

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division

The Gospel According to Paul:

Romans

Contents

1. God Reaches Out to Rebels.....	5
2. All Are Sinners	10
3. Justification—Imputed Righteousness ...	15
4. Fruits of Faith	20
5. No Longer Slaves to Sin.....	25
6. From Slavery to Success	31
7. Victory Through Trust	36
8. Cherishing Our Opportunity	41
9. The Omnipotence of the Almighty.....	46
10. Transformed by God's Love.....	52
11. Amid Friends and Foes.....	57
12. In Humble Meekness	62
13. A Final Legacy of Faith	67

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: Sermon View on the front cover; Map Resources on p. 51.

Copyright © 2022 by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, Sabbath School Department, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24019, USA. Telephone: 1-540-362-1800 * www.sdarm.org * E-mail: info@sdarm.org

Sabbath Bible Lessons (USPS 005-118), Vol. 98, No. 1, January–March, 2022. Published quarterly by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, Sabbath School Department. Printed, and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24019–5048, U.S.A. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022–9993.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

• U.S.A. AND CANADA

Contact: Telephone 1-540-366-9400
*www.reformationherald.com
*E-mail: info@reformationherald.org

Annual subscriptions in U.S.A.: U.S. \$17.00. Large print \$25.00. Please note: For all single issues and international subscriptions, shipping costs will be added. International \$16.00. Single issues \$4.00. Large print \$6.00. Prices subject to change without notice. Subscription requests and payments may be made at: www.reformationherald.com. Those not submitted online may be sent to: *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, P. O. Box 7240, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240. POSTMASTER, please send address changes to: *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, P. O. Box 7240, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240.

• AUSTRALIA

Contact: Telephone 61-2-9627-7553
*www.sdarm.org.au*E-mail:info@sdarm.org.au

Annual subscriptions in Australia: AU \$20.50 (individual copies \$6.00). Other countries, economy air \$26.00. Please send subscription requests and payments (in Australian currency) to the address below.

POSTMASTER, please send address changes to: *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, P. O. Box 132, Riverstone NSW 2765, Australia.

• SOUTH AFRICA

Contact: Telephone 27-011-336-7064 * www.sdarsa.org.za * E-mail: admin@sdarsa.org.za

Annual subscriptions in South Africa: R120-00 (single copies R35-00). Please send subscription requests and payments to the address below.

POSTMASTER, please send address changes to: *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, P. O. Box 7950, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa.

Foreword

The Sabbath school studies for this quarter are based on the epistle of Paul to the Christians living in Rome. Why is the study of this epistle so essential today?

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. He stated his position on the questions which were agitating the Jewish and the Gentile churches and showed that the hopes and promises which had once belonged especially to the Jews were now offered to the Gentiles also.

"With great clearness and power the apostle presented the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. He hoped that other churches also might be helped by the instruction sent to the Christians at Rome; but how dimly could he foresee the far-reaching influence of his words! Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace. For the epistle to the church at Rome, every Christian has reason to thank God."— *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 373, 374.

What has been the spiritual condition of the entire human race since the Fall? What is the purpose of God's moral law in the plan of salvation? What is our individual condition before God? What does faith have in our redemption? Are we justified by faith or by works? Is there any merit in faith? Is the law annulled by faith or is it confirmed? Can we overcome sin by our best efforts in keeping the law? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the whole process of our regeneration? What should be our attitude before the civil authorities?

Martin Luther declared in his preface to the commentary he wrote about the book of Romans: "This epistle is in truth the chief part of the New Testament and the purest Gospel. It would be quite proper for a Christian, not only to know it by heart word for word, but also to study it daily, for it is the soul's daily bread. It can never be read or meditated too much and too well. The more thoroughly it is treated, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

No doubt, this epistle played a vital role in the Reformation of the 16th century. And now, as part of the final movement of Reformation, we need a clear understanding of this "most precious message" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91).

May the Lord richly bless all teachers and students of this precious message!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for Plymouth Leadership College

The pen of Inspiration repeats the phrase, “educate, educate, educate,” numerous times. To open new fields in the Lord’s vineyard, for canvassers, for medical missionaries, for all youth. “Train the youth, mold the character, educate, educate, educate, for the future, immortal life.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 590.

Plymouth Leadership College (PLC) seeks to fulfill this very mission. With a foundation on the missionary schools that were started by faithful brethren in the North American region, including schools in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Colorado and California, the Western U.S. Union saw the value of establishing a place where education would be focus. A campus had been purchased in rural northern California in the 1950’s for this purpose, and had been used sometimes, but now the WUSU wanted to formalize this and ensure that it would provide this education regularly. The property, known to many Reformers around the world as Moriah Heights, now houses the campus of PLC together with a number of other church institutions, including an elementary school and agricultural program. It is an ideal location in the countryside for a school that will prepare our youth to enter the mission field and proclaim the final message of warning to this world.

With a blend of on-campus and online instruction, PLC is able to provide access to high quality Christian post-secondary education to students not only in California, but throughout the world. Students from across North America as well as the Pacific Islands, Africa, and South America have attended classes on campus. The pandemic has taught us the value of having programs available online to meet the needs of those who have been prevented from coming to classes in person. And now, just as this offering is being collected, another class of students from across the United States and around the world is beginning the next Accelerated Evangelism Program.

Your support of this project is vital. Every penny collected will go directly into the production of more materials that you will be able to access. This offering is an investment in yourself, your local church, and your community. After giving your generous contribution, continue supporting the work of education by going to www.plymouth-college.us and registering yourself to take a class at PLC! New courses are constantly being added.

Your brethren from the Western United States Union



God Reaches Out to Rebels

MEMORY TEXT: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:21, 22).

“The nations of the world, through corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. They had once known Him; but because ‘they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations.’”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 14.

Suggested Readings: Romans 1:18–32; *Child Guidance*, pp. 439–443.

Sunday

December 26

1. GOD’S REVELATION TO HUMANITY

a. In what ways does God reveal Himself to humanity? **Romans 1:18, 19.**

“Nature and revelation alike testify of God’s love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvelous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator’s love. It is God who supplies the daily needs of all His creatures.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 9.

b. What is the typical, erroneous concept of salvation among heathen peoples? Who invented it? **Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:9.**

“Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God. . . . The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion. . . . Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 35, 36.

2. NO EXCUSE TO BE LOST

a. **Why can no one be excused for being lost? Romans 1:20; 2:14, 15.**

“Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

b. **What happens to those who reject the divine light revealed to them through the Holy Spirit and through God’s natural creation? Romans 1:21–25.**

c. **What level of moral degradation is finally reached by those who willfully reject divine truth? Romans 1:26–28.**

d. **What other wicked practices are mentioned by Paul—and what will be the final consequence? Romans 1:29–32.**

“Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, ‘They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.’ Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. . . . ‘The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence.’ God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 91.

3. HYPOCRISY AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

a. What description does Paul give regarding those who condemn others? *Romans 2:1–3.*

“The effort to earn salvation by one’s own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 123.

“Much is involved in the matter of judging. Remember that soon your life record will pass in review before God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 85.

b. How does repentance come to our hearts? *Romans 2:4; Acts 5:31.*

“A repentance such as [David’s repentance], is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men. . . .

“It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, ‘Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ *Acts 5:31.* We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 25, 26.

c. On the other hand, what is the result of impenitence? *Romans 2:5–11.*

“To hold the people in darkness and impenitence till the Saviour’s mediation is ended, and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin, is the object which [Satan] seeks to accomplish.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 518.

4. ACCOUNTABLE FOR OUR OPPORTUNITIES

a. Explain the fair, equitable measurement in God's judgment. Romans 2:12, 13; Luke 12:47, 48.

"God's test of the heathen, who have not the light, and of those living where the knowledge of truth and light has been abundant, is altogether different. He accepts from those in heathen lands a phase of righteousness which does not satisfy Him when offered by those of Christian lands. He does not require much where much has not been bestowed."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1121.

b. How can both old and young benefit from the blood of Christ? Romans 1:16, 17; 1 John 1:7.

"The Lord says to the young, 'My son, give Me thine heart.' The Saviour of the world loves to have children and youth give their hearts to Him. There may be a large army of children who shall be found faithful to God, because they walk in the light as Christ is in the light. They will love the Lord Jesus, and it will be their delight to please Him. They will not be impatient if reproved, but will make glad the heart of father and mother by their kindness, their patience, their willingness to do all they can in helping to bear the burdens of daily life. Through childhood and youth they will be found faithful disciples of our Lord."—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 297, 298.

c. What is involved in our surrender to Christ? Matthew 16:24.

"The cross of Christ is the central pillar on which hangs the 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' 'If any man will come after Me,' Christ says, 'let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' 2 Corinthians 4:17; Matthew 16:24. It is the fragrance of our love for our fellow men that reveals our love for God. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toil that the welfare of Israel is promoted. God upholds and strengthens the one who is willing to follow in Christ's way."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 560.

5. REAL CIRCUMCISION/BAPTISM

a. According to Paul, what kind of circumcision or baptism is really valid? Romans 2:25–27. When is a baptism legitimate? Mark 16:16.

“ ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’ . . . It is the grace of Christ that gives life to the soul. Apart from Christ, baptism, like any other service, is a worthless form.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 181.

b. Who is a real Jew or Christian in the sight of God—in contrast to the Jewish nation in the time of Christ? John 3:36; Romans 2:28, 29.

“[The Jewish nation] had represented themselves as the special, loyal people who were favored of God. But Christ presented their religion as devoid of saving faith. It was a combination of dry, hard doctrines, intermingled with sacrifices and offerings. They were very particular to practice circumcision, but they did not teach the necessity of having a pure heart. They exalted the commandments of God in words, but refused to exalt them in practice; and their religion was only a stumbling block to men.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 30, 1895.

“When we have accepted Christ, and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit have pledged ourselves to serve God, the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit—the three dignitaries and powers of heaven—pledge themselves that every facility shall be given to us if we carry out our baptismal vows to ‘come out from among them, and be . . . separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing.’ When we are true to our vows, He says, ‘I will receive you.’ ”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1075.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should we realize when reaching out to nonbelievers?
2. As the morals in society worsen, why must we study Romans chapter 1?
3. What do we as Christians ever need to keep in mind about repentance?
4. How are we in danger of being overconfident in spiritual attainments?
5. What does the apostle Paul emphasize about circumcision—and why?

All Are Sinners

MEMORY TEXT: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 320.

Suggested Readings: Romans 3:9–23; *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1069–1072.

Sunday

January 2

1. THIS AFFECTS EVERYONE!

a. How does Paul explain the actual condition of both religious and nonreligious people? Romans 3:9, 10.

“All have the same sinful nature. All are liable to make mistakes. No one is perfect. The Lord Jesus died for the erring that they might be forgiven. It is not our work to condemn. Christ did not come to condemn, but to save.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 292.

b. What diagnosis does Paul give about the moral and spiritual status of humanity—and how is this verdict echoed today? Romans 3:11–19.

“My soul has been bowed down with anguish as I have been shown the weak condition of God’s professed people.

“Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. There are but few professed Christians who regard this matter [of moral pollution] in the right light and who hold proper government over themselves when public opinion and custom do not condemn them. How few restrain their passions because they feel under moral obligation to do so and because the fear of God is before their eyes! The higher faculties of man are enslaved by appetite and corrupt passions.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 347, 348.

2. THE ENTIRE WORLD GUILTY BEFORE GOD

a. Considering the perfect righteousness of God, what is the condition of the entire world—including all who may think themselves righteous? *Romans 3:19.*

“[Many] wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 320.

“The whole world stands condemned before the great moral standard of righteousness. In the great day of judgment every soul that has lived on the earth will receive sentence in accordance as to whether his deeds have been good or evil in the light of the law of God. Every mouth will be stopped as the cross with its dying Victim shall be presented, and its real bearing shall be seen by every mind that has been sin blinded and corrupted. Sinners will stand condemned before the cross, with its mysterious Victim bowing beneath the infinite burden of human transgression. How quickly will be swept away every subterfuge, every lying excuse! Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. They will then understand that they have chosen Barabbas instead of Christ, the Prince of Peace.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1895.

b. What is—and is not—the benefit of God’s law? *Romans 3:20.*

“‘By the law is the knowledge of sin.’ 1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20. In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God’s great standard of righteousness. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own.

“The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains ‘remission of sins that are past’ and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: ‘Abba, Father!’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 467, 468.

3. GRACE POURED OUT

a. Since we cannot be justified by our obedience to the law, what is the only way to be justified before God? Romans 3:21–25.

“Imputation of the righteousness of Christ comes through justifying faith, and is the justification for which Paul so earnestly contends. He says: [Romans 3:20–31 quoted].

“Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner’s substitute and surety. But while he is justified because of the merit of Christ, he is not free to work unrighteousness. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. . . . Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love. Christ is the great depositary of justifying righteousness and sanctifying grace.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 397, 398.

b. How can God be just and, at the same time, justify a sinner? Romans 3:26; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21.

“Through Jesus, God’s mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God’s character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man’s redemption. . . .

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

4. JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

a. To what conclusion does Paul come after explaining our justification before God? **Romans 3:20, 28; Galatians 2:16.**

“We are enlightened by the precepts of the law, but no man can by them be justified. Weighed and found wanting is our inscription by nature. But Christ is our mediator, and accepting Him as our Saviour, we may claim the promise, ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Romans 5:1).”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 156.

b. What happens with those who are justified by faith? **Romans 3:21; 5:5.**

“Christ is the sinner’s advocate. Those who accept His gospel behold Him with open face. They see the relation of His mission to the law, and they acknowledge God’s wisdom and glory as revealed by the Saviour. The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection.

“The law and the gospel are in perfect harmony. Each upholds the other. In all its majesty the law confronts the conscience, causing the sinner to feel his need of Christ as the propitiation for sin. The gospel recognizes the power and immutability of the law. ‘I had not known sin, but by the law,’ Paul declares. The sense of sin, urged home by the law, drives the sinner to the Saviour. In his need man may present the mighty arguments furnished by the cross of Calvary. He may claim the righteousness of Christ; for it is imparted to every repentant sinner.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1096.

c. By what kind of faith is the sinner justified? **Romans 1:17; Galatians 5:6.**

“Let us seek for that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, that we may represent the character of Christ to the world.”—*Christian Education*, p. 93.

5. THE NEW COVENANT

a. Which promises are included in the covenant of grace (the New Covenant)? Hebrews 8:6, 10–13.

“The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law. [Jeremiah 31:33, 34 quoted.]

“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’ Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

b. When is God’s law written in our hearts? Romans 5:1–5; Psalm 40:8.

“The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God.’ Psalm 40:8.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 176.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In today’s world, why do we need to be very vigilant about moral purity?
2. What is the purpose of God’s law?
3. How should Christ’s suffering on Calvary influence my life?
4. Why do we have such tremendous need of a Saviour?
5. How can I live the New Covenant life?

Justification—Imputed Righteousness

MEMORY TEXT: “What saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3).

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

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 389–398.

Sunday

January 9

1. ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

a. **How was Abraham justified before God, and what is written about his faith? Romans 4:1–3; Hebrews 11:8–10.**

“[The covenant of grace] was renewed to Abraham in the promise, ‘In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 370.

“Abraham’s unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible. To him, faith was ‘the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.’ [Hebrews 11:1]. Relying upon the divine promise, without the least outward assurance of its fulfillment, he abandoned home and kindred and native land, and went forth, he knew not whither, to follow where God should lead.”—*Ibid.*, p. 126.

b. **Describe Abraham’s severest trial of faith. Hebrews 11:17–19.**

“The trial was far more severe than that which had been brought upon Adam. . . . All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham’s unfaltering obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 155.

2. DAVID JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

- a. After his crimes against Bathsheba and Uriah, what prayers did David offer to the Lord? Psalms 51:1–4; 32:1–5.

- b. When the prophet Nathan presented to David the enormity of his sin, how did David react? 2 Samuel 12:13 (first part). How did the Lord then respond through the prophet? 2 Samuel 12:13 (second part).

- c. What does the apostle Paul reveal about David's experience following his repentance? Romans 4:5–7.

“David’s repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgments threatened, inspired his prayer. But he saw the enormity of his transgression against God; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. David did not in despair give over the struggle. In the promises of God to repentant sinners he saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance. . . .

“Though David had fallen, the Lord lifted him up. He was now more fully in harmony with God and in sympathy with his fellow men than before he fell. . . .

“This passage in David’s history is full of significance to the repenting sinner. It is one of the most forcible illustrations given us of the struggles and temptations of humanity, and of genuine repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Through all the ages it has proved a source of encouragement to souls that, having fallen into sin, were struggling under the burden of their guilt. Thousands of the children of God, who have been betrayed into sin, when ready to give up to despair have remembered how David’s sincere repentance and confession were accepted by God, notwithstanding he suffered for his transgression; and they also have taken courage to repent and try again to walk in the way of God’s commandments. . . .

“The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 725, 726.

3. JUSTIFIED BEFORE OR AFTER BAPTISM?

a. Was Abraham justified by faith before circumcision or after circumcision? Romans 4:8–10.

b. What was the purpose of circumcision? Romans 4:11. What is the purpose of baptism? 1 Peter 3:18, 21.

“The rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as ‘a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.’ Romans 4:11. It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

“The resurrection of Christ is commemorated by our being buried with Him by baptism, and raised out of the watery grave, in likeness of His resurrection, to live in newness of life.”—*Early Writings*, p. 217.

“Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God’s spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, ‘*The Lord our Righteousness*.’ Jeremiah 23:6.

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing.’ And to them is fulfilled the promise: ‘I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.’ 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 91.

4. PROMISES FULFILLED THROUGH FAITH

a. On what basis did God fulfill His promises to Abraham? **Romans 4:13.**

"The Bible plainly teaches that the promises made to Abraham are to be fulfilled through Christ. All that are Christ's are 'Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'—heirs to 'an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away'—the earth freed from the curse of sin. Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:4. For 'the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;' and 'the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.' Daniel 7:27; Psalm 37:11."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 170.

b. What else is written about Abraham's faith? **Romans 4:18–22.**

"The birth of a son to Zacharias, like the birth of the child of Abraham, and that of Mary, was to teach a great spiritual truth, a truth that we are slow to learn and ready to forget. In ourselves we are incapable of doing any good thing; but that which we cannot do will be wrought by the power of God in every submissive and believing soul. It was through faith that the child of promise was given. It is through faith that spiritual life is begotten, and we are enabled to do the works of righteousness."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 98.

c. What is the ultimate lesson we gain from these facts? **Romans 4:23–25.**

"It is God that circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord's from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: 'I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised.'"—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 392.

5. FAITH ESSENTIAL FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION

a. What is the biblical definition of faith? Hebrews 11:1.

“Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ’s perfect obedience instead of the sinner’s transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his Substitute and Surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 100, 101.

b. What is the big difference between faith and presumption? Ephesians 2:8; Galatians 5:6; James 2:17.

“We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. [1 John 3:5, 6 quoted.] Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. [1 John 3:7 quoted.] Righteousness is defined by the standard of God’s holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai.

“That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption. [Ephesians 2:8; James 2:17 quoted.]”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 61.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can my faith become more like that of Abraham?
2. How can my repentance come more like that of David?
3. What is to be the experience of one who takes the vow of baptism?
4. Why should we not delay in taking our sinful lives to the Saviour?
5. How might I be in danger of falling into some form of presumption?

Fruits of Faith

MEMORY TEXT: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1, 2).

“When the Spirit of God controls mind and heart, the converted soul breaks forth into a new song; for he realizes that in his experience the promise of God has been fulfilled, that his transgression has been forgiven, his sin covered. He has exercised repentance toward God for the violation of the divine law, and faith toward Christ, who died for man’s justification.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 476.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 345–349.

Sunday

January 16

1. FORGIVEN BY FAITH

a. **What is justification, and why is it essential? Matthew 9:2; Romans 5:1.**

“Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1070.

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

b. **What is the hope of those who are justified by faith? Romans 5:2.**

“Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 394.

2. THE PURPOSE OF TRIBULATION

a. **Why does God allow tribulation to come upon His people? Romans 5:3, 4; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.**

“When [God] permits trials and afflictions, it is ‘for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.’ Hebrews 12:10. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

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

b. **How is God’s law written in our hearts after justification? Romans 5:5 (compare with Hebrews 8:10). What will be seen in our life? Matthew 6:33.**

“The acceptance of Christ gives value to the human being. His sacrifice carries life and light to all who take Christ as their personal Saviour. The love of God through Jesus Christ is shed abroad in the heart of every member of His body, carrying with it the vitality of the law of God the Father. Thus God may dwell with man, and man may dwell with God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 299, 300.

“Christ’s kingdom should be superior to every other interest. The law of God written in our hearts will subordinate our own interests to those that are higher and eternal.”—*The Bible Echo*, December 9, 1895.

c. **How does God demonstrate in fullness His love for us? Romans 5:7, 8.**

“Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 394.

3. RECONCILED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

a. How does Jesus deliver us from the wrath of the law against sinners? **Romans 4:15; 5:9.**

“God calls for faith in Christ as our atoning sacrifice. His blood is the only remedy for sin.

“It is not God’s will that you should be distrustful, and torture your soul with the fear that God will not accept you because you are sinful and unworthy. . . . You can say: ‘I know I am a sinner, and that is the reason I need a Saviour. . . . I have no merit or goodness whereby I may claim salvation, but I present before God the all-atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is my only plea.’ ”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 102.

“The Lord God through Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the lowest depths of human wretchedness, and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 161.

“Every revelation of God to the soul increases the capacity to know and to love. The continual cry of the heart is, ‘More of Thee,’ and ever the Spirit’s answer is, ‘Much more.’ ”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 20.

b. How does the Lord make our reconciliation with Him possible? **Romans 5:10, 11; Ephesians 2:13, 14, 16.**

“As you see the enormity of sin, as you see yourself as you really are, do not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save. We have not to reconcile God to us, but—O wondrous love!—God in Christ is ‘reconciling the world unto Himself.’ 2 Corinthians 5:19. He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of his children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 35.

4. THE TWO ADAMS

a. How does Paul compare the first Adam with the second? Romans 5:12–14; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45–47.

“Satan tempted the first Adam in Eden, and Adam reasoned with the enemy, thus giving him the advantage. Satan exercised his power of hypnotism over Adam and Eve, and this power he strove to exercise over Christ. But after the word of Scripture was quoted, Satan knew that he had no chance of triumphing.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 713.

“Not only man but the earth had by sin come under the power of the wicked one, and was to be restored by the plan of redemption. At his creation Adam was placed in dominion over the earth. But by yielding to temptation, he was brought under the power of Satan. ‘Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.’ 2 Peter 2:19. When man became Satan’s captive, the dominion which he held, passed to his conqueror. Thus Satan became ‘the god of this world.’ 2 Corinthians 4:4. He had usurped that dominion over the earth which had been originally given to Adam. But Christ, by His sacrifice paying the penalty of sin, would not only redeem man, but recover the dominion which he had forfeited. All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 67.

b. Whose righteousness justifies all repentant sinners? Romans 5:15–18.

“After Adam and Eve brought death into the world by their disobedience, a costly sacrifice was provided for the human race. A higher value than that they originally possessed was placed upon them. By giving Christ, His only-begotten Son, as a ransom for the world, God gave all heaven.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 299.

c. What does Paul confirm about our previous condition—and the only way we can be made righteous in God’s sight? Romans 5:19.

“Only the blood of Christ can atone for us; His grace alone can create in us a clean heart, and enable us to obey God’s law. In Him is our only hope.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 9, 1891.

5. ABUNDANT GRACE

a. Regardless of how overwhelmed we may feel about the depth of our sins, what hope are we privileged to grasp? Romans 5:20.

"The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, 'and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.' And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift—Immanuel, 'God with us.' "—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 26.

"Through the love of God the treasures of the grace of Christ have been laid open before the church and the world. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' [John 3:16]. What marvelous, unfathomable love, which led Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners! And what a loss the soul suffers who, understanding the strong claims of the law, fails to acknowledge that where sin abounds, the grace of Christ does much more abound!"—*Gospel Workers*, p. 157.

b. What will be our final reward of grace? Romans 5:21.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does justification matter?
2. Why does every one of us need to face custom-tailored tribulations?
3. In a worried, troubled world, how does the gospel of Christ bring hope?
4. Compare and contrast the two Adams.
5. What do I need to remember when plagued with a guilty conscience?

No Longer Slaves to Sin

MEMORY TEXT: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).

“The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1074.

Suggested Readings: Romans 6 (the entire chapter);
The Signs of the Times, January 27; February 3, 1898: “Knowing Christ.”

Sunday

January 23

1. GOD'S POWER IN JUSTIFICATION

a. What happens when a repentant sinner is justified? Matthew 6:12; John 1:12, 13.

“There is forgiveness for the penitent; for Christ is ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29. God’s promise is: ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ ‘A new heart also will I give you. . . . And I will put My Spirit within you.’ Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 36:26, 27.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 8.

“God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 114.

“Those who receive Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour are clothed with His garments of light. He takes away their sin and imparts to them His righteousness. Their joy is full. . . .

“He who is truly converted will be so filled with the love of God that he will long to impart to others the joy that he himself possesses.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 212.

2. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO CHRIST

a. After being justified by faith, are we free to live in sin? Romans 6:1, 2.

“By faithful obedience to the truth they are to make their calling and election sure.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1115.

b. What does baptism actually symbolize? Romans 6:3–5.

“The resurrection of Christ is commemorated by our being buried with Him by baptism, and raised out of the watery grave, in likeness of His resurrection, to live in newness of life.”—*Early Writings*, p. 217.

“All who are sons or daughters of God will deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. All who take their position on the Lord’s side will, as branches of the True Vine, receive nourishment, and will be stimulated by the vine to bear like fruit. They will be in cooperation with God, according to their ability exercising themselves unto godliness by walking in newness of life, which is daily repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 23, 1897.

c. When does the believer die to sin? 2 Corinthians 5:14; Romans 6:6. How can he/she keep this experience? Romans 6:11–13; 1 Corinthians 15:31.

“Paul’s sanctification was the result of a constant conflict with self. He said: ‘I die daily.’ 1 Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God’s will, however crucifying to his own nature.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 313.

“As you arose from the watery grave at the time of your baptism, you professed to be dead, and declared that your life was changed—hid with Christ in God. You claimed to be dead to sin, and cleansed from your hereditary and cultivated traits of evil. In going forward in the rite of baptism, you pledged yourselves before God to remain dead to sin. Your mouth was to remain a sanctified mouth, your tongue a converted tongue. You were to speak of God’s goodness, and to praise His holy name. Thus you were to be a great help and blessing to the church.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 908.

3. VICTORY ASSURED

a. **What is involved in the death to sin and self? Romans 6:15–18; Colossians 3:1–5; 8–10.**

b. **Where should our affections be centered? Colossians 3:2; Hebrews 12:2.**

“Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view.”—*Early Writings*, p. 67.

“If those who today are teaching the word of God, would uplift the cross of Christ higher and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God’s compassion and the sinfulness of sin.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209.

c. **What assurance is given that we can indeed overcome sin in the strength of Jesus? Romans 6:14; 1 John 5:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57.**

“In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. ‘Be of good cheer,’ He says; ‘I have overcome the world.’ John 16:33.

“Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, ‘I thirst.’ He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours.

“Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, ‘The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded.’ Isaiah 50:7.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 122, 123.

4. SLAVES OF SIN vs. SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

a. How can we overcome as Christ did? 2 Peter 1:4.

“‘The prince of this world cometh,’ said Jesus, ‘and hath nothing in Me.’ John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

“Shall we not accept the enmity which Christ has placed between man and the serpent?”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 16.

b. How does Paul describe the human condition when separated from God? Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 6:20, 21. But what happens when we surrender to Christ? Romans 6:19, 22, 23.

“Satan works in the children of disobedience, not merely having access to their minds, but working through their influence, conscious and unconscious, to draw others into the same disobedience.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 94.

“When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

5. THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE

a. **What is promised to those who persevere in believing in Christ?**
Colossians 1:21–23; Romans 6:23 (second part).

“When we put our trust in Jesus Christ, working obedience unto righteousness, angels of God work in our hearts unto righteousness.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 94.

b. **How did Christ define eternal life in His intercessory prayer—and upon what condition is eternal life possible?** John 17:3; 1 John 5:12, 13, 20.

“[John 17:3 quoted.] These words mean much. It is only by knowing Christ that we can know God. The Sent of God calls upon all to listen to these words. They are the words of God, and all should give heed to them; for by them they will be judged. To know Christ savingly is to be vitalized by spiritual knowledge, to practice His words. Without this, all else is valueless.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1898.

“A knowledge of God will constitute a kind of knowledge that will be as enduring as eternity.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 392.

“While we know Christ in one sense, that He is the Saviour of the world, it means more than this. We must have a personal knowledge and experience in Christ Jesus, an experimental knowledge of Christ, what He is to us, and what we are to Christ. That is the experience that everyone wants. Now, I cannot have it for any of you, nor can you have it for me. The work that is to be done for us, is to be through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God upon human minds and human hearts. The heart must be purified and sanctified.”—*This Day With God*, p. 213.

“To know God is to love Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. As the Creator creates in me a new heart, what happens to my priorities?
2. With a new heart, what happens to the way I speak?
3. What happens as I continue to set my affections on Christ?
4. Without Christ, what is my human nature like—and what changes when I fully surrender my will to Christ?
5. Why is it so important for me to know Jesus as my Friend and Saviour?

First Sabbath Offering for Welfare Assistance

"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

"Jesus here identifies Himself with His suffering people. It was I who was hungry and thirsty. It was I who was a stranger. It was I who was naked. It was I who was sick. It was I who was in prison. When you were enjoying the food from your bountifully spread tables, I was famishing in the hovel or street not far from you. When you closed your doors against Me, while your well-furnished rooms were unoccupied, I had not where to lay My head. Your wardrobes were filled with an abundant supply of changeable suits of apparel, upon which means had been needlessly squandered, which you might have given to the needy. I was destitute of comfortable apparel. When you were enjoying health, I was sick. Misfortune cast Me into prison and bound me with fetters, bowing down My spirit, depriving Me of freedom and hope, while you roamed free. What a oneness Jesus here expresses as existing between Himself and His suffering disciples! He makes their case His own. He identifies Himself as being in person the very sufferer."—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 40.

Unfortunately, many of our brethren around the world are among these little ones referred to above. Beside those in regions devastated by natural tragedies, epidemics and pandemics, many are living in extreme poverty caused by civil wars, political conflicts, and other real social tragedies where widows and orphans are many. The General Conference Welfare Department works not only to meet primary needs such as food, clothing and health, but also to create alternative sources of income—encouraging small community businesses, farms, and bakeries, as well as build schools and buy agricultural implements and seeds—all with the aim of finding ways to promote better living conditions without relying on outside help. This is a challenge, but we believe in divine provision and are strengthened by the financial support of our brethren worldwide. Today, as we give, let us remember we are serving "one of the least" of these little brethren. Please be generous and selfless; make a sacrifice if necessary. Let us put the best of ourselves into this offering, so that when we have the privilege of meeting our Saviour, we can be among those who have the joy of hearing: "You did it unto Me"!

The General Conference Welfare Department



From Slavery to Success

MEMORY TEXT: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:3, 4).

“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

Suggested Reading: *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1076–1078.

Sunday

January 30

1. AN ILLUSTRATION

a. **What was the condition of ancient Israel when they tried to obey God’s moral law in their own strength? Romans 10:1–3.**

“The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

b. **What practical illustration does Paul use to explain the relationship between humanity and God’s moral law—and how can we be dead to the condemnation of that law? Romans 7:1–4.**

“Turn your eyes from the imperfections of others, and fix them steadfastly on Christ. With a contrite heart, study His life and character. You need not only to be more enlightened, but quickened, that you may see the banquet that is before you, and eat and drink the flesh and blood of the Son of God, which is His Word. By tasting the good Word of life, by feeding on the bread of life, you may see the power of a world to come, and be created anew in Christ Jesus.”—*This Day With God*, p. 46.

2. PAUL DIED, NOT THE LAW**a. What is the main purpose of the moral law? Romans 7:7–9.**

“[Romans 7:7–9 quoted.] Sin then appeared in its true hideousness, and [Paul’s] self-esteem was gone. He became humble. He no longer ascribed goodness and merit to himself. He ceased to think more highly of himself than he ought, and he ascribed all the glory to God. He was no longer ambitious for greatness. He ceased to want to avenge himself, and was no longer sensitive to reproach, neglect, or contempt. He no longer sought earthly alliance, station, or honor. He did not pull others down to uplift himself. He became gentle, condescending, meek and lowly of heart, because he had learned his lesson in the school of Christ. He talked of Jesus and His matchless love, and grew more and more into His image. He bent his whole energy to win souls to Christ. When trial came upon him because of his unselfish labor for souls, he bowed in prayer, and his love for them increased. His life was hid with Christ in God, and he loved Jesus with all the ardor of his nature. Every church was dear to him; every church member was a person of interest to him; for he looked upon every soul as the purchase of the blood of Christ.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1076.

b. Describe Paul’s early experience with God’s law. Romans 7:10–12.

“The apostle Paul, in relating his experience, presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says, ‘I was alive without the law once’—he felt no condemnation; ‘but when the commandment came,’ when the law of God was urged upon his conscience, ‘sin revived, and I died.’ Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law. Mark, it was Paul, and not the law, that died.”—Ibid.

c. Explain the conflict between the law and the sinner. Romans 7:13–17.

d. Describe the struggle of the carnal mind seeking its own righteousness. Romans 7:18–21.

3. THE ONLY WAY OUT

a. How does the repentant believer consider God's moral law? Romans 7:22. On the other hand, what he does realize about himself? Verse 23.

"He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

b. What had Paul mournfully concluded about his spiritual state—and how was this echoed also by the early Advent believers? Romans 7:24.

"Sinners felt their consciences quickened. The 'light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' illumined the secret chambers of their souls, and the hidden things of darkness were made manifest. Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. They had a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and felt the terror of appearing, in their guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. In anguish they cried out: 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' "—*The Great Controversy*, p. 461.

c. Where only can hope be found? Romans 7:25 (first part). Yet what tends to be the natural, human flow of thinking—and why does it drastically need to change? Romans 7:25 (second half); Isaiah 55:7.

"With the mind we serve the law of God; but the minds of many have been serving the world. And while their minds were all occupied with things of earth and serving themselves, they could not serve the law of God."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 150.

"We need to understand how necessary it is that we die to self. Self-crucifixion will place souls on vantage ground. I entreat those [of you] who profess to be Christians to die to self that you may be stirred with a new life by the Holy Spirit's power. Satan is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Daily we need the converting power of God, or we cannot walk in the footprints of Christ. As the mind is enlightened in regard to what is purity and sanctification, and the heart responds to the strivings of the Holy Spirit, a daily conversion will be the result."—*The Upward Look*, p. 269.

4. NOW, NO CONDEMNATION

a. After utter, total surrender of the mind to Christ, what could Paul—and the early Advent believers, too—ultimately declare? Romans 8:1, 2.

“As the cross of Calvary, with its infinite sacrifice for the sins of men, was revealed, they saw that nothing but the merits of Christ could suffice to atone for their transgressions; this alone could reconcile man to God. With faith and humility they accepted the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Through the blood of Jesus they had ‘remission of sins that are past.’”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 461.

“While the Christian’s life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse. [Romans 8:1 quoted.]”—*Ibid.*, p. 477.

b. Where do we find freedom from sin—and how did Paul find deliverance from “the motions of sin”? Romans 8:3; compare 7:5 and 8:2.

“[The] same resurrection power is that which gives life to the soul ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ Ephesians 2:1. That spirit of life in Christ Jesus, ‘the power of His resurrection,’ sets men ‘free from the law of sin and death.’ Philippians 3:10; Romans 8:2. The dominion of evil is broken, and through faith the soul is kept from sin. He who opens his heart to the Spirit of Christ becomes a partaker of that mighty power which shall bring forth his body from the grave.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 209, 210.

“We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. . . . When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 36.

“There is need of men who will love God, who will not have a dwarfed, stunted religion, but will ever be gaining new supplies of grace, spirituality, and energy, by doing the commandments of the Lord.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 19, 1888.

5. FLESH vs. SPIRIT**a. What is the choice of those who are “born again”? Romans 8:4–9.**

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words ‘flesh’ or ‘fleshly’ or ‘carnal lusts’ embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul. The love of God must reign supreme; Christ must occupy an undivided throne. Our bodies are to be regarded as His purchased possession. The members of the body are to become the instruments of righteousness.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 127, 128.

b. What is our spiritual condition if guided by the Holy Spirit? Romans 8:10–14; 1 John 4:7.

“Our finite will must be brought into submission to the will of the Infinite; the human will must be blended with the divine. This will bring the Holy Spirit to our aid; and every conquest will tend to the recovery of God’s purchased possession, to the restoration of His image in the soul.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 153.

“Christ places the salvation of man, not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness. Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is through action that character is built. [Romans 8:14 quoted.] . . . Not those whose hearts are touched by the Spirit, not those who now and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 149, 150.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be “married” to Christ?
2. What happens when we try to follow God’s law in our own strength?
3. Where does our mind need to be when we seek to follow Christ?
4. What good news is introduced in the opening of Romans chapter 8?
5. How are we to continue to grow in the experience shown in Romans 8?

Victory Through Trust

MEMORY TEXT: “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*” (Romans 8:15).

“The gospel of Christ alone can free [man] from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains ‘remission of sins that are past’ and becomes a partaker of the divine nature.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 468.

Suggested Readings: Romans 8:15–39;
Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 331–339.

Sunday

February 6

1. GOD'S CHILDREN

a. **When and how do we, who are naturally “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3), become children of God? John 1:12, 13; Romans 8:15.**

“The dearest gift that heaven itself had to bestow has been poured out that God ‘might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ By that gift men are uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin to become children of God. Says Paul: ‘Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*.’”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 739.

“Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

b. **After being adopted as God's children, what should be our experience? Galatians 5:16; Colossians 2:6.**

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

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S CHILDREN

a. How does the Bible describe the true children of God? **1 John 3:1–3; 1 Peter 1:13–16.**

"The apostle [Peter] sought to teach the believers how important it is to keep the mind from wandering to forbidden themes or from spending its energies on trifling subjects. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518.

b. What fruits should be revealed in the life of God's children? **Galatians 5:22, 23; Romans 8:16, 17.**

"There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely. . . .

"Christ 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*, pp. 67–69.

c. How does Paul explain the fruit of the Spirit—pure unselfish love known as charity? **1 Corinthians 13:4–8.**

"Love 'rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' This love 'never faileth.' It can never lose its value; it is a heavenly attribute. As a precious treasure, it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 319.

3. GUIDED AND EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

a. What does the Holy Spirit do for God's children? **Romans 8:26, 27.**

"Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ, who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit's striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.

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

"Oh, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving, must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 344.

b. If we maintain a consistent connection with Christ, what does He promise to do in our behalf? **Philippians 1:6; 1 John 2:1.**

"We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 64.

4. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS CHILDREN

a. How does God's wise providence guide everything in regard to His children? *Romans 8:28.*

"The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord's permission, and 'all things' that are permitted 'work together for good to them that love God.' *Romans 8:28.*"—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 71.

"Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487.

b. While God knows the future of everyone, what does He predestinate for the life of His children? *Romans 8:29; John 1:12.*

"Wonderful possibilities are provided for every one who has faith in Christ. No walls are built to keep any living soul from salvation. The predestination, or election, of which God speaks, includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God's commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people, chosen by God from among men. All who are willing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world."—*The Gospel Herald*, June 11, 1902.

c. Explain the step-by-step process performed in our behalf. *Romans 8:30.*

"Calling and justification are not one and the same thing. Calling is the drawing of the sinner to Christ, and it is a work wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the heart, convicting of sin, and inviting to repentance."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 390.

5. A SONG OF VICTORY

- a. How does God's word assure us of victory—and how was this made possible? Romans 8:31, 32.

- b. What does God do for us when we are connected with Him? Romans 8:33–39.

"In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 552, 553.

"When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we 'are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2 Corinthians 3:18."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 72.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When we are adopted into God's family, what change occurs?
2. Describe the characteristic fruits of adoption into His family.
3. Explain the activity that the Godhead is now carrying out in our behalf.
4. Why do we not need to be stressed when faced with unexpected difficulties?
5. What happens when we keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus?

Cherishing Our Opportunity

MEMORY TEXT: “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid” (Romans 9:14).

“The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression. He that ‘confesseth and forsaketh’ his sin ‘shall have mercy’ (Proverbs 28:13).”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 552.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 207, 208; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 119, 120.

Sunday

February 13

1. A MIXED NATION

a. Describe the longing that Paul had for the salvation of his nation, and the reasoning behind it. Romans 9:1–5.

“It was no ordinary desire that the apostle felt. Constantly he was petitioning God to work in behalf of the Israelites who had failed to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. . . .

“The Jews were God’s chosen people, through whom He had purposed to bless the entire race. From among them God had raised up many prophets. These had foretold the advent of a Redeemer who was to be rejected and slain by those who should have been the first to recognize Him as the Promised One.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 374.

b. Ever since the Hebrew people began as a nation, what had God always observed existing among them? Romans 9:6–8.

2. AN ANCIENT EXAMPLE

a. **What should we learn from the Lord's message to Rebekah about the future of her unborn twins? Romans 9:10–12; Genesis 25:22, 23.**

“There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. 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.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 207.

b. **With regard to the birthright, what was the desire of Esau, the firstborn—and Jacob, the second son? Genesis 25:29–34; Hebrews 12:16, 17.**

“Esau, as the eldest, was the one entitled to the birthright. But Esau had no love for devotion, no inclination to a religious life. The requirements that accompanied the spiritual birthright were an unwelcome and even hateful restraint to him. The law of God, which was the condition of the divine covenant with Abraham, was regarded by Esau as a yoke of bondage. Bent on self-indulgence, he desired nothing so much as liberty to do as he pleased. To him power and riches, feasting and reveling, were happiness. He gloried in the unrestrained freedom of his wild, roving life.”—Ibid., p. 178.

“It was by his own deliberate choice that [Esau] was separated from the people of God. Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith.”—Ibid., p. 208.

“Jacob had learned from his mother of the divine intimation that the birthright should fall to him, and he was filled with an unspeakable desire for the privileges which it would confer. It was not the possession of his father's wealth that he craved; the spiritual birthright was the object of his longing. To commune with God as did righteous Abraham, to offer the sacrifice of atonement for his family, to be the progenitor of the chosen people and of the promised Messiah, and to inherit the immortal possessions embraced in the blessings of the covenant—here were the privileges and honors that kindled his most ardent desires. His mind was ever reaching forward to the future, and seeking to grasp its unseen blessings.”—Ibid., pp. 178, 179.

3. FAIR AND COMPASSIONATE

a. What reveals God's justice in honoring Jacob? Romans 9:13, 14.

"There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. 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. Christ Himself said, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life' (John 3:36). 'Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will of My Father* which is in heaven' (Matthew 7:21). And in the Revelation He declares, 'Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city' (Revelation 22:14). As regards man's final salvation, this is the only election brought to view in the word of God.

"Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The *provisions* of redemption are free to all; the *results* of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 207, 208.

b. What timeless principle did God unveil to Moses about His compassion? Exodus 34:5–7; Romans 9:15, 16.

"We must not think of God only as a judge ready to pronounce sentence against us. He hates sin; but from love to sinners He gave Himself, in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory.

"The Lord Himself declares His character that Satan has malignantly set in a false light. . . . [Exodus 34:6, 7 quoted.]"—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 633.

4. PHARAOH

- a. How are all to observe the peril of Pharaoh's attitude when Moses presented to him the divine command to release Israel from slavery? Romans 9:17; Exodus 5:1, 2.

- b. Why did Pharaoh's heart become harder and harder—and how is this a warning for all? Exodus 7:3, 4; Hebrews 4:7.

"God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his firstborn, and the firstborn of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Galatians 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 84, 85.

"There was no exercise of supernatural power to harden the heart of the king. God gave to Pharaoh the most striking evidence of divine power, but the monarch stubbornly refused to heed the light. Every display of infinite power rejected by him, rendered him the more determined in his rebellion. The seeds of rebellion that he sowed when he rejected the first miracle, produced their harvest. As he continued to venture on in his own course, going from one degree of stubbornness to another, his heart became more and more hardened, until he was called to look upon the cold, dead faces of the firstborn."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 268.

"Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk promptly in its rays. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 120.

5. IT'S TIME TO DECIDE

a. How does Inspiration convey the solemn reality facing every mortal? Romans 9:18–20.

“Now is your time to seek a preparation and readiness for the fearful test which is before us—that holiness without which no man shall see God. Let none say, My way is hid from the Lord; God taketh no knowledge of my ways. Now it may be it is not too late. Now it may be you can repent. But even if pardon is written against your names, you will sustain terrible loss; for the scars you have made upon your souls will remain.

“Oh, how can any who have the light of truth, the great light given them of God, defy the wrath and judgments of God by sinning against Him and doing the very things God has told them in His word not to do? How can they be so blinded by Satan as to dishonor God to His face, and defile their souls by sinning knowingly? Says the apostle, ‘We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.’ Will these sinners—shall I call them hypocrites?—in Zion inquire, In what manner am I a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men? Answer for yourselves, By my abuse of the light and privileges and mercies God has given me, by unseemly actions which corrupt and defile the soul. Professing to know God, do I put Him out of my thoughts, and substitute an idol? Do I lead other minds to regard sin lightly by my example?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 447.

b. What picture should ever remain vivid in our minds? Romans 9:21–23.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do we know that blood lineage does not guarantee salvation?
2. Why did Jacob find more favor in God’s sight than did Esau?
3. What do the experiences of Jacob and Moses teach me about God?
4. How can I avoid the step-by-step spiritual suicide Pharaoh chose?
5. How do choices I’m making right now influence my eternal destiny?

The Omnipotence of the Almighty

MEMORY TEXT: “Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth” (Romans 9:27, 28).

“He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning—the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 43.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 372–382.

Sunday

February 20

1. THE ISRAEL OF GOD

a. **What identifies the children of Abraham?** John 8:37–39; Genesis 26:5.

“The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham, but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not true children of his. Only those who are spiritually in harmony with him are reckoned as true descent.”—*This Day with God*, p. 183.

“Paul says, ‘They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.’ Galatians 3:7. But Abraham’s faith was made manifest by his works. . . . Says the apostle James, ‘Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.’ James 2:17. And John, who dwells so fully upon love, tells us, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’ 1 John 5:3.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 153, 154.

b. **What do today’s true Israelites ever keep in mind?** Romans 9:24–29.

2. GOD'S MERCY REVEALED

a. Why was God compelled to reject Israel as a nation? **Romans 9:31-33; 10:1-3.**

"The leaders in the Jewish nation had signally failed of fulfilling God's purpose for His chosen people. Those whom the Lord had made the depositaries of truth had proved unfaithful to their trust, and God chose others to do His work. In their blindness these leaders now gave full sway to what they called righteous indignation against the ones who were setting aside their cherished doctrines. They would not admit even the possibility that they themselves did not rightly understand the word, or that they had misinterpreted or misapplied the Scriptures. They acted like men who had lost their reason."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 78, 79.

b. Why were the Gentiles able to be grafted in as heirs of the kingdom of God? **Romans 9:30; 10:9-13; Isaiah 42:6, 7.**

"The Saviour longed to unfold to His disciples the truth regarding the breaking down of the 'middle wall of partition' between Israel and the other nations—the truth that 'the Gentiles should be fellow heirs' with the Jews and 'partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel' Ephesians 2:14; 3:6. This truth was revealed in part at the time when He rewarded the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and also when He preached the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar. Still more plainly was it revealed on the occasion of His visit to Phoenicia, when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman. These experiences helped the disciples to understand that among those whom many regarded as unworthy of salvation, there were souls hungering for the light of truth.

"Thus Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God's kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Saviour's love. But not until later did they realize in all its fullness that God 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.' **Acts 17:26, 27.**"—*Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

3. GOD LOVES THE WHOLE WORLD

a. Explain the contrast between Satan's lie and God's unbiased plan for the human race. *Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:3–6; 2 Peter 3:9.*

"Christ wanted all. He could not endure that one should be lost. O if the human family could only see the results of sin in the transgression and violence and crime that exist in the world! If they could see the transformation of men from the image of God to the similitude of Satan!"—*That I May Know Him*, p. 67.

"[Christ] died a most shameful death, and made a full and complete sacrifice, in order that no one might perish, but that all might come to repentance. He made an atonement for every repenting, believing soul, in order that all might find in Him a sin bearer."—*Ibid.*, p. 100.

"It is not the will of God that any shall perish, but that all shall have everlasting life."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 394.

"All are one in Christ. Birth, station, nationality, or color cannot elevate or degrade men. The character makes the man."—*Christian Service*, p. 218.

b. What commission is given to all of God's people? *Matthew 28:18–20; Romans 10:14, 15.*

"At the meeting on a mountain in Galilee, all the believers who could be called together were assembled."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 818.

"Clothed with boundless authority, [Christ] gave His commission to the disciples: [Matthew 28:19, 20 quoted.]"—*Ibid.*, p. 819.

"It was the Saviour's purpose that after He ascended to heaven to become man's intercessor, His followers should carry on the work that He had begun. . . . God demands that every soul who knows the truth shall seek to win others to the love of the truth."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 103.

"The Lord Jesus seeks the cooperation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communication of His grace. The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust; then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ. This is not to be gained through education in the most scientific schools. It is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 249, 250.

4. A CALL TO ACTION

a. In view of God's amazing care for a world steeped in strife, what call to action must we each accept? 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 11:1-4.

"Let companies now be quickly organized to go out two and two, and labor in the Spirit of Christ, following His plans. Even though some Judas may introduce himself into the ranks of the workers, the Lord will care for the work. His angels will go before and prepare the way. Before this time, every large city should have heard the testing message, and thousands should have been brought to a knowledge of the truth. Wake up the churches, take the light from under the bushel.

"Where are the men who will work and study and agonize in prayer as did Christ? We are not to confine our efforts to a few places. 'If they shall persecute you in one city, flee ye to another.' Let Christ's plan be followed. He was ever watching for opportunities to engage in personal labor, ever ready to interest and draw men to a study of the Scriptures. He labored patiently for men who had not an intelligent knowledge of what is truth. While we are not awake to the situation, and while much time is consumed in planning how to reach perishing souls, Satan is busy devising and blocking the way. . . .

"Too much labor has been put forth in the plants in a few favored localities. Let not so large an expenditure of means and of time as has been devoted to — be given to other places. . . ."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 303.

b. Explain what is to be our attitude and duty toward the Jewish people living today. Romans 11:5, 11, 17-21.

"The work for the Jews, as outlined in the eleventh chapter of Romans, is a work that is to be treated with special wisdom. It is a work that must not be ignored. The wisdom of God must come to our people. In all wisdom and righteousness we must clear the King's highway. The Jews are to be given every opportunity of coming to the light."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1079.

c. How does God's management reveal His mercy? Romans 11:22-25.

5. BRILLIANCE IN THE FACE OF DARKNESS

a. Describe the final message each of us is to share with those with whom we come in contact. *Isaiah 40:10; Romans 11:30–32.*

“Those who wait for the Bridegroom’s coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God.’ The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

“The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness. . . .

“Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. . . . The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415–417.

b. Describe the experience of the true Israel of God at the end of history—and the reason for it. *Revelation 12:17; 14:12; Romans 11:33.*

“The Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands.”—*Evangelism*, p. 118.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How am I to develop more fully the spiritual strength of Abraham?
2. In an age of disparity, what must every Christian keep in mind?
3. How can I develop the type of faith God commends among the Gentiles?
4. In Christ’s strength, what actions can I take to win souls for Him?
5. How can my sharing of the third angel’s message be made practical?

First Sabbath Offering for the Church in Keilor Park, Australia

Home to around five million people, Melbourne, Victoria, is the southernmost capital city in Australia's mainland. The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement has had a presence here for over 50 years.

In 1972, a church building was dedicated in the western suburb of Keilor Park, by volunteer hands. When it was built, the size of the building was deemed to be sufficient. However, over the years, our membership has grown, many children were born, and the number attending church has increased.

After a half century standing as a lighthouse to the community, the church building in Keilor Park has begun to need serious repair. It has also become too small to accommodate the growing numbers who worship here. In recent years the foundation around the sanctuary has been settling, and the wall and roof structure are actually not able to withstand the shifting of the foundation. This would involve a very difficult and costly repair.

After much deliberation, the brethren came to the conclusion that rebuilding the church would be the best, simplest and most cost-effective solution. So, it is our desire to complete a larger church in which to worship God and be a witness to those around us. We also plan to include a new dining hall for cooking demonstrations, health lectures, and outreach for the public.

We have received the necessary approval from the local government, have drawn up plans for construction, and are now in the process of obtaining a permit to build.

By the time this appeal reaches you, construction will have begun, and the members and friends of the Keilor Park Church need your help. The planning permit requires that the parking lot be paved with asphalt, and this has increased our costs significantly. We anticipate that it will cost a modest AU\$450,000 to complete this project. To date we have raised AU\$220,000 and have many members, friends and even the neighbors in our community who are willing to sacrifice their time to assist us in constructing our new church building. "Let us rise up and build" (Nehemiah 2:18)! Please join in this venture and help us complete this lighthouse for western Melbourne. Thank you, and may God bless every giver!

Your brethren from the Australasian Union



Transformed by God's Love

MEMORY TEXT: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“We are to give ourselves to the service of God, and we should seek to make the offering as nearly perfect as possible. God will not be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer. Those who love Him with all the heart, will desire to give Him the best service of the life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 352, 353.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 275–281.

Sunday

February 27

1. A LIVING SACRIFICE

a. **What solemn appeal is presented to each one of us? Romans 12:1.**

“God expressly directed that every offering presented for the service of the sanctuary should be ‘without blemish.’ Exodus 12:5. The priests were to examine all animals brought as a sacrifice, and were to reject every one in which a defect was discovered. Only an offering ‘without blemish’ could be a symbol of His perfect purity who was to offer Himself as ‘a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ 1 Peter 1:19. The apostle Paul points to these sacrifices as an illustration of what the followers of Christ are to become.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 352.

b. **Where does true transformation occur? Romans 12:2.**

“Christ demands all. If He required less, His sacrifice was too dear, too great to make to bring us up to such a level. Our holy faith cries out, Separation. We should not be conformed to the world, or to dead, heartless professors. ‘Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.’ This is a self-denying way.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 240.

2. BECOMING POOR IN SPIRIT

a. As believers, what are each of us warned about ourselves? Romans 12:3; Ecclesiastes 7:16.

"There is among us an evil that needs to be corrected. Brethren feel free to look at, and speak of, the supposed defects of others, when that very liberty reveals a decided defect in themselves. They make it manifest that they are wise in their own conceits; and God cannot give them His special blessing, for they would exalt themselves and hurt the precious cause of truth. When the world was destitute of the knowledge of God, Jesus came to impart this inestimable blessing—a knowledge of the paternal character of our heavenly Father."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 193.

b. What appeals does Christ make to all of us, erring sinners as we are? Matthew 5:3, 5; 11:28–30.

"[Matthew 11:30 quoted.] We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God.

"It is the love of self that brings unrest. When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus, the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. Then we shall not be seeking the highest place. We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 330, 331.

"None but God can subdue the pride of man's heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

3. IN THE CIRCLE OF CHRISTIANS

a. How does Paul illustrate the work of the church? **Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12–23.**

“By a comparison of the church with the human body, the apostle aptly illustrated the close and harmonious relationship that should exist among all members of the church of Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 317.

b. What does God expect from all members of His church? **Ephesians 4:1–3, 12, 13.**

“I point you to the words of the apostle Paul in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. This whole chapter is a lesson that God desires us to learn and practice.

“In the fourth chapter of Ephesians the plan of God is so plainly and simply revealed that all His children may lay hold upon the truth. Here the means which He has appointed to keep unity in His church, that its members may reveal to the world a healthy religious experience, is plainly declared.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1117.

c. Explain the keys to sweet harmony in the church. **Romans 12:9.**

“Divine love makes its most touching appeals to the heart when it calls upon us to manifest the same tender compassion that Christ manifested. That man only who has unselfish love for his brother has true love for God. The true Christian will not willingly permit the soul in peril and need to go unwarned, uncared for. He will not hold himself aloof from the erring, leaving them to plunge farther into unhappiness and discouragement or to fall on Satan’s battleground.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 550.

“We are to seek the Lord in humility and contrition, confessing our own sins, and coming into close unity with one another. Brethren and sisters, pray, pray, for your own sakes, and for the sake of others.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 29, 1909.

4. THE REALITY OF HUMAN NATURE

a. Even if we have professed Christianity for years, what must we continually remember? Jeremiah 17:9; 1 Corinthians 8:1 (second half).

"The forms of unbelief are varied, for Satan watches every opportunity to crowd in some of his attributes. There is in the natural heart a tendency to be exalted or puffed up if success attends the efforts put forth. But self-exaltation can find no place in the work of God. Whatever your intelligence, however earnestly and zealously you may labor, unless you put away your own tendencies to pride, and submit to be guided by the Spirit of God, you will be on losing ground.

"Spiritual death in the soul is evidenced by spiritual pride and a crippled experience; those who have such an experience seldom make straight paths for their feet. If pride is nourished, the very qualities of the mind which grace, if received, would make a blessing, become contaminated. The very victories which would have been a savor of life unto life, if the glory had been given to God, become tarnished by self-glory. These may seem to be little things, unworthy of notice, but the seed thus scattered brings forth a sure harvest. It is these little sins, so common that they are often unnoticed, that Satan uses in his service."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1080.

b. What attitude, too often underestimated, is actually a supreme indication of genuine Christianity? Philippians 2:3; Romans 12:10.

"God requires more of His followers than many realize. . . . We shall have no excuse to offer in the day of God if we fail to reach the standard set before us in His word. . . .

"Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. . . . The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 171.

5. WEANING OURSELVES FROM WORLDLY FOCUS

a. Living as we do in a highly intensive age, what balanced admonitions are to be reflected in our lives? Romans 12:11; 1 John 2:15–17.

“Waiting, watching, and vigilant working are to be combined. Our life should not be all bustle and drive and planning about the things of the world, to the neglect of personal piety and of the service that God requires. While we should not be slothful in business, we should be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The lamp of the soul must be trimmed, and we must have the oil of grace in our vessels with our lamps. Every precaution must be used to prevent spiritual declension, lest the day of the Lord overtake us as a thief. That day is not to be put far off; it is near, and no man should say, even in his heart, much less by his works, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming,’ lest for so doing his portion be appointed with hypocrites and unbelievers.

“I saw that God’s people are in great peril; many are dwellers upon the earth; their interest and affections are centered in the world. Their example is not right. The world is deceived by the course pursued by many who profess great and noble truths. . . .

“Brother A was presented before me to represent a class who are in a similar position. They have never been indifferent to the smallest worldly advantage. By diligent business tact and successful investments, by trading, not on pounds, but on pence and farthings, they have accumulated property. But in doing this they have educated faculties inconsistent with the development of Christian character. . . .

“All the abilities which men possess belong to God. Worldly conformity and attachments are emphatically forbidden in His word. When the power of the transforming grace of God is felt upon the heart, it will send a man, hitherto worldly, into every pathway of beneficence.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 276, 277.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How is my commitment to Christ to affect the way I think?
2. How do the meek shine in contrast to those with typical human nature?
3. In what ways can I be more proactive in fostering unity in my church?
4. How will truly thinking of my brethren better than myself benefit me?
5. From what aspects of the world do I need to wean myself?

Amid Friends and Foes

MEMORY TEXT: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (**Romans 12:21**).

“To be great in God’s kingdom is to be a little child in humility, in simplicity of faith, and in the purity of love. All pride must perish, all jealousy be overcome, all ambition for supremacy be given up, and the meekness and trust of the child be encouraged.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 130.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 483–496.

Sunday

March 6

1. LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

a. Even when life is looking bleak, what is to be our attitude? **Romans 12:12**.

“All have trials; griefs hard to bear, temptations hard to resist. Do not tell your troubles to your fellow mortals, but carry everything to God in prayer. Make it a rule never to utter one word of doubt or discouragement. You can do much to brighten the life of others and strengthen their efforts, by words of hope and holy cheer.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 119, 120.

“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul.

“Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 99.

2. OPEN HEART, OPEN HOME

a. Name one precious Christian trait often forgotten—but much valued—in today's busy world. **Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9.**

"The Bible lays much stress upon the practice of hospitality. Not only does it enjoin hospitality as a duty, but it presents many beautiful pictures of the exercise of this grace and the blessings which it brings. . . .

"Lot, Abraham's nephew, though he had made his home in Sodom, was imbued with the patriarch's spirit of kindness and hospitality. Seeing at nightfall two strangers at the city gate, and knowing the dangers sure to beset them in that wicked city, Lot insisted on bringing them to his home. To the peril that might result to himself and his household he gave no thought. It was a part of his lifework to protect the imperiled and to care for the homeless, and the deed performed in kindness to two unknown travelers brought angels to his home. Those whom he sought to protect, protected him. At nightfall he had led them for safety to his door; at the dawn they led him and his household forth in safety from the gate of the doomed city.

"These acts of courtesy God thought of sufficient importance to record in His word; and more than a thousand years later they were referred to by an inspired apostle: 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Hebrews 13:2).

"The privilege granted Abraham and Lot is not denied to us. By showing hospitality to God's children we, too, may receive His angels into our dwellings. Even in our day, angels in human form enter the homes of men and are entertained by them. And Christians who live in the light of God's countenance are always accompanied by unseen angels, and these holy beings leave behind them a blessing in our homes."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 341, 342.

b. Of what great principle is this a reminder? **Philippians 2:4.**

"Our work in this world is to live for others' good, to bless others, to be hospitable; and frequently it may be only at some inconvenience that we can entertain those who really need our care and the benefit of our society and our homes."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 645.

3. LOVE LIKE NO OTHER

a. **Describe the depth of an amazing, outstanding quality we learn from Jesus. 1 Peter 1:21–23; Romans 12:14.**

“We may learn the lessons of meekness and lowliness of mind as we go up to Mount Calvary, and, looking upon the cross, see our Saviour in agony, the Son of God dying, the Just for the unjust. Behold Him who could summon legions of angels to His assistance with one word, a subject of jest and merriment, of reviling and hatred. He gives Himself a sacrifice for sin. When reviled, He threatened not; when falsely accused, He opened not His mouth. He prays on the cross for His murderers. He is dying for them. He is paying an infinite price for every one of them. He would not lose one whom He has purchased at so great cost. He gives Himself to be smitten and scourged without a murmur. And this uncomplaining victim is the Son of God. His throne is from everlasting, and His kingdom shall have no end. . . . Look, O look upon the cross of Calvary; behold the royal victim suffering on your account. . . .

“The Son of God was rejected and despised for our sakes. Can you, in full view of the cross, beholding by the eye of faith the sufferings of Christ, tell your tale of woe, your trials? Can you nurse revenge of your enemies in your heart while the prayer of Christ comes from His pale and quivering lips for His revilers, His murderers—‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34)?”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 65.

b. **Name some vital keys to winning souls for Christ. Romans 12:15.**

“My brethren, let your hearts become broken and contrite. Let expressions of sympathy and love, which will not blister the tongue, flow from your lips. Let others feel that warmth which love can create in the heart.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1164.

“There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 143, 144.

4. RELATING TO OTHERS

a. What natural attitude must we all choose to replace with Christ's way that is so different from our own—and why? James 1:9, 10; Romans 12:16.

"[Christ] saw that the weakness, the curse of the church, would be a spirit of self-righteousness. Men would think they could do something toward earning a place in the kingdom of heaven. They would imagine that when they had made certain advancement, the Lord would come in to help them. Thus there would be an abundance of self and little of Jesus. Many who had made a little advancement would be puffed up and think themselves superior to others. They would be eager for flattery, jealous if not thought most important. Against this danger Christ seeks to guard His disciples.

"All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. . . .

"Love rejoices in the truth and institutes no envious comparisons. He who possesses love compares only the loveliness of Christ and his own imperfect character."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 400–402.

b. When treated badly by others, what inspired wisdom should we always keep in mind? Romans 12:17, 18; Proverbs 16:7.

"Unswerving faith and unselfish love will overcome the difficulties that arise in the path of duty to hinder aggressive warfare. As those inspired by this faith go forward in the work of saving souls, they will run and not be weary, will walk and not faint.

"I assure you that if you work in right lines, God will make your enemies to be at peace with you. He will uphold and strengthen you. Make a covenant with God that you will guard well your words. 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.' (James 3:2). Remember that a revengeful speech never makes one feel that he has gained a victory. Let Christ speak through you. Do not lose the blessing that comes from thinking no evil."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 243.

"In all your difficulties be calm and undisturbed, patient and forbearing, not rendering evil for evil, but good for evil. Look to the top of the ladder. God is above it. His glory shines on every soul ascending heavenward. Jesus is this ladder. Climb up by Him, cling to Him, and ere long you will step off the ladder into His everlasting kingdom."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 130.

5. ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

a. **Describe the patience of the saints we must develop if we expect to be sealed in Christ for eternity. Luke 21:19; Romans 12:19.**

“There is a precious experience, an experience more precious than fine gold, to be gained by everyone who will walk by faith. He who will walk in the way of unwavering trust in God will have a connection with heaven. The child of God is to do his work, looking to God alone for strength and guidance. He must toil on without despondency and full of hope, even though he is placed in most trying and aggravating circumstances.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1022.

“When the defiance of God’s law is almost universal, when His people are pressed in affliction by their fellow men, the Lord will interpose.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 178.

“The fervent prayers of His people will be answered; for God loves to have His people seek Him with all the heart, and depend upon Him as their deliverer. He will be sought unto to do these things for His people, and He will arise as their protector and avenger.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1081.

b. **How are the faithful to shine in this generation? Romans 12:20, 21.**

“We may never know until the judgment the influence of a kind, considerate course of action to the inconsistent, the unreasonable, and unworthy. If, after a course of provocation and injustice on their part, you treat them as you would an innocent person, you even take pains to show them special acts of kindness, then you have acted the part of a Christian; and they become surprised and ashamed, and see their course of action and meanness more clearly than if you plainly stated their aggravated acts to rebuke them.”—*Medical Ministry*, pp. 209, 210.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When tempted to vent my frustrations, what should I keep in mind?
2. Why should I recall those times when hospitality was a blessing to me?
3. How am I called to reflect the attitude of Christ toward His murderers?
4. In what areas of life is Satan making me think I’m somehow superior?
5. Even if I might be right, how should I treat those who may be wrong?

In Humble Meekness

MEMORY TEXT: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14).

“[Romans 13:14 quoted.] Let every soul heed these words, and know that the Lord Jesus will accept of no compromise.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 171.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 394–403.

Sunday

March 13

1. THE INSPIRED BALANCE

a. Explain the comprehensive duties of Christians of every era with regard to earthly authorities. Romans 13:1–7; Acts 4:18–20; 5:17–20.

“When the disciples preached Christ and Him crucified, after His resurrection, the authorities commanded them not to speak any more nor to teach in the name of Jesus. [Acts 4:19, 20 quoted.] They continued to preach the good news of salvation through Christ, and the power of God witnessed to the message. The sick were healed, and thousands were added to the church. . . .

“The God of heaven, the mighty Ruler of the universe, took this matter into His own hands; for men were warring against His work. He showed them plainly that there is a ruler above man, whose authority must be respected. . . .

“Those who seek to compel men to observe an institution of the papacy, and trample upon God’s authority, are doing a work similar to that of the Jewish leaders in the days of the apostles. When the laws of earthly rulers are brought into opposition to the laws of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, then those who are God’s loyal subjects will be true to Him.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 713.

“I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 361.

2. MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE RESPECT

a. **What attitude and criteria did Christ teach regarding our duties to God and to the government? Mark 12:13–17; Romans 14:16.**

“Christ’s reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 602.

b. **Describe the attitude we are ever to manifest toward rulers, as exemplified by faithful men of God. Daniel 6:16–22; Titus 3:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:17.**

“We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God’s word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is not to be set aside for a ‘Thus saith the church’ or a ‘Thus saith the state.’ The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.

“We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ’s name, advocating the truths committed to us.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 69.

“It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. . . . Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. We should not be turned aside to lines that will encourage controversy or arouse antagonism in those not of our faith.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 394.

“In all modesty, in the spirit of grace, and in the love of God we are to point men to the fact that the Lord God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.”—*Ibid.*, p. 395.

3. YEARNING FOR THE SPIRIT OF GOD

a. Describe the impact of having God's law in our hearts. *Romans 13:8–10.*

"God's law is fulfilled only as men love Him with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. It is the manifestation of this love that brings glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men. The Lord is glorified when the great end of His law is attained. It is the work of the Holy Spirit from age to age to impart love to human hearts, for love is the living principle of brotherhood.

"Not one nook or corner of the soul is to be a hiding place for selfishness. God desires that heaven's plan shall be carried out, and heaven's divine order and harmony prevail, in every family, in every church, in every institution. Did this love leaven society, we should see the out-working of noble principles of Christian refinement and courtesy, and in Christian charity toward the purchase of the blood of Christ. Spiritual transformation would be seen in all our families, in our institutions, in our churches. When this transformation takes place, these agencies will become instrumentalities by which God will impart heaven's light to the world and thus, through divine discipline and training, fit men and women for the society of heaven.

"Jesus has gone to prepare mansions for those who are preparing themselves, through His love and grace, for the abodes of bliss. In the family of God in heaven there will not be found one who is selfish. The peace and harmony of the heavenly courts will not be marred by the presence of one who is rough or unkind. He who in this world exalts self in the work given him to do will never see the kingdom of God unless he is changed in spirit, unless he becomes meek and lowly, revealing the simplicity of a little child."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 139, 140.

b. Now more than ever, what sobering call resounds to us? *Romans 13:11.*

"Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields to tell the unconcerned and indifferent to seek the Lord while He may be found."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 253.

"Now the day of God is nearer than when we first believed, and we should be more earnest, more zealous, and fervent than in those early days. Our perils are greater now than then. Souls are more hardened. We need now to be imbued with the spirit of Christ, and we should not rest until we receive it."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 162.

4. FOCUS AND ZEAL AS NEVER BEFORE

a. What is crucial as we approach the end of time? Romans 13:12–14.

“The Lord has not closed Heaven against His people; but their own course of continual backsliding, of bickering, envying, and strife, has separated them from Him. Pride and love of the world live in the heart. . . .

“Impurity is widespread, even among those who profess to be the followers of Christ. Many are eagerly participating in worldly, demoralizing amusements which God’s word forbids. Thus they sever their connection with God, and rank themselves with the pleasure-lovers of the world. If God should present their sins before them as they appear in His sight, they would be filled with shame and terror.

“And what has caused this alarming condition? Many have accepted the theory of religious truth, who have not been converted to its principles. There are few indeed who feel true sorrow for sin; who have deep, pungent convictions of the depravity of the unregenerate nature, and are trying to walk even as Christ walked. The heart of stone is not exchanged for a heart of flesh. Few are willing to fall upon the Rock, and be broken.

“What surpassing love and condescension, that when we had no claim on divine mercy, Christ was willing to undertake our redemption! But our great Physician requires of every soul unquestioning obedience. We are never to prescribe for our own case. Christ must have the entire control of our will and action, or He will not undertake in our behalf.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 14, 1887.

“We are standing, as it were, on the borders of the eternal world. We are looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord; the night is far spent; the day is at hand. When we realize the greatness of the plan of redemption we shall be far more courageous, self-sacrificing, and devotional than we now are.

“There is a great work for us to do before success will crown our efforts. There must be decided reforms in our homes and in our churches. Parents must labor for the salvation of their children. God will work with our efforts when we do on our part all that He has enjoined upon us and qualified us to do; but because of our unbelief, worldliness, and indolence, blood-bought souls in the very shadow of our homes are dying in their sins, and dying unwarned. Is Satan always thus to triumph? Oh, no! The light reflected from the cross of Calvary indicates that a greater work is to be done than our eyes have yet witnessed.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 382, 383.

5. BROTHERLY LOVE

a. Considering the fact that all human beings are different, how should we treat each other? *Romans 14:7-13.*

“Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same. There are no two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light, are to another most difficult and perplexing.

“So frail, so ignorant, so liable to misconception is human nature, that each should be careful in the estimate he places upon another. We little know the bearing of our acts upon the experience of others. What we do or say may seem to us of little moment, when, could our eyes be opened, we should see that upon it depended the most important results for good or for evil.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 473.

b. How does the Lord see those who cause division in His church—and how only can we reach unity both in the family and the church? *Proverbs 6:16-19; Colossians 1:27, 28.*

“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ.

“The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 179.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What example do I give friends and family regarding earthly authority?
2. Explain the balance of honoring the Majesty of heaven above all.
3. How might my attitudes be hindering the Spirit of God in my life?
4. What actions should I be taking in preparation for Christ’s return?
5. How will my relationships with others change as I seek Christ fully?

A Final Legacy of Faith

MEMORY TEXT: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:13).

“My brethren and sisters, keep the mind fixed on Jesus. Keep the heart uplifted in prayer to God. Behold Jesus and what He endured and suffered for us in order that we might have that life which measures with the life of God.”—*Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 21, Ms. 95, 1906.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 503–516.

Sunday

March 20

1. BUILDING COURAGEOUSLY

a. **How do we most effectively build up one another? Romans 14:19.**

“Jesus Himself never purchased peace by compromise. His heart overflowed with love for the whole human race, but He was never indulgent to their sins. He was too much their friend to remain silent while they were pursuing a course that would ruin their souls—the souls He had purchased with His own blood. He labored that man should be true to himself, true to his higher and eternal interest. The servants of Christ are called to the same work, and they should beware lest, in seeking to prevent discord, they surrender the truth. They are to ‘follow after the things which make for peace’ (Romans 14:19); but real peace can never be secured by compromising principle. And no man can be true to principle without exciting opposition. A Christianity that is spiritual will be opposed by the children of disobedience. But Jesus bade His disciples, ‘Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.’ Those who are true to God need not fear the power of men nor the enmity of Satan. In Christ their eternal life is secure. Their only fear should be lest they surrender the truth, and thus betray the trust with which God has honored them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 356.

2. CHRISTLIKENESS

a. As members of the body of Christ, what responsibility does each one of us too often neglect? Galatians 6:1, 2; Romans 15:1, 2.

"I have been and am still fellowshipping as brethren and sisters those who have been guilty of grave sins and who even now do not see their sins as God sees them. But the Lord bears with these persons, and why should not I? He will yet cause His Spirit so to impress their hearts that sin will appear to them as it appeared to Paul, exceedingly sinful.

"We know but little of our own hearts and have but little sense of our own need of the mercy of God. This is why we cherish so little of that sweet compassion which Jesus manifests toward us and which we should manifest toward one another. We should remember that our brethren are weak, erring mortals like ourselves. Suppose that a brother has through unwatchfulness been overborne by temptation and contrary to his general conduct has committed some error, what course shall be pursued toward him? We learn from the Bible that men whom God had used to do a great and good work committed grave sins. The Lord did not pass these by unrebuked, neither did He cast off His servants. When they repented, He graciously forgave them and revealed to them His presence and wrought through them. Let poor, weak mortals consider how great is their own need of pity and forbearance from God and from their brethren. Let them beware how they judge and condemn others."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 246, 247.

b. Describe the example our Master has given us. Romans 15:3.

"While in the world, [Jesus] was not of the world. It was a continual pain to Him to be brought in contact with the enmity, depravity, and impurity which Satan had brought in; but He had a work to do to bring man into harmony with the divine plan, and earth in connection with heaven, and He counted no sacrifice too great for the accomplishment of the object. He 'was in all points tempted like as we are.' Satan stood ready to assail Him at every step, hurling at Him his fiercest temptations; yet He 'did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.' . . .

"While abhorring sin, He wept with compassion over the sinner. He pleased not Himself. The Majesty of heaven clothed Himself with the humility of a child. This is the character of Christ. Are we walking in His footsteps?"—*Ibid.*, pp. 421, 422.

3. HOPE TO SHINE FORTH

a. When plagued with darkness, where is our hope? Romans 15:4, 13.

“Poor, trembling soul, rest in the promises of God. In so doing, the enemy’s fetters will be broken, his suggestions will be powerless. Heed not the whisperings of the enemy. Go free, oppressed soul. Be of good courage. Say to your poor, desponding heart: ‘Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.’ I know that God loves you. Put your trust in Him. Think not of those things which bring sadness and distress; turn from every disagreeable thought and think of precious Jesus. Dwell upon His power to save, His undying, matchless love for you, even you.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 319.

b. What is to be the aim of our fellowship in Christ? Romans 15:5–7.

“When Christ made so great a sacrifice to save men and bring them into unity with one another, even as He was united with the Father, what sacrifice is too great for His followers to make in order to preserve that unity?

“If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them in favor of the Christian religion.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 19.

c. How is this blessed experience to expand? Romans 15:8–12, 16.

“The Lord has declared that the Gentiles shall be gathered in, and not the Gentiles only, but the Jews. . . . There are Jews everywhere, and to them the light of present truth is to be brought. There are among them many who will come to the light, and who will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power. The Lord God will work. He will do wonderful things in righteousness.”—*Evangelism*, p. 578.

“Paul teaches that believers are to be ‘sanctified by the Holy Ghost’ Romans 15:16. What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told His disciples: ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth’ (John 16:13).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 469.

4. SPREADING TRUTH, NOT LIES

a. Toward the end of his epistle, of what did Paul warn the believers in Rome? Romans 16:17–19. How does this problem occur today?

“Brother J is deceived, and is deceiving others. His theme has been consecration, when his heart was not right. His mind has been divided. He has had no anchor to hold him, and has been floating about without a settled faith. Much of his time has been occupied in relating to one and another reports and stories calculated to distract and unsettle minds. He has had much to say in regard to my husband and myself, and against the visions. He has stood in a position, ‘Report, . . . and we will report it.’ God sent him not on such a mission. He has not known whom he has been serving. Satan has been using him to throw minds into confusion. What little influence he had he has used to prejudice minds against the third angel’s message. . . . God will open the eyes of honest souls to understand the cruel work of those who scatter and divide. He will mark those who cause divisions, that every honest one may escape from Satan’s snare.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 334.

b. Why can we press forward, looking onward in hope? Romans 16:20.

“Until Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, men will become perverse in spirit and turn from the truth to fables. The church will yet see troublous times. She will prophesy in sackcloth. But although she must meet heresies and persecutions, although she must battle with the infidel and the apostate, yet by the help of God she is bruising the head of Satan. The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation.

“The gospel message does not win a single soul to Christ, or make its way to a single heart, without wounding the head of Satan. Whenever a captive is wrenched from his grasp, delivered from his oppression, the tyrant is defeated. The publishing houses, the presses, are instrumentalities in God’s hand to send out to every tongue and nation the precious light of truth. This light is reaching even to heathen lands, and is constantly making inroads upon superstition and every conceivable error.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 594, 595.

5. THE ETERNALLY MARVELOUS MYSTERY

a. How are we to cherish more wholeheartedly the unfolding of the mystery of redemption? Romans 16:25-27.

"From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, 'They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads' (Revelation 22:4), the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme—man's uplifting—the power of God, 'which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:57).

"He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God's word.

"The science of redemption is the science of all sciences; the science that is the study of the angels and of all the intelligences of the unfallen worlds; the science that engages the attention of our Lord and Saviour; the science that enters into the purpose brooded in the mind of the Infinite—'kept in silence through times eternal' (Romans 16:25, R.V.); the science that will be the study of God's redeemed throughout endless ages. This is the highest study in which it is possible for man to engage. As no other study can, it will quicken the mind and uplift the soul."—*Education*, p. 126.

"In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew 'the riches of the glory of this mystery; 'which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Colossians 1:27."—*Ibid.*, p. 309.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I build up others more effectively with my conversation?
2. When noticing defects in others, what should be my prayer?
3. What can we do for our fellowship in Christ to thrive and expand?
4. Why are backbiting and gossiping so harmful to the church?
5. Name some of the greatest joys of the hereafter.

First Sabbath Offerings



A New Kind of Christian Leadership

FEBRUARY 5
for Welfare Assistance
(see p. 30.)



JANUARY 1
for Plymouth Leadership
College
(see p. 4.)

MARCH 5
for the Church in Keilor Park,
Australia
(see p. 51.)