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Vol. 101, No. 3

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division



PART THREE

The Gospel **According to John**

By abiding in Christ, we are fortified to rejoice
and to suffer for His dear sake.

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

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Foreword

As we continue in *Lessons From the Gospel According to John*, we begin to approach the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us, "it would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.

The apostle speaks of the true *Logos* as being Jesus Christ, the incarnate expression of divine wisdom, divine will, and divine power, through whom the way of salvation was opened and revealed to all men. Jesus is referred to as being the Creator of all things, the source of life, the light of the world, the living manifestation of the mind of the Father. The will of God "that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), through the work of the Holy Spirit, is also brought to view by John, who then leads us to Gethesemane, where the fate of the human race was decided.

It appears that one of the main purposes of the book was to help Christian believers who were dispersed, who had had no personal contact with Jesus and were imbibing heathen ideas, to meet the true *Logos*, the true Light. Another important purpose of the writing of John was to prepare the Christians in general to face some of the dangers threatening the church at the end of the century: Primitive godliness was decreasing (Revelation 2:4) and the love of the world was gaining ground among the people of God (1 John 2:15). Heresies such as Gnosticism were encroaching upon the flock. Gnosticism denied that Christ had truly incarnated, taking human nature. Gnostics taught that men had not actually seen Christ, that what they had seen was only an apparition. Therefore, the truth revealed in John 1:14 was particularly significant in those days. Another danger that was threatening the church was persecution from the Roman authorities.

There is no doubt that the book of John was a great help to the primitive Christian church. It has been a great help to the followers of Christ down through the ages—and it is a great help to us today.

May the guidance of the Spirit of God be granted to both teachers and students as we continue going through this series of lessons!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, July 5, 2025



The Arue Church in Tahiti

Often associated with beautiful tropical and idyllic landscapes, the island of Tahiti is located in French Polynesia, an overseas territory of France comprised of 121 islands in a land area of 1,359 square miles (3,418 kilometers), spanning over 1,242 square miles (2,000 square kilometers) of the southern Pacific Ocean.

Historically, the polytheistic beliefs of the inhabitants of these many islands led to many pagan practices including sun worship, cannibalism and spirit worship. The arrival of Christianity brought change through the efforts of British Christian missionaries who came to these islands in 1797. The French later colonized the area in the late 1800's. Today, among the population of nearly 279,000 inhabitants, 54% are Protestant, 38% Catholic, and the rest adhere to other beliefs.

The message of Reform arrived in French Polynesia in 1982 with the visit of Brother A. C. Sas. The first members, 24 souls in all, were baptized a year later. The gospel message has continued to spread across the islands and several church groups have been formed since then.

Sadly to this day, our church in French Polynesia has no church (building) of its own and our brethren meet in rented structures or on land privately owned by the members. By God's grace, in 2013, after much prayer and fasting, a piece of land was found in the district of Arue, almost 20 kilometers from Papeete, Tahiti.

The small membership of this church have made self-sacrificing efforts for many years, cooking and selling vegetarian dishes each week to make the purchase of this property possible. In spite of the exemplary efforts of our brothers and sisters who have worked hard to pay for this land, there is a great need of a building to help spread the message of truth here in these last days of earth's history.

Therefore we appeal to our brothers and sisters around the world kindly to join us in providing the means to raise up a building in Arue which will serve as a local church and a place for seminars, camp meetings and health work in the capital of French Polynesia.

The uplifting words of 1 Chronicles 22:19 resonate to us today, "Arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God." May God bless you abundantly and may His work advance around the world.

Your brothers and sisters in French Polynesia

Jesus, Simon, and Mary

MEMORY VERSE: “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke 7:47).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 485–487, 550–552.

“Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

1. THE LAST VISIT TO BETHANY

Sun, Jun 29

- a. Describe the situation existing in Jerusalem at the time of Christ’s visit to Bethany and how this may have influenced some who attended Simon’s feast. John 11:55–57; Psalm 55:21.

“Simon of Bethany was accounted a disciple of Jesus. He was one of the few Pharisees who had openly joined Christ’s followers. He acknowledged Jesus as a teacher, and hoped that He might be the Messiah, but he had not accepted Him as a Saviour. His character was not transformed; his principles were unchanged.”—*Ibid.*, p. 557.

- b. What great blessing had Simon received, and how did he now show his gratitude to Jesus? Luke 7:36.

“Simon had been healed of the leprosy, and it was this that had drawn him to Jesus. He desired to show his gratitude, and at Christ’s last visit to Bethany he made a feast for the Saviour and His disciples.”—*Ibid.*

- a. Describe the hidden, behind-the-scenes type of situation that often exists in social gatherings—and how it existed on this occasion. Psalm 55:21.
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“This feast brought together many of the Jews. There was at this time much excitement at Jerusalem. Christ and His mission were attracting greater attention than ever before. Those who had come to the feast closely watched His movements, and some of them with unfriendly eyes.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 557.

- b. Relate the actions of Mary at Simon’s feast. Luke 7:37, 38; John 12:3.
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“Mary was earnestly listening to every word from the lips of Jesus. In His mercy, Jesus had pardoned her sins, He had called forth her beloved brother from the grave, and Mary’s heart was filled with gratitude. She had heard Jesus speak of His approaching death, and in her deep love and sorrow she had longed to show Him honor. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of ‘ointment of spikenard, very costly,’ with which to anoint His body. But now many were declaring that He was about to be crowned king. Her grief was turned to joy, and she was eager to be first in honoring her Lord. Breaking her box of ointment, she poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 558, 559.

- c. What was Judas’s reception of this act? John 12:4, 5; Matthew 26:8, 9.
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“[Mary] had sought to avoid observation, and her movements might have passed unnoticed, but the ointment filled the room with its fragrance, and published her act to all present. Judas looked upon this act with great displeasure. Instead of waiting to hear what Christ would say of the matter, he began to whisper his complaints to those near him, throwing reproach upon Christ for suffering such waste. Craftily he made suggestions that would be likely to cause disaffection.”—*Ibid.*, p. 559.

- a. In reality, why did Judas criticize Mary's act of anointing Jesus' feet? John 12:6.
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"Judas was treasurer for the disciples, and from their little store he had secretly drawn for his own use, thus narrowing down their resources to a meager pittance. He was eager to put into the bag all that he could obtain. The treasure in the bag was often drawn upon to relieve the poor; and when something that Judas did not think essential was bought, he would say, Why is this waste? why was not the cost of this put into the bag that I carry for the poor? Now the act of Mary was in such marked contrast to his selfishness that he was put to shame; and according to his custom, he sought to assign a worthy motive for his objection to her gift. Turning to the disciples, he asked, 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.' Judas had no heart for the poor. Had Mary's ointment been sold, and the proceeds fallen into his possession, the poor would have received no benefit."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 559.

- b. How did the disciples consider Judas—and how did he consider himself? John 13:29.
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"Judas had a high opinion of his own executive ability. As a financier he thought himself greatly superior to his fellow disciples, and he had led them to regard him in the same light. He had gained their confidence, and had a strong influence over them. His professed sympathy for the poor deceived them, and his artful insinuation caused them to look distrustfully upon Mary's devotion."—*Ibid.*, pp. 559, 560.

- c. Describe what often drives those who quietly murmur to others—and how it can affect sensitive souls being targeted by it. Jude 1:16.
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"Mary heard the words of criticism. Her heart trembled within her. She feared that her sister would reproach her for extravagance. The Master, too, might think her improvident. Without apology or excuse she was about to shrink away."—*Ibid.*, p. 560.

- a. How was Simon affected by his own pharisaical pride and by Mary's act—and how did he judge Jesus? Luke 7:39.

“Simon the host had been influenced by the criticism of Judas upon Mary's gift, and he was surprised at the conduct of Jesus. His Pharisaic pride was offended. . . .

“By curing Simon of leprosy, Christ had saved him from a living death. But . . . because Christ allowed this woman to approach Him, because He did not indignantly spurn her as one whose sins were too great to be forgiven, because He did not show that He realized she had fallen, Simon was tempted to think that He was not a prophet.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 566.

- b. What knowledge of the intimate lives of Simon and Mary did Jesus reveal? Luke 7:40–43. How did Jesus rebuke Simon, and why? Luke 7:44–46.

“[Simon] did not realize that God's Son must act in God's way, with compassion, tenderness, and mercy. Simon's way was to take no notice of Mary's penitent service. Her act of kissing Christ's feet and anointing them with ointment was exasperating to his hardheartedness. He thought that if Christ were a prophet, He would recognize sinners and rebuke them. . . .

“As did Nathan with David, Christ concealed His home thrust under the veil of a parable. He threw upon His host the burden of pronouncing sentence upon himself. Simon had led into sin the woman he now despised. She had been deeply wronged by him. . . . But Simon felt himself more righteous than Mary, and Jesus desired him to see how great his guilt really was. He would show him that his sin was greater than hers.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 566, 567.

- c. How did the Jews react when Jesus said that Mary's sins were forgiven? Luke 7:48, 49. What effect did Christ's parable have on Simon's heart?

“Simon now began to see himself in a new light. He saw how Mary was regarded by One who was more than a prophet. He saw that with keen prophetic eye Christ read her heart of love and devotion. Shame seized upon him, and he realized that he was in the presence of One superior to himself.”—*Ibid.*, p. 567.

5. SIMON'S CONVERSION

Thu, Jul 3

- a. As unsure as the outcome may seem to us, why are we encouraged to speak candidly with sinners such as Simon? Proverbs 9:8; James 5:20.
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“While Mary was a sinner pardoned, [Simon] was a sinner unpardoned. The rigid rule of justice he had desired to enforce against her condemned him.

“Simon was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before the guests. He had not been treated as he desired Mary to be treated. He saw that Jesus did not wish to expose his guilt to others, but sought by a true statement of the case to convince his mind, and by pitying kindness to subdue his heart. Stern denunciation would have hardened Simon against repentance, but patient admonition convinced him of his error. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 567, 568.

- b. What did Jesus say about Mary's act, and what encouraging words did He address to her? Matthew 26:12, 13; Luke 7:50.
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“Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome.”—*Ibid.*, p. 568.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jul 4

1. In my walk with God, how can I cultivate the better qualities of Mary?
2. What warning should I take in noticing Judas' attitude at the feast?
3. How can I avoid the pitfall into which Simon's thoughts led him?
4. When can Christ's words of comfort to Mary apply in my life?
5. What should I learn from how Jesus convinced Simon of his error?

The Triumphal Entry

MEMORY VERSE: “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass” (Matthew 21:5).

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 569–579.

“Christ came to save Jerusalem with her children; but Pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and malice had prevented Him from accomplishing His purpose.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 577.

1. ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Sun, Jul 6

- a. As Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem, with what instructions did He send two of them in advance? Matthew 21:1–5.

“Jesus had sent two of His disciples to bring to Him an ass and its colt. At His birth the Saviour was dependent upon the hospitality of strangers. The manger in which He lay was a borrowed resting place. Now, although the cattle on a thousand hills are His, He is dependent on a stranger’s kindness for an animal on which to enter Jerusalem as its King.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 569, 570.

- b. Describe the action of the disciples. Matthew 21:6, 7.

“The disciples, with glad enthusiasm, spread their garments on the beast, and seated their Master upon it. Heretofore Jesus had always traveled on foot, and the disciples had at first wondered that He should now choose to ride. But hope brightened in their hearts with the joyous thought that He was about to enter the capital, proclaim Himself King, and assert His royal power.”—*Ibid.*, p. 570.

- a. When the multitude heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, what did they do? John 12:12, 13.
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“While on their errand [the disciples] communicated their glowing expectations to the friends of Jesus, and the excitement spread far and near, raising the expectations of the people to the highest pitch.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 570.

- b. What led the multitude to hail Jesus as the Messiah on that joyous occasion? Zechariah 9:9; John 12:14, 15.
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“Christ was following the Jewish custom for a royal entry. The animal on which He rode was that ridden by the kings of Israel, and prophecy had foretold that thus the Messiah should come to His kingdom. No sooner was He seated upon the colt than a loud shout of triumph rent the air. The multitude hailed Him as Messiah, their King. Jesus now accepted the homage which He had never before permitted, and the disciples received this as proof that their glad hopes were to be realized by seeing Him established on the throne.”—*Ibid.*

- c. How did the people eager for deliverance echo with joy the words of the Psalmist? Matthew 21:9; Psalm 118:26.
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“The multitude were convinced that the hour of their emancipation was at hand. In imagination they saw the Roman armies driven from Jerusalem, and Israel once more an independent nation. All were happy and excited; the people vied with one another in paying Him homage. They could not display outward pomp and splendor, but they gave Him the worship of happy hearts. They were unable to present Him with costly gifts, but they spread their outer garments as a carpet in His path, and they also strewed the leafy branches of the olive and the palm in the way. They could lead the triumphal procession with no royal standards, but they cut down the spreading palm boughs, Nature’s emblem of victory, and waved them aloft with loud acclamations and hosannas.”—*Ibid.*

- a. How did some of the Pharisees react to the demonstration of praise for Christ? John 12:19; Luke 19:39.
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“Many Pharisees witnessed the scene, and, burning with envy and malice, sought to turn the current of popular feeling. With all their authority they tried to silence the people; but their appeals and threats only increased the enthusiasm. They feared that this multitude, in the strength of their numbers, would make Jesus king. As a last resort they pressed through the crowd to where the Saviour was, and accosted Him with reproving and threatening words: ‘Master, rebuke Thy disciples.’ They declared that such noisy demonstrations were unlawful, and would not be permitted by the authorities.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 572.

- b. What answer did Jesus give them? Luke 19:40.
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“That scene of triumph was of God’s own appointing. It had been foretold by the prophet, and man was powerless to turn aside God’s purpose. Had men failed to carry out His plan, He would have given a voice to the inanimate stones, and they would have hailed His Son with acclamations of praise.”—*Ibid.*, p. 572.

“As well might the priests and rulers attempt to deprive the earth of the shining face of the sun, as to shut from the world the beams of glory from the Sun of Righteousness. In spite of all opposition, the kingdom of Christ was confessed by the people.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 47.

“The work of God will ever go forward, in spite of all that man may do to hinder it or tear it down.”—*The Story of Jesus*, p. 85.

- c. How was this amazing outburst a fulfillment of prophecy, as recognized by many in the crowd? Zechariah 9:9.
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“As the silenced Pharisees drew back, the words of Zechariah were taken up by hundreds of voices. [Zechariah 9:9 quoted.]”—*Ibid.*, p. 572–575.

- a. For what purpose did Jesus permit such a great demonstration on the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem? John 12:16, 23–28.
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“Never before in His earthly life had Jesus permitted such a demonstration. He clearly foresaw the result. It would bring Him to the cross. But it was His purpose thus publicly to present Himself as the Redeemer. He desired to call attention to the sacrifice that was to crown His mission to a fallen world. While the people were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set Himself apart as an oblation. It would be needful for His church in all succeeding ages to make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. It was necessary, then, that the eyes of all people should now be directed to Him; the events which preceded His great sacrifice must be such as to call attention to the sacrifice itself. After such a demonstration as that attending His entry into Jerusalem, all eyes would follow His rapid progress to the final scene.

“The events connected with this triumphal ride would be the talk of every tongue, and would bring Jesus before every mind. After His crucifixion, many would recall these events in their connection with His trial and death. They would be led to search the prophecies, and would be convinced that Jesus was the Messiah; and in all lands converts to the faith would be multiplied.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 571.

- b. Surprisingly, what did Jesus do when He came into full view of the city—and why? Luke 19:41–44.
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“In the midst of a scene of rejoicing, where all were paying Him homage, Israel’s King was in tears; not silent tears of gladness, but tears and groans of insuppressible agony. The multitude were struck with a sudden gloom. Their acclamations were silenced. Many wept in sympathy with a grief they could not comprehend.

“The tears of Jesus were not in anticipation of His own suffering. . . . It was the sight of Jerusalem that pierced the heart of Jesus—Jerusalem that had rejected the Son of God and scorned His love, that refused to be convinced by His mighty miracles, and was about to take His life. He saw what she was in her guilt of rejecting her Redeemer.”—*Ibid.*, p. 576.

5. ARRIVING IN JERUSALEM

Thu, Jul 10

- a. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, what question did the rulers ask and what answer did they get amid the uproar? Matthew 21:10, 11.

“As the procession is about to descend the Mount of Olives, it is intercepted by the rulers. They inquire the cause of the tumultuous rejoicing. As they question, ‘Who is this?’ the disciples, filled with the spirit of inspiration, answer this question. In eloquent strains they repeat the prophecies concerning Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 578.

- b. As soon as Jesus had arrived in the city, what did He do in the temple? Matthew 21:12–16; Psalm 8:2.

“Three years before, the rulers of the temple had been ashamed of their flight before the command of Jesus. They had since wondered at their own fears, and their unquestioning obedience to a single humble Man. They had felt that it was impossible for their undignified surrender to be repeated. Yet they were now more terrified than before, and in greater haste to obey His command. There were none who dared question His authority. Priests and traders fled from His presence, driving their cattle before them. . . .

“When the multitude fled from the temple, many had remained behind. These were now joined by the newcomers. Again the temple court was filled by the sick and the dying, and once more Jesus ministered to them.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 591, 592.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jul 11

1. How is the attitude of the Pharisees often repeated today?
2. What characterized those who honored Christ as the promised King?
3. What might be causing Jesus to weep for me as He did for Jerusalem?
4. How was the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 fulfilled on this occasion?
5. Why did Christ permit so much public acclaim at this time?

We Want to See Jesus

MEMORY VERSE: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

Suggested Reading: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 80–89.

“Only through the death of Christ could Satan’s kingdom be overthrown. Only thus could man be redeemed, and God be glorified.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

1. FROM THE EAST AND WEST

Sun, Jul 13

- a. Who had sought Jesus at His birth—the beginning of His life—and what did they bring to Him? Matthew 2:1, 2, 10, 11.

- b. Now, who sought Jesus at the end of His ministry, and whom did they represent? John 12:20. What does this teach us? Matthew 8:11.

“These men [certain Greeks] came from the West to find the Saviour at the close of His life, as the wise men had come from the East at the beginning. At the time of Christ’s birth the Jewish people were so engrossed with their own ambitious plans that they knew not of His advent. The magi from a heathen land came to the manger with their gifts, to worship the Saviour. So these Greeks, representing the nations, tribes, and peoples of the world, came to see Jesus. So the people of all lands and all ages would be drawn by the Saviour’s cross. . . .

“Some supposed, and had circulated the report, that He had driven the priests and rulers from the temple, and that He was to take possession of David’s throne, and reign as king of Israel. The Greeks longed to know the truth in regard to His mission.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 621, 622.

- a. How did the Greeks express their desire? John 12:21.

- b. Explain the process by which Jesus learned of the request and how His heart responded to it. John 12:22, 23.

“When Christ heard the eager request, ‘We would see Jesus,’ echoing the hungering cry of the world, His countenance lighted up, and He said, ‘The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.’ In the request of the Greeks He saw an earnest of the results of His great sacrifice.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 621.

“When the request was brought to Jesus, He was in that part of the temple from which all except Jews were excluded, but He went out to the Greeks in the outer court, and had a personal interview with them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 622.

- c. How should the tender regard of Christ to reach out to those strangers motivate us? Luke 14:23; Ecclesiastes 11:1, 2.

“We must make every effort to spread a knowledge of the truth to all who will hear, and there are many who will listen. All through our large cities God has honest souls who are interested in what is truth. . . . Repeat the message, repeat the message, were the words spoken to me over and over again. Tell My people to repeat the message in the places where it was first preached, and where church after church took its position for the truth, the power of God witnessing to the message in a remarkable manner.”—*Evangelism*, p. 394.

“We are not told that we must make a special, wonderful display. The truth must be proclaimed in the highways and the byways, and thus work is to be done by sensible, rational methods. . . . The work that Christ did in our world is to be our example, as far as display is concerned. We are to keep as far from the theatrical and the extraordinary as Christ kept in His work. Sensation is not religion, although religion will exert its own pure, sacred, uplifting, sanctifying influence, bringing spiritual life, and salvation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 396.

- a. What comparison did Jesus make between the grain of wheat and His mission? John 12:24.
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“The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. So the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary will bear fruit unto eternal life. The contemplation of this sacrifice will be the glory of those who, as the fruit of it, will live through the eternal ages.

“The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone. He could bring no sons and daughters to God. Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity. Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest—the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 623.

- b. What second application did Jesus make of the parable of the seed? John 12:25, 26.
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“All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world’s need. Self-love, self-interest, must perish. And the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. So in human life. To give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ’s sake sacrifice their life in this world will keep it unto life eternal.

“The life spent on self is like the grain that is eaten. It disappears, but there is no increase. A man may gather all he can for self; he may live and think and plan for self; but his life passes away, and he has nothing. The law of self-serving is the law of self-destruction.

“[John 12:26 quoted.] All who have borne with Jesus the cross of sacrifice will be sharers with Him of His glory. It was the joy of Christ in His humiliation and pain that His disciples should be glorified with Him. They are the fruit of His self-sacrifice.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 623, 624.

- a. What prayer did Jesus offer as He thought of His death on the cross? John 12:27, 28 (first part).
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"In anticipation Christ was already drinking the cup of bitterness. His humanity shrank from the hour of abandonment, when to all appearance He would be deserted even by God, when all would see Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He shrank from public exposure, from being treated as the worst of criminals, from a shameful and dishonored death. A foreboding of His conflict with the powers of darkness, a sense of the awful burden of human transgression, and the Father's wrath because of sin caused the spirit of Jesus to faint, and the pallor of death to overspread His countenance.

"Then came divine submission to His Father's will. 'For this cause,' He said, 'came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.' Only through the death of Christ could Satan's kingdom be overthrown. Only thus could man be redeemed, and God be glorified. Jesus consented to the agony, He accepted the sacrifice."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

- b. What answer was heard coming from heaven? John 12:28 (last part). What did the bystanding crowd say? John 12:29.
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"As the voice was heard, a light darted from the cloud, and encircled Christ, as if the arms of Infinite Power were thrown about Him like a wall of fire. The people beheld this scene with terror and amazement. No one dared to speak. With silent lips and bated breath all stood with eyes fixed upon Jesus. The testimony of the Father having been given, the cloud lifted, and scattered in the heavens. For the time the visible communion between the Father and the Son was ended.

"The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him.' But the inquiring Greeks saw the cloud, heard the voice, comprehended its meaning, and discerned Christ indeed; to them He was revealed as the Sent of God.

"The voice of God had been heard at the baptism of Jesus at the beginning of His ministry, and again at His transfiguration on the mount. Now at the close of His ministry it was heard for the third time."—*Ibid.*, p. 625.

5. THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS

Thu, Jul 17

- a. Notwithstanding the many miracles Jesus performed—plus the voice which had again resonated from heaven—how did the majority of the Jews respond to Him? John 12:37–41.
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“Jesus had just spoken the most solemn truth regarding the condition of the Jews. He had made His last appeal, and pronounced their doom. Now God again set His seal to the mission of His Son. He recognized the One whom Israel had rejected. ‘This voice came not because of Me,’ said Jesus, ‘but for your sakes.’ It was the crowning evidence of His Messiahship, the signal from the Father that Jesus had spoken the truth, and was the Son of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 625.

“They had once asked the Saviour, ‘What sign showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee?’ John 6:30. Innumerable signs had been given; but they had closed their eyes and hardened their hearts. Now that the Father Himself had spoken, and they could ask for no further sign, they still refused to believe.”—*Ibid.*, p. 626.

- b. How are we cautioned by the actions of some of the rulers, despite the fact that they were convinced Christ’s mission was real? John 12:42, 43.
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“They loved the praise of men rather than the approval of God. To save themselves from reproach and shame, they denied Christ, and rejected the offer of eternal life. And how many through all the centuries since have been doing the same thing!”—*Ibid.*

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jul 18

1. What did the seekers at Christ’s birth and now the Greeks signify?
2. How is the parable of the grain of wheat applicable to my life?
3. How am I to discern God’s voice when many will think it is thunder?
4. What fears and concerns of the Jewish rulers must I avoid?
5. Explain the two applications of the grain of wheat that is buried.

Jesus, the Servant of Servants

MEMORY VERSE: “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 642–651.

“The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. ‘Not to be ministered unto, but to minister,’ (Matthew 20:28), had been the lesson of His every act.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 642.

1. A GENTILE CONCEPT

Sun, Jul 20

- a. What destructive mentality originating with Lucifer affected Judaism (including Christ's disciples) and can also affect us today? Luke 22:24, 25.

“Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 435, 436.

“In the kingdoms of the world, position meant self-aggrandizement. The people were supposed to exist for the benefit of the ruling classes. Influence, wealth, education, were so many means of gaining control of the masses for the use of the leaders. The higher classes were to think, decide, enjoy, and rule; the lower were to obey and serve. Religion, like all things else, was a matter of authority. The people were expected to believe and practice as their superiors directed. The right of man as man, to think and act for himself, was wholly unrecognized.”—*Ibid.*, p. 550.

“By spiritual pride, a desire to dictate, an ambitious longing for honor or position . . . the church may be disturbed and her peace sacrificed.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 241.

- a. In stark contrast to ambitious longing for a higher position, what principle did Jesus establish—and what example did He give in this regard? Luke 22:26, 27; John 13:13–16.
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“Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Power, position, talent, education, placed their possessor under the greater obligation to serve his fellows. . . .

“In Christ’s kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to cooperate with men in uplifting humanity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 550, 551.

- b. Describe how Christ treated faulty humans—an attitude to replace our own natural tendency. Philippians 2:3, 4.
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“It is a natural, but not a pleasing, trait in our characters to be keen in our perceptions, and tenacious in our remembrance, of the faults and failings of others.

“Brother B does not try to be in union with his brethren; his self-confidence has led him to feel no special necessity for union. He feels that their minds have been cast in a mold inferior to his own and that to receive their opinions and counsel as worthy of attention would be a great condescension. . . . He feels that he is too wise and experienced to need the precautions which are indispensable to many. He has so high an opinion of his own abilities and such a reliance upon his own attainments that he believes himself prepared for any emergency.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 444, 445.

“The influence of worldly selfishness, which is carried about by some like a cloud, chilling the very atmosphere that others breathe, causes sickness of soul and frequently chills to death.”—*Ibid.*, p. 528.

“If there is that love among brethren which will lead them to esteem others better than themselves, there will be a giving up of their own ways and wishes to others.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 447.

- a. What concern did the apostles still have shortly before the Passover? Matthew 20:20–24; Luke 22:24.
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“There was ‘a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.’ This contention, carried on in the presence of Christ, grieved and wounded Him. The disciples clung to their favorite idea that Christ would assert His power, and take His position on the throne of David. And in heart each still longed for the highest place in the kingdom. They had placed their own estimate upon themselves and upon one another, and, instead of regarding their brethren as more worthy, they had placed themselves first. The request of James and John to sit on the right and left of Christ’s throne had excited the indignation of the others. That the two brothers should presume to ask for the highest position so stirred the ten that alienation threatened. They felt that they were misjudged, that their fidelity and talents were not appreciated. Judas was the most severe upon James and John.

“When the disciples entered the supper room, their hearts were full of resentful feelings. Judas pressed next to Christ on the left side; John was on the right. If there was a highest place, Judas was determined to have it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 643, 644.

- b. What earlier illustration had the disciples apparently forgotten, thus triggering another cause for dissension among them? Matthew 18:1–4.
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“Another cause of dissension had arisen. At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples’ part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves.”—*Ibid.*, p. 644.

“Let us think how our words sound in the ears of God, how our selfish thoughts look in His sight, when we judge and condemn others, who may be better in heart and purpose than ourselves.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1885.

- a. After patiently waiting for the disciples to take the initiative, what did Jesus finally do? John 13:3–5.
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“[John 13:5 quoted.] This action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light.

“So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 644, 645.

- b. How did Peter react when it was his turn? John 13:6–8 (first part).
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“Peter could not bear to see his Lord, whom he believed to be the Son of God, acting the part of a servant. His whole soul rose up against this humiliation. He did not realize that for this Christ came into the world.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 645, 646.

- c. How far had Judas yielded to Satan’s temptations—and how did Christ show He was aware of this? John 13:2, 10, 11.
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“Before the Passover Judas had met a second time with the priests and scribes, and had closed the contract to deliver Jesus into their hands. Yet he afterward mingled with the disciples as though innocent of any wrong, and interested in the work of preparing for the feast. The disciples knew nothing of the purpose of Judas. Jesus alone could read his secret. Yet He did not expose him. Jesus hungered for his soul. He felt for him such a burden as for Jerusalem when He wept over the doomed city. His heart was crying, How can I give thee up? The constraining power of that love was felt by Judas. When the Saviour’s hands were bathing those soiled feet, and wiping them with the towel, the heart of Judas thrilled through and through with the impulse then and there to confess his sin. But he would not humble himself.”—*Ibid.*, p. 645.

- a. With this act, what does Jesus really desire to do? John 13:8 (last part).

“By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

- b. What significant words did Jesus pronounce after the feet-washing ceremony—and what should this bring to our minds during our observance of this? John 13:12-17.

“We are fallible, and have erred many times. Let us return to the Lord with repentance and confession. As we assemble to participate in the ordinances of the Lord’s house, let us make every wrong right, so far as lies in our power. When bowing before a brother, washing his feet, ask yourself, ‘Have I aught in my heart that separates me from this brother? Have I said or done anything that estranges us?’ If so, take it away by heartily confessing your sin. Thus heart will be cemented to heart, and the blessing of God will be manifest.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 283.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jul 25

1. Explain the contrast between the heavenly attitude and that of earth.
2. If I refuse to wash my brother’s feet, what am I actually refusing?
3. How is the inner experience of Judas a warning to me?
4. Explain how Christ transformed the attitude of the disciples.
5. What is the purpose and significance of the feet-washing ceremony?

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, August 2, 2025



The GC Education Department

Education, like sanctification, is the work of a lifetime. From our earliest years through eternity, education will always be an intrinsic part of the human experience. This Sabbath we ask for your support in making this vital part of the church expand its reach.

We are to learn to be missionaries from our earliest years. “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). And when the victory has been secured, and sin and sinners are no more, the work of education will continue.

Now as never before, our church must be ready to provide materials to establish proper educational foundations for every age group in the human family.

Sadly, most educational institutions have moved away from teaching fundamentals to becoming indoctrination centers for worldliness. Realizing just how much influence schooling has on their children, many have requested materials to assist in educating them for the honor and glory of God. Therefore, the GC Education Department is creating an entire curriculum with this very aim as its focus. Partnering with our educators and various units, the work of preparing this curriculum is well underway.

Yet the project is larger than the sums available. We need your generous contributions to prepare the materials, translate them, and make them affordable even to those in places of poverty. Your support makes it possible for us to prepare materials of the highest quality so that the students using them will be “qualified for usefulness in this life and for the service of God throughout eternity.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 495.

We understand this project is large, but it is well worth it. With your support we will produce materials from math to language to social sciences that will equip even the youngest among us to give the gospel message to all the world in the most effective way possible.

Thank you in advance and may God bless the gifts and givers.

General Conference Education Department

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 265–269.

“This earth, because of transgression, had been struck off from the continent of heaven. Communication had ceased between man and his Maker; but the way has been opened so that he may return to the Father’s house.”—*My Life Today*, p. 260.

1. JESUS ANNOUNCES HIS RETURN TO THE FATHER

Sun, Jul 27

- a. With what words did Jesus announce the end of His mission on earth? John 13:33. What other message did He convey? John 13:34, 35.

“One of Christ’s last commands to His disciples was ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ John 13:34. Do we obey this command, or are we indulging sharp, unchristlike traits of character? If we have in any way grieved or wounded others, it is our duty to confess our fault and seek for reconciliation. This is an essential preparation that we may come before God in faith, to ask His blessing.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 144.

- b. What conversation took place between Peter and Jesus concerning the Lord’s departure? John 13:36–38.

“Many today stand where Peter stood when in self-confidence he declared that he would not deny his Lord. And because of their self-sufficiency, they fall an easy prey to Satan’s devices. Those who realize their weakness trust in a power higher than self. And while they look to God, Satan has no power against them. But those who trust in self are easily defeated.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 307.

- a. While still in the upper room, what comforting words did Jesus speak to His disciples and what promise did He make to them? John 14:1, 2.
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“[John 14:1–4 quoted.] For your sake I came into the world. I am working in your behalf. When I go away, I shall still work earnestly for you. I came into the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to the Father to cooperate with Him in your behalf. The object of Christ’s departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. He was going to prepare a place for them, that He might come again, and receive them unto Himself. While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

- b. What important event did Christ include in His message? John 14:3.
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“The promise of Christ’s second coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end,’ would bid them welcome to His presence in the heavenly kingdom.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 33.

- c. What question did Thomas ask Jesus concerning the way, and what answer did he receive? John 14:5, 6.
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“There are not many ways to heaven. Each one may not choose his own way. Christ says, ‘I am the way: . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.’ Since the first gospel sermon was preached, when in Eden it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, Christ had been uplifted as the way, the truth, and the life. He was the way when Adam lived, when Abel presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of the Redeemer. Christ was the way by which patriarchs and prophets were saved. He is the way by which alone we can have access to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

- a. How did Jesus identify Himself with the Father—and how does this relate to us? John 14:7.
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“Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world’s Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 738, 739.

- b. What petition did Philip make to Jesus, and what was the significance of the Lord’s response? John 14:8–11.
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“When Philip came to Jesus with the request, ‘Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,’ . . . Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 739.

“Christ emphatically impressed upon them the fact that they could see the Father by faith alone. God cannot be seen in external form by any human being.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1141, 1142.

“Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man. Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, the Godhead was still His own. Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years. . . .

“Their faith might safely rest on the evidence given in Christ’s works, works that no man, of himself, ever had done, or ever could do. Christ’s work testified to His divinity. Through Him the Father had been revealed.

“If the disciples believed this vital connection between the Father and the Son, their faith would not forsake them when they saw Christ’s suffering and death to save a perishing world. Christ was seeking to lead them from their low condition of faith to the experience they might receive if they truly realized what He was—God in human flesh.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 663, 664.

a. What great possibilities did Jesus offer His disciples? John 14:12.

“The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.

“‘And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.’ By this Christ did not mean that the disciples’ work would be of a more exalted character than His, but that it would have greater extent. He did not refer merely to miracle working, but to all that would take place under the working of the Holy Spirit.

“After the Lord’s ascension, the disciples realized the fulfillment of His promise. The scenes of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ were a living reality to them. They saw that the prophecies had been literally fulfilled. They searched the Scriptures, and accepted their teaching with a faith and assurance unknown before. They knew that the divine Teacher was all that He had claimed to be. As they told their experience, and exalted the love of God, men’s hearts were melted and subdued, and multitudes believed on Jesus.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 664, 667.

b. What assurance did Jesus give to bring hope in all ages? John 14:13, 14.

“As yet the disciples were unacquainted with the Saviour’s unlimited resources and power. He said to them, ‘Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name.’ John 16:24. He explained that the secret of their success would be in asking for strength and grace in His name. He would be present before the Father to make request for them. The prayer of the humble suppliant He presents as His own desire in that soul’s behalf. Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.”—*Ibid.*, p. 667.

- a. Describe the special moment the disciples had with Jesus as He explained His connection with the Father (John 14:8–10)—and how we, too, may enjoy such communion with Heaven. Song of Solomon 2:3, 4.
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“As Christ was speaking these words [in John chapter 14:8–10], the glory of God was shining in His countenance, and all present felt a sacred awe as they listened with rapt attention to His words. They felt their hearts more decidedly drawn to Him, and as they were drawn to Christ in greater love, they were drawn to one another. They felt that heaven was very near them, that the words to which they listened were a message to them from the heavenly Father.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1142.

“There are many professing Christians who are anxious and depressed, many who are so full of busy activity that they cannot find time to rest quietly in the promises of God, who act as if they could not afford to have peace and quietness. To all such Christ’s invitation is: ‘Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest.’ . . .

“Let us turn from the dusty, heated thoroughfares of life to rest in the shadow of Christ’s love. Here we gain strength for conflict. Here we learn how to lessen toil and worry, and how to speak and sing to the praise of God. Let the weary and the heavy-laden learn from Christ the lesson of quiet trust. They must sit under His shadow if they would be possessors of His peace and rest.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 69, 70.

“When the Lord’s people are filled with meekness and tenderness, they will realize that His banner over them is love, and His fruit will be sweet to their taste. They will make a heaven below in which to prepare for heaven above.”—*Ibid.*, p. 131.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Aug 1

1. How can I avoid the pitfall into which Peter sank?
2. In light of Christ’s promise of a mansion for me, what is my duty on earth?
3. How am I enabled to accomplish the works of Jesus?
4. How did Jesus comfort the disciples when they heard of His departure?
5. What does Jesus mean by “greater works” to be done—and how?

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

MEMORY VERSE: “And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 19–23;
The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 47–56.

“The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

1. OBEDIENCE—THE FRUIT OF FAITH

Sun, Aug 3

- a. Upon receiving Jesus by faith, what do Christians receive in their hearts? Romans 5:1–5.

- b. How is the love of Christ manifested in the life of the believer? John 14:15, 21; 1 John 2:3.

“[Christ] saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

- a. Whom did Jesus promise to send to comfort the disciples? John 14:16–18.
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“From the very beginning of the work of redemption He [the Spirit] had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

- b. How would Christ “live” in the hearts of the disciples? John 14:19–23.
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“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high. . . .

“Jesus read the future of His disciples. He saw one brought to the scaffold, one to the cross, one to exile among the lonely rocks of the sea, others to persecution and death. He encouraged them with the promise that in every trial He would be with them. That promise has lost none of its force. The Lord knows all about His faithful servants who for His sake are lying in prison or who are banished to lonely islands. He comforts them with His own presence. When for the truth’s sake the believer stands at the bar of unrighteous tribunals, Christ stands by his side. All the reproaches that fall upon him, fall upon Christ. Christ is condemned over again in the person of His disciple. When one is incarcerated in prison walls, Christ ravishes the heart with His love. . . .

“At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 669, 670.

- a. How would the Comforter influence the memory and understanding of the disciples? John 14:26.

“[The disciples] did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them. Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words. He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds. And He had left unsaid many things that could not be comprehended by the disciples. These also would be opened to them by the Spirit. The Spirit was to quicken their understanding, that they might have an appreciation of heavenly things. ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,’ said Jesus, ‘He will guide you into all truth.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 670, 671.

- b. What else would the Comforter do in behalf of Christ’s true followers? John 16:12–14.

“If there is a point of truth that you do not understand, upon which you do not agree, investigate, compare scripture with scripture, sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God’s Word. You must lay yourselves and your opinions on the altar of God, put away your preconceived ideas, and let the Spirit of Heaven guide you into all truth.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 412, 413.

“We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 241.

“Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God’s promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. Thus ‘when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.’ Isaiah 59:19.

“Jesus promised His disciples: ‘The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’ John 14:26. But the teachings of Christ must previously have been stored in the mind in order for the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance in the time of peril.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 599, 600.

- a. What wonderful promise did Jesus give to His faithful followers—a promise that would be very helpful in times of adversity? John 14:27-29.

“In His discourse to the disciples, Jesus made no mournful allusion to His own sufferings and death. His last legacy to them was a legacy of peace.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

“[John 14:27 quoted.] This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity to the world. Christ never purchased peace by compromise with evil. The peace that Christ left His disciples is internal rather than external and was ever to remain with His witnesses through strife and contention.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 84.

“The history of truth has ever been the record of a struggle between right and wrong. The proclamation of the gospel has ever been carried forward in this world in the face of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering.

“What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered persecution for Christ’s sake? It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. Reproach and persecution have separated many from earthly friends, but never from the love of Christ. Never is the tempest-ried soul more dearly loved by his Saviour than when he is suffering reproach for the truth’s sake. ‘I will love him,’ Christ said, ‘and will manifest Myself to him.’ John 14:21. When for the truth’s sake the believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, Christ stands by his side. When he is confined within prison walls, Christ manifests Himself to him and cheers his heart with His love.”—*Ibid.*, p. 85.

- b. At the end of His mission, what was Jesus able to affirm concerning Himself? John 14:30.

“Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself, ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.’ The storms of temptation burst upon Him, but they could not cause Him to swerve from His allegiance to God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 927.

5. THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Thu, Aug 7

- a. Through what means alone can we have peace with God? John 16:33; Ephesians 2:13, 14.
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“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.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 122.

- b. What is required of the believer who wishes to be at peace with God? Psalm 119:165. What will be the experience of such a believer? 1 John 3:22.
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“The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised.”—*Ibid.*, p. 668.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Aug 8

1. How can I be sure that I am really praying in Christ's name?
2. Why should Christ's peace appeal to me more than the peace the world offers?
3. How can I experience more of the peace of Christ?
4. Describe the life of the believer at peace with God.
5. Summarize the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, the True Vine

MEMORY VERSE: “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5, last part).

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 353–355; vol. 1, pp. 248, 249.

“A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. . . . This union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 231.

1. FRAGILE AND DEPENDENT

Sun, Aug 10

a. To what did Jesus compare Himself, and why? John 15:1 (first part).

“Instead of choosing the graceful palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So Christ in His humanity was dependent upon divine power. ‘I can of Mine own self do nothing,’ He declared. John 5:30.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 674, 675.

b. What other lesson did Jesus seek to illustrate through the vine? John 15:1–3.

“The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. Israel had been represented as a vine which God had planted in the Promised Land. The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received.”—*Ibid.*, p. 675.

- a. What condition is essential to a fruitful Christian life? John 15:4.
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“The connection of the branch with the vine, He said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ’s strength, his emptiness to Christ’s fullness, his frailty to Christ’s enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 675.

- b. What happens to a person that is separated from Christ? John 15:6.
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“This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. . . . This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 676.

- c. How is true discipleship revealed? John 15:4; 8:31; 13:35.
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“When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 678.

- a. What will be the sure result of our constant connection with Christ? John 15:5, 8.
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“The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay. . . .

“When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

“It is Jesus that we need; His light, His life, His spirit, must be ours continually. We need Him every hour. And we should pray in the morning that as the sun illuminates the landscape, and fills the world with light, so the Sun of Righteousness may shine into the chambers of mind and heart, and make us all light in the Lord. We cannot do without His presence one moment. The enemy knows when we undertake to do without our Lord, and he is there, ready to fill our minds with his evil suggestions that we may fall from our steadfastness; but it is the desire of the Lord that from moment to moment we should abide in Him, and thus be complete in Him.”—*My Life Today*, p. 15.

“All who receive Christ as a personal Saviour are to demonstrate the truth of the gospel and its saving power upon the life. God makes no requirement without making provision for its fulfillment. Through the grace of Christ we may accomplish everything that God requires. All the riches of heaven are to be revealed through God’s people.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 301.

- b. On what condition can we abide in Christ’s love? John 15:9, 10; 1 John 2:5.
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“God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

“God’s great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 283.

- a. What does Jesus say about His word as the connecting link between Himself and the believers? John 15:3, 7; 6:63.

“It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

- b. Describe how a spiritual type of surgery transforms our inner motives and attitudes as we submit to God’s word. Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 51:10.

“God’s servants must bear a pointed testimony, which will cut the natural heart and develop character.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1, p. 249.

“The Bible . . . is the voice of God speaking every day to the soul. . . . The work of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten the darkened understanding, to melt the selfish, stony heart, to subdue the rebellious transgressor, and save him from the corrupting influences of the world. The prayer of Christ for His disciples was: ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.’ The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, pierces the heart of the sinner and cuts it in pieces.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 441.

“In all who will submit themselves to the Holy Spirit a new principle of life is to be implanted; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 96.

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

- a. What will Christ do with the believer who claims to be in Christ but does not bear fruit? John 15:2 (first part).

“While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

- b. What does Jesus do with the branches that abide in Him? John 15:2 (last part).

“Jesus with solemn tenderness explained the purpose of the husbandman. The pruning will cause pain, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart. There are branches trailing upon the ground; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which their tendrils are fastening. They are to reach heavenward, and find their support in God. The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The overgrowth must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The husbandman prunes away the harmful growth, that the fruit may be richer and more abundant.”—*Ibid.*, p. 677.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**Fri, Aug 15**

1. How am I to abide in Christ?
2. How can I be more receptive to the benefits of His “pruning shears”?
3. What will be the result of this “pruning” in my life?
4. Why does Christ use the vine to illustrate this connection?
5. What is the basis for a fruitful Christian life?

Brotherly Love

MEMORY VERSE: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).

Suggested Reading: *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 376–389.

“All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

1. A NEW COMMANDMENT

Sun, Aug 17

- a. How much love was demonstrated by the great Exemplar, and what is its significance for His followers? John 13:1 (last part); 15:13.

“How broad, how full, is this love! The disciples were to love one another as Christ had loved them. This was to be their testimony to the world that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory. At the time the disciples did not understand the new part of that commandment; but after the sufferings of Christ, after His crucifixion and resurrection and ascension to heaven, they began to have some idea of what the love of God comprehended, and of the love they were to exercise one toward another. After the Holy Spirit rested upon them on the day of Pentecost, that love was revealed.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 20, 1898.

- b. What is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit and what are the evidences that this fruit is being perfected in us? Galatians 5:22; 1 John 4:11–13; 3:18.

“The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.

- a. In what sense did Christ refer to brotherly love as “a new commandment”? John 13:34.
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“To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ’s sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 677, 678.

- b. What reveals that we are the sons of God and the friends of Christ? Romans 8:14; 1 John 3:10.
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“Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God’s favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love. 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. ‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’ Romans 8:14. 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.

“The character and disposition of Christ’s followers will be like their Master’s. He is the pattern, the holy and perfect example given for Christians to imitate. His true followers will love their brethren and be in harmony with them. They will love their neighbors as Christ has given them example and will make any sacrifice if they can by so doing persuade souls to leave their sins and be converted to the truth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 58, 59.

- a. What title does Jesus bestow upon His faithful followers, and why? John 15:15, 14.
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“Says Christ: ‘Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.’ This is the condition imposed; this is the test that proves men’s characters.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 188.

“The present is a season of solemn privilege and sacred trust to the servants of God. If these trusts are faithfully kept, great will be the reward of the faithful servant when the Master shall say: ‘Give an account of thy stewardship.’ The earnest toil, the unselfish work, the patient, persevering effort, will be rewarded abundantly; Jesus will say: Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, guests. The approval of the Master is not given because of the greatness of the work performed, because many things have been gained, but because of the fidelity in even a few things. It is not the great results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness more than the greatness of the work accomplished.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 510, 511.

- b. For what purpose did Jesus choose us, and what are the responsibilities that accompany this privilege? John 15:16, 17.
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“Our Saviour manifested for us a love that the love of man can never equal. When we were bruised and dying, He had pity upon us. He did not pass us by on the other side, and leave us, helpless and hopeless, to perish. He did not remain in His holy, happy home, where He was beloved by all the heavenly host. He beheld our sore need, He undertook our case, and identified His interests with those of humanity. He died to save His enemies. He prayed for His murderers. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, ‘These things I command you, that ye love one another’; ‘as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.’ John 15:17; 13:34.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 381, 382.

“We may claim to be followers of Christ, we may claim to believe every truth in the word of God; but this will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life.”—*Ibid.*, p. 383.

- a. What does the world do to the friends of Christ? Why? John 15:18, 19.
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“When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart.

“This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the wrath of Satan. Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

- b. Why did the world persecute Christ, and why are His followers also persecuted? John 3:19, 20; 15:20, 21.
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“Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict. When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is drawing away the subjects of Satan’s kingdom, and the prince of evil is aroused to resist it. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 29.

“The truth of God has never been popular with the world. The natural heart is ever averse to the truth. I thank God that we must renounce the love of the world, and pride of heart, and everything which tends to idolatry, in order to be followers of the Man of Calvary. Those who obey the truth will never be loved and honored by the world. From the lips of the divine Teacher, as He walked in humility among the children of men, were heard the words: Whosoever will be My disciple, let him take up his cross, and follow Me. Yes, follow our Exemplar. Was He seeking for praise and honor of men? Oh, no! Shall we then seek for honor or praise from worldlings?

“Those who have no love for God will not love the children of God. Listen to the words of heavenly instruction: ‘Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you.’ ”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 491.

5. DIVINE LOVE IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVERS

Thu, Aug 21

- a. How does the apostle Paul distinguish between spurious vs. true Christian love? 1 Corinthians 13:1–8.

“No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 318, 319.

- b. What must we realize about the characteristics commended by Christ in Revelation 3:10–12, as well as the promises to those possessing them?

“The pure and holy garments are not prepared to be put on by any one after he has entered the gate of the city. All who enter will have on the robe of Christ’s righteousness and the name of God will be seen in their foreheads. This name is the symbol which the apostle saw in vision, and signifies the yielding of the mind to intelligent and loyal obedience to all of God’s commandments. There will be no covering up of sins and faults to hide the deformity of character; no robes will be half washed; but all will be pure and spotless.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, August 18, 1886.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Aug 22

1. What qualities of divine love does Christ want to develop in me?
2. What is hindering me from receiving Christ’s unselfish love in its fullness?
3. How is Christ’s commandment to be new to me?
4. Why shouldn’t I be surprised at persecution?
5. Describe the blessings to the believers in the period of Philadelphia.

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

MEMORY VERSE: “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 14–23.

“Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

1. “I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS”

Sun, Aug 24

- a. What difficulties were the disciples to encounter after Christ’s ascension? John 16:1–3.

“The Lord knows all about His faithful servants who for His sake are lying in prison or who are banished to lonely islands. He comforts them with His own presence. When for the truth’s sake the believer stands at the bar of unrighteous tribunals, Christ stands by his side. All the reproaches that fall upon him, fall upon Christ. Christ is condemned over again in the person of His disciple. When one is incarcerated in prison walls, Christ ravishes the heart with His love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

- b. What was assured to the disciples—and how? John 14:18; 15:26.

“[Christ] determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation.”—*My Life Today*, p. 36.

- a. What difference in the relationship between Christ and His followers would occur after His ascension? John 16:7.

“Henceforth through the Spirit, Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of His children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them. The light, and love, and power of the indwelling Christ shone out through them.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 75.

- b. What far-reaching work would the Holy Spirit perform in behalf of sinners? John 16:8–11.

“The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures.

“Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. ‘He will guide you into all truth’ (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 52, 53.

- c. What other important mission would the Holy Spirit accomplish before the world? John 15:26.

“It is the union of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the living witness that is to warn the world. The worker for God is the agent through which the heavenly communication is given, and the Holy Spirit gives divine authority to the word of truth.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1053.

- a. Besides the Holy Spirit, who else would witness for Christ? John 15:27; 1 John 1:1–3. How?
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“The businessman may conduct his business in a way that will glorify his Master because of his fidelity. If he is a true follower of Christ he will carry his religion into everything that is done and reveal to men the spirit of Christ. The mechanic may be a diligent and faithful representative of Him who toiled in the lowly walks of life among the hills of Galilee. Everyone who names the name of Christ should so work that others, by seeing his good works, may be led to glorify their Creator and Redeemer. . . .”

“With a loving spirit we may perform life’s humblest duties ‘as to the Lord.’ Colossians 3:23. If the love of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the life. The sweet savor of Christ will surround us, and our influence will elevate and bless.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 82, 83.

- b. What special promise for the future was given to the people of God in Old Testament times through the prophet Joel? Joel 2:28, 29.
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- c. When and how was this promise partially fulfilled? Acts 2:1–7, 16–18.
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“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

- a. How do we know the promise in Joel 2:28–32 applies also to us? Acts 3:19.
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“This promise belongs as much to us as it did to them, and yet how rarely it is presented before the people, and its reception spoken of in the church. In consequence of this silence upon this most important theme, what promise do we know less about by its practical fulfillment than this rich promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby efficiency is to be given to all our spiritual labor? The promise of the Holy Spirit is casually brought into our discourses, is incidentally touched upon, and that is all. Prophecies have been dwelt upon, doctrines have been expounded; but that which is essential to the church in order that they may grow in spiritual strength and efficiency, in order that the preaching may carry conviction with it, and souls be converted to God, has been largely left out of ministerial effort.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 174.

“If the lay members of the church will arouse to do the work that they can do, going on a warfare at their own charges, each seeing how much he can accomplish in winning souls to Jesus, we shall see many leaving the ranks of Satan to stand under the banner of Christ. If our people will act upon the light that is given in these few words of instruction, we shall surely see of the salvation of God. Wonderful revivals will follow. Sinners will be converted, and many souls will be added to the church. When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost will fall on us.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 246.

- b. What should be our main concern today, and for what should we fervently pray to the Lord? John 16:12–14; Zechariah 10:1.
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“Oh, how much we all need the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Then we shall always work with the mind of Christ, with kindness, compassion, and sympathy, showing love for the sinner while hating sin with a perfect hatred.”—*Evangelism*, p. 369.

“There needs to be a waking up among God’s people, that His work may be carried forward with power. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that God will add to the ranks of His people men of ability and influence, who are to act their part in warning the world.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 558, 559.

- a. How are we to prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter rain power? Hosea 6:1–3.
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“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.’ I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.”—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**Fri, Aug 29**

1. What work is the Holy Spirit doing in me—and how does He want to use me in greater measure as an instrument in the hands of God?
2. What may be hindering my reception of the Holy Spirit in fullness?
3. What is my part in helping my church receive the fullness of the Spirit?
4. Explain the functions of the Holy Spirit on earth.
5. Describe the applications of the prophecy of Joel 2:28–32.

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, September 6, 2025



A school in Mahoko, Rwanda

The Republic of Rwanda is a country in East Africa, bordered by Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Burundi. The nation's economy has grown much since the early 2000's through coffee and tea exports as well as agricultural production, soap, energy, bottled water, and more. Popularly known as the Land of a Thousand Hills, in recent years, Rwanda has been drawing tourists for its beauty—especially with its rivers and lakes, including near the city of Mahoko, where we have our school project.

With over 13 million people, the languages here are the native Kinyarwanda, French, English (the official language spoken by 20%), and Swahili. Among the population, 43.7% are Catholics, 37.7% mainline Protestants, 11.8% Seventh-day Adventists (cited as a category distinct from other Protestants), and 2.0% Muslim, followed by others.

Despite all the profession of religion here, in an increasingly fallen world, we see a great need to invest in a thorough education of our children. "True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 395.

Bombarded as our children are by the things of this world, it is increasingly difficult to protect them from the wiles of the enemy. What was once limited in its accessibility is now literally attached to our children through the "smart" phones and other devices. How can we be fitted for the work of evangelism when our own children cannot be prepared for it? We have an even bigger concern because our children studying in the schools belonging to the government are compelled to attend classes on the Sabbath day. So, the need is urgent.

As our financial resources are insufficient, we appeal to our brethren around the world kindly to help us with your donations towards this school building.

When the First Sabbath Offering is gathered, please give generously, that God may be glorified through this school project here among the thousand hills. It is our prayer that the Lord may richly bless the gifts and the givers!

Your brothers and sisters from Rwanda

Christ Prays for His Disciples (1)

MEMORY VERSE: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them” (John 17:9, 10).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 737–746.

“This prayer [in John 17] is a lesson regarding the intercession that the Saviour would carry on within the veil, when His great sacrifice in behalf of men, the offering of Himself, should have been completed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1145.

1. CHRIST’S LAST PRAYER WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Sun, Aug 31

- a. After Jesus finished giving instructions to the disciples, what did He do with them for the last time? John 17:1, 9.

“[John 17:1–6 quoted.] This was Christ’s last prayer with His disciples. It was offered just before He went into the Garden of Gethsemane, where He was to be betrayed and taken.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1145.

- b. What does Christ reveal at the opening of this prayer? John 17:1, 2.

“The seventeenth chapter of John speaks plainly regarding the personality of God and of Christ, and of their relation to each other.”—*Ibid*.

“Study prayerfully the seventeenth chapter of John. This chapter is not only to be read again and again; its truths are to be eaten and assimilated.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 80.

- a. What fundamental truth did Jesus pronounce as the basis for eternal life? John 17:3.
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“The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. This is the knowledge that works transformation of character. Received into the life, it will re-create the soul in the image of Christ. This is the knowledge that God invites His children to receive, beside which all else is vanity and nothingness.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 475.

“Said Jesus: ‘The Father Himself loveth you.’ If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove ‘as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered.’ It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. He does not become perplexed by the multiplicity of our grievances nor overpowered by the weight of our burdens. His watch-care extends to every household and encircles every individual; He is concerned in all our business and our sorrows. He marks every tear; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out His purposes of love toward us, ‘that we might be partakers of His holiness’ and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 742.

- b. What does it mean to know Christ, and what is the result of such knowledge? Compare Hosea 6:3 with John 17:3.
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“It is only by knowing Christ that we can know God. . . . To know Christ savingly is to be vitalized by spiritual knowledge, to practise His words. Without this, all else is valueless.

“Christ came to this world to reveal the Father. What patience, what pitying tenderness, what divine compassion, what strength of purpose, he manifested! He did not fail nor become discouraged. He was the embodiment of purity, and His love was without a parallel. At every step He practised self-denial and self-sacrifice. In His death He was the revelation of the reconciliation between God and man.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1898.

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

- a. During His ministry, in what did Christ's life on earth consist? John 17:4.
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"In all the gracious deeds that Jesus did, He sought to impress upon men the parental, benevolent attributes of God. In all His lessons He was seeking to teach men the wonderful truth that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Jesus would have us understand the love of the Father, and He seeks to draw us to Him by presenting His parental grace. . . .

"Jesus came into the world to illustrate the character of God in His own life, and He swept back the misrepresentations that Satan had originated, and revealed the glory of God. It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 139.

- b. What did Jesus ask the Father at the end of His earthly mission? John 17:5.
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"Christ is not praying for the manifestation of the glory of human nature; for that human nature never had an existence in His pre-existence. He is praying to His Father in regard to a glory possessed in His oneness with God. His prayer is that of a mediator; the favor He entreats is the manifestation of that divine glory which was possessed by Him when He was one with God. Let the vail be removed, He says, and let My glory shine forth—the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."—*The Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1899.

"This world is but an atom in the vast dominions over which God presides, yet this little fallen world—the one lost sheep—is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold. Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be 'wounded for our transgressions' and 'bruised for our iniquities.' (Isaiah 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 190, 191.

- a. By associating with Christ, what conviction did the disciples reach regarding His words? John 7:17; 17:7. What is our duty today?
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“Those who are seeking to know the truth and to understand the will of God, who are faithful to the light and zealous in the performance of their daily duties, will surely know of the doctrine, for they will be guided into all truth. God does not promise, by the masterly acts of His providence, to irresistibly bring men to the knowledge of His truth, when they do not seek for truth and have no desire to know the truth. Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. They may be obedient through the name and grace of our Redeemer, or they may be disobedient, and realize the consequences. Man is responsible for receiving or rejecting sacred and eternal truth. The Spirit of God is continually convicting, and souls are deciding for or against the truth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 427, 428.

- b. What did Jesus say to His Father with regard to the belief of the apostles? John 17:8. How do these words apply to us today?
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“[John 17:3, 8 quoted.] Here is the work laid before us, to be representatives of Christ, as He in our world was the representative of the Father. We are to teach the words given us in the lessons of Christ. . . . We are in the antitypical day of atonement, and not only are we to humble our hearts before God and confess our sins, but we are, by all our educating talent, to seek to instruct those with whom we are brought in contact, and to bring them by precept and example to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.”—*Christian Education*, p. 157.

- c. In whose behalf, specifically, did Jesus offer His prayer in John 17? John 17:9, 20.
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“[Christ] is making intercession for the most lowly, the most oppressed and suffering, for the most tried and tempted ones.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 49.

- a. How is Jesus glorified through His disciples? John 17:10, 11. What is necessary in order for this work to be performed?
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“Christ designs that heaven’s order, heaven’s plan of government, heaven’s divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth. Thus in His people He is glorified. Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. . . . The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depositary, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His humiliation, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 680.

“Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the cooperation of angels of heaven. With the help of these divine agencies they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ. So long as they remained united, the church would go forth ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ Song of Solomon 6:10. Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 90, 91.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Sep 5

1. How can a personal knowledge of Christ affect my destiny?
2. In what ways could my Christian experience be used as an educational tool in God’s hands?
3. What can I do to glorify Christ more fully?
4. Under what circumstances did Jesus pray for the last time with His disciples?
5. Explain the reasons for Christ’s first advent.

Christ Prays for His Disciples (2)

MEMORY VERSE: “And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26).

Suggested Reading: *The Sanctified Life*, pp. 61–69.

“As a consecrated high priest He intercedes for His people. As a faithful shepherd He gathers His flock under the shadow of the Almighty, in the strong and sure refuge. For Him there waits the last battle with Satan, and He goes forth to meet it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 680.

1. UNITED IN CHRIST

Sun, Sep 7

- a. What point essential to the success of the church does Jesus mention repeatedly in His intercessory prayer? John 17:11 (last part), 21–23.

“[Christ] prays that His disciples may be one, even as He and the Father are one; and this unity of believers is to be as testimony to the world that He has sent us, and that we bear the evidence of His grace.”—*My Life Today*, p. 252.

“If we draw nigh to God, individually, then don’t you see what the result will be? Can’t you see that we will draw nigh to one another? We cannot draw nigh to God, and come to the same cross, without our hearts being blended together in perfect unity.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 96.

- b. How can church unity be achieved and maintained? 1 John 1:7.

“A union of believers with Christ will as a natural result lead to a union with one another, which bond of union is the most enduring upon earth. We are one in Christ, as Christ is one with the Father. Christians are branches, and only branches, in the living Vine.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 47.

- a. What does Christ say concerning His disciples and the world? John 17:13, 14. Why does the world persecute them?
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“The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner’s peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and doctrines were known. Therefore they were hated by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain. For the same reason that Cain slew Abel, did those who sought to throw off the restraint of the Holy Spirit, put to death God’s people. It was for the same reason that the Jews rejected and crucified the Saviour—because the purity and holiness of His character was a constant rebuke to their selfishness and corruption. From the days of Christ until now His faithful disciples have excited the hatred and opposition of those who love and follow the ways of sin.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 46.

- b. What is God’s plan for His children as far as the influences of the world are concerned? John 17:15, 16.
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“By His own example the Saviour has shown that His followers can be in the world and yet not of the world. He came not to partake of its delusive pleasures, to be swayed by its customs, and to follow its practices, but to do His Father’s will, to seek and save the lost. With this object before him the Christian may stand uncontaminated in any surroundings. Whatever his station or circumstances, exalted or humble, he will manifest the power of true religion in the faithful performance of duty.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 467.

“The world has not enough true Christians; the church has need of them; society cannot spare them. Christ’s prayer for His disciples was: ‘I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.’ Jesus knows we are in the world, exposed to its temptations, but He loves us and will give us grace to triumph over its corrupting influences. He would have us perfect in character; that our waywardness may not occasion moral deformity in others.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 334.

- a. What does the truth do for those who know and obey it? John 8:32; 17:17.
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“Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. . . .

“The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ’s purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 100, 101.

- b. How is the truth defined? Psalm 119:142.
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“The truth as it is in Jesus is obedience to every precept of Jehovah. It is heart work. Bible sanctification is not the spurious sanctification which will not search the Scriptures, but will trust to good feeling and impulses rather than to the seeking for truth as for hidden treasure. Bible sanctification will lead its possessors to know the requirements of God and to obey them.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 152.

- c. How can we be sanctified by the truth? John 17:19; 16:13 (first part).
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“Christ declared He sanctified Himself, that we also might be sanctified. He took upon Himself our nature, and became a faultless pattern for men. He made no mistake, that we also might become victors, and enter into His kingdom as overcomers. He prayed that we might be sanctified through the truth. What is truth? He declared, ‘Thy word is truth.’ His disciples were to be sanctified through obedience to the truth.”—*My Life Today*, p. 252.

- a. How do we know that Christ included us in His mediatorial prayer? John 17:20.
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“All that Christ was to the disciples, He desires to be to His children today.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 75.

“Christ’s redeemed ones are His jewels, His precious and peculiar treasure.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 309.

- b. What assurance do we have that Christ’s watchcare, through the Holy Spirit, is over us today? John 14:16.
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“The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone—these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51.

“In the hour of greatest need, when discouragement would overwhelm the soul, it is then that the watchful eye of Jesus sees that we need His help. The hour of man’s necessity is the hour of God’s opportunity. When all human support fails, then Jesus comes to our aid, and His presence scatters the darkness and lifts the cloud of gloom.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 530.

- c. What desire did Jesus manifest in behalf of His people at the end of His prayer? John 17:24.
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“Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 834.

- a. How are we to reflect the Father through Christ? John 17:25, 26.

“Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 739.

- b. What focus must we always maintain in life? Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

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

“The command is not, Let him that glorieth glory in himself, but in God. . . . There is, then, no ground for men to take glory to themselves. For every blessing which they enjoy, for every good quality which they possess, they are indebted to the grace of Christ. None should exalt themselves as possessing wisdom or righteousness. . . .

“Those who have the deepest experience in the things of God, are the farthest removed from pride or self-exaltation. They have the humblest thought of self, and the most exalted conceptions of the glory and excellence of Christ. . . . When we have our eyes fixed upon heaven, and have clear views of the character of Christ, we shall exalt the Lord God in our hearts.

“As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies with a desire to become like his great Exemplar.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 235.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Sep 12

1. What can I do to promote unity among the brethren?
2. How can I benefit from Christ's prayer in behalf of His disciples?
3. In what ways can I develop a deeper knowledge of the name of God?
4. Explain Christ's saying: “They are not of the world.”
5. Summarize the biblical definitions of “truth.”

The Arraignment of Christ

MEMORY VERSE: “Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 165–168.

“The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 690.

1. A SOLEMN MOMENT

Sun, Sep 14

- a. When Jesus finished His intercessory prayer, where did He go with His disciples, and for what purpose? John 18:1; Matthew 26:36.

- b. In appealing to three disciples to accompany Him, what request did the Lord make, and why? Mark 14:33, 34.

“It was [Satan’s] purpose to swell iniquity to such great proportions, that it would make atonement seem impossible, so that the Son of God, who sought to save a lost world, should be crushed beneath the curse of sin. The working of the vigilant foe in presenting to Christ the vast proportions of transgression, caused such poignant pain that He felt that He could not remain in the immediate presence of any human being. He could not bear that even His disciples should witness His agony as He contemplated the woe of the world. Even His most dearly loved friends must not be in His companionship. The sword of justice was unsheathed, and the wrath of God against iniquity rested upon man’s substitute, Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1102, 1103.

- a. What is the essence of Christ's first prayer in Gethsemane? Mark 14:35, 36.
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“Christ was now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before. His suffering can best be described in the words of the prophet, ‘Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Zechariah 13:7. As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant. Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself.

“As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. In the wilderness of temptation the destiny of the human race had been at stake. Christ was then conqueror. Now the tempter had come for the last fearful struggle. For this he had been preparing during the three years of Christ's ministry. Everything was at stake with him. If he failed here, his hope of mastery was lost; the kingdoms of the world would finally become Christ's; he himself would be overthrown and cast out. But if Christ could be overcome, the earth would become Satan's kingdom, and the human race would be forever in his power. With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ's soul was filled with dread of separation from God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 686, 687.

- b. Returning from His agonizing prayer, in what state did Jesus find His disciples? What reproof did He give them? Mark 14:37, 38.
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“Rising with painful effort, He staggered to the place where He had left His companions. But He ‘findeth them asleep.’ Had He found them praying, He would have been relieved. Had they been seeking refuge in God, that satanic agencies might not prevail over them, He would have been comforted by their steadfast faith. But they had not heeded the repeated warning, ‘Watch and pray.’ At first they had been much troubled to see their Master, usually so calm and dignified, wrestling with a sorrow that was beyond comprehension. They had prayed as they heard the strong cries of the sufferer. They did not intend to forsake their Lord, but they seemed paralyzed by a stupor which they might have shaken off if they had continued pleading with God. They did not realize the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 688.

- a. What was Christ's second prayer, and what were the disciples doing? Matthew 26:42, 43. What prophecy was then fulfilled? Isaiah 52:14.
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"A short time before, Jesus had stood like a mighty cedar, withstanding the storm of opposition that spent its fury upon Him. Stubborn wills, and hearts filled with malice and subtlety, had striven in vain to confuse and overpower Him. He stood forth in divine majesty as the Son of God. Now He was like a reed beaten and bent by the angry storm. He had approached the consummation of His work a conqueror, having at each step gained the victory over the powers of darkness. As one already glorified, He had claimed oneness with God. In unfaltering accents He had poured out His songs of praise. He had spoken to His disciples in words of courage and tenderness. Now had come the hour of the power of darkness. Now His voice was heard on the still evening air, not in tones of triumph, but full of human anguish."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 689, 690.

- b. How was the Son of God comforted during that critical hour? Luke 22:43. With what words had Isaiah prophesied of Christ's anguish and consolation? Isaiah 53:11.
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"In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved."—*Ibid.*, pp. 693, 694.

- a. Who led the group that arrested Jesus? John 18:2–5.

- b. What happened to the angry mob when Jesus identified Himself to them? John 18:6.

“No traces of His recent agony were visible as Jesus stepped forth to meet His betrayer. Standing in advance of His disciples He said, ‘Whom seek ye?’ They answered, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus replied, ‘I am He.’ As these words were spoken, the angel who had lately ministered to Jesus moved between Him and the mob. A divine light illuminated the Saviour’s face, and a dovelike form overshadowed Him. In the presence of this divine glory, the murderous throng could not stand for a moment. They staggered back. Priests, elders, soldiers, and even Judas, fell as dead men to the ground.

“The angel withdrew, and the light faded away. Jesus had opportunity to escape, but He remained, calm and self-possessed. As one glorified He stood in the midst of that hardened band, now prostrate and helpless at His feet. The disciples looked on, silent with wonder and awe.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 694.

- c. How was the treachery of Judas to affect the mob—and the meekness of Jesus to be misinterpreted by Peter? John 18:7–10; Luke 22:47–50.

“The mob grew bold as they saw Judas touch the person of Him who had so recently been glorified before their eyes. They now laid hold of Jesus, and proceeded to bind those precious hands that had ever been employed in doing good.

“The disciples had thought that their Master would not suffer Himself to be taken. For the same power that had caused the mob to fall as dead men could keep them helpless, until Jesus and His companions should escape. They were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved. Peter in his anger rashly drew his sword and tried to defend his Master, but he only cut off an ear of the high priest’s servant.”—*Ibid.*, p. 696.

- a. Describe the patient love manifested by Jesus at the moment of His arrest. Matthew 26:51–53; Luke 22:50, 51. How did Heaven view it?

“The disciples began to hope as they saw the multitude with their staves and swords fall so quickly. As they arose and again surrounded the Son of God, Peter drew his sword and smote a servant of the high priest and cut off an ear. Jesus bade him to put up the sword, saying, ‘Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?’ I saw that as these words were spoken, the countenances of the angels were animated with hope. They wished then and there to surround their Commander and disperse that angry mob. . . . The hearts of the disciples also sank in despair and bitter disappointment, as Jesus suffered Himself to be led away by His enemies.

“The disciples feared for their own lives, and they all forsook Him and fled. Jesus was left alone in the hands of the murderous mob. Oh, what a triumph of Satan then! And what sadness and sorrow with the angels of God! Many companies of holy angels, each with a tall commanding angel at their head, were sent to witness the scene. They were to record every insult and cruelty imposed upon the Son of God, and to register every pang of anguish which Jesus should suffer; for the very men who joined in this dreadful scene are to see it all again in living characters.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 167, 168.

- b. What must all who profess Christ learn from the Lord’s admonition to Peter? John 18:11; 1 John 3:15.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Sep 19

1. What appeal of Christ to the disciples is especially valid for me?
2. How should the Lord’s experience in Gethsemane affect me?
3. How can I avoid the type of reaction shown by Peter at Jesus’ arrest?
4. What was the principal cause of Christ’s anguish?
5. How did the multitude react before the angelic glory?

Simon Peter

MEMORY VERSE: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31, 32).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 331–336.

“It was through self-sufficiency that Peter fell; and it was through repentance and humiliation that his feet were again established.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 155.

1. THE CHARACTER OF PETER

Sun, Sep 21

- a. When Simon first came to Jesus, what did the Master say to him? John 1:42. What do we know of Peter’s character prior to his conversion?

“The eye of Christ rested upon [Peter], reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

“It was on the point where he thought himself strong that Peter was weak; and not until he discerned his weakness could he realize his need of dependence upon Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 382.

- b. Despite his defects, what invitation did Jesus offer Peter? Matthew 4:18, 19.

“It was after Isaiah had beheld the holiness of God and his own unworthiness that he was entrusted with the divine message. It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and dependence upon divine power that he received the call to his work for Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 246.

- a. What fact reveals that Peter was fallible like any other human, even after the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Galatians 2:11–14.
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“[Peter] won the confidence of many by his prudent conduct toward the Gentile converts. For a time he acted in accordance with the light given from heaven. He so far overcame his natural prejudice as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. But when certain Jews who were zealous for the ceremonial law, came from Jerusalem, Peter injudiciously changed his deportment toward the converts from paganism. A number of the Jews ‘dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.’ This revelation of weakness on the part of those who had been respected and loved as leaders, left a most painful impression on the minds of the Gentile believers. The church was threatened with division.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 198.

- b. What lesson can we learn from the mistakes and the rehabilitation of Peter? Psalm 145:14.
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“Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment. God also saw that in time to come some would be so deluded as to claim for Peter and his pretended successors the exalted prerogatives that belong to God alone. And this record of the apostle’s weakness was to remain as a proof of his fallibility and of the fact that he stood in no way above the level of the other apostles.

“The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God, that they may not fail in integrity, but firmly adhere to principle. The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199.

- a. What does Jesus say about the foundation of the church? Matthew 16:16–19.
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“The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. . . .”

“The word Peter signifies a stone—a rolling stone. Peter was not the rock upon which the church was founded. The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 412, 413.

- b. Like Peter, what did other prophets and apostles declare concerning the true foundation of the church? Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:3–6.
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“In the presence of God, and all the heavenly intelligences, in the presence of the unseen army of hell, Christ founded His church upon the living Rock. That Rock is Himself—His own body, for us broken and bruised. Against the church built upon this foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail. . . .

“For six thousand years, faith has builded upon Christ. For six thousand years the floods and tempests of satanic wrath have beaten upon the Rock of our salvation; but it stands unmoved.

“Peter had expressed the truth which is the foundation of the church’s faith, and Jesus now honored him as the representative of the whole body of believers. He said, ‘I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’

“ ‘The keys of the kingdom of heaven’ are the words of Christ. All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included. These words have power to open and to shut heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413.

- a. Explain Peter's greatest defect of character. Mark 14:27-29.
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"For each of the classes represented by the Pharisee and the publican there is a lesson in the history of the apostle Peter. In his early discipleship Peter thought himself strong. Like the Pharisee, in his own estimation he was 'not as other men are.' . . . Peter did not know his own danger. Self-confidence misled him. He thought himself able to withstand temptation; but in a few short hours the test came, and with cursing and swearing he denied his Lord."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 152.

- b. How did Jesus deal with this presumptuous disciple? Luke 22:31, 32.
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"When the crowing of the cock reminded him of the words of Christ, surprised and shocked at what he had just done he turned and looked at his Master. At that moment Christ looked at Peter, and beneath that grieved look, in which compassion and love for him were blended, Peter understood himself. He went out and wept bitterly. That look of Christ's broke his heart. Peter had come to the turning point, and bitterly did he repent his sin. He was like the publican in his contrition and repentance, and like the publican he found mercy. The look of Christ assured him of pardon.

"Now his self-confidence was gone. Never again were the old boastful assertions repeated."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 152-154.

- c. After His resurrection, what did Jesus ask Peter? John 21:15-17. Why did Jesus repeat this three times—and how did Peter answer? Luke 22:31, 32.
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"[Peter] had dishonored Christ, and had incurred the distrust of his brethren. They thought he would not be allowed to take his former position among them, and he himself felt that he had forfeited his trust. Before being called to take up again his apostolic work, he must before them all give evidence of his repentance. Without this, his sin, though repented of, might have destroyed his influence as a minister of Christ. The Saviour gave him opportunity to regain the confidence of his brethren, and, so far as possible, to remove the reproach he had brought upon the gospel."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 811.

- a. Name some key characteristics of discipleship. Colossians 1:10, 11; 3:12–14. What can we learn from the way Christ dealt with Peter?

“The gospel makes no compromise with evil. It cannot excuse sin. Secret sins are to be confessed in secret to God; but, for open sin, open confession is required. The reproach of the disciple’s sin is cast upon Christ. It causes Satan to triumph, and wavering souls to stumble. By giving proof of repentance, the disciple, so far as lies in his power, is to remove this reproach.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 811.

“The Saviour’s manner of dealing with Peter had a lesson for him and for his brethren. It taught them to meet the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. Although Peter had denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him never faltered. Just such love should the undershepherd feel for the sheep and lambs committed to his care. Remembering his own weakness and failure, Peter was to deal with his flock as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.

“The question that Christ had put to Peter was significant. He mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. ‘Lovest thou Me?’ He said. This is the essential qualification. Though Peter might possess every other, yet without the love of Christ he could not be a faithful shepherd over the Lord’s flock. Knowledge, benevolence, eloquence, gratitude, and zeal are all aids in the good work; but without the love of Jesus in the heart, the work of the Christian minister is a failure.”—*Ibid.*, p. 815.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**Fri, Sep 26**

1. How might I, like Peter, be misjudging my own character?
2. How can I avoid the defect of character manifested by Peter?
3. What lessons can I learn from Peter’s fall and rehabilitation?
4. After Christ’s resurrection, why did Christ need to ask Peter a pointed question in front of his brethren—and what should we learn from this?
5. Explain the foundation on which Christ built His church, and identify the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

First Sabbath Offerings



Sabbath, July 5

The Arue Church in Tahiti

How important it is for this remote island in the Pacific Ocean to have a lighthouse for God (see p. 4)!



Sabbath, August 2

The GC Education Department

Effective young missionaries must be knowledgeable. Let's continue preparing their curriculum (see p. 25)!



Sabbath, September 6

A school in Mahoko, Rwanda

Protecting and educating children to be faithful missionaries for the Lord (see p. 51).