon him."—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903.

"If church members do not act the part God has assigned them, the movement of health reform will go on without them, and it will be seen that God has removed their candlestick out of its place."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 339.

3. PREDICTED CHANGES

a. Name some prophecies of dietary changes for the remnant:

1884: "Use less and less meat, until it is not used at all. If meat is discarded, if the taste is not educated in that direction, if a liking for fruits and grains is encouraged, it will soon be as God in the beginning designed it should be. No meat will be used by His people."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 407.

1890: "Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to his original design—that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth. Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavor to work steadily toward it."—*Counsels on Health*, p. 450.

1898: "The Lord would bring His people into a position where they will not touch or taste the flesh of dead animals. Then let not these things be prescribed by any physicians who have a knowledge of the truth for this time. There is no safety in the eating of the flesh of dead animals, and in a short time the milk of the cows will also be excluded from the diet of God's commandment-keeping people."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 411.

1899: "The light given me is that it will not be very long before we shall have to give up using any animal food. Even milk will have to be discarded. Disease is accumulating rapidly. The curse of God is upon the earth, because man has cursed it. The habits and practices of men have brought the earth into such a condition that some other food than animal food must be substituted for the human family. We do not need flesh food at all. God can give us something else."—*Ibid.*, pp. 384, 385.

b. What standard must be reached by those who are preparing for the coming of Christ? Matthew 5:48; Philippians 3:14–16.

"Do you imagine you can leave off sin a little at a time? Oh, leave the accursed thing at once! Hate the things that Christ hates, love the things that Christ loves."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 327.

"Holiness is the foundation of God's throne; sin is the opposite of holiness; sin crucified the Son of God. If men could see how hateful sin is, they would not tolerate it, nor educate themselves in it. They would reform in life and character."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 145.

4. PROGRESSING TO PERFECTION

- a. According to God's plan for those who are preparing to be in His kingdom, for what reasons are they to do away with meat eating? Romans 8:22.

1884: "A positive injury is done to the system by continuous meat eating. There is no excuse for it but a depraved, perverted appetite. You may ask, Would you do away entirely with meat eating? I answer, It will eventually come to this, but we are not prepared for this step just now. Meat eating will eventually be done away. The flesh of animals will no longer compose a part of our diet; and we shall look upon a butcher's shop with disgust."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 407.

1898: "We cannot now do as we have ventured to do in the past in regard to meat eating. It has always been a curse to the human family, but now it is made particularly so in the curse which God has pronounced upon the herds of the field, because of man's transgression and sin. The disease upon animals is becoming more and more common, and our only safety is in leaving meat entirely alone."—*Ibid.*, p. 412.

1902: "Those who claim to believe the truth are to guard carefully the powers of body and mind, so that God and His cause will not be in any way dishonored by their words or actions. The habits and practices are to be brought into subjection to the will of God. We are to give careful attention to our diet. It has been clearly presented to me that God's people are to take a firm stand against meat eating."—*Ibid.*, p. 383.

1902: "Those who use flesh meat disregard all the warnings that God has given concerning this question. They have no evidence that they are walking in safe paths. They have not the slightest excuse for eating the flesh of dead animals."—*Ibid.*

1905: "The moral evils of a flesh diet are not less marked than are the physical ills. Flesh food is injurious to health, and whatever affects the body has a corresponding effect on the mind and the soul."—*Ibid.*

1905: "We shall soon reach a time when we must understand the meaning of a simple diet. The time is not far hence when we shall be obliged to adopt a diet very different from our present diet."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 281.

5. A PERFECTED PEOPLE

- a. **With whom must true reformation begin in the church?** 2 Thesalonians 3:9; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 11:1.

"The ministers must be converted before they can strengthen their brethren. They should not preach themselves, but Christ and His righteousness. A reformation is needed among the people, but it should first begin its purifying work with the ministers. . . .

"One important part of the work of the ministry is to faithfully present to the people the health reform as it stands connected with the third angel's message as part and parcel of the same work. They should not fail to adopt it themselves, and should urge it upon all who profess to believe the truth."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 469, 470.

"Can we possibly have confidence in ministers who at tables where flesh is served join with others in eating it?"—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 402.

"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.

- b. **How do we know that the required reformation must be completed before the coming of Christ?** Acts 3:19–21; Philippians 1:6; 2 Peter 3:14.

"Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods, tea and coffee, and rich and unhealthful food preparations, and who are determined to make a covenant with God by sacrifice, will not continue to indulge their appetite for food that they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 153, 154.

"Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507.

"It is the Lord's purpose that His people shall be a sanctified, purified people."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 47.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. When the people are not prepared to take a higher stand, how do we know that God makes concessions through His prophets?
- b. Why was it impossible to make flesh eating a test of fellowship in the early 1900's?
- c. What prophecies show that, before the coming of Christ, flesh will no longer be part of the remnant church's diet?
- d. Where does true reformation always begin?
- e. Will the prophesied reformation be completed before the close of probation or only at the coming of Christ?

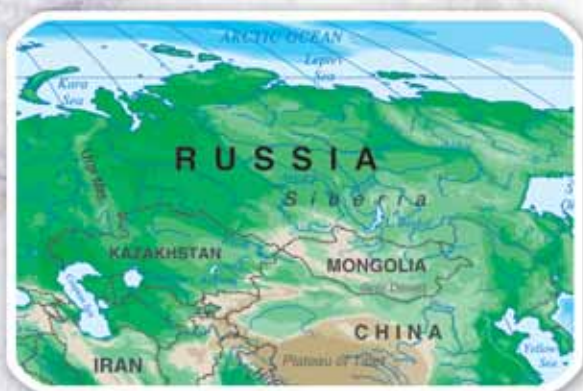
"The exhortation of the apostle is, 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded' (James 4:8). It is by engaging in this work, and by exercising living faith in God that we are to perfect Christian character. The work of cleansing the soul temple and preparing for Christ's appearing must be done while we are in this world of temptation. Just as Christ finds us in character when He comes, so we shall remain.

"We should make daily advancement in the work of character building. When we try to separate from us our sinful habits, it may at times seem that we are tearing ourselves all to pieces; but this is the very work that we must do if we would grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, if we would become fit temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. . . . After we have truly repented of our sins and done all that we can to overcome them, He would have us manifest a calm, unyielding trust in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour.

"If we make an entire surrender to Him, leave our life of sin and passion and pride, and cling to Christ and His merits, He will fulfill to us all that He has promised."—*The Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1887.

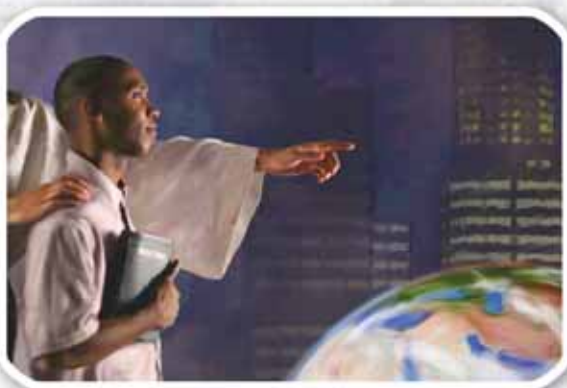
"[In the earth made new,] man will be restored to his lost kingdom, and the lower order of beings will again recognize his sway; the fierce will become gentle, and the timid trustful. 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain' (Isaiah 11:6–9), saith the Lord."—*The Review and Herald*, July 1, 1915.

First Sabbath Offerings



JULY 5
for Russia
(See p. 4.)

AUGUST 2
for the Missionary schools
around the world
(See p. 35)



SEPTEMBER 6
for Los Angeles,
California, USA
(See p. 60.)