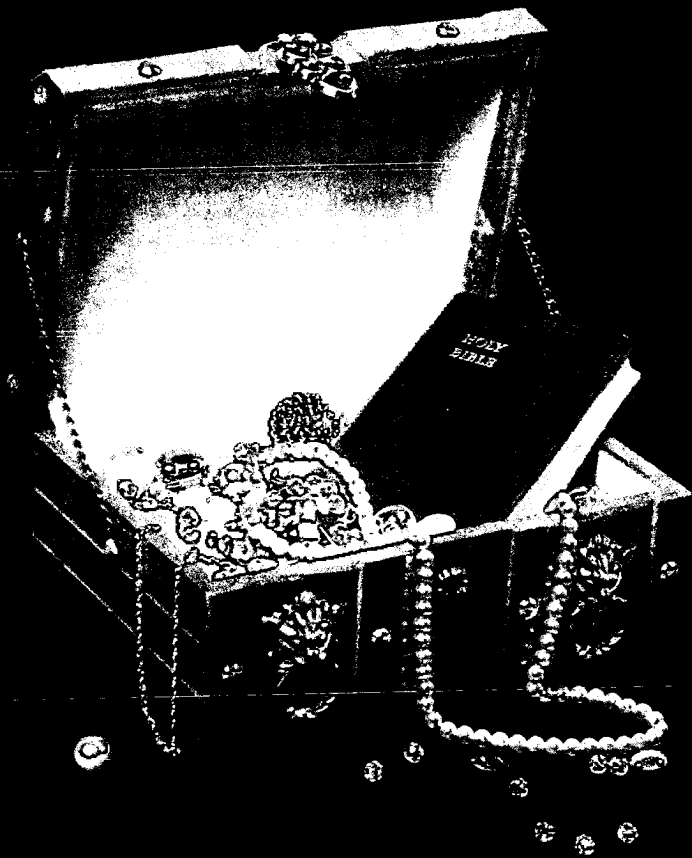


YBREAK SERIES

Oct.-Dec. 1981

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

This We Believe-II



the riches . . . of the wisdom . . . of God! Rom. 11:33

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School Visitor
Speaks Out:



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President WALTER R.L. SCRAGG Secretary JAN PAULSEN Treasurer JOHN MUDERSPACH

NORTHERN EUROPEAN DIVISION

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

119 ST. PETER'S STREET, ST. ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND. AL1 3EY
Telephone: ST. ALBANS 60331 Telegrams/Cables: 'ADVENTIST ST. ALBANS' Telex: 262284 Ref: 1720

My Brothers and Sisters:

It doesn't seem so long ago that I wrote you about projects in our Division. We asked your help for our schools in Sweden, Britain and West Africa.

Thank you for the record offering you gave. The projects in Sweden and Africa are completed and the one in Britain, nearly so. Without your help we could not have advanced the way we have.

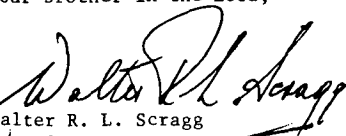
This quarter we have three new Special Projects for which we ask your support. They are:

1. An evangelistic centre in Skoczow, Poland. Our church in Poland has many needs and opportunities. A climate of liberty and goodwill has enabled us to establish strong local churches. This centre will provide a place where the message we share can be presented to large audiences.
2. Rebuilding of Toivonlinna Junior College, Finland. Two old buildings desperately needing replacement, and the threat of closure because of safety requirements makes a new dormitory and dining block an urgent priority.
3. A child evangelism centre in Tromso, North Norway. With its nightless summers and dayless winters, North Norway provokes unique challenges in child evangelism. We hope to meet them in the largest city in North Norway with a centre which will provide for Vacation Bible Schools, Bible Story Hours, Pathfinder clubs and a day school. These will be missionary projects for the children of the city and will give us access to large numbers of non-Adventist families.

For Northern Europe we plead for your prayers that God's Spirit will be poured on the 45,000 members in these countries. The challenges are great; the opportunities are many. Your intercession will lift us toward a finished work.

Thank you for what you have done and will do.

Yours in the Lord,


Walter R. L. Scragg
President

THE COVENANT SERIES

Since the first quarter of 1975 the Sabbath Schools of the world have been studying the Daybreak Series of lessons built around, and growing out of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. Beginning with the first quarter, 1982, and for the next five years or so, the Sabbath Schools will be studying various aspects of God's covenants with humankind.

We are not deeply concerned if our Sabbath School members are not conscious from week to week or from quarter to quarter that the lessons are following a particular theme. It is primarily a satisfaction to the writers and editors of the lessons to know that a degree of balance and proportion may be better obtained within a curriculum than by haphazard selection of topics for study.

It goes without saying that when the work of 20 different writers is projected over a five-year period, there may be some unavoidable changes—or switches at least—in the order of the lessons, and some may not actually appear at all. Sickness, accident, or other hindrances can come to all, even to writers and editors!

But the lessons have been planned under four main areas of study that cover the benefits of God's covenants of grace:

1. The Inward Law
2. The Revelation of God and His People
3. The Knowledge of God
4. The Forgiveness of Sin

It is not planned that we should study all of one area before moving to the next. Rather, there will be cycles of studies running across the four main areas. And, as we said above, sometimes we have to break the ideal order of subjects because we cannot keep the world field without any lessons while we wrestle with the demands of deadlines, reading committees, translating and printing schedules. Even the wonderful mail services of the world are faced with growing difficulties. Manuscripts get delayed beyond deadlines, and even lost.



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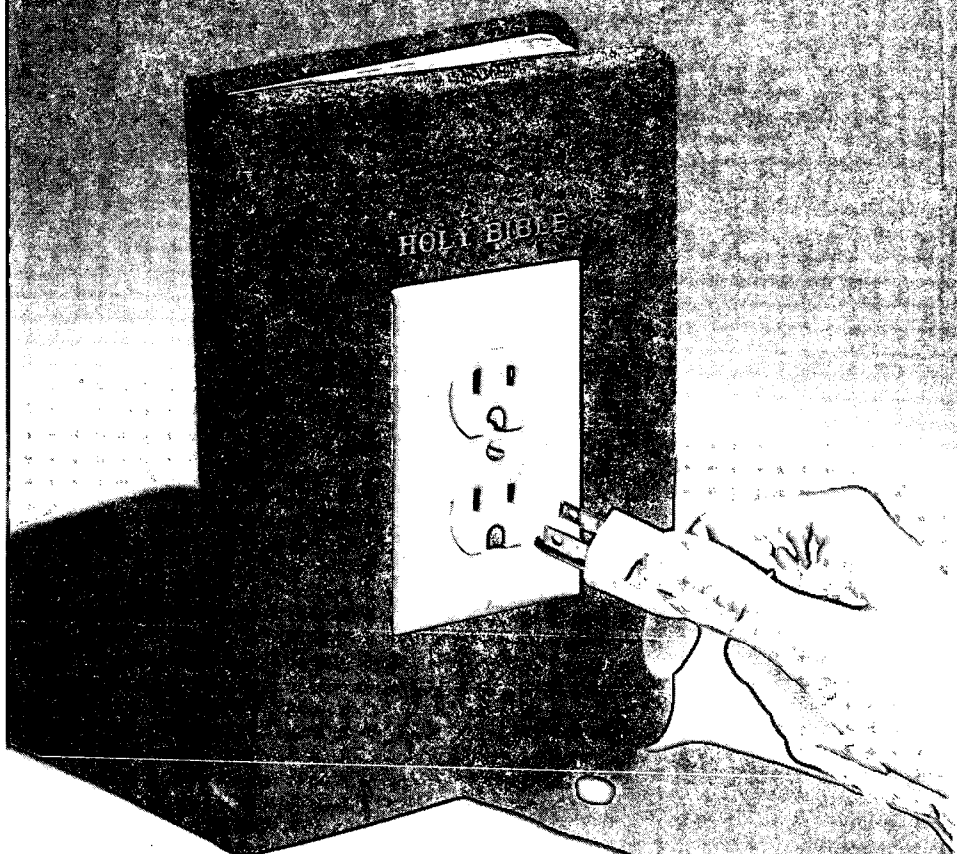
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A daily study of His Word will keep the power flowing.

THIS WE BELIEVE

Studies in Christian Doctrine: Part II

Introduction

Although this quarter sees us continuing our study of Bible doctrines as taught by Seventh-day Adventists, we must not rest content with the previous quarter's approach or any blessing received from it. "Time, like an ever-rolling stream," has borne some details of those studies away, and we now need a fresh approach and brand-new blessings for the thirteen studies that lie ahead.

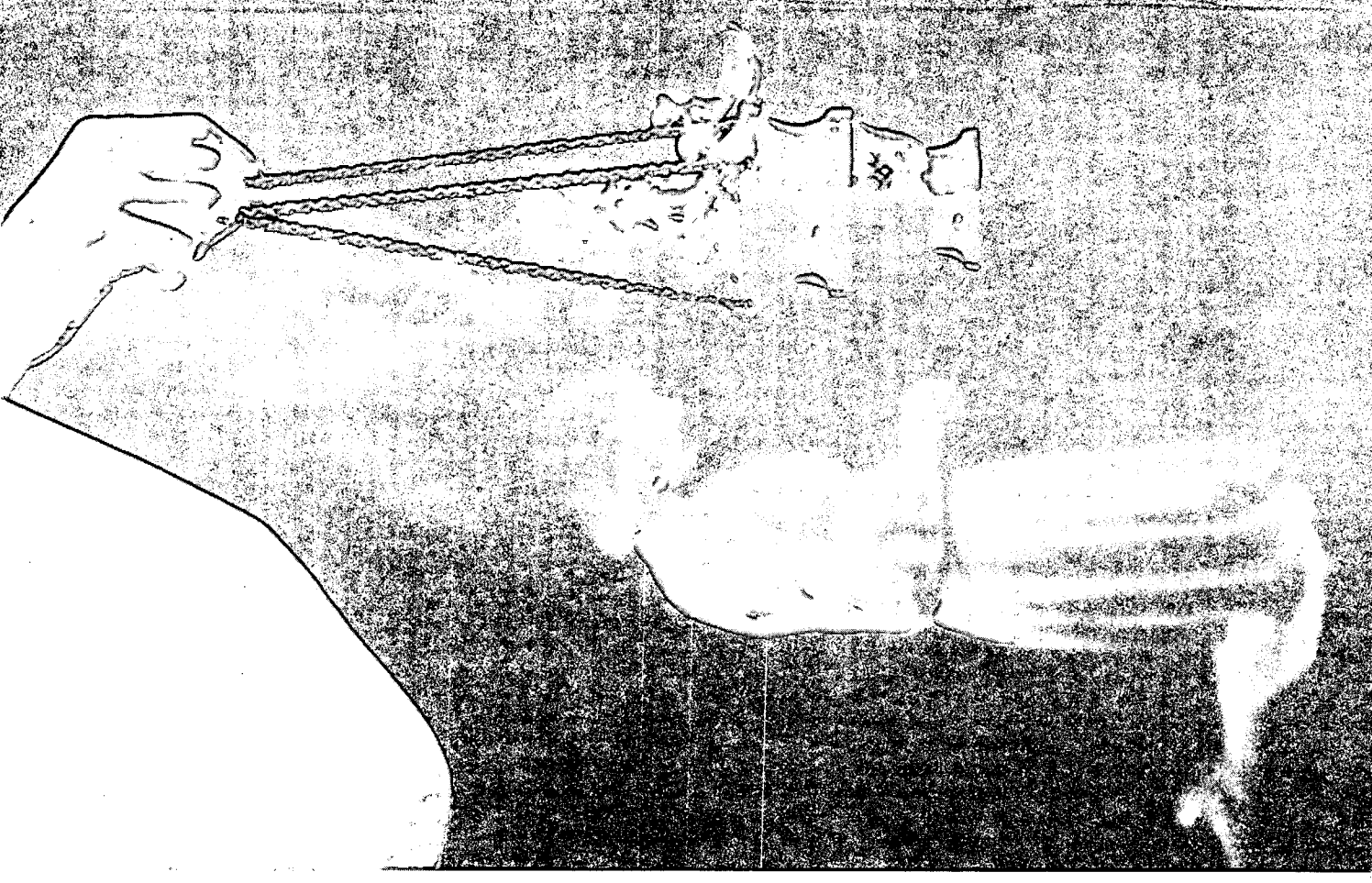
A glance at the topics that await our attention reveals that Christ our Saviour broods over them all as High Priest, Judge, Returning Lord, Master Physician, Head of the Church, Servant and Sacrifice, Chief Witness, and Great Exemplar. This is as it should be, for without Him in the central position our doctrines cannot be Christian. With Him at their center, their reliability and efficacy are assured.

Each lesson is firmly based on Scripture, the source of all true doctrine. Many of those scriptures are well known; others may have received relatively little use. But they will all bear intensive study, especially when seen from a slightly different angle than that used in the past. Teachers and class members are therefore urged to study the Word as deeply as possible. The Word "is quick [or, living], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Let us, then, daily study that Word, that God may reveal to us the purpose He had in mind in having those particular passages included in the Bible. Classes where the Word is intensively studied will find sound religious instruction, spiritual life, and inspiration for daily living.

The Word is the mine from which doctrines are dug. The doctrines have ever been in the Word, embedded in it as gems and minerals are contained in rocks and soil. No true doctrine is of human devising; it is inherent in Holy Writ, there to be quarried by those who search the Scriptures to discover revelations of God's character and His ways. These, when found, are formed into shapes more readily understood and retained by His children. We should therefore not see doctrines as ready-made declarations of belief that spare us further mental and spiritual exercise. We need them in portable form for convenience and as a means of expressing our beliefs to others that they may know the substance of our faith. But each belief is infinitely richer than its summary form. Indeed, to change the figure, the formal doctrine may be little more than a label to list the contents of the treasure chest of truth. It is for us to lift the lid and discover the wealth of revelation that lies within.

These illustrations explain why a series of Sabbath School lessons on Christian doctrine does not attempt to formulate those doctrines. That duty is done in the *Church Manual* presentation of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists." (Much time, before and at the General Conference Session in Dallas, was devoted to their careful revision.) At home and in Sabbath School we need to explore beyond the formal statements and to discover both the principles that underlie the doctrines and those that grow out of our beliefs.

At one stage in church history it was said that Christians were divided into two classes—those who did not think at all, and those who did nothing but think. Let us form a third class—those who think sensibly about their religion, who know the scriptural foundations on which faith rests, who are able to give a thoughtful answer to every man that asks a reason of the hope that is within us, and who can bring the doctrines of the church into practical application in the daily life, declaring with confidence, "This We Believe."



Our Great High Priest

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

The wilderness tabernacle, as a type, gives human beings a faint idea of the heavenly sanctuary, or temple, where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reign in eternal splendor. The doctrine has its roots in the Old Testament, but it becomes intensely relevant for present-day Christians through New Testament revelation, particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This unique book concentrates on portraying Christ as the divine-human High Priest who mediates the benefits of His own self-sacrifice for mankind, which is lost without such ministry.

Our personal acquaintance with and relationship to our great High

Priest is vital to our salvation. This lesson, therefore, assumes that Sabbath School members possess a basic knowledge of the earthly sanctuary and its services and spends two thirds of the week in study of Him around whom all sanctuary services revolve. If explanation is needed for this emphasis, it is found in the week's memory verse, which bids us "consider" or "contemplate" or "fix the mind on" Christ Jesus. He is "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" or "confession"—that is, our religion. There can be no more Christ-centered study than that! May its pursuit enable us to "see Jesus, . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9).

In no sense is this only an academic study. A more spiritual (that is, related to the Spirit) and personal topic would be hard to choose. If we wish, it will daily remind us to look up and see our Intercessor ministering on our behalf before the Almighty, who appointed Him to that merciful work. Those who wish to refresh their minds concerning this heavenly reality can hardly do better than to make the Epistle to the Hebrews their *Further Study* for this week.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Tabernacle and Temple**
(Ex. 25:8, 9)
2. **The Priest's Office**
(Ex. 28:1)
3. **The Perfect Priest**
(Heb. 8:1, 2)
4. **"Like Unto His Brethren"**
(Heb. 2:17)
5. **Our Intercessor**
(Heb. 9:24)
6. **The Believer's Response**
(Heb. 4:16)

**Part 1
TABERNACLE
AND TEMPLE**

As the Lord prepared Israel for entrance into the Promised Land, how did He meet the nation's need for a center to its religious life?

"Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Ex. 25:8,9).

God knew that His wandering people needed a focal point for worship. In the desert a permanent building was neither desirable nor practicable. A traveling people needed a portable shrine that could be constructed from available materials and be made the center of every campsite. The need was met by the tent, or tabernacle, or sanctuary.

We do not here intend to conduct an historical study of the erection of either the temporary or permanent buildings. We would rather note the divine intention in planning their construction. This is clearly stated in today's text: "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." God, as a loving Father as well as an awe-inspiring Deity, ever wants to be personally in the midst of His people. This presents no problem for the Omnipresent One but calls for a localized sense of God for the benefit of His children, who need a specific center where they can meet their Lord, offer their adoration and gifts, obtain pardon and spiritual renewal, and receive His guidance for all aspects of their group and personal lives. The sanctuary, or temple, fills that multiple need and gives them the assurance of God's willingness to dwell in their midst. (See Lev. 26:11, 12.)

What did the tabernacle and temples faintly represent? Heb. 9:11, 12, 14. (Compare Heb. 8:1, 2.)

"The heavenly temple, the abiding place of the King of kings, where 'thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him,' . . . that temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration—no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory. Yet important truths concerning the heavenly sanctuary and the great work there carried forward for man's redemption were to be taught by the earthly sanctuary and its services."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.

THINK IT THROUGH

When I go to church, do I lift up my spiritual eyes to the true tabernacle and see there my Lord in glory?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, "Additional Note on [Hebrews] Chapter 10," pp. 467-469

Part 2
THE PRIEST'S
OFFICE

Upon whom did God place responsibility for the services of the tabernacle? For what reasons?

"Take unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons" (Ex. 28:1).

"By divine direction the tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. In the earliest times every man was the priest of his own household. In the days of Abraham the priesthood was regarded as the birthright of the eldest son. Now, instead of the first-born of all Israel, the Lord accepted the tribe of Levi for the work of the sanctuary. By this signal honor He manifested His approval of their fidelity, both in adhering to His service and in executing His judgments when Israel apostatized in the worship of the golden calf. The priesthood, however, was restricted to the family of Aaron. Aaron and his sons alone were permitted to minister before the Lord."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350.

How were Aaron and his sons consecrated to their holy office? Ex. 40:13-15; 29:4-9.

Although, as stated above, "in the earliest times every man was the priest of his own household," the spiritual needs of a whole people—whose worship was based upon a sanctuary graced by the presence of the most high God—called for a centralized system. For such service a consecrated priesthood was required. Its members ministered on their people's behalf "in the priest's office." Because of this "everything connected with the apparel and deportment of the priests was to be such as to impress the beholder with a sense of the holiness of God, the sacredness of His worship, and the purity required of those who came into His presence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 351.

From its inauguration to its closure, however, the tabernacle system of worship was handicapped by the frailty of its priests. They were as human as the people whom they represented and reflected their apostasy. In the divine economy, therefore, their ministry was an interim measure designed to care for Israel's needs until the sinless, perfect High Priest would appear.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways does the ministry of the Christian church fill the roll that was given to the Levitical priesthood?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 350-356

Part 3
THE PERFECT
PRIEST

What superior alternatives to the wilderness tabernacle and the Levitical priesthood has God provided for His people?

“We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2).

In its earlier chapters the Epistle to the Hebrews has been depicting Christ as “the Apostle and High Priest” of the Christian religion (ch. 3:1). In chapter 8 the writer sums up one aspect of his reasoning by asserting the divine nature of that priesthood, seeing our Lord seated at God’s right hand—a position no human priest could ever occupy. The Saviour is also revealed as ministering in “the true tabernacle,” that is, the *real* or *genuine* one, the heavenly original after which the earthly one was patterned. (Compare Heb. 8:5 with Ex. 25:40.)

For what principal purpose were human high priests ordained or appointed, and what did this require of Christ? Heb. 8:3. (Compare Heb. 5:1-3.)

The Levitical priesthood was instituted because of man’s sin and was largely occupied with the offering of sacrifices for sin. Christ’s priesthood is of a wider nature; for His office is eternal, and He will still be our High Priest even after sin has been destroyed. Yet His redemptive role will never be forgotten, and man’s chief reason for gratitude will always be remembrance of the Saviour’s double service in sacrificing Himself and in mediating that offering by His priestly ministry.

“The Christian world in general is acquainted with Christ as ‘the Lamb of God’ that ‘taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). It is acquainted with Christ as the crucified One, who gave Himself for us that we might be saved. But not all Christians are acquainted with Christ as the high priest who ministers His blood in the sanctuary above. Yet without that ministry the plan of salvation would be ineffective. In the institution of the Passover in Egypt God commanded the Israelites not simply to slay the lamb, but to put its blood on the doorposts. . . . So in the antitype the blood of Christ, our Passover. . . , is not simply shed, it is *ministered* for us in heaven above by our great High Priest, as a vital part of God’s plan to save us.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 430.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I in my daily life show my gratitude for the wonder of God’s planning my salvation through the priestly ministry of His Son?

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 681-685

Part 4
"LIKE UNTO
HIS
BRETHREN"

What was the purpose of the great humiliation that God's Son voluntarily accepted in His incarnation? What has it done for you?

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17).

In order to be "a merciful and faithful high priest" and "make reconciliation for the sins of the people," the Eternal One had to be "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). We cannot realize what this meant to Him who inhabited eternity, but we should understand that this was part of the cost of His high priesthood. His humanity, however, will also enable Him to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

Jesus "made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life."—*Early Writings*, p. 149.

Which of the High Priest's divine-human qualities bring Him into the most sympathetic touch with His people's daily needs? Heb. 4:15.

We cannot measure the comfort that comes from knowing that our High Priest understands all about the temptations that beset us! Still greater is the assurance of knowing that His temptation-conquering power may be ours too!

"Those who claim that it was not possible for Christ to sin, cannot believe that He really took upon Himself human nature. But was not Christ actually tempted, not only by Satan in the wilderness, but all through His life, from childhood to manhood? In all points He was tempted as we are, and because He successfully resisted temptation under every form, He gave man the perfect example, and through the ample provision Christ has made, we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 929.

THINK IT THROUGH

How different the Christian life would be if the Trinity had not planned for Jesus to take on human form and be subject to such trials as trouble us!

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 24, 25, 117, 122, 123

Part 5
OUR
INTERCESSOR

Where has our ascended High Priest gone, and for what purpose?

“Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24).

Every thoughtful Christian asks, “What is my Master now doing in heaven?” Our text provides a partial answer to that vital question. He appears, or presents Himself, “in the presence of” (literally, “in the face of”) God for us, on our behalf, as our Representative, our Advocate.

“Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy, and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 933.

What ministry has engaged the Son since His return to heaven? Heb. 7:25. (Compare Acts 7:55.)

This verse reveals the continuing nature of Christ’s redemptive work. While the cross is at the center of our salvation, our Saviour’s priestly ministry as Intercessor is the means by which we benefit from the reconciliation provided between ourselves and God. This does not mean that the Son can do nothing else but present our repentance and pleas for pardon before the Father (that would seem to place limitations on the illimitable) but that our eternal High Priest is ever willing and able to represent us before God. How precious, then, is this part of our Redeemer’s work!

“The final object of His entrance as high priest and sacrifice into the eternal heaven is there to appear before God *for us*, presenting on our behalf no exhausted sacrifice, nor one of transient efficacy or needing repetition, but Himself in his own person, as an ever-present, ever-living victim and atonement. And this object is attained at once, and attained for ever.”—Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. 2, p. 129. (Quoted by M. L. Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews*, p. 363.)

THINK IT THROUGH

What steps should I take to engage Jesus to appear in the presence of God on my behalf?

FURTHER STUDY

Study the ninth chapter of Hebrews verse by verse, concentrating on the current significance of Christ’s high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

**Part 6
THE
BELIEVER'S
RESPONSE**

In view of our having the Son of God as our great High Priest, what are we exhorted to do?

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

The word here rendered "boldly" may also be translated "with confidence." "The throne of grace" refers to the throne where grace is dispensed, that is, God's throne, since He is "the God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10). There we shall find mercy that pardons our transgressions and grace to help us overcome sin. "As an earthly parent encourages his child to come to him at all times, so the Lord encourages us to lay before Him our wants and perplexities, our gratitude and love. Every promise is sure. Jesus is our Surety and Mediator, and has placed at our command every resource, that we may have a perfect character. The blood of Christ in ever-abiding efficacy is our only hope; for through His merits alone we have pardon and peace."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1116.

How may we realize the spiritual benefits provided by Christ's intercession in the heavenly sanctuary? Heb. 10:19-25.

These verses introduce the closing practical counsels in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Unless these are heeded and practiced, our study of Christ's priesthood brings only a mental satisfaction which may be lifeless and even deceptive. Four prerequisites prepare us for entering "into the holiest": (1) a true or sincere heart; (2) a full faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice; (3) a penitent's clear conscience; (4) a symbolic cleansing from sin in baptism (verse 22). These in turn enable us to (1) hold fast our hope (rather than "faith"); (2) stimulate our fellows in Christian service; (3) be faithful in communal worship; (4) encourage fellow members to steadfastness, in view of the second coming (verses 23-25).

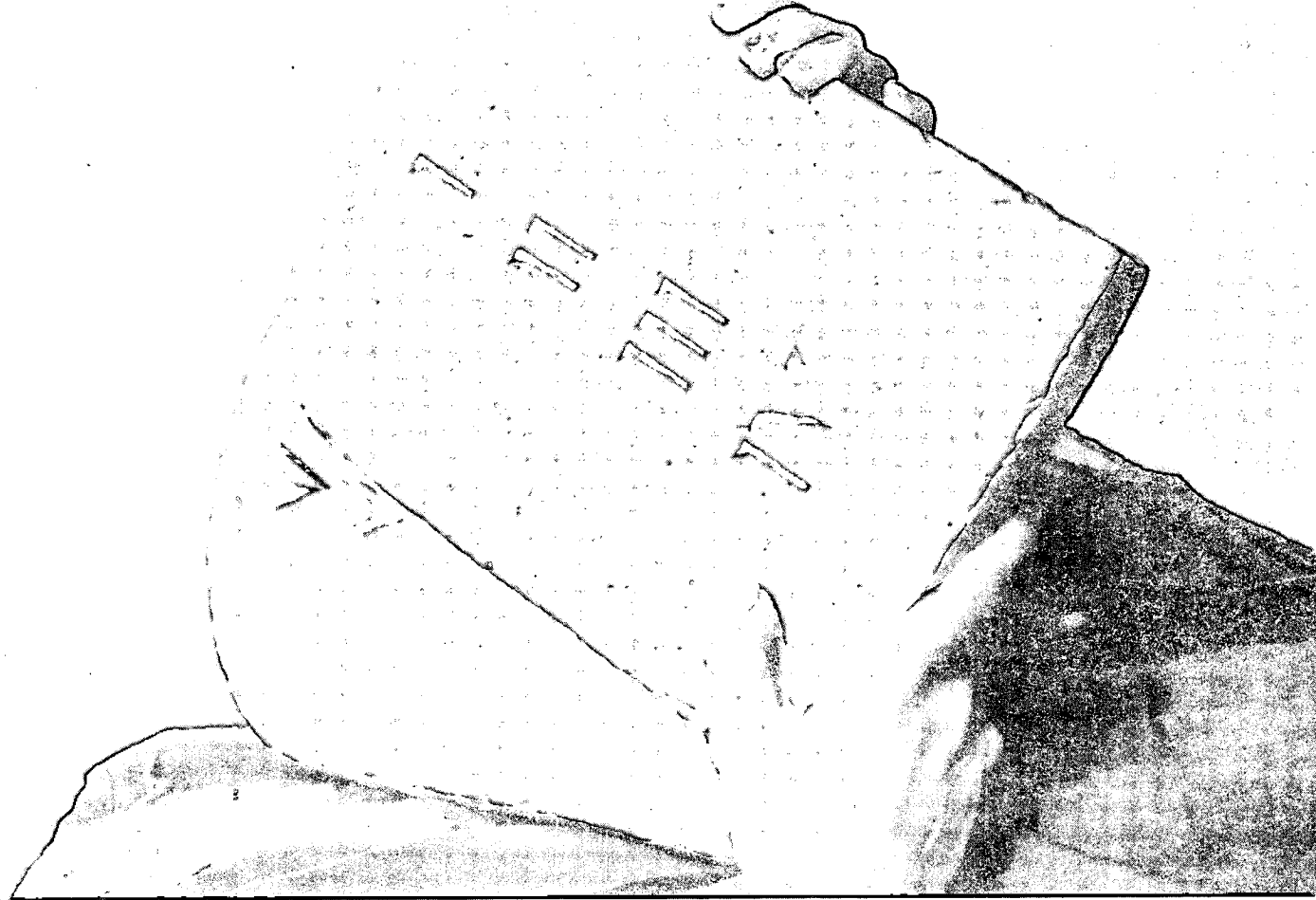
Here we have a divinely endorsed recipe for healthy church life. We suggest that we consider each suggestion in our personal study of this lesson at home and then discuss each point of apostolic counsel in our Sabbath School class. Such an exercise may well improve the spiritual health of the church where we worship. The strength of the church lies in its attending membership.

THINK IT THROUGH

When we pray, consciously coming to the throne of grace and seeing Christ as our High Priest, what does He do for us?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 362-368



2. Judgment and the Judge

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

Our memory verse comes from a remarkable chapter that opens (verses 1-9) with Paul’s recognition of mortality, linked with the hope of immortality and the need to “be accepted of him,” that is, Christ (verse 9). This raises the prospect of having “our lives laid open before the tribunal of Christ” (verse 10, NEB) and the spiritual condition that must be met for a confident appearing before the Judge (verses 10, 14, 17). The passage closes with the sublime revelation of God’s love manifested *in* Christ and *by* Christ which alone makes possible our survival of the judgment (verses 18-21).

Verse ten of this chapter, therefore, is not a passing reference to judgment as a minor event in salvation history, but it highlights an

important aspect of our Lord’s redemptive ministry and an unavoidable milestone on our way to the kingdom.

Awareness of the importance of the judgment opens our eyes to the wealth of scriptural revelation on the subject. Reminders of the certainty of judgment and of various stages in its realization are sprinkled throughout both Testaments, with vivid descriptions in Daniel 7:9-14 and Revelation 20:11-15. The topic occupied a prominent position in Paul’s thought, and he is led in Romans 14:10 to repeat the core of what he had already told the Corinthians, namely, “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

As with all theological knowledge, there is the danger of a formal acceptance of the fact of judgment without its having a spiritual effect upon our thought and conduct. This is one of the reasons that leads this lesson to concentrate on the spiritual lessons to be drawn from the judgment in preference to the timing of the event—although one day’s study will deal with the time when we may appear before our Saviour-Judge.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Subject to Judgment**
(Gen. 1:28)
2. **God and Judgment**
(Eccl. 12:13, 14)
3. **Judgment on Earth**
(Lev. 6:2-7)
4. **Judgment in Heaven**
(Dan. 8:14)
5. **New Testament and Judgment**
(Acts 17:30, 31)
6. **Preparation for Judgment**
(1 John 2:1)

Part 1
SUBJECT TO
JUDGMENT

What were the first recorded responsibilities placed upon human beings? What blessings were they designed to bring?

“God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:28).

When God created our first parents, He also blessed them with everything they would need to enjoy the world that lay before them. At the same time He required certain things of them. In fact, the duties grew out of God’s gifts. They were to populate the earth; they were to govern it and its creatures. They were thus called to give account of their stewardship of the unmarred creation. They were answerable to the Creator for the fulfillment of what He asked. In other words, they were subject to judgment from the beginning.

“God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. . . . God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case he would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. . . . There could have been no development of character.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 49.

When Eve and then Adam disregarded the Creator’s directives, what judgments came upon them? Gen. 3:16-19.

“It was not the will of God that the sinless pair should know aught of evil. He had freely given them the good, and had withheld the evil. But, contrary to His command, they had eaten of the forbidden tree, and now they would continue to eat of it—they would have the knowledge of evil—all the days of their life. From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan’s temptations.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 59.

We should not suppose that all the promised wages of sin were received immediately. They were paid gradually as the human frame weakened as a result of wrongdoing and as nature herself was affected by man’s and woman’s departure from the Creator’s perfect standard. But the most grievous result of sin—being sent out of Paradise—followed fast upon the heels of transgression. Sin, when it is finished, always brings death (James 1:15).

THINK IT THROUGH

Study Genesis 2:8 to 3:24 and assess the need of linking responsibility and accountability.

Part 2
GOD AND
JUDGMENT

As the preacher concludes his sayings (in Ecclesiastes), what emphatic counsel does he give his readers?

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13, 14).

Because God brings everything we do into judgment, the writer urges us to "fear God, and keep his commandments." This well summarizes Old Testament theology on conduct in relation to judgment, not that we shall survive judgment on the strength of our commandment keeping (this would be salvation by works), but only through the merits of Jesus. On the other hand, our reward in the judgment will be related to the delight we have shown in doing God's will and upholding His standards. This teaching is related to Christ's own words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

"God discerns the purposes of man and all his works. Every man will be rewarded according as his works have been, whether good or evil."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 300, 301.

With what attitude does the God-fearer look toward the Lord's coming in judgment? Ps. 98:9.

The Lord "cometh to judge the earth." This prospect can bring fear or joy, depending on the spiritual condition of the beholder. The born-again Christian can warmly welcome the appearance of the Judge, crying, "This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9). At the other end of the scale, he who has rejected Christ will have rejected his Advocate and will face the prospect of judgment with shame and fear, knowing his own guilt and defenselessness.

"Thou Judge of quick and dead,
Before whose bar severe,
With holy joy or guilty dread,
We all shall soon appear—
Our erring souls prepare
For that tremendous day,
And fill us now with watchful care,
And stir us up to pray."
—Charles Wesley,
The New Advent Hymnal, no. 170.

THINK IT THROUGH

As I review my thoughts, my words, my actions of the past week and relate them to the judgment revelations, what steps do I need to take?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 384-387

Part 3
JUDGMENT
ON EARTH

By what symbolic process was pardon for sin represented under the Mosaic law?

"If a soul sin, . . . he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock. . . . And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord" (Lev. 6:2-7).

"The most important part of the daily ministration was the service performed in behalf of individuals. The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. . . .

"The sins of Israel being thus transferred to the sanctuary, the holy places were defiled, and a special work became necessary for the removal of the sins."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 354, 355.

What annual purification was then ordained for the sanctuary and for Israel? Lev. 16:16.

On the tenth day of the seventh month (September-October) each year, the high priest fulfilled the rituals for the cleansing of the sanctuary which represented full atonement for the confessed sins of Israel on that annual Day of Atonement.

What wider significance do these Levitical ceremonies have in the plan of salvation? Heb. 9:22-26.

Few, if any, have difficulty in seeing the offering of animals as a type of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Sound biblical study invites us to take the further step of accepting that the typical Day of Atonement must also have its antitype. This would be in an event that will once and for all not only pardon sin but remove all condemnatory records from against the names of those who have chosen Christ as their Substitute and Advocate. This calls for an act of examination or judgment of those who have engaged Christ as their Advocate. "As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

THINK IT THROUGH

How thoroughly have we learned that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins—our sins?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 352-358

**Part 4
JUDGMENT
IN HEAVEN**

Which Old Testament prophecy, related to the antitypical day of atonement, deals with prophetic time? Is there any other prophecy like it?

“Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:14).

This verse, in isolation, does not provide its own interpretation. It needs to be considered in the context of Daniel's other prophecies, especially those in chapters 7 through 9. These take us through the remaining Old Testament years into the Christian era and into God's eternal kingdom. The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70; its services had been replaced by Christ's heavenly ministry in “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2). Since the cleansing of the sanctuary takes place at the end of the 2300 prophetic days or literal years, the event can only refer to the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven.

In what sense can the heavenly sanctuary be cleansed? Heb. 9:23. (Note the translation in the New English Bible.)

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, *through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement.* The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 421, 422. (Emphasis supplied.)

A detailed study of the chronological aspects of Daniel 7 through 9 points to 457 B.C. as the beginning date for the measurement of the 2300 days, or years, with A.D. 1844 as the time when our Lord entered on the cleansing, or judicial, phase of His high-priestly ministry. The present-day significance of that date will appear more fully in next week's lesson. For now, we should realize that the ever-nearer arrival of the second advent brings nearer our own personal appearance before the judgment seat of Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does Christ's daily intercession for repentant sinners need a judgment-type ministry for its completion?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 418-422

Part 5
NEW TESTAMENT
AND JUDGMENT

In God's plans, how prominent a place has been assigned to a time for judgment?

"God . . . now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31).

In his address to the Athenians, Paul urged his listeners to repent because of the certainty of judgment. He knew that God, in His infallible foreknowledge, had already fixed a day when His Son would judge all men. This, says Paul, was called for by Christ's resurrection. Room must therefore be found in the prophetic calendar for the Saviour's judging both the living and the dead. (Compare Christ's own declaration in John 5:22 and Peter's teaching in Acts 10:42.)

When, in the human life-span, does the judgment occur? Heb. 9:27, 28.

Generally, judgment cannot be pronounced until a man's earthly life is completed, which is normally at death. After this, his record can be justly weighed, as it will be in the investigative judgment. For those who are alive at Christ's coming, death will not be necessary, for all who claim pardon by faith in Christ's sacrifice will already have been judged by having their sins forgiven and their lives cleansed (1 John 1:9). When the Saviour appears the second time, then it will be "without sin," or, in a better translation, "apart from sin." When He first came, it was to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21); at the second coming, His objective will be to receive the redeemed unto Himself (John 14:3).

"The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. . . . When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 485.

THINK IT THROUGH

Now is the time to ensure a satisfactory verdict when our cases come before the Righteous Judge.

"This is a time when every man in a responsible position, and every member of the church, should bring every feature of his work into close accord with the teachings of the word of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 185.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 482-491

Part 6
PREPARATION
FOR JUDGMENT

What plan does God have to ensure our freedom from condemnation at the time of judgment?

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

The apostle provides two phases of the answer to our question. (1) Refrain from sinning. This is the ideal, the objective of the plan of salvation. However, since all of us have sinned (and have inherently sinful natures that taint our obedience—see *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 344), that advice gives us excellent counsel but does not save us from condemnation. (2) We must engage the services of our Mediator—He who longs to plead our cause. We all need Jesus Christ the Righteous to speak on our behalf, but we must retain Him as our defense lawyer now, for it will be too late when the final judgment is set and the books are opened.

"Our crucified Lord is pleading for us in the presence of the Father at the throne of grace. His atoning sacrifice we may plead for our pardon, our justification, and our sanctification. The Lamb slain is our only hope. Our faith looks up to Him, grasps Him as the One who can save to the uttermost, and the fragrance of the all-sufficient offering is accepted of the Father. . . . He is our sympathizing Saviour."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 948.

On what basis may we face with confidence the prospect of Christ's coming and the thought of judgment? 1 John 2:28.

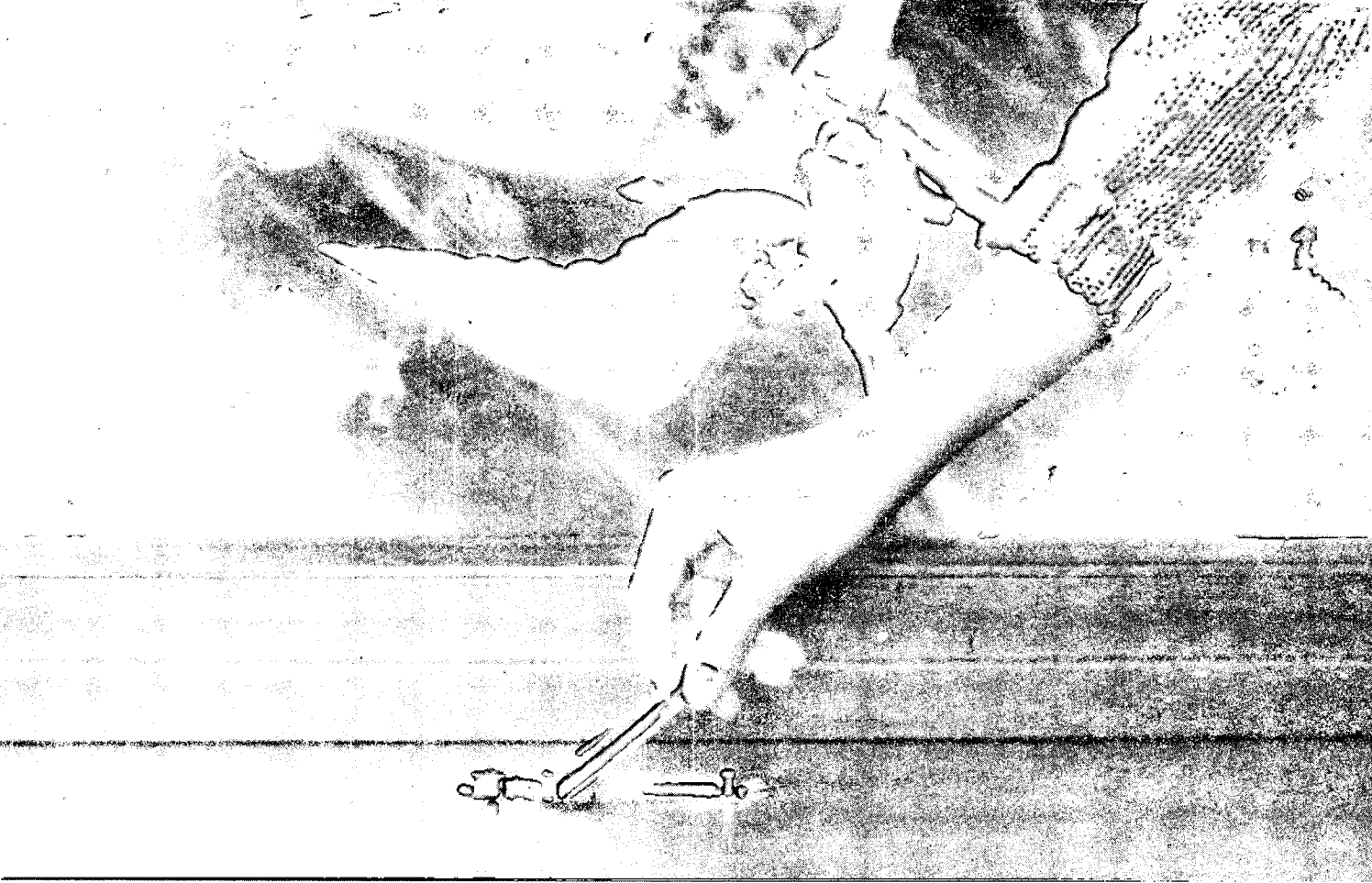
Only those who "abide in him" here below will be ready to abide with Christ above when He returns to gather His elect from one end of heaven to the other. "Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. . . . As the vine branch constantly draws sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676. Thus we shall have confidence—not a brazen presumption, but a conviction of Christ's faithful, effective advocacy on our behalf, a knowledge that He is able "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25). Then we shall not be ashamed before Him.

THINK IT THROUGH

"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:12). How shall we apply this admonition to our own lives?

FURTHER STUDY

Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 948



3. Recall to Worship

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

The Father has not always had to seek those who will worship Him. Cherubim and seraphim, unnumbered angelic hosts, and inhabitants of unfallen worlds have ever delighted to render Him homage and adoration. Only sin has made the human race draw back and be unable to worship its Creator acceptably, and the Lord has been trying to help men overcome those handicaps. This leads Him to seek for worshipers, not for self-glorious ends (such motivation is foreign to God's nature), but for the uplift of those whom He is teaching to worship. Thus man's highest end is to worship and glorify his Maker and, in so doing, to become more like God.

In the person of Lucifer, God has a powerful competitor who also seeks for worshipers. He succeeded with myriads of angels. He even tried to enroll the Son of God among his devotees (Matt. 4:9). He has continued recruitment among all mankind throughout human history.

This sketch supplies a background to the giving of the three angels' messages recorded in Revelation 14. Each message is concerned with worship, true and false. The dominant theme is, "Fear God, and give glory to him" (Rev. 14:7), proclaimed against the countercalls of Babylon, the beast, and his image. All the world wonders after the beast (Rev. 13:3); and, if we are not to follow suit, we must clearly see the issues which are at stake. Our directive must be that which inspired our Master, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10). This will lead to obedience; for obedience is still the highest form of worship, "the highest dictate of reason as well as of conscience."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 506.

The urgency of the divine call to worship and obedience resides in the time factor "the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7). This forewarns of the approaching end. There is no time to lose!

Let us then this week take a fresh look at one of the best-known doctrines of our church—the threefold call to worship our Creator.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. The Globe and the Gospel
(Rev. 14:6)
2. Call to Worship
(Rev. 14:7)
3. Worship the Creator
(Rev. 14:7)
4. Come Out of Babylon
(Rev. 14:8)
5. Beware of Apostasy
(Rev. 14:9, 10)
6. True Worshipers
(Rev. 14:12)

**Part 1
THE GLOBE
AND THE
GOSPEL**

In the revelator's portrayal of last things, what scale of evangelism did he present?

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

Study of the book of Revelation quickly reveals that its survey of history does not follow a straight line in time, but moves forward and backward as the shifting scenes pass before John's eyes. An illustration of this occurs in chapters 13 and 14, where the prophet records a normal historical sequence in chapter 13, then gives a glimpse into a later scene in chapter 14:1-5, and in 14:6 resumes the chronological recital from chapter 13:18. Recognition of the interruption enables us to see the connection between 13:18 and 14:6 and the three messengers of 14:6-12 fulfilling their duties in the last days prior to the Lord's return (14:14-20).

John sees an angel fly in the midst of heaven (ensuring prominence), to preach eternally good news to all peoples. Since angels are not given the task of preaching, the angel must symbolize the Christians who bear that responsibility. Their message is given them—an everlasting gospel. The only authentic and efficacious gospel ever published, this good news born in times eternal in the heart of our loving God was proclaimed first in Eden (Gen. 3:15), typified in the sacrificial services in the tabernacle, and realized in the ministry of our Lord. This is the news that fallen man has always needed—and needs even more urgently today. Those who have received it are here commissioned in the last days to share it with their fellow human beings of all races in all nations.

"The first angel's message of Revelation 14, announcing the hour of God's judgment and calling upon men to fear and worship Him, was designed to separate the professed people of God from the corrupting influences of the world and to arouse them to see their true condition of worldliness and backsliding. In this message, God had sent to the church a warning, which, had it been accepted, would have corrected the evils that were shutting them away from Him. Had they received the message from heaven, humbling their hearts before the Lord and seeking in sincerity a preparation to stand in His presence, the Spirit and power of God would have been manifested among them."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 379.

THINK IT THROUGH

What bearing does your belief in the one and only everlasting gospel have on your daily experience?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 818-822

**Part 2
CALL TO
WORSHIP**

“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come” (Rev. 14:7).

This proclamation was not given in a corner but “in the midst of heaven,” to all peoples, and “with a loud voice.” The Lord intended the message to make a powerful impact on the entire human race.

The core of the message is the same as has ever been at the heart of the gospel: “Fear God, and give glory to him.” (Compare Ex. 20:3-6; Deut. 6:4, 5; Eccl. 12:13; Micah 6:8; Matt. 4:10; 22:36-38; John 14:15; 17:3.) The world’s ills stem from man’s slowness and refusal to fear or reverence God, from man’s continual self-centeredness that leads him to cry, “Glory to Man in the Highest! for Man is the master of things.”—A. C. Swinburne, “Hymn of Man,” quoted in *Oxford Book of Quotations*. The first angel calls on mankind to repudiate such egotism and to give the Lord God His rightful place in every department of life.

The unique urgency of the message resides in an historical fact—“the hour of his judgment is come.” From Eden onward, God’s judgment has always operated (see last week’s lesson), but it has hitherto been of an interim nature, awaiting a final reckoning. Now history has caught up with the divine timetable—the hour of God’s judgment has come; it has arrived.

The authority in the first message grows out of the fulfillment of prophecy concerning judgment, specifically Daniel 8:14, which pinpoints A.D. 1844 as “the hour” or the time when the investigative judgment began in the heavenly sanctuary. This places a great spiritual responsibility on that body of Christians—Seventh-day Adventists—who understand and proclaim this message.

“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. . . . They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. . . .

“It is not only by preaching the truth, not only by distributing literature, that we are to witness for God. . . . Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life. Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 19-21.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are we, as Seventh-day Adventists, noted for reverently giving glory to God? What do our witness, our lives proclaim?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 355-357

**Part 3
WORSHIP THE
CREATOR**

What is the distinctive attribute of the God, whom the first angel's message calls upon men to worship?

"Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7).

It is singularly fitting that the first angel's call to worship should define God as He who created all things. The proclamation, "the hour of his judgment is come," began to be preached about 1840, which was a little before the time when creationism and evolution would begin to be examined more intensively than ever before. Interest quickened within the next two decades and received a dramatic stimulus in 1859 from the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. Any Christian movement, therefore, that stressed creationism and called men to worship God as Creator of the world in six literal days and to observe the seventh-day Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of that fiat Creation—any such movement was peculiarly "on target" for the mid-nineteenth century.

Let us not forget, however, that the call is for worship. This requires that we fear God and give glory to Him, acknowledging His primacy, giving Him our adoration, our respect, our obedience, our service, our trust, our love. In this way we bring glory to Him in the eyes of the watching universe. Only then are we fulfilling the third angel's message.

"To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God."—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 979.

"The worship of God is in contrast with the worship of the beast (ch. 13:8, 12) and that of its image (v. 15). In the crisis soon to come, the inhabitants of the earth will be called upon to make their choice. . . . The message of the first angel is designed to prepare men to make the proper choice and to stand firm in the time of crisis."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 828.

From these observations we get a glimpse of the comprehensiveness of this first message. It is universal; it rings the age-old, ever-needed call to the worship of our Creator God. It does this in the urgent setting of the judgment, against which there can be no appeal; and—very significant to each student of this lesson—it is sounded by men and women who themselves must practice what they preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can our manner of worship, and particularly of Sabbath observance, bring glory to God?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 379, 380

**Part 4
COME OUT
OF BABYLON**

“There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8).

Manuscript evidence favors the inclusion of “a second” after “another angel,” thus completing the numbering of the angelic trio. But while the angels are shown as following one another, there is nothing to suggest that the second and third displace the first, or the third the second. When the third appears, the other two messages continue to be preached simultaneously.

“The term ‘Babylon’ is derived from ‘Babel,’ and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate various forms of false or apostate religion. In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman—a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.

“In the Bible the sacred and enduring character of the relation that exists between Christ and His church is represented by the union of marriage. . . .

“The unfaithfulness of the church to Christ in permitting her confidence and affection to be turned from Him, and allowing the love of worldly things to occupy the soul, is likened to the violation of the marriage vow. . . .

“The message of Revelation 14, announcing the *fall* of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God’s people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith. At the time of their rise these churches took a noble stand for God and the truth, and His blessing was with them. . . . But they fell by the same desire which was the curse and ruin of Israel—the desire of imitating the practices and courting the friendship of the ungodly.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 381, 383.

While proclaiming the message, let us never forget Revelation 18:4—God sees His people in Babylon! Find them!

THINK IT THROUGH

How may the Seventh-day Adventist Church guard against Babylonian influences?

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pp. 273, 274, 277-279

**Part 5
BEWARE OF
APOSTASY**

What is the terrible burden published by the third heaven-sent messenger?

“The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (Rev. 14:9, 10). (See also verse 11.)

The content of these three verses is concentrated, calling for our close attention.

1. “The third angel followed [or accompanied] them.” This mention of the third may suggest the unity of the three, may confirm the numbering of the first and second angels, and may gather the three in a group distinct from the many other messengers seen by the revelator. This may also suggest that the proclamation of the first two messages continues while the third is preached.

2. The opening words of the message—worship, beast, image, mark—firmly link it with the events foretold in chapter 13:11-18. Indeed, the third message cannot be understood apart from chapter 13.

3. Note the sin against which the message warns: it is transgression against the first commandment (Ex. 20:3)—God alone is to be worshiped.

4. “His mark.” “To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God.

“If the light of the truth has been presented to you, . . . and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls ‘My holy day,’ you receive the mark of the beast.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 979, 980.

5. Babylon has made all nations drink of her wine. Those who deliberately choose false worship will drink God’s wine, His judgment.

6. The judgment. This does not involve eternal torment. The reference might be to the plagues which bring death (chapters 15, 16) and to the second death (chapter 20:12-15).

7. Study of the fearful nature of divine judgment on false worship should call out compassion and missionary action on the part of God’s people. Let us not be self-satisfied, for that would be unpardonably pharisaical and make us eligible for the same torment that comes to those who worship the beast and his image.

THINK IT THROUGH

Amid the power and the glory that shine throughout the Revelation, there is also the horror of the wages of sin. How real to us are these extreme opposites? In which direction are we moving—toward God or His enemies?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 593-598

Part 6
TRUE
WORSHIPERS

What fruitage comes from the proclamation of the three angels' messages?

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

Verses 6 to 12 are a unit of prophecy and require unified interpretation. Since no results are recorded from the giving of the first and second messages, the declaration in verse 12 summarizes the fruitage borne of the threefold witness. That summary deserves close study.

Saints. Three verses (9-11) have just been devoted to the judgment that falls on those who worship the beast and his image. The reference to "saints" shows that while such apostasy is worldwide, it will not be total.

Patience. Faithful Christians will need all the patience, fortitude, and steadfastness that heaven can furnish them as they resist apostate forces and false teachings. The phrase "here is" shows that there will be a body of patient, faithful believers, who are identified in chapter 12:17 as "the remnant."

Keep the commandments of God. This is a further clue to the identity of the faithful—they are obedient, and they heed God's law, in contrast to those who obey the beast and his image. This faithfulness to the law of the Lord, especially in respect to Sabbath observance, will distinguish the faithful from those who transgress that law.

The faith of Jesus. Or, faith in Jesus. If the first rendering is preferred, then the saints are to hold the same faith that sustained Jesus; if the second translation is taken, then the reference is to the saints' faith in Jesus and His merits. (NIV has "faithful to Jesus.")

"In Revelation 14 John beholds another scene. He sees a people whose fidelity and loyalty to the laws of God's kingdom grow with the emergency. The contempt placed upon the law of God only makes them reveal more decidedly their love for that law."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 981.

These messages are addressed not only to those who have not yet made their decisions, but to us who claim to be commandment keepers. They should provide us with the standard by which to assess our fitness for inclusion among "the saints."

THINK IT THROUGH

How may we know if God includes us among the faithful remnant?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 197-200



4. The King Is Coming

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).

The teaching of the second coming of Christ is a natural doctrine, a logical continuation of world history rather than a statement of a theological view. Given the facts of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creation, the incarnation, Calvary, the resurrection, and the ascension, the second coming is called for—one of history’s great essentials, a part of creation’s total pattern. Without it, there is tragedy. With it, there is the greatest of triumphs.

We briefly touch on that side of salvation history this week, and we see it as a necessary part of the Christian story. We then turn to Christ’s own foresights and obser-

vations concerning His return and His counsels to His first and later disciples concerning their involvements in the history of their own times. We note how He wished they and we should live as the Master’s prophecies are fulfilled.

We need to read the signs of the times, especially those of our own times. Each given sign is a signpost, to be read and then left behind as we, the travelers, move ahead. To convince others that we are on the right road, we may refer to past landmarks; but they will not now ensure our arrival at the pearly gates. Our completion of the journey now depends on our right reading and following of the map of the country that lies ahead.

It is not possible to cover such a subject as Christ’s coming and His kingdom in two weeks, in twelve brief glances at the wealth of revelation on this regal topic. Neither is it desirable that we contentedly repeat what textbooks have outlined for more than a century past. We have, then, had to be severely selective, while viewing the second advent from a slightly different angle from the usual, seeing it as the culmination of God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Kingdom Is Coming**
(Luke 1:32, 33)
2. **Satisfaction Assured**
(Isa. 53:11)
3. **Promise of Return**
(John 14:1-3)
4. **Signs of Return—I**
(Matt. 24:3)
5. **Signs of Return—II**
(Matt. 24:29)
6. **Signs of Return—III**
(Luke 17:26, 27)

Part 1
THE KINGDOM
IS COMING

In addition to announcing Christ's birth, what assurance did Gabriel give Mary concerning her Son?

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33).

With what joy did Gabriel make that announcement! He and his myriads of winged companions had mourned the loss of our world's loyalty for 4000 years. Now their Commander was about to take human form that He might regain "the first dominion" (Micah 4:8), might reign from the throne of David, and might rule over an everlasting kingdom. The first step in fulfilling this bold program was about to be taken—the Eternal would tie Himself to time as a babe, who would live to overthrow the enemy and reestablish God's rule over the whole earth. The beneficent ministry, the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension were further vital steps in the fulfillment of the proclaimed plan, but not yet has David's greatest Son regained "the throne of his father David." While Christ has ever remained a King (witness the Magi's gifts in Bethlehem), He still has to return to rule as King over our world. Therein lies the need for His second advent—to complete the work begun here as a man.

What simple but encouraging promise did the Lord give His true followers? Matt. 5:5.

This promise, too, calls for our Lord's return. At present "the meek" are the last to inherit even a minute portion of the earth; their little is taken from them—even life itself—by the proud. This state of society will get worse and worse until halted by the dramatic change in world government that Christ's return will bring. This is why He will come again.

"The meek 'shall inherit the earth.' It was through the desire of self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation [putting self aside] that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He did."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

THINK IT THROUGH

How successful can Christianity claim to be, apart from the revolution that will accompany its Founder's return?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 299-302

Part 2
SATISFACTION
ASSURED

“He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:11).

After recounting the suffering that would come to the Man of Sorrows as He bore the sins of the world, the prophet foretells that the Suffering Servant “will be satisfied.” By bearing “their iniquities,” the Redeemer will “justify man,” or “make the many righteous.” This is an assurance that the Son of man will not have suffered in vain. “The travail of his soul” will give birth to a multitude of redeemed ones that no man can number, and these will be the subjects of His kingdom.

It is enlightening to note that this verse contains one of the few phrases where the Dead Sea Scrolls' version of Isaiah gives a different reading from the traditional Hebrew text. As a result, we may literally read, “After the labour of his soul he shall see the light of life; he shall be satisfied.” (See also NIV.)

Our Lord cannot be completely satisfied, however, until those He has saved from sin are able to enjoy eternal life. This is only possible at the last day, at His own coming in glory. (See John 5:25; 29; 6:40.)

What royal scene did the Spirit of Christ, operating in Daniel, reveal to the prophet? Dan. 7:13, 14, 27.

This foreview, based on divine foreknowledge and well known to our Lord through His own study of the Scriptures, called for more than His earthly life could ever provide. When He ascended to His Father's court, He expected to return in regal majesty to complete all that had been foretold concerning His kingdom. This calls for His judgment ministry (that would clear His government), for His acceptance of the everlasting dominion, and, ultimately, for His triumphant royal return. (Compare *The Great Controversy*, pp. 479, 480.) Already, then, it may be truly said, He has seen the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied (see Isa. 53:11)—the investigative judgment declaring that the cross was not in vain. He who had appeared to Daniel must Himself have been sustained during His days on earth by His study of Daniel's book. How deep must be His interest as its prophecies approach their complete fulfillment.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I ensure that my life's records, reviewed during the judgment, will bring Christ the satisfaction He has long awaited?

FURTHER STUDY

Under the Spirit's guidance, study Isaiah 53, seeking the secret of bringing satisfaction to the Saviour.

**Part 3
PROMISE OF
RETURN**

With what expectation did Jesus face separation from His disciples?

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Although Christ's concern for His followers held first place in His thoughts, His own heart must have been heavy at the thought of leaving those with whom He had shared three years that turned the tide of human history. Yet He faced the parting in the knowledge of reunion, and He wanted the eleven to share that same expectation. He therefore reminded them of the basic position of their faith and appealed to their personal knowledge of Himself. You are believers in God; believe similarly in Me. I am only going away from you that I might come back and be with you, and you with Me, forever.

"The object of Christ's departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. . . . While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

Under what circumstances did angels confirm the assurance of their Master's return? Acts 1:9-11.

"The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet,—the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father's throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 832.

While the angels did not specifically promise the disciples that they would see their Lord return in the clouds during their own lifetime, the announcement held out that eventual prospect to the group of early Christians who had just seen their beloved Jesus carried away from their straining eyes.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what respects does our personal knowledge of the Father encourage us to believe in the Son and His return?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 252-254

Part 4
SIGNS OF
RETURN—I

What questions concerning the future did the Master's teaching arouse in the minds of His disciples?

"As he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3).

The last crowded week of our Lord's peculiarly human ministry had already begun. It would be followed by 40 days of appearances after his resurrection. Sunday morning, on His way up the steep road from Jericho, He had ridden, humbly but triumphantly, into the capital, then withdrawn down the same road to the peace of Bethany. On Monday He cleared the temple of its blasphemous commerce and entered on an intensive threefold teaching program—addressed to the general populace, to the rulers, and lastly to the disciples (Matt. 20:29 to 23:39). His sorrow over the destruction about to strike Jerusalem (Matt. 24:1, 2) prompted the Twelve to pose the threefold question, "When will these events occur? What sign will forewarn us of Your coming? How shall we know when to expect the end of the world?"

What was the Master's immediate response to His followers' inquiries? Matt. 24:4-8.

Jesus does not avoid the questions posed by His disciples. But because they could not grasp what would occur even in the week that lay ahead, because they could not understand the centuries that would pass before their Lord would return, and because, had they known, they would not have been able to bear the revelations—for such reasons Jesus mercifully mingled the immediate with the distant. (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 25.) He referred to some signs that would be true of both times. Warnings concerning the destruction of the temple and the city, of political chaos, devastating wars, and natural disasters, merged with signs that particularly applied to His own return, or *parousia*. However, the primary application of the phrase "the end is not yet" (Matt. 24:6) is seen as a warning to the disciples in A.D. 31 not to expect an immediate destruction of Jerusalem. That catastrophe did not occur until A.D. 70, nearly 40 years later, by which time some of His listeners were dead!

THINK IT THROUGH

Compared with the Twelve, how perceptive are we concerning the signs of our times?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 628-630

Part 5
SIGNS OF
RETURN—II

To which prominent milestones on the road to His return did the Saviour draw the believers' attention?

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. 24:29).

Some sections of our Lord's prophecy (Matthew 24 and parallels) may be applied to first-century conditions and events and also to the time just before His second advent—as we have already observed in Matthew 24:6 (Mark 13:7)—“the end is not yet.” The same may be said of Matthew 24:21 (Mark 13:19)—“for then shall be great tribulation.”

No double interpretation is possible, however, for today's text, though prophecy drastically foreshortens its time elements. The physical signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, occurring in 1780 and 1833, are clearly linked to the coming of the Son of man (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:24-26). But they were guideposts; and no sensible traveler spends much time looking backward—he forges ahead. Furthermore, the lapse of one and a half centuries since 1833 should warn us not to measure prophecy's view of time by human reckoning.

What other signs of Christ's approaching return does Luke record, in addition to those in the heavens? Luke 21:25, 26.

If Christians had given more heed to the earlier physical signs, they might feel less fear in face of “the distress of nations, with perplexity” and the shaking of the powers of heaven.

The conflict between dramatic improvement in living conditions—accompanied by worsening social and political relations—and man's inability to ensure lasting peace, produces despair. Thoughtful persons' hearts fail them for fear.

“We are now standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. A crisis is before us, such as the world has never witnessed. And sweetly to us, as to the first disciples, comes the assurance that God's kingdom ruleth over all. The program of coming events is in the hands of our Maker. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 121.

THINK IT THROUGH

Compare the parallel records of our Lord's prophetic discourse in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21; and build a picture of pre-advent conditions.

**Part 6
SIGNS OF
RETURN—III**

By what parallel event did Jesus direct His followers to moral conditions that would point toward His coming?

"As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26, 27). (Read also verses 28-30.)

"God did not condemn the antediluvians for eating and drinking; . . . Their sin consisted in taking these gifts without gratitude to the Giver. . . . It was lawful for them to marry. Marriage was in God's order; . . . but . . . marriage was perverted and made to minister to passion.

"A similar condition of things exists now. That which is lawful in itself is carried to excess."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 101.

How does Paul support the Lord's view of the morality of the last-day generation? 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

This is a fearful list of moral breakdown. It has applied to most generations throughout history, but it is applicable to our generation more than to any other. Worse still, it applies to those who have "a form of godliness," that is, to professing Christians, to church members, and, in some degree at least, to ourselves. We can be a sign of the last days, either by being justly included in Paul's sad list or by rising out of that class and being numbered among them "that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

What is the key to passing safely through the moral perils of the last days? Luke 21:34-36.

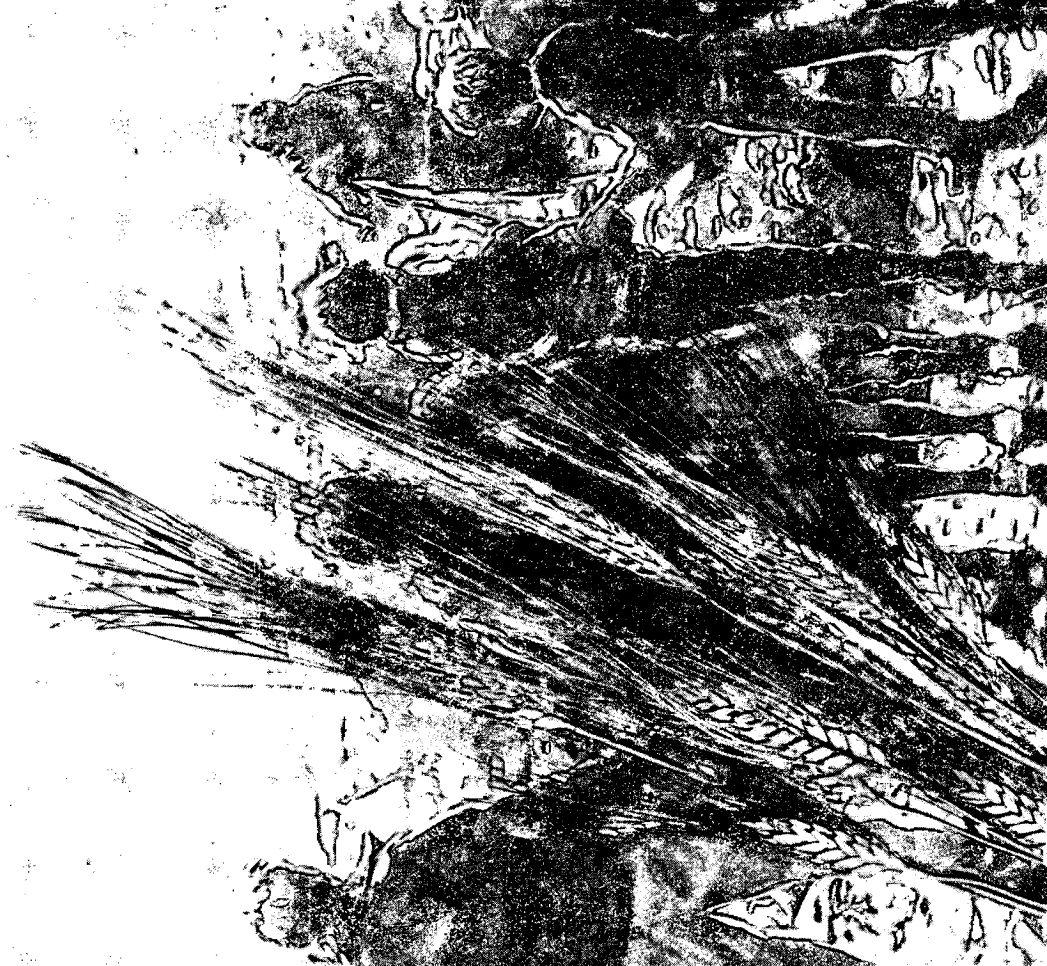
We have responsibilities for our own spiritual survival. We must "take heed" unto ourselves. We must reject customs that debauch millions of our fellow human beings. Christian restraint in eating and drinking and a trustful, watchful way of meeting life's demands will enable us to escape the snares that entrap so many in our time.

THINK IT THROUGH

Which of the sins listed by Paul beset me the most? Am I seeking daily grace from Christ to overcome them?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 306-309



5. "Thy Kingdom Come"

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"
(Matt. 6:10).

This is the first petition in the prayer Jesus taught the multitude on the mount (chapter 5:1). Its position reveals its importance in the Teacher's thinking. Its request—so brief, yet of such magnitude—lies at the very heart of Christ's ministry. He came so His kingdom could come. None knew better than He that His Palestinian life would not complete that task. But it would set it in motion; it would gather the nucleus of subjects who would be—in a special sense because of their openness to Christ—charter members of this kingdom which the Son so often described as "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 4:17 onward). The central ambition (in the purest possible sense) of the Son of man's existence was the establishment of that kingdom on earth.

Last week's lesson dwelt on the need for the coming of the King, for His sake as well as that of the lost worlds. Christ's own promises assure us that His work did not end at Calvary nor even at Bethany (Luke 24:50), but that before the foundation of the world He had planned, in concert with the Father, to come the second time to complete the work He began in Bethlehem. Without that return, His Father's kingdom would not come; with it, the train of events would see God's will done on this earth as it is in heaven.

The limitations of *brief* doctrinal studies create their own difficulties. This doctrine of the kingdom is no exception. It had its immediate application to those who received its message in Palestine and to the hearts of those who later accepted it in every nation under heaven. But it is also inseparably linked to the Lord's glorious return for the eternal establishment of His kingdom on earth as an integral part of His kingdom in heaven. It is from this angle that this week's study views the second advent—as a spectacular step in answer to the petition, "Thy kingdom come."

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **When?—I**
(Matt. 24:32, 33)
2. **When?—II**
(Matt. 24:36)
3. **Why?**
(Matt. 24:14)
4. **How?—I**
(Acts 1:11)
5. **How?—II**
(Matt. 16:27)
6. **How to Be Ready**
(Matt. 24:42)

Part 1 **How did Jesus reveal His recognition of the human desire to**
WHEN?—I **know the time when His prophecies will be fulfilled?**

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:32, 33).

The disciples' question, "When shall these things be?" (Matt. 24:3) led to Christ's prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. He first wanted to prepare the Twelve for the national tragedy that loomed ahead (A.D. 70). He then wanted to prepare the church for the griefs and joys that would be associated with His second coming. He therefore told of the signs recorded in Matthew 24:29 and described some of the events that would accompany the return (verses 30, 31). Infinite wisdom limited Christ in knowing or giving a date for the advent. It well knew also what human nature would do if a day were fixed for His appearing. But Christ did reveal enough to alert the believer to the nearness of that glad event. (See Matt. 24:36.)

The double thread of meaning that runs throughout Matthew 24 and its parallels (Mark 13 and Luke 21) appears also in our text for today. The Greek of Matthew 24:33 permits translation either as "it is near" or as "he is near." The first could refer to A.D. 70 or to the advent, while the second would be a distinct reference to Christ's own return. The general context, many modern translations, and *The Desire of Ages*, page 632, favor the second translation.

What solemn assurance of fulfillment did Jesus give concerning the signs? Matt. 24:34, 35.

Verse 34 has given rise to many time forecasts concerning the end. Yet it is clear from Christ's subsequent words in verse 36 that He never intended His followers to assume that He was suggesting a date for His return. Some take the phrase "this generation shall not pass" to mean that all the Lord's predictions will have been fulfilled when the life cycle of the last generation is interrupted by the advent itself. This application is seen to be confirmed by the emphatic declaration in verse 35.

THINK IT THROUGH **How clear is our conviction that Christ's coming is near, even at the doors? How do we proclaim that conviction?**

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 632-634

Part 2 How did Jesus declare the impossibility of the church's
WHEN?—II knowing either the day or the hour—that is the date—of
Christ's second coming?

"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

Speaking in A.D. 31, the Lord could only deal in general terms with the time of His second advent. Neither the Twelve nor the multitudes who would come into the church after them were capable of facing with spiritual calmness the passage of two millenniums. Therefore the wise and merciful Father withheld time knowledge from them. Yet disciples of all ages have longed to have a date for their Master's return. To all of them, the Lord's answer is final, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." The parallel passage in Mark contains the phrase "neither the Son" (Mark 13:32). How, then, can mere mortals have the boldness to claim to foretell the date of the Son's return? All dated forecasts are doomed to failure. Worse still, the very attempts are misplaced, being an endeavor to discover what the Father in His wisdom has decided to keep secret. (See Acts 1:7.)

"Time after time has been set for Christ to come, but repeated failures have been the result. . . . Because the times repeatedly set have passed, the world is in a more decided state of unbelief than before in regard to the near advent of Christ. They look upon the failures of the time setters with disgust; and because men have been so deceived, they turn from the truth substantiated by the word of God that the end of all things is at hand."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 307.

Nevertheless, we must guard against the opposite extreme—that of ignoring or denying the Lord's coming. Those negative attitudes are often fatal, leading to a complete loss of faith. It is the evil servant who says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," while the faithful and wise servant is ever ready for his Master's return.

THINK IT THROUGH Have we ever declared, after some earthshaking event, **"We are sure Christ will come within the next one or two (or five or ten) years now!"** Is it not better, with Christ, to leave such times and seasons to our omniscient Father?

"Those who think they must preach definite time in order to make an impression upon the people do not work from the right standpoint. . . . An excitement is created; but when the time passes, as it has done repeatedly, those who moved out upon time fall back into coldness, darkness, and sin, and it is almost impossible to arouse their consciences without some great excitement."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 308.

Part 3 **What did Jesus present to the Twelve as a key factor in the**
WHY? **time of His return?**

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14).

This gospel of the kingdom. There is only one gospel (compare Gal. 1:8). It proclaims the coming of the kingdom of which Christ is King. It prepares men and women to be His sinless subjects.

Shall be preached. This is both a commission to preach that gospel and an assurance that it will be done.

In all the world. This calls for and promises global coverage.

For a witness unto all nations. This requires that the good news of God's plan of salvation be shared with all nationalities.

Then shall the end come. This is a reference to "the end of the world" (Matt. 24:3) and a pledge that it will come.

Upon whom does the burden for the proclamation of the gospel rest? Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15.

The task was originally given to the apostles, but it was soon shared with the church and accepted by the early Christians, who "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). These took the command literally and spoke to all whom they met, sharing with them the wonderful news that "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). The royal command in Mark 16:15 shows that a token witness to a nation does not fulfill the church's missionary duty. The divine intent is the giving of the gospel "to every creature," or "to all creation"—a colossal task still to be accomplished before the end can come. But what else could we expect? "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), and there are more than 4,000,000,000 "creatures" alive in our world today. How many of them have heard and accepted or rejected the gospel? How many still remain to be reached? What are we doing to reach them? Are we doing it so effectively that the end will soon come?

"The church of Christ is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. . . . Everyone, to the extent of his talent and opportunity, is to fulfill the Saviour's commission."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 81.

THINK IT THROUGH

What am I doing that will contribute to the preaching of the gospel in all the world to help the end to come? If the answer is negative, let this day's study change it.

Part 4 **What simple, angelic assurance defines the manner in**
HOW?—I **which Jesus will return?**

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

"In like manner. By this promise, His return must be (1) personal—'this same Jesus' (see DA 832); (2) visible—'ye have seen him go'; (3) with clouds—'a cloud received him'; (4) certain—'shall so come.' This quiet but solemn pledge of the angelic counselors brings to the doctrine of the second coming of Christ an utter certainty, assured by the reality of the ascension. It is all true, event and promise, or none of it is true. Without the second advent, all the preceding work in the plan of salvation would be as vain as the sowing and cultivation of crops without a harvest."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 125, 126.

With what magnificent words does Paul confirm the angels' announcement? 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

Here is the ascension in reverse. The same Jesus, possessing the same dual divine-human nature, though glorified beyond our utmost imaginings, descends from the heaven to which He had ascended centuries ago. The eleven apostles who had seen Him caught up will have been resurrected to see their Lord returning, as the angels had promised. With them will also be raised a multitude of the dead in Christ. (See Dan. 12:2; *Early Writings*, p. 285.) This host, together with all living believers who had accepted the Saviour by faith, will "meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we [Paul, the faithful Thessalonians, and all the redeemed] ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). This description adds to what Jesus told the people in His time. (See Matt. 16:27; 24:30, 31; 26:64.)

"Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 739.

THINK IT THROUGH **When "this same Jesus" calls to the dead and the living, shall I be numbered among those who respond and meet Him?**

This is no merely academic question. We need to give most earnest attention to our answer now.

FURTHER STUDY *Early Writings*, pp. 285-288

Part 5 **While still in Palestine, what was our Lord able to tell of His**
HOW?—II **triumphant return?**

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

Peter had recognized the divinity of his Lord (Matt. 16:16). Jesus had forewarned His companions of His approaching passion and had expounded His philosophy of sacrificial living (verses 21-26). Then comes the revelation—already shared with Nathaniel at the time of his call (John 1:51) but apparently forgotten or not understood—"the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father" (Matt. 16:27). We memorize such words. Do we have any true idea of what they mean? Moses pleaded, "Shew me thy glory" (Ex. 33:18); and he was told, "There shall no man see me, and live" (verse 20). In vision Daniel saw the Ancient of Days and tried to describe what he saw (Dan. 7:9, 10; compare Matt. 24:30, 31).

With what words does one of the psalmists describe Christ's coming? Ps. 50:3, 4.

Those who knew their God as did the psalmists had a sanctified respect for His glory. When they thought of His appearing, they visualized the awe-inspiring splendor, the purity that could only be expressed in terms of fire, and the turmoil in the elements as the shining hosts precede, surround, and follow the King in His beauty. Habakkuk records an even more blazing vision in chapter 3:3-6. Yet his reaction is not one of craven fear. Instead, he exclaims, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (verse 18). Isaiah's response was similar when he saw the Lord will "swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; . . . it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us" (Isa. 25:8, 9).

"No language can describe the glory of the scene. The living cloud of majesty and unsurpassed glory came still nearer, and we could clearly behold the lovely person of Jesus. . . . His countenance was as bright as the noonday sun, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet had the appearance of fine brass. His voice sounded like many musical instruments."—*Early Writings*, p. 286.

THINK IT THROUGH **When we see Jesus, shall we be surprised at His appearance, or shall we have so digested the biblical description of His advent that we shall be humbly ready for His glory?**

FURTHER STUDY *The Great Controversy*, p. 301

Part 6
HOW TO BE
READY

What reality shapes the counsel the Lord Himself gives to those who await His return?

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42).

Watch, or keep on the alert. *Ye know not*. Thanks to the Saviour's instruction, we can know much about His coming, but not one of us knows the *day* (rather than *hour*) of that coming (compare verse 36). This makes it necessary for us to read the signs of the times rightly and to be always on the alert; especially as we see the day approaching (Heb. 10:25). The Master placed great emphasis on this watchful state, telling six parables to drive the counsel home (Mark 13:34-37; Matt. 24:43, 44, 45-51; 25:1-13, 14-30, 31-46).

"The desire of our Lord is that we should be watching, so that when He cometh and knocketh we may open to Him immediately. A blessing is pronounced upon those servants whom He finds watching. . . . Are we prepared without delay to open to Him immediately and welcome Him in? Watch, watch, watch."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 195.

What can we do for ourselves that will better prepare us to meet our Master in peace? 2 Peter 3:14.

This verse is for all who love their Lord's appearing—those who look for or wait for or expect "the coming of the day of God" and "new heavens and a new earth" (verses 12, 13). It is, then, a peculiarly Adventist verse and should be given earnest, receptive attention by those who await the Saviour. Peter bids us, "be diligent," or take pains, making every effort for a specific purpose—namely, to be found by the Lord in a state of peace, spiritually spotless and therefore blameless. This is an extremely high standard. It has only been fully met by Jesus Christ, and yet it can be credited to us. We then choose to be like Him through His transforming power. Here, then, is a recipe for readiness to meet the Redeemer in the last great day—daily justified and daily being sanctified.

"My brother, my sister, I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Day by day cast the love of the world out of your hearts. Understand by experience what it means to have fellowship with Christ."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 285.

THINK IT THROUGH

How diligent are we in our preparations to meet our Lord at His return?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 634-636



6. All Things New

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isa. 65:17).

The doctrine of the second coming brings good news to mankind, but Christ’s return is not the end of the story. If it were, many questions would remain unanswered, and many problems would be left unsolved. Happily, there are further pages of revelation still to be turned. One, showing the redeemed living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, has already been glanced at; the second, where God makes all things new (Rev. 21:5), is the subject of this week’s study. It is the true fulfillment of Tennyson’s well-known lines:

And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation
moves.

Consciously or otherwise, the renewed earth is the goal to which all of God’s subjects have been looking and moving throughout history. Adam must have longed to be restored to Eden. Abraham looked for the heavenly city. Isaiah was inspired to look for the creation of “new heavens and a new

earth.” Jesus, however, having come from His Father’s house and knowing He would return there, knew it as His true home. He has ever wanted His followers to see it in a similar light.

It is difficult for earthbound, time-confined humans to see into a future without time or limit; but much can be learned from a careful study of biblical revelation. But we need to be big-minded there, for the ultimate reality will outstrip even the most far-reaching of sanctified imaginings. However, we are not required to *know* all about future glories. Our duty and privilege is to be ready for them. And that confronts us with spiritual requirements, for “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). We must also remember this too: “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13). Let us not forget, however, that Christ wants to receive us unto Himself (John 14:3). As Augustine recognized, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.”

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Assured Inheritance
(Isa. 45:18)
2. News of the Kingdom
(Mark 1:14)
3. They Seek a Country
(Heb. 11:10)
4. New Heaven, New Earth
(Rev. 21:1)
5. God With Us
(Rev. 21:3)
6. Citizens of the Kingdom
(Rev. 21:7)

**Part 1
ASSURED
INHERITANCE**

Note how God, through Isaiah, makes clear that He will yet reach the goal He had in creating our planet.

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else” (Isa. 45:18).

There is no boasting here. The Creator is calmly reminding mankind and all other inhabitants of the universe that the fulfillment of His plan in the creation of our earth has been postponed, but not defeated, by the disease of sin. When human history closes and the redeemed move over into the eternity that we can now see only as the future—but which to the Eternal is the ever-continuing present—we shall perceive that the Almighty’s original purposes for the earth have been fulfilled.

“There will be open to the student, history of infinite scope and of wealth inexpressible. Here, from the vantage ground of God’s word, the student is afforded a view of the vast field of history and may gain some knowledge of the principles that govern the course of human events. But his vision is still clouded, and his knowledge incomplete. Not until he stands in the light of eternity will he see all things clearly.”—*Education*, p. 304.

With what words does David remind us that the earth will be peopled by righteous inhabitants? Ps. 37:9-11, 29.

“Those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.” “The meek shall inherit the earth.” “The righteous shall inherit the land.” This must be so. An all-wise all-powerful God could not determine otherwise. In the beginning He made man free to choose good or evil in order to settle the conflict between right and wrong. When the war against wrong shall have ended in favor of right, it would be foolish and fatal to allow those who prefer sin to introduce its destructive conceits into a new and perfect creation. Those who are going to inhabit the renewed earth must, therefore, be in complete harmony with the Creator’s ideals. The Son of God confirmed this in His teaching on the mount (Matt. 5:5). To the poor in spirit, to the meek, to the pure in heart, to the persecuted, to the reviled, the Son of man will say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

THINK IT THROUGH

How clearly do we accept that our present responses to God’s standards determine our fitness for eternity?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 729-735

**Part 2
NEWS OF THE
KINGDOM**

As Jesus began His ministry, what news did He bring to the world? What was the meaning of it?

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14).

Behold the irony of history! After John the Baptist had been imprisoned while preaching “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:1, 2), Jesus of Nazareth opened His ministry with the very same message (Matt. 4:17). He who had set Adam and Eve in Eden—there to establish a branch of the kingdom on planet earth—and had seen that kingdom usurped by Satan, had come in human guise to regain that realm for God. He was recruiting subjects for the kingdom—those who agreed with its principles, served Him as King, and were loyal to God the Father. The kingdom would be first established in His followers’ hearts and then be realized in Eden restored, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord.

Why did the Lord often give instruction about the kingdom by an indirect method? Matt. 13:10, 11.

The King had much to tell about the kingdom, but He had to convey His news gently, for even the Jewish people were unprepared to accept His revelations. He therefore taught in parables. Thirteen of those, recorded by Matthew, dealt with the kingdom of heaven or of God (Matt. 13:3 with 19, 24, 31, 33, etc.). Later, just prior to ascension, He spent 40 days with the eleven apostles, “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). He educated them to prepare others to be subjects of that kingdom.

There can be no doubt, however, that Christ’s far-seeing mind looked beyond the building of the kingdom of God on a limited basis among willing members of the human race. He was living and working for the establishment of that kingdom as the supreme ruling power for all the universe, with the New Jerusalem—set upon this earth—as the seat of divine government. Given His eternal background and His knowledge of God’s eternal purpose, He could foresee no less than what is so briefly portrayed in the two final chapters of the Bible—Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. We need to share His vision, while safeguarding our own understanding of it from the blurrings that arise from our own limitations.

THINK IT THROUGH

As I think of the kingdom of heaven, am I more concerned with its physical glories than with my spiritual preparedness to be one of its citizens?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “Like a Grain of Mustard Seed,” pp. 76-79

**Part 3
THEY SEEK
A COUNTRY**

What was the vision that inspired holy men of old in their pilgrimage? How does this vision help us?

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

In this, Abraham was typical of all saints who endured troubled earthly lives on the strength of a heavenly vision. Through eyes of faith they looked toward the well-founded city of which God is both designer and builder. They looked ahead, seeking a better, heavenly fatherland, and believing that God had prepared such a country especially for them (verses 14, 16). Those who have lived nearest to God have most clearly seen “the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9), even though they have been numbered among those who “died in faith, not having received the promises” (Heb. 11:13).

How did New Testament saints share the patriarchal vision? 2 Peter 3:13.

Earlier in this chapter, Peter has been writing of the scoffers and earthly-minded ones who have ever been doubtful of biblical promises of the Lord’s return and of His re-creative acts (2 Peter 3:1-7). He has stated the Lord’s patience (verse 9), that “the day of the Lord will come” (verse 10), that the old creation will be destroyed (verse 12), and that those who trust the divine promise (see verses 4, 9) will look for “new heavens and a new earth” (verse 13). The word here translated “new” does not call for a completely different kind of heaven and earth, but rather renewed heavens and a renewed earth from which all that is evil has been purged and in which all that is right has made its permanent home.

THINK IT THROUGH

Seeing that we look for such things, what kind of people should we now be?

“In heaven there is perfect order, perfect obedience, perfect peace and harmony. Those who have had no respect for order or discipline in this life would have no respect for the order which is observed in heaven. They can never be admitted into heaven, for all worthy of an entrance there will love order and respect discipline. The characters formed in this life will determine the future destiny. When Christ shall come, He will not change the character of any individual. Precious, probationary time is given to be improved in washing our robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. To remove the stains of sin requires the work of a lifetime.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 429.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 285-288

Part 4
NEW HEAVEN,
NEW EARTH

What final and pleasing vision was granted to the revelator? What does it mean to us today?

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

The heavenly guides have led the apostle from the days of the early church to the threshold of eternity, and now they give him a glimpse into the timeless future, when all that God originally planned will come to pass. What Peter and others looked for, John is permitted to see—a renewed heaven and a remade earth to replace those that have been destroyed by the shattering events attendant to the end of the age. The greater part of the remaining apocalyptic visions (Rev. 21:2 to 22:5) describes conditions on the new earth and the glories of its capital city.

What impression of the Holy City is given by the simile applied to it by John? Rev. 21:2, 9, 10.

The New Jerusalem has been the heavenly city, but it is now to be the seat of divine government. It is therefore seen to be "descending out of heaven from God," gleaming because of the glory of the Father radiating from it. The physical and spiritual glories of that city are spelled out more fully in verses 11 to 27; but we should remember that John is there trying to describe the indescribable, using earthly language to convey eternal realities that are beyond the mental reach of human beings.

"Workers for God should not spend time speculating as to what conditions will prevail in the new earth. . . . He has made every provision for our happiness in the future life, and we are not to speculate regarding His plans for us. Neither are we to measure the conditions of the future life by the conditions of this life."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 314.

When all that the Lord has seen fit to reveal to us concerning the nature of eternal life and the occupations that will engage us during the eternal years has been faithfully studied, we are scarcely carried beyond the pearly gates. The limitation need cause us no dismay. We shall have eternity itself in which to explore unimagined wonders where there will be no limits of time to press us into peace-destroying haste!

THINK IT THROUGH

What do we foresee as our chief pleasure when we at last behold the new heaven and when we dwell in the new earth?

FURTHER STUDY

Read Isaiah 25, endeavoring to apply its picturesque language to conditions in the new earth.

Part 5
GOD WITH US

When the Holy City descends, what long-cherished divine plan will have been carried out?

"I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:3).

While the Lord God had walked in Eden, there is no scriptural suggestion that He had then intended to make our earth the center of His government. But the disaster of disobedience not only called out redemptive love, but revealed the plan that God Himself would live among the redeemed. This is beautifully confirmed by the revelator's choice of words in this verse: "The tabernacle of God is with men."

The earthly sanctuary was made so that the Lord might dwell among His people (Ex. 25:8; 29:45); the temples built by Solomon and Zerubbabel were to be similarly honored (1 Kings 6:13; Hag. 2:6-9); and when the Word, who was God, was made flesh, God came to "dwell"—or to "tabernacle"—among men (John 1:14). And now, with every form of evil destroyed (Rev. 20:7-15), God comes to make His everlasting home among the ransomed race.

In considering this, we should ever bear in mind the limitations of human thought and language and realize that the Omnipresent will not be localized, though He will dwell among His people, even as their God. That surprising honor will suffice.

Over which territory and for how long a time will the Lord God reign? Rev. 11:15; 19:6, 16.

"Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him [Christ], then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him [Christ], that God [the Father] may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

Since heaven itself and all other worlds already delight in loyalty to the Lord God, the submission of our wayward world proclaims the Godhead as King of kings and Lord of lords over the whole universe. Then will be fulfilled the declaration prophesied by John: "and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them" say, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13). Alleluia!

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 674-678

**Part 6
CITIZENS OF
THE KINGDOM**

What fitness for citizenship in the new world does its King demand?

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7).

This is but one of many ways of describing the qualities that must be possessed by all who would be citizens of the kingdom of God. They must, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, have overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is the refrain in the messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Other biblical writers mention other facets of the character of him who would live with the Eternal—law lover, upright, pure hearted, guileless (Ps. 1:1-3; 15; 24:3-5; 34:12-14), humble (Isa. 57:15), Spirit controlled (Rom. 8:1-4)—while Jesus declares simply but with authority that the new birth is the prime essential (John 3:3). From another point of view it might be truly said that the whole Bible is given that we might learn the secret of how to become citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

After reviewing the many instructions given for finding eternal life, what basic requirement must we ever keep in mind? Matt. 18:3.

"To be great in God's kingdom is to be a little child in humility, in simplicity of faith, and in the purity of love. All pride must perish, all jealousy be overcome, all ambition for supremacy be given up, and the meekness and trust of the child be encouraged. . . .

"Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom and to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained? . . .

"'He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.' 'Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' This conformity to Jesus will not be unobserved by the world. It is a subject of notice and comment. The Christian may not be conscious of the great change; for the more closely he resembles Christ in character the more humble will be the opinion of himself; but it will be seen and felt by all around him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 130, 222, 223.

THINK IT THROUGH

If Jesus were to come today, would I be ready for the kingdom of heaven?



7. Christianity and Health

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

It is worth our while to consider the setting in which our memory verse is placed. It concludes the apostle's study of some of Israel's failures during the Exodus, especially those of intemperance in eating, drinking, recreation, and sexual pleasures. From Israel he turns to the Christian church and its early struggles against idolatry. He sees the communion service as a safeguard against the lures of a careless paganism, whose declared philosophy cried, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow we die." (See Isa. 22:13.) He concludes his argument with 1 Corinthians 10:31.

As moral principles are increasingly ignored, Christians increasingly need to safeguard those that are the basis of their religion. One

of the most elementary yet most important of these principles claims that the Christian is God's property by right of creation and of purchase. This provides the basis for true temperance and balanced health reform.

As the church sees the mounting flood of alcoholism, so much of which is still old-fashioned drunkenness with its attendant crime and brutality, it has the clear duty to stem the cruel tide through prevention, to rescue the enslaved, and to aid their victims. All drug dependencies bring harm to the individual and society and defile the temple of the Holy Spirit. The teaching of temperance and the helping of those who have lost the power to help themselves, become merciful and essential forms of Christian service, and they play no small part in reducing the miseries that afflict our world.

"Here is a principle which lies at the foundation of every act, thought, and motive; the consecration of the entire being, both physical and mental, to the control of the Spirit of God. . . . You can do all things through Christ who strengthenth you."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 84.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **God's Ideals for His Children**
(Gen. 1:27)
2. **Guidance on Diet**
(Deut. 14:2)
3. **Jesus and Health**
(Matt. 4:23)
4. **The Believer and His Body**
(Rom. 12:1)
5. **Spirit-inspired Temperance**
(Gal. 5:22, 23)
6. **Health Forevermore**
(2 Peter 3:13)

**Part 1
GOD'S IDEALS
FOR HIS
CHILDREN**

On what basis may we be assured of the physical perfection of the newly created Adam and Eve?

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27).

In His creation of the first man and woman the Creator expressed His intention toward the human race. By making "man in his own image" He cast him in a perfect mold, for, by definition, Deity is perfect. Consequently, Adam and Eve were without blemish, literally in perfect health, and not subject to disease. Furthermore, they were models for all mankind. If sin had not burst into Eden, all human beings would have possessed a perfect physique and would have enjoyed perfect health and self-control. Such was God's ideal for His earthly children.

In spite of sin's ruin, what assurance has God given to show His continuing desire to give health to His children and the assurance of a return to self-control? Deut. 7:12-15; Ex. 15:26; 23:25. (See also Ps. 103:2-5.)

"Christ had been the guide and teacher of ancient Israel, and He taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God. The Great Physician who healed the sick in Palestine had spoken to His people from the pillar of cloud, telling them what they must do, and what God would do for them. . . . Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and he assured them, 'The Lord will take away from thee all sickness.' . . . When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. 'There was not one feeble person among their tribes.' "—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 824.

Our very salvation depends on the truth of the psalmist's declaration that the Lord is He "who forgiveth all thine iniquities" (Ps. 103:3); and we believe and know that this pardon is ours in Christ Jesus (1 John 1:9). The full benefit of such forgiveness, however, will not be enjoyed until we enter into eternity. May it not be similar, though to a lesser degree, with our health? As we follow Christ's guidance, we shall enjoy better health and also the prospect of full restoration when "this mortal shall have put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:54).

THINK IT THROUGH

What influence does my spiritual condition have upon the Lord's work in behalf of my health?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 128-130

Part 2
GUIDANCE
ON DIET

What is the spiritual concern that prompts the Lord's interest in our physical well-being?

"For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. 14:2).

It was no thoughtless act that led our Maker to define clean and unclean meats. (See Gen. 7:2; Deut. 14:3-21; Lev. 11:1-47.) The Lord had chosen Israel to be "a special people" above all the nations (Deut. 7:6). They were to be "his treasured possession" (NIV), and with this high calling, they were to see themselves as "an holy people." To this high end, they were to be careful in their diet and in other matters, for the sake of spiritual as well as physical health.

The difference between clean and unclean meats is still to be observed; and vegetarianism stands on its own merits; but the prevalence of disease among animals used for food offers a sound and additional reason why a lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet—where we can find and pay for it—offers an excellent solution to the dietary question.

"In teaching health principles, keep before the mind the great object of reform—that its purpose is to secure the highest development of body and mind and soul. Show that the laws of nature, being the laws of God, are designed for our good; that obedience to them promotes happiness in this life, and aids in preparation for the life to come."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 146.

What lessons can we learn and apply from the drinking and eating practices of certain Old Testament characters? Num. 6:2-4; Judges 13:2-5; Jer. 35:1-10; Dan. 1:3-20.

Manoah's wife and son, the Rechabites, the captive royal Jewish children in Babylon, and the Nazarites—more accurately Nazirites—were willing to deny their appetites and observe strict temperance principles amid widely differing circumstances. "True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful. There are few who realize as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*. p. 562.

THINK IT THROUGH

The church is called unto purity and holiness, following in our Master's footsteps. How willing are we to follow scriptural dietary guidance in fulfillment of our high calling?

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 479-490

**Part 3
JESUS AND
HEALTH**

During His first Galilean tour, how did Jesus demonstrate His deep concern for mankind's health?

"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23).

There is no room for any doubt concerning the Godhead's attitude to disease. The beneficent medical ministry of the Son proclaims to the world that Father, Son, and Spirit are against it. They want to abolish it. As we saw in part 1 of this week's lesson, one of the Lord's own self-descriptions is, "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. 15:26). And now, the Lord Incarnate demonstrates His desire to overcome human suffering and to make His creatures whole.

"The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 17.

As Christ prepared His church to meet the last days, how did He speak of the indulged craving of appetite in relation to readiness for His return? Luke 21:34. (Compare Rom. 13:11-14.)

Our Lord, in His omniscience, knows our need for self-examination and self-control in matters of appetite. He also knows that need will increase as pressures grow greater prior to the end. He therefore urges us, "Do not let your minds be dulled by dissipation and drunkenness and worldly cares so that the great Day closes upon you suddenly like a trap" (Luke 21:34, NEB). There is real spiritual peril in our appetites for food, drink, and all kinds of pleasure; and the Saviour here underlines our personal responsibility for curbing those desires that they not swamp our spiritual faculties.

"In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God.

"The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 122.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is my daily health program going to help or hinder my preparation for meeting the Lord in peace?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 485-492

**Part 4
THE BELIEVER
AND HIS BODY**

What solution to bodily temptations does Paul offer to Christians? How do I relate to this solution?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

Those who accept this solution take a great stride in the conquest of many temptations. The offering, to be effective, has to be on a continuing basis so that the body always remains under God's ownership and control. "The body is the only medium through which the mind and the soul are developed for the upbuilding of character. Hence it is that the adversary of souls directs his temptations to the enfeebling and degrading of the physical powers. . . .

"The body is to be brought into subjection. The higher powers of the being are to rule. The passions are to be controlled by the will, which is itself to be under the control of God. The kingly power of reason, sanctified by divine grace, is to bear sway in our lives."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 130.

In what picturesque and enlightening way does Paul extend his teaching concerning our bodies? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

For the Christian, this is not a matter of choice, but of fact. By baptism he has offered back his body to God, who makes of it a shrine wherein dwells the Holy Spirit. The Christian's body, then, does not belong to himself. He will choose to use it so that God is glorified.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual has long expressed concern that the followers of Christ should be a godly people, not adopting the unholy maxims or conforming to the unrighteous ways of the world, not loving its sinful pleasures or countenancing its follies. It has indicated that believers should recognize their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit and that therefore they should clothe themselves in neat, modest, dignified apparel. Further, in eating and drinking and in their entire course of conduct, they have been instructed to shape their lives as followers of the meek and lowly Master. Adventist followers of Christ have been led to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, tobacco, and other narcotics and to avoid every body- and soul-defiling habit and practice.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are we doing with our bodies? Does our life-style encourage the Holy Spirit to live in us?

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels on Diet and Foods, pp. 43-47

Part 5
SPIRIT-INSPIRED
TEMPERANCE

What are some of the qualities produced in a Spirit-controlled character?

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Here we encounter one of Paul’s deep insights—the contrast and conflict between “the works of the flesh” (verses 19-21), translated by J. B. Phillips as “the activities of the lower nature,” and “the fruit” (verse 22), or “the harvest” (NEB), of the Spirit. The last item of “fruit” noted is “temperance” (verse 23), which comes from a word that is better translated as “self-control.” Temperance therefore has a broader meaning than abstinence. It includes Spirit-controlled living in every activity—drinking, eating, sleeping, dressing, working, or pleasure. This is also God’s answer to every false craving and desire.

But there are nine “fruits” in Paul’s list. While emphasizing the ninth, must we not also give similar attention to the other eight? It is of little use to stress temperance if we fall lamentably short on the other qualities.

What is God’s plan by which we may reach and continue in the scriptural ideals for personal conduct? 1 Thess. 5:23.

Every human being can, if he will, testify to his inability to live according to Christian ideals. He needs a power outside of himself that will provide strength to overcome the downward pull of his lower nature. That power is available; the god of peace, who is almighty, is well able to make and keep us perfectly holy, that we might be spotless at Christ’s appearing.

“Apart from divine power, no genuine reform can be effected. . . . Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without. . . .

“When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 130, 131.

THINK IT THROUGH

While keeping free from the grosser indulgences of drunkenness, smoking, gluttony, and sensuality, how do we measure in the finer qualities listed in Galatians 5:22, 23?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 473-478

**Part 6
HEALTH
FOREVERMORE**

What is the final goal to which the Christian doctrine of temperance directs its believers?

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

While temperance or the consistent practice of self-control yields high dividends in this life, its principal fruitage is fitness for living in the Holy City and for eternity in the re-created heavens and earth. Paul emphasizes this in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, declaring that he disciplined himself on earth in order to gain a fadeless trophy in the life to come. "Those who enter into a contest of physical strength for a corruptible prize realize the necessity of rigid abstinence from every indulgence that would weaken the spiritual powers. . . .

"How much more should those who enter for the gospel race, restrain themselves from the unlawful indulgence of appetite and 'abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' They must be temperate at all times. The same restraint that gives them the power to obtain the victory at one time will, if practiced constantly, give them a great advantage in the race for the crown of life."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1089.

What unique blessings does the heavenly herald promise to citizens of the earth made new? Rev. 21:3, 4; 22:1-3.

At long, long last! The separation caused by sin has ended. God and His people are united; they live together forevermore, and in the Divine presence sin and its sorry results cannot exist. God Himself permanently removes all need for tears. Death is abolished because sin and its causes are conquered. There is no reason for sorrow or crying; there is no more pain. The redeemed will be forever in perfect physical, mental, and spiritual fitness. As Isaiah so picturesquely records on God's behalf: "as the days of a tree are the days of my people" (Isa. 65:22), which may suggest they shall live forever, temperately, and in undiluted, unmarred health and happiness.

And the relief will not only be ours. Spend time to realize what the complete removal of sin from the universe will mean to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does our present way of life prepare us or unfit us for an eternity in the sinlessness of the new heavens and the new earth?

FURTHER STUDY

Read the ten verses of Isaiah 35 and give special thought to those phrases that concern health in this life and the life to come.



8. Spiritual Gifts

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

We can truly understand the life and ministry of our Lord only when we give full weight to the role of the Holy Spirit in His life journey from conception to ascension. To Mary, the angel promised, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee”; and, as a result, “she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18). At Jesus’ baptism “the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him,” and “immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness,” after which “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” and there announced, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Luke 3:22; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:14, 18).

If the Son of God needed and welcomed the Spirit as He worked to “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21), surely His people need the Spirit’s power even more as they seek strength to

resist sin and grace to lead others to similar victory. And this was indeed the pattern followed by the church from its infancy. In obedience to the Master’s command, its first members tarried in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49) until they were endowed with power from on high and were thus enabled to witness to Christ “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

We have been called to complete the work begun by Christ and His apostles. We do not have the sinlessness and singleness of purpose of the One, neither the apostolic dedication of the others; but we can, if we will, have the same Power from on high that inspired and sustained them all. The Spirit Himself is waiting to bestow on us the needed gifts. Our part is to desire them fervently and to receive and use them as they are sent.

“The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fulness by the Spirit’s power.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 121.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Divine Partnership**
(John 14:16)
2. **Promise and Fulfillment**
(Acts 1:4)
3. **The Spirit-guided Church**
(Acts 4:31)
4. **Gifts in the Church**
(1 Cor. 12:28)
5. **The Gift of Prophecy**
(1 Cor. 14:3, 4)
6. **The Greatest Gift**
(1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13)

**Part 1
DIVINE
PARTNERSHIP**

As Jesus faced separation from His beloved disciples, what provisions did He make for their spiritual welfare?

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

As we have already noted in the introduction to this week's study, the Holy Spirit shared in Christ's mission. He had also worked with and for humanity from the very beginning, though the Old Testament stress on one God may have veiled man's grasp of that ministry. But the incarnation, with its divine partnership between the Three Persons of the Godhead, enabled the disciples more clearly to sense the reality of the Spirit. As Christ had revealed the Father, so, in His life and teachings, He was revealing the personality of the Spirit. As He neared the hour when He would "depart out of this world unto the Father," He sought to assure the Twelve that the Spirit would continue the work He Himself had begun.

In what specific ways was the Comforter to work with the church after Christ's departure? John 14:16, 17, 27; 15:26; 16:7-14.

1. The Comforter, or Paraclete, or Advocate would console, stand beside, and plead with and for those who would be left without the Saviour's own dynamic, sustaining presence.

2. He would abide with them "for ever." His would be no temporary presence; there would be no separation unless the disciples themselves took the step.

3. He would teach them "all things," reminding them of all that Christ had revealed and they had only dimly understood.

4. The Spirit of truth would work not only with believers, but also with "the world" to convince its peoples of their need of redemption.

5. He would guide "into all truth," reveal "things to come," and develop what Christ had already taught 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 Desire of Ages*, p. 670.

THINK IT THROUGH

How fully do we allow the Spirit to carry out His mission of guiding us into all truth?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 668-672

**Part 2
PROMISE AND
FULFILLMENT**

What do the opening verses of Acts reveal concerning the central position of the Spirit in Christ's care for the infant church?

"Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4).

The Master had clearly told His disciples to expect the coming of the Comforter after His own departure (John 16:7), and that departure was now near. It is clear, however, that this coming of the Spirit was of a special nature, additional to the fact that He had been working with Jesus throughout His life and ministry. The Third Person was now serving with the resurrected Christ to prepare the eleven for their great responsibilities (Acts 1:2); and as the weight of their tasks began to be felt, they all the more readily recalled the promises of the Spirit's help (outlined in our previous lesson). They were thus very open to the final promise, just prior to the ascension, that they would receive supernatural power from the Spirit's coming upon them (verse 8). After seeing their Master taken up into heaven, they returned to Jerusalem and "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (verse 14), awaiting the promise of the Father.

In what matchless manner and with what remarkable results did the Spirit come upon the waiting believers? Acts 2:1, 2, 38-41.

These early Christians must have spent about 10 days in soul-searching prayer and witnessing, for Pentecost came 50 days after the beginning of Passover. During 40 of those days their Lord had appeared to them on several occasions (Acts 1:3); then 10 days remained after the ascension. They were 10 days well spent, for they led to the descent of the Spirit.

"They were filled with an intense longing to carry forward the work He had begun. They realized the greatness of their debt to heaven and the responsibility of their work. Strengthened by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, they went forth filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross. . . . They had consecrated their lives to Him for service, and their very features bore evidence of the surrender they had made."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 46.

THINK IT THROUGH

May the church enjoy a second Day of Pentecost? Study Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2 for the answer.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 35-39

Part 3
THE SPIRIT-
GUIDED
CHURCH

What evidence shows that the Spirit's pentecostal descent was not a one-time or temporary event?

"When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

The young church had learned its lesson well. Its following of divine instruction had brought the first, spectacular blessing at Pentecost, and its leaders and membership were willing to follow that example in order to enjoy a continuance of that experience. They reaped a rich reward—deep fellowship with unity, community of possessions, and great apostolic power (Acts 4:32, 33).

What further proofs came of God's readiness to give the Holy Spirit to them that were truly ready to receive Him? Acts 8:14-17, 26-40.

Ellen G. White describes these events as a picture of the work that we are to do. They show that the Spirit is ever willing to work *with* those who are willing to be guided by Him, and *for* those who are willing to be instructed by Him. Like Peter, John, and Philip in these illustrations, we need consciously to cooperate with the Spirit; then He will use us for the salvation of others.

The recipients of this combined evangelistic attention may be unaware of the power that is moving on their behalf, but they do feel a spiritual hunger which, while not fully recognized and not always understood, longs to be satisfied.

"There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.

"An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts. The angel sent to Philip could himself have done the work for the Ethiopian, but this is not God's way of working. It is His plan that men are to work for their fellow men."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

THINK IT THROUGH

When did I last keep the Spirit waiting—while I engaged in unprofitable use of my time—when He was ready to use me in bringing others to the Saviour?

FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Workers, pp. 284-289

**Part 4
GIFTS IN
THE CHURCH**

In guiding the Corinthians, how does Paul list the variety of spiritual gifts provided by God for the church?

“God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28).

The fact that a whole chapter is devoted to the subject of spiritual gifts reveals their importance in the life of the church. In his summing up (1 Cor. 12:28), the apostle refers to eight different gifts borne by different church members. The numbering of the gifts suggests an order of importance, with apostleship ranking first and the use of tongues standing last. That this list does not cover all the gifts is clear from verses 4 to 11, where others are mentioned—namely, wisdom, knowledge, faith, speaking in and interpretation of tongues.

A large, mature church might reasonably expect to find all of the gifts distributed among its membership. Christians are urged to “covet earnestly the best [or greater, or higher] gifts” (verse 31), suggesting that it is fitting to ask the Spirit for bestowal of suitable gifts—ever remembering that these are even then distributed according to divine wisdom (verse 11).

Compare the above listing with that given by Paul in Ephesians 4:8-11.

Paul does not here enter on as full a survey of gifts as he had done earlier in 1 Corinthians 12, for his purpose is different. He is here concerned with unity; hence he refers to the gifts—several forms of church ministry—that will promote this highly desirable state. However, there is harmony between 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11, for the purpose is the same in each chapter—the furtherance of unity (1 Cor. 12:11, 12; Eph. 4:2-6).

This purpose is further outlined in Ephesians 4:12, 13, where the apostle’s wealth of meaning can be better savored by the free rendering that follows: The gifts are given for equipping the saints for a work of service or ministry that will build up Christ’s body (that is, the church), until we all attain to the oneness or unity of the faith and the personal, experiential knowledge of God’s Son, which will lead us to perfect or mature manhood measured against the stature of Christ or of Christ in His fullness.

THINK IT THROUGH

Study the passage just above, phrase by phrase, and ask the question, Are the Spirit’s gifts gaining their stated purposes in my life as a member of Christ’s church, especially in respect to unity?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 619-621; vol. 8, pp. 239-243

Part 5
THE GIFT OF
PROPHECY

What high place does the apostle give to the spiritual gift of prophecy in contrast to that of speaking with tongues?

“He that prophesieth speaketh unto men unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church” (1 Cor. 14:3, 4).

The biblical understanding of prophecy is not limited to a foretelling of the future, but also includes the ministry of counseling, of communicating God’s will to the church and its individual members. Paul, therefore, exalts the office of prophet in preference to that of a speaker of tongues—known or unknown. Prophecy is given second place in his lists of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11), and its operation played an important part in the development of the early church (Acts 2:17, 18; 11:27, 28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:8-10). To a more limited extent, each age of the church has been served by those who possessed one or more aspects of the gift of prophecy. But Scripture shows that in the last days, prior to Christ’s triumphant return, the prophetic gift will function no less prominently than it did in the founding of the church.

To which prophecy did Peter appeal in his historic sermon at Pentecost? Acts 2:16-18.

Under the Spirit’s guidance the apostle applied Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28, 29) to the last days of the Jewish nation, which were the first days of the Christian church. But Joel’s words primarily apply to “the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Joel 2:31), which is the last day—the day when Christ will come in glory. The gift of prophecy is to prepare men and women who live in that day to meet their Lord in peace and with joy.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the prophetic gift has been bestowed on the church in the last days in the work and writings of Ellen G. White. They believe that her prophetic ministry serves as one of the identifying features of the remnant church. The foretelling of that gift in the church is seen in Revelation 12:17, with an explanation in chapter 19:10.

The function of Ellen G. White’s prophetic gift has not only unveiled the future, but has guided the church in its development, fortified it in the fulfillment of its mission, and given its membership a wealth of Bible-based, Christ-centered counsel that is unsurpassed in spiritual quality.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what special ways can the prophetic gift help the remnant church fulfill its last-day mission?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 112-115

**Part 6
THE GREATEST
GIFT****Which of all the Spirit's gifts stands highest with the Holy Spirit?****"Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."****"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13).**

No one could accuse Paul of not having dealt thoroughly, within the limits of one long letter, with the topic of spiritual gifts; yet, as he meditated on the subject, he realized he had not yet even mentioned the greatest gift of all. He had been saving that till last, and then he writes one of the greatest pieces of religious literature ever penned, which we identify as 1 Corinthians 13 (there were no chapter or verse divisions in the original letter).

The theme is *charity* a seventeenth-century translation of the Greek *agapē*, which has long since been more meaningfully rendered as *love*, and that of the loftiest kind. Without possession of this gift, says Paul, we are nothing. We might have the gift of tongues or prophecy, the ability to understand all mysteries and specialized knowledge, mountain-moving faith, unselfish willingness to face martyrdom by burning, yet if spiritual love does not inspire and permeate the exercise of those gifts, their use is profitless. The all-surpassing greatness of love need not surprise us, for the highest definition of God is the so-well-known, but still so-little-understood declaration—"God is love." Small wonder, then, that we can only possess that greatest of all qualities as His supreme gift.

What position does love occupy in Paul's list of Spirit-given fruits? Gal. 5:22, 23.

The priority given to love (*agapē*) in this listing of finest Christian qualities and the unequivocal exaltation of love in the Corinthian letter convince us of the necessity of having love as the spiritual essence that gives special flavor to all other noble gifts.

"Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.

THINK IT THROUGH**How earnestly do we desire the Holy Spirit to give us, in full measure, the greatest of His many gifts?****FURTHER STUDY***Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 167-171



9. Christian Stewardship

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:20, 21).

Our Lord’s teaching has a distinctly otherworld flavor. That is not surprising in One whose “kingdom is not of this world.” Those who intend to follow Him must obtain the same otherworldly philosophy, even when dealing with such worldly matters as income and possessions. They will seek to “lay up . . . treasures in heaven,” knowing that such a policy is wiser in every way than that of accumulating “treasures upon earth.”

These thoughts lead our minds to stewardship, which, from a Christian viewpoint, may be defined as the unselfish use of the resources God has given us, be they in the form of money, possessions, circumstances, or in the less tangible but no less useful gifts of time, health, intelligence, influence, and abilities.

In Adventist circles, we tend to think that stewardship means returning the tithe, and it also suggests to more and more members the giving of the same amount

for freewill offerings and for general church expense. But a responsive heart will also wish to care for many other needs, especially those connected with human welfare both in and outside of the church. We must guard against a hardening of the “heart-eries,” for such a disease is spiritually fatal. If skeptical questions be fired about the genuineness of some appeals that reach us, we should not take all such queries as reasons for closing our minds and our pockets. As Dr. Atterbury, an eighteenth-century divine, once asked, “Shall we re-pine at a little misplaced charity, we who could no way foresee the effect—when an all-knowing, all-wise Being showers down every day His benefits on the unthankful and undeserving?”

One way to obtain funds for satisfying our responsibilities in stewardship is to reduce the size of our wants. That process is not an easy one, for there are so many pressures, from without and within, to increase our desires! But God’s Spirit can help us to keep their size and number in check, and we shall be able to respond to a wider number of genuine needs in the troubled world around us.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Creator and Owner**
(Gen. 2:15)
2. **Religion and Arithmetic**
(Num. 18:21)
3. **Religion and Giving**
(Deut. 12:6)
4. **Religion and Our Possessions**
(Rom. 14:7)
5. **Religion and Others**
(James 1:27)
6. **Blessings on Stewardship**
(Mal. 3:10)

**Part 1
CREATOR
AND OWNER**

What task did the Lord God place upon Adam immediately after Creation? For what purposes?

"The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15).

Nothing could have been more natural to Adam than to accept the God-given work of gardening. He was occupier of the largest country estate ever owned by man, and with undimmed mind and unsapped strength he must have delighted in the duty of caring for the natural glories that surrounded him. When Eve stood by his side, they had the joy of planning a leisurely, unrestricted development of the endless resources that were theirs, with no sin-born handicaps to turn pleasure into a burden. Yet even in their innocence they were but tenants, placed in newly created perfection "to dress it and to keep it."

"So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 51.

To whom has the earth always belonged? Deut. 10:14; Ps. 24:1.

Since God is the Most High, He does not answer to any higher power, but to Himself alone. All He sees—and He sees all—belongs to Him. As Creator, He is also the Owner. But being free of any taint of egotism or selfishness, He does not hug His boundless wealth to Himself; rather, He finds satisfaction in sharing responsibility for its use with those whom He has created. Even after sin had spoiled their paradise, our first parents continued as stewards of their Lord's property, though under much less pleasant circumstances. But God did not replace them, and men and women have ever since been His agents, whether they knew it or not, answerable to the divine Landlord, even though most of them do not acknowledge His ownership.

"The earth is the Lord's, and all the treasures it contains. The cattle upon a thousand hills are His. All the gold and silver belongs to Him. He has entrusted His treasures to stewards, that with them they may advance His cause and glorify His name."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 652.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are we faithful, as tenants of any property the Creator has placed in our care? What profit does the Lord receive from our stewardship?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 47-51

Part 2
RELIGION AND
ARITHMETIC

Under God's government, what was the plan for Israel's support of its priesthood? How might it fail?

"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Num. 18:21).

The Levites were set apart for full-time sacred service on behalf of Israel and had no time in which to earn their own living. The Lord therefore ordained that they should be supported by one tenth, or a tithe, from the income of the members of the other eleven tribes. "But the tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. . . . Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and a wanderer, promised the Lord, 'Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.' . . . As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, the law of tithing was reaffirmed as one of the divinely ordained statutes upon obedience to which their prosperity depended."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525.

Note the Bible's record that the custom of tithing continued among God's chosen people over a span of eight to nine hundred years. 2 Chron. 31:5, 6; Neh. 10:37, 38.

If we accept the fifteenth century B.C. as the time of the Exodus, about 700 years elapsed before Hezekiah came to Judah's throne, some 5 years before Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. Hezekiah brought his people back to the Lord. Among other reforms, he encouraged them to renewed faithfulness in tithing and in offerings for support of the temple services. About 120 years later (about 605 B.C.) Judah fell to Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews were deported to Babylon, where they eventually established a Jewish way of life. When a large body returned to Judah in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (457 and 445 B.C.), we find them ready to pay tithes to the Levites and resolving not to "forsake the house of our God" (Neh. 10:39). Some 40 years afterward, however, religious fervor had cooled; and Malachi had to exhort both priests and people to renewed faithfulness in worship and in support of their religion. It is thus clear that not only did tithing precede God's rule over Israel, but that it continued and survived it; and, as New Testament readers know, it was practiced in Christ's own day (Matt. 23:23).

THINK IT THROUGH

Consider tithing, not as an imposed requirement, but as a fair principle suited to all peoples.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 253-256

**Part 3
RELIGION
AND GIVING**

What did the Israelites bring to the Lord in addition to their tithes?

"Thither shall ye bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks" (Deut. 12:6).

Tithes supported the Levites in the performance of their sacred duties, while the freewill offerings made possible the many other forms of religious and charitable service that belonged to Israel.

"The contributions required of the Hebrews for religious and charitable purposes amounted to fully one fourth of their income."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 527. "There are many who have looked upon the Jewish nation as a people to be pitied because they were constantly taxed for the support of their religion; but God, who created man and provided him with all the blessings he enjoys, knew what was for his best good. And through His blessing He made their nine tenths worth more to them than the entire amount without His blessing."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 404.

There is great significance for the church in Paul's endorsement of the principle on which tithing is based. 1 Cor. 9:11-14.

As the church grew, its members realized the need of systematic giving for the support of its ministry and the furtherance of the gospel. In the ancient custom of tithing there was a ready-made system that had divine approval and would meet the Christian community's needs. The plan distributes responsibility on a proportionate basis, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48); while the converse is also true, he who has little being only expected to contribute little.

A similar principle applies to freewill offerings. However, we should always remember the widow and her mite (Mark 12:41-44)! Gaining wealth becomes a habit easily, and it is dangerously possible to hug more to oneself as one obtains more. The Master knew this, and so He warned His followers: "Beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." He then told of the covetous but foolish farmer who built bigger barns instead of sharing some of his prosperity with needy neighbors. (See Luke 12:15-21.)

THINK IT THROUGH

The claim that nine tenths with God's blessings goes farther than ten tenths without it is unusual arithmetic, but many Christians have "proved" God in this matter. Have we?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Church Manual, chapter on Gospel Finance

**Part 4
RELIGION
AND OUR
POSSESSIONS**

Our possessions are not limited to money and the goods that money can buy. There are other gifts, whether seen or not, of which a Christian is called to be a steward. The Lord has given these for a twofold purpose—for our enjoyment and for the benefit of others. Most of us are well able to fulfill the first goal—we instinctively take care of ourselves. But it is all too easy for us to neglect the second—our use of the other gifts to bring happiness to others.

Which scripture expresses the principle on which such use of gifts is based?

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Rom. 14:7).

Whether we like it or not, our lives touch those of our neighbors. We therefore need a sympathetic awareness of their circumstances and outlook and a willingness to meet their needs. We all have possessions the use of which might benefit others besides ourselves—there are our homes, our gardens and their produce, our cars, our tools, our skills. Stewardship in such areas comes so easily to some, with such effort to others, but it is possible for all who yield to the Spirit's promptings.

Note Jesus' summary of His disciples' duty toward others. Matt. 10:7, 8.

This commission was not given to the Twelve alone. Its motivating principle, that of service based on gratitude, applies equally well to us today. We can be useful stewards of our intellectual gifts, our scriptural and spiritual knowledge, our artistic talents, our musical abilities, our social accomplishments, and our developing compassions. The hearts and minds God has given us can be used for His glory and the salvation of our neighbors.

“We should feel it our special duty to work for those living in our neighborhood. Study how you can best help those who take no interest in religious things. As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Speak to them of Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour. Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 152.

THINK IT THROUGH

What effect is a broadening concept of stewardship having upon my Christian service?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 254-260

**Part 5
RELIGION
AND OTHERS**

On which vital points of true religion does James focus the Christian's attention?

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

This verse needs to be studied in its setting in order to avoid an unbalanced interpretation of its message. It is the climax to the writer's counsel begun in verse 22, where he stresses deeds above words. His purpose in verse 27 is not to give a theological definition of "pure religion and undefiled," but to explain that in God's eyes genuine religion includes care of orphans and widows, who represent all who need Christian compassion and service. A necessary part of stewardship, then, is the use of one's time, energy, sympathy, and money in the care of those who cannot adequately care for themselves.

In what ways does Jesus' teaching of the Christian duty of promptly caring for the unfortunate apply to us today? Luke 10:25-37.

The parable is too well known to need detailed exposition here, but we might well note the two questions that led to its application. "Master," inquired the lawyer, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Later, he asked, "Who is my neighbour?" Christ's reply to the first inquiry emphasized the paramount importance of love to God and to our neighbors, while the second response established need as the basis for neighborly assistance, though that need cut across racial and social prejudices. The application is nothing but practical: "Go, and do as the Samaritan did!"

The Lord's instruction shows that stewardship includes the generous use of compassion; first aid when no medical service is at hand, the application of simple emergency remedies, the use of our own car or other available means of transport to the nearest medical facility, readiness to give financial aid where needed, and a continuing interest in the welfare of the one we have tried to help.

Christ "showed that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 376.

THINK IT THROUGH

Where lies the power to resist the temptation to practice selfishness in our religion?

FURTHER STUDY

Isa. 58:6-14; Matt. 25:34-46

**Part 6
BLESSINGS ON
STEWARSHIP**

When the tithing plan is faithfully followed, of what may the participant be assured?

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Here we find three good reasons for returning a tenth of our total income to the Lord: (1) The plan is authorized by God. (2) The plan is used by God for the support of His work on earth. (3) Taking part in the plan produces God's rich blessing. While we do not follow the plan to obtain the blessing, the blessing comes when, in willing obedience to the divine urging, we bring "all the tithes into the storehouse."

"If all the tithes of our people flowed into the treasury of the Lord as they should, such blessings would be received that gifts and offerings for sacred purposes would be multiplied tenfold, and thus the channel between God and man would be kept open."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 474.

**What does Christ promise those who are generous givers?
Luke 6:38.**

While the Master makes rigorous demands on His followers, He also promises rich rewards to those who follow His own sacrificial example. Many a time the rewards will seem out of all proportion to the relative little that we have given. They will be "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," until the recipient protests that he by no means merits such abundant blessings—and that will be true. But the harvest follows a divinely ordained formula—we reap what we have sown. "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6). The converse is also true—"he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly."

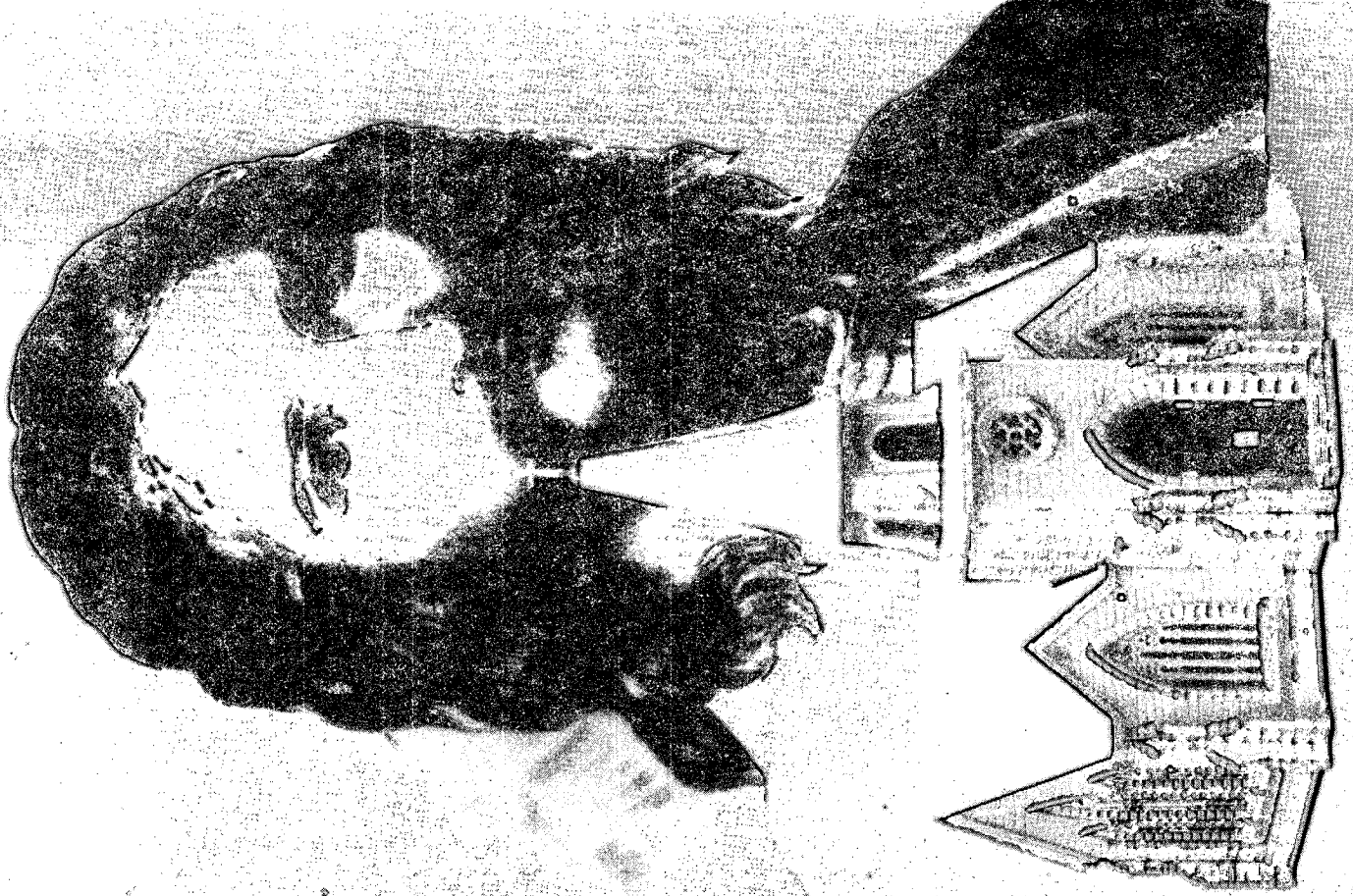
When it comes to giving, let us err on the side of generosity, even if our gifts sometimes seem to go astray. "The followers of Christ should not wait for thrilling missionary appeals to arouse them to action. If spiritually awake, they would hear in the income of every week, whether much or little, the voice of God and of conscience with authority demanding the tithes and offerings due the Lord."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 474.

THINK IT THROUGH

Let each Sabbath School member review his or her own record as a steward and ponder the blessings that have followed faithfulness.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 381-385



10. The Church

"He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

To provide interested readers with the background of the word *church* and in order to leave the daily sections of this week's lesson uncluttered by concerns of language, we use this space to study the ancestry of our word *church*. The original biblical texts use four words that relate to our concept of "church"—two being Hebrew and two being Greek:

1. *'edah*, the primary meaning of which is "appointed meeting" or "assembly." This occurs mainly in the early books of the Old Testament, where it is generally translated "congregation" (124 times).

2. *qahal*, which is derived from the verb "to call together" or "to assemble," with its noun also signifying "congregation" (86 times), "assembly," "company."

The word *qahal*, which has almost the meaning of *'edah*, appears more frequently in the later Old Testament books. These two words are the Old Testament terms that come nearest to the Christian concept of "church," but they fall short of the intensely spiritual factors attached to the corresponding New Testament image.

3. The next of these words is found in the Septuagint (the Greek

version of the Old Testament, represented by the Roman numerals LXX). It employs the word *sunagōgē* (synagogue) to translate the Hebrew *'edah*. It is developed from two Greek words, *sun*, "with" or "together," and *agō*, "to bring," giving the thought of "bringing together," therefore "a gathering" or "an assembly."

4. In the later Old Testament books—where *qahal* generally replaces *'edah*—the LXX employs *ekklēsia* (from *ek*, "out of," and *kaleō*, "to call," hence "called out"), the last of these four biblical words. It was used in the Greek world for discussion of or decision concerning public business, therefore, "an assembly" instead of *sunagōgē*. Such usage undoubtedly prepared the way for its use by the apostles to designate the Christian assembly which the New Testament knows as the church.

In addition, there is also the Greek *kuriakos*, "belonging to the Lord." This was first applied to the building or place where the church met. Later it was used for the church itself. It moved into European languages as *kirche* (German), *kirk* (Scot), and *church* (English). But *kuriakos* is never so used in the New Testament.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. In the Old Testament (Deut. 7:6)
2. In the Master's Ministry (Matt. 16:18)
3. The Apostolic Church (Acts 2:41)
4. Christ and His Church (Col. 1:18)
5. Pictures of the Church
6. The Remnant Church (Rev. 14:12)

**Part 1
IN THE OLD
TESTAMENT**

Consider God's purpose for Israel as expressed in their selection. Consider their response.

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6).

Here and in similar passages (for example, Deut. 4:20; 14:2; 26:18, 19; Ex. 6:7; 19:5, 6) Scripture makes it clear that the Lord called Israel from among all other nations to be an exhibit or demonstration of what sinful men and women could become by His enabling grace.

This divine intention had already been revealed by the rescue of Noah and his family from the Flood (Gen. 6:5-9, 17, 18; 7:1; 9:8-17), in the call and career of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3 and onward), of Jacob (Gen. 28:10-15), and of the children of Israel (Ex. 19:3-6). Through His chosen people God planned to bring all others under his own kind rule for their true and lasting happiness.

How does Stephen describe those with whom God made His covenant at Sinai? Acts 7:37, 38.

Stephen stood before the Sanhedrin and, until he was violently stopped, reviewed God's providences as given from Abraham to Solomon. Like Peter (Acts 3:22-26), he applied to the incarnate Son of God the prophecy spoken by Moses concerning the coming of a prophet. In Acts 7:38 Stephen identifies the "prophet" with "the angel which spake to him [Moses] in the mount Sina [that is, Sinai]," while he describes the Israelites as "the church in the wilderness." In this setting, the word here translated "church (*ekklēsia*) would be better rendered "assembly" or "congregation." At the same time, we must recognize that Luke, the author of Acts, was writing for Christians and that elsewhere in his book (19 times) he, without question, uses *ekklēsia* for "church." There is little doubt, then, that the New Testament believers saw the Old Testament assembly or congregation as the forerunner of the Christian church.

THINK IT THROUGH

As a member of His church, how far do I fulfill the Lord's intent as given in Deuteronomy 7:6?

FURTHER STUDY

The book par excellence for the study of the church is the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is suggested that we slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully consider selected passages for this week's *Further Study* sections. The passage chosen for today is chapter 1:1-10.

**Part 2
IN THE
MASTER'S
MINISTRY**

In what momentous words did the Master announce the founding of His church?

"I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

We should mark well the setting of this declaration (verses 13-20). The central question is the identity of the Son of man (verse 13). The answer comes in Simon Peter's confession (verse 16). Christ's reference to "my church" (verse 18) arises from Peter's declaration and is not basic to it. From it we learn that the church—My church, that is Christ's own church, the Christian church—was not then built. Its construction lay still in the future.

This does not deny the reality of the Old Testament church, but it does spell a change from the earlier tradition. The change was brought about by the Son's advent and the universal scope of the institution He was then establishing. The founding of that church was accompanied by no fanfare of trumpets, but by the quiet announcement to the small circle of His chosen Twelve. Through the faithful witness of those disciples, the church reached out to the ends of the world and has drawn into its fellowship people of every nation.

"Not on the rock of human strength, but on Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was the church founded, 'and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 595, 596.

What authority did Jesus bestow on the disciples for the government of His church? Matt. 16:19; 18:18-20.

The Saviour knew His remaining days on earth were few. He therefore placed authority upon Peter "as the representative of the whole body of believers. . . .

"The keys of the kingdom of heaven' are the words of Christ. All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413. But the disciples were not left to their own methods. The Master's authority undergirded them and their successors for the right conduct of the church's business, and by His Spirit He was ever present to guide them into right decisions. There is a neat phrase from the Latin that sums up the relationship between the Lord and His church—Where Christ is, there is the church.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is our level of awareness of Christ's lordship over the church, and how submissive are we to His leadership?

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 1:11-23—see the power of Christ in His church.

**Part 3
THE
APOSTOLIC
CHURCH**

When did significant growth begin in the early Christian community? What was the cause of this growth?

"Then they that gladly received his [Peter's] word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Until Pentecost the infant church was composed of those, few in number, who had responded to Christ's own ministry. As a result of Pentecost (sometimes known as "the birthday of the church")—when the apostles had become the Spirit's effective instruments—some 3000 accepted the Saviour's personal invitation, answered His servants' appeals, were baptized, and greatly strengthened the church. Their very number called for organization and accelerated the development of church order. But no infallible blueprint dropped from heaven; the leaders adopted no ready-made, sophisticated system of government. Instead, as the need arose, they engaged in prayer and group discussion, sought the Spirit's counsel, followed it, and found the best ways to conduct church business. (See Acts 6:1-8; 15:1-31.)

What fuller evidence does Acts provide concerning the development of church organization? Acts 9:31; 20:28.

The preferred reading of Acts 9:31 speaks of "the church" rather than "the churches." This is significant, for it harmonizes with the Lord's own words that we studied in yesterday's lesson. The reference is not to membership of local churches, but to a corporate group of churches that together composed "the church." The conversion of Saul brought "rest"—literally, "peace"—to the persecuted Christians; and, as a result, the church was "edified" or "built up" and grew as the number of believers steadily increased.

With the exception of Acts 20:28, which speaks of "the church of God"—a phrase which might justly be taken as a reference to the church membership as a spiritual entity rather than as a local congregation—the other 19 references in Acts to "church" or "churches" are to local groups. The one apparent exception (Acts 2:47) carries no weight, since the words "to the church" do not appear in the best manuscripts. Luke's account, however, does provide a picture of rapid growth, of the founding of many groups of Christians, and of the emergence of the concept of the church as embracing all believers in the ever-increasing number of local congregations.

THINK IT THROUGH

As members of local congregations, what can we do to strengthen ties with the worldwide church?

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 4:1-16

**Part 4
CHRIST AND
HIS CHURCH**

What strength is there for us in Christ's relationship to the church and in the church's relationship to Christ?

"He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

We use the week's memory verse to impress on our minds Christ's first place in relation to the church. We would not wish to lose sight of the Head while studying the body, for we recognize that no living body exists apart from a living head. The headship of Christ saves us from seeing the church as a late development—an afterthought—and sets its genesis in times eternal.

The human body is used in several scriptures to illustrate the vital relationship that exists between Christ and His church (see Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:15, 16; 5:23, 30; Col. 1:24). In particular, our text emphasizes that Christ is the head and the church is the body. This is more than an illustration—it is an expression of a timeless truth. Christ, who is "the beginning" and "beginner," who is "the first," "the preeminent," "the supreme"—He, as Creator, always has been and ever will be first. He is also the controller, even as the head controls the body. As the body is subject to the directives that come from the head, so is the church subject to Christ. It can own no other master and remain the church. Indeed, when the body ceases to obey the head, it is diseased and on its way to death. Happy are those sections of the church that with spiritual integrity acknowledge Christ as their Head!

What exalted office does Christ fill as Head of the church? Eph. 5:23.

The body cannot save itself or its head, except as it obeys the injunctions that come from the head. The analogy is richly fulfilled in Christ's ministry for the church. He not only saves it by giving the right directives, protecting it from self-injury and destruction; but He has given Himself—His own life—to save the church from eternal death. If He, the Head, had not sacrificially died, the church would have no life. Indeed, it would have been stillborn. How willingly subject to His kind biddings the church ought then to be!

THINK IT THROUGH

As a part of the body of Christ, how obedient am I to the signals that come from the Head?

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 5:22, 23

**Part 5
PICTURES OF
THE CHURCH****What lessons can be drawn from New Testament titles that are given to the church?**

In addition to being called "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12), the Christian church is given these descriptions:

1. The temple of God. Eph. 2:19-22. There are several illustrations taken from the building trade in this one of Paul's many long sentences. Mention of "fellowcitizens" and "household" (verse 19) suggests a city and a house; "foundation" and "cornerstone" (verse 20) refer to construction; "framed" and "temple" and "habitation" (verses 21, 22) are linked to edifices; while "built," "building," and "builded" specifically apply to the erection of a temple. (Compare 1 Peter 2:5.) The Greek word used here and generally in the epistles and the Revelation for "temple" is *naos*, which refers to the inner sanctuary, and not *hieron*, which is used for the complete temple complex. *Naos* may therefore be translated as "sanctuary," which is most appropriate to the spiritual concept of the individual Christian and the corporate body of the church as being the dwelling place or sanctuary of the Most High.

2. Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem. Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22, 23; Rev. 21:2, 3. The image of the city may not be so clear as that of the sanctuary. The revelator describes the Holy City both as a "bride," "the Lamb's wife" (21:2, 9), which is a clear reference to the church, and also as the capital city of the new earth (verse 10). But there is no contradiction here. John sees both the city and its holy inhabitants, or the city containing the church. (Compare Psalm 48, which speaks of the church as Mount Zion.)

3. Pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim. 3:15. The apostle identifies "the house of God, which is the church of the living God," which he then defines as "the pillar and ground [*hedraïōma*, foundation or mainstay] of the truth." The thought is a little complex, but one very important function of the church emerges—it is to be the sustainer, and, by extension, the repository of truth.

4. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. Strictly speaking, this is not a title for the church; but, for the duration of human history, the kingdom and the church are almost identical. Matthew speaks almost exclusively of "the kingdom of heaven," while Mark and Luke prefer "the kingdom of God," indicating that the different titles refer to the same kingdom, which is closely related to the church.

THINK IT THROUGH**Am I, as a member of the church of the Living God, a consecrated unit, albeit small, in the sanctuary or habitation of my God?****FURTHER STUDY**

Ephesians 2:11-22

**Part 6
THE REMNANT
CHURCH**

What qualities are expected of the remnant—the church that is linked to the giving of the three angels' messages?

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

This latter-day church—specifically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church—flourishing just prior to the return of the Son of man (verses 13-16), will possess the regular qualities that have characterized the true church in every age. (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 814, 815.) But to cope with the last-day stresses, it will also need the special endowments listed in verse 12:

1. The patience of the saints. In the context of persecution (compare Rev. 12:17) this covers more than forbearance. It includes strong elements of fortitude, which saints need when brought under the wrath of the dragon power.

2. Keep the commandments of God. In the original, there is no word for "here" at this point. The phrase may therefore be taken as a further definition of "saints"—they are commandment keepers. Since no one commandment is mentioned, we may understand that God's nonceremonial commands are intended, those in the Decalogue and others that have been given to the church on other occasions since Sinai.

3. The faith of Jesus. This also further describes the saints. In addition to keeping the commandments, they keep the faith of Jesus—that is, they retain and use the faith that Jesus had, or they keep their faith in Jesus. They will, in fact, retain both.

What is God's eternal purpose with respect to His church in all ages? Eph. 3:8-11.

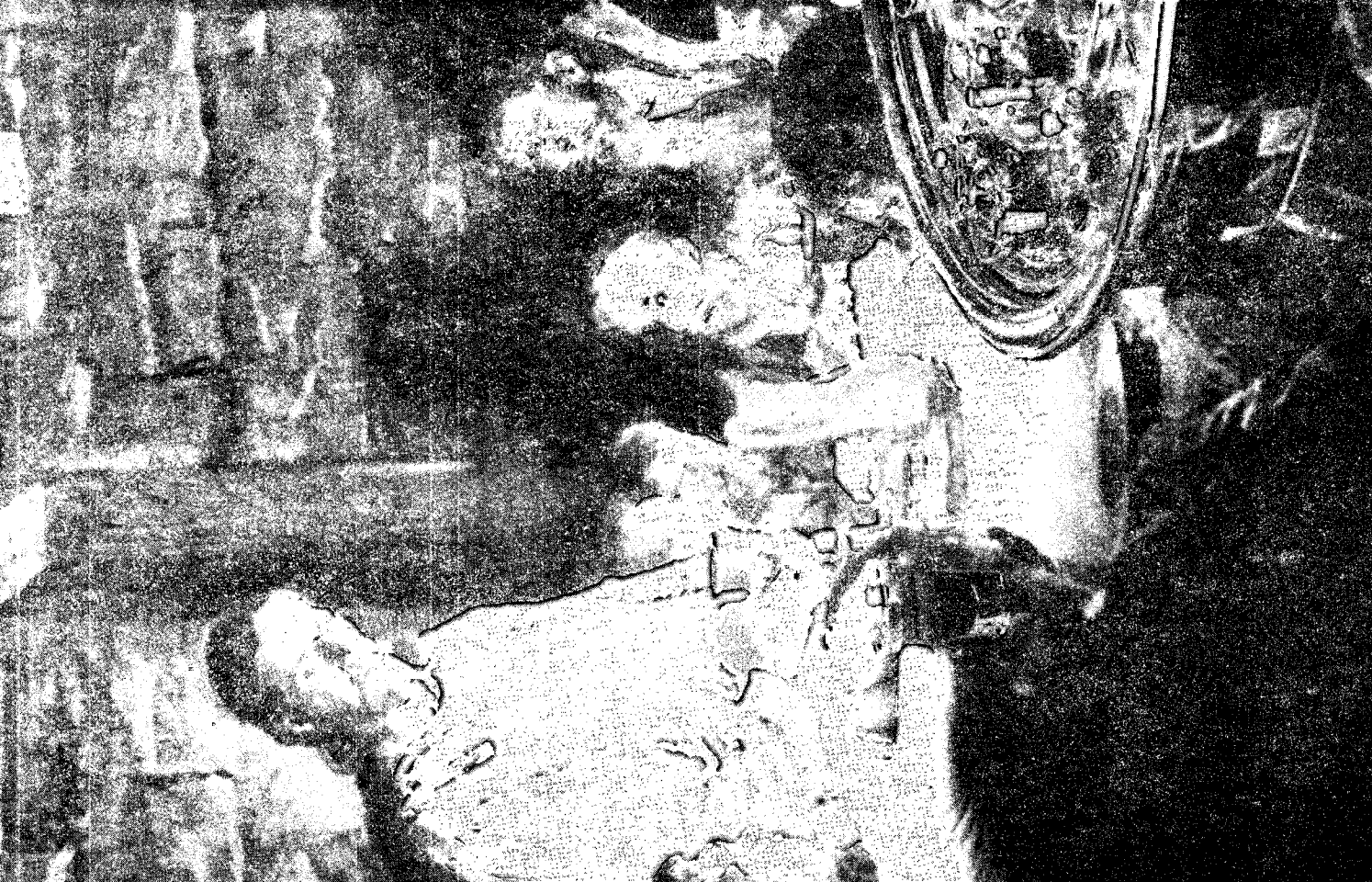
Since this passage is too rich in meaning to be studied in full here, we can only consider the core (verses 10 and 11). God's eternal intention has been that the church should be the medium through which His manifold wisdom—multi-colored, much-variegated, of infinite diversity and sparkling beauty—is displayed to the watching universe, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. What a responsibility for the church! "The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 50.

THINK IT THROUGH

How faithfully does our church, and we as its members, fulfill our Lord's eternal purpose?

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians 3:1-12



11. Symbols for Saints

“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

True religion connects earth with heaven. While having its feet firmly planted on the ground, it will deliberately have its head and its heart in heaven. We should therefore expect our religion to possess a few “mysteries” that will bridge the gulf between the human and divine, earthly and heavenly, seen and unseen, tangible and intangible, known and unknown, temporal and eternal, until we can truly say with Francis Thompson,

○ world invisible, we view thee,
 ○ world intangible, we touch thee,
 ○ world unknowable, we know thee,
 Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

In prayer and worship we already have private and congregational means of grace that enable us to communicate with the supernatural. In addition, we have biblical authority for more specialized observances, which may be justly

described as holy ordinances “instituted by Christ, in which by sensible signs the grace of God in Christ, and the benefits of the covenant of grace, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers, and these, in turn, give expression to their faith and allegiance to God.”—Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1938), p. 617.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes two ordinances that meet this definition—baptism and the communion service. Each of them was authorized by Christ. Each is based on earthbound acts that lift the participants into heavenly associations and move them toward eternal life. Each reveals a major incident in the life of our Lord and invites the believer to share in that experience with a view to eventual union with the Master.

Reverent observance of these two Christian rituals will help us regain our lost sense of awe—of mystery—and will bring us closer to “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.” For this we need the exercise of faith, as stated in our memory verse, and a sense of the reality of God.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Patterns**
(Ex. 12:26, 27)
2. **Baptism—I**
(Mark 1:4)
3. **Baptism—II**
(John 3:5)
4. **The Last Supper**
(Mark 14:16)
5. **The Lord’s Supper**
(John 13:4, 5)
6. **In Memoriam**
(1 Cor. 11:23-29)

Part 1
PATTERNS

The Old Testament is well supplied with advance views of God's solution to the problem of sin. From Genesis 3:15 through Genesis 4:3, 4; 8:20-22; 22:3-18 and onward, Scripture gives partial revelations of the Lord's redemptive plans. In this lesson we glimpse two of these illustrations.

What ceremony of remembrance, established in Israel under the crisis of the Exodus from Egypt, pointed to the way of salvation from sin and its penalty?

"It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped" (Ex. 12:26, 27).

"The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin. The sacrificial lamb represents 'the Lamb of God,' in whom is our only hope of salvation. Says the apostle, 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' 1 Corinthians 5:7. It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ's blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 277.

What other Exodus events foreshadowed the New Testament ordinance of baptism? 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

Jewish Christians and first-century converts had little if any difficulty in following parallels between ancient historical occurrences and Christian teachings. They readily saw the crossing of the Red Sea, the protective pillars of cloud and fire, the water-giving rock, and the earlier rite of circumcision as foreshadowings of the later and loftier revelations centered on Christ and illustrated in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

THINK IT THROUGH

If the partial revelations given in Old Testament times sustained the faithful for 40 centuries, how much more should the historic realities of Christ's ministries and the certainty of His return and reign in eternal glory sustain us!

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 273-280

Part 2 In what form is the rite of baptism introduced into the New
BAPTISM—I Testament scene?

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4).

Mark, as usual, is the most concise of the evangelists. Here he records that John the Baptizer was baptizing in the wilderness, that is, in the Jordan, after preaching in the barren territory through which the river passed. He called his audiences to confess and repent of their sins that they might find forgiveness. Public baptism would proclaim their break with the past and the new life that then began.

Baptism did not originate with John. It was already a Jewish practice—a ceremonial washing by immersion—but without the spiritual overtones that marked John’s ministrations. John’s call also had a still higher purpose—that of preparing his followers for the appearance of the Messiah (verses 7, 8) and of baptizing the Sinless One Himself (verse 9).

What trust did Jesus place upon His disciples immediately before His ascension? Matt. 28:19, 20.

The disciples had already baptized those who were converted by Christ’s ministry (John 3:22 and 4:2); but now, possessing a far deeper knowledge, they were given a much wider commission. Clothed with the Master’s power over all things (Matt. 28:18), they were to go into all the world (Mark 16:15) and teach (Matt. 28:19)—literally, “make disciples” (Greek *mathēteuō*, not *didaskō*, “teach,” as used in Matt. 28:20)—all nations. A basic part of their evangelism was to baptize converts in the threefold name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and instruct them in all that Christ had taught His apostles. Thus, from its beginning, admission to membership in the Christian church included the rite of baptism (compare Mark 16:16). The remainder of the New Testament record shows that the apostles faithfully fulfilled their Lord’s command.

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

THINK IT THROUGH How faithfully are we, as a church, fulfilling our Lord’s specific commands in our worldwide missionary work?

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 91-97

Part 3
BAPTISM—II

What connection did Jesus see between baptism and salvation?

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Jesus is here solemnly restating (note the repetition of “Verily, verily” from verse 3) the thought He had already expressed in verse 3, namely, that the new birth is essential for all who would see or enter the kingdom of God. He here reveals that the experience must cover two distinct but closely related stages—new birth by water baptism and new birth by the Holy Spirit. The interlocking of the two is emphasized in the Greek by the union of “water and spirit” in one phrase without any definite article for either noun. Christian teaching and experience reveal that the Spirit’s part in the new birth, and therefore in salvation, must come before baptism to give the rite value and must follow immersion in order to sustain its effect and blessing.

What additional scriptural authority do we have for regarding baptism as more than a picturesque ceremony? Rom. 6:3, 4.

The secular mind would see no more in baptism than an act of purification. The informed Christian sees in the ordinance a symbol of God’s most mighty deed, which centered on the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son. This makes the ceremony holy, clothing it with a spiritual meaning that goes beyond the physical and visible act. It testifies that the participant has died to the old life, that he has been buried, and that a new person rises from the baptismal water to live a new life in union with Christ.

“That the rite of Christian baptism is simply a symbol and does not convey divine grace, is evident throughout the NT. Unless a man believes in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:37; cf. Rom. 10:9) and repents of sin (Acts 2:38; cf. ch. 19:18), baptism can be of no value to him. In other words, there is no saving power in the rite itself, apart from faith in the heart of the one receiving the rite. From these considerations it is clear that infant baptism is a meaningless procedure so far as the salvation of the child is concerned. Baptism can become meaningful only when the child is old enough to understand salvation, faith, and repentance.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 298.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the memory of my own baptismal experience?

FURTHER STUDY

Col. 3:1-6 and Bible encyclopedias on “Baptism”

**Part 4
THE LAST
SUPPER**

Immediately prior to Christ's passion, for which annual ceremony did the disciples prepare? For what purpose?

"His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover" (Mark 14:16). (Read also verses 12, 13.)

For more than a thousand years, God's chosen people had been celebrating their deliverance from Egyptian slavery and keeping the Passover as the Lord had commanded. The heart of the observance was the slain lamb, the use of its blood to identify Israelitish homes, and the eating of the roast flesh immediately before flight from Egypt. (See Ex. 12:3-17.) Jesus Himself must have shared in some 18 such anniversaries during His human lifetime; and now, as faithful Jews, He and His disciples prepared for what the Master alone knew would be His last Passover supper. (For the chronology of this supper, see *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 532-537.)

What application did Jesus make of the Passover meal? Mark 14:22-25.

He who, on the eve of His Palestinian ministry, had been introduced to His fellow countrymen as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), was about to fulfill His mission. It was eminently fitting, then, that this fulfillment should come at the time of the observance of the type, the Passover. The tragedy was that its true significance did not then dawn on His followers' minds. Only later did they see that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

"Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages. . . .

"It is the means by which his great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have we been delivered as effectively from the slavery of sin as were the Israelites from Egyptian bondage?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 652-661

**Part 5
THE LORD'S
SUPPER**

What preparatory service had the Saviour instituted prior to celebrating the last Passover with His disciples?

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:4, 5).

Blessing awaits those who meditate upon the service of foot washing. The ceremony should be observed thoughtfully, repentantly, humbly, sympathetically, lovingly, and in true fraternity of spirit. It should be observed with insight into our own and our partner's needs, remembering the quality of love that Christ brought into His own washing of His followers' feet. There is more opportunity for blessing when observance takes place in small groups unpressured by space and time, with each pair of partners enjoying spiritual leisure to savor the uplift that comes from bending low in loving service.

How did Jesus sanctify the bread and wine of the Passover supper? Matt. 26: 26-29.

In chapter 72 of *The Desire of Ages*, pages 652-661, Ellen G. White employs at least seven distinctive titles for the second service held in the upper room. After reference to "two great festivals" it is called "the memorial of His great sacrifice," "the ordinance of the Lord's Supper," "the sacramental service," "the administration of the sacrament," "the communion service," and "the holy communion."

The communion emblems received special attention from our Lord. The bread He blessed and broke, distributing a portion to each disciple; for the wine He gave thanks (Greek *eucharisteō*, "to give thanks," whence the word *Eucharist*); and He passed the cup around that each might drink from it. How precious would be the apostles' remembrance of that holy occasion!

"These emblems [the bread and wine] Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 653.

THINK IT THROUGH

As we celebrate holy communion, how can we share in the sense of grateful awe that came to the first participants as they reviewed the experience?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 642-651

Part 6
IN MEMORIAM

Let us now reverently review the description of the Lord's Supper as recorded by Paul in A.D. 57, about 26 years after the Saviour introduced the service in Jerusalem (A.D. 31). 1 Cor. 11:23-29.

1. Paul's account was given in the setting of strife in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:17-22). It represents his appeal to the church for unity and *koinōnia*—"communion" or "fellowship" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).

2. He was here recording what he had already given the church verbally, namely, that which he had "received of the Lord."

3. The setting for the most holy of all services was the night Jesus was betrayed. The reaction to the sad fact would be a new declaration of loyalty, a strengthening of unity among disciples.

4. Christ is calm against the background of His impending cruel death. He gives thanks (*eucharisteō*) for the bread which takes the place of the Passover lamb, which is no longer needed now that the antitype, the Lamb of God, is offering Himself for the sins not only of Israel but of the whole world.

5. Christ breaks the bread, symbolizing the wounding of His own body on the cross. As in the foot washing, so in the Supper itself: the Master serves the servants. He distributes the emblem of His bodily sacrifice, telling them that He is making the sacrifice for their sakes and bidding them continue the practice in remembrance of His redemptive ministry. Could they ever forget?

6. He then similarly serves the cup, that is, the wine in the common cup, as the emblem of His blood, so soon to be spilled on their behalf. He then reveals that it "is the new testament" or the "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31:31-34 at last—after centuries of the shedding of animal blood as a type—ratified by the lifeblood of the Sinless Sacrifice. As with the bread, this sharing, too, is to be repeated in remembrance of what He is about to do.

7. The sharing of the bread and wine is to be more than a refreshing observance. It is to be a proclamation of His redeeming death and of His intention to return and gather them into His Father's kingdom (Matt. 26:29).

In one fleeting lesson we can only touch the fringes of meaning found in this sacred service. Each celebration will, if we earnestly request it, yield deeper, richer revelations of God's love for us as shown in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why resolve never willingly to miss sharing in the regular celebration of the Lord's Supper?



12. Christian Witness

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isa. 43:10).

The need for and the appointment of godly witnesses is as old as Adam. After expulsion from Eden he must have witnessed continually concerning his origin, the sinless time spent in the garden, his sin and its pardon, the promise of a Redeemer made to Eve and himself, and the early days outside when they laid foundations for religious practices that kept open the communication between themselves and their Creator.

Thereafter, all the patriarchs and their successors witnessed to aspects of truth that had meaning for their times. Noah spent 120 years fulfilling his responsibility; Abraham testified to his God with varying degrees of faith; Joseph did noble work under extremely difficult conditions; Moses bore witness before Pharaoh and among his own people for 40 trying years.

Then follows a mixture of men and women who, in widely differing ways, attested to the reality and goodness of the Almighty—Ruth, Elijah, Elisha, Naaman, Jonah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, and Malachi—last in the succession of Old Testament prophets—and John the Baptist, who witnessed to Messiah Himself.

We might truly say, adapting Acts 14:17, that even in the darkest days God has never left Himself without witnesses to His power, His purposes, and His love. For this we should be truly grateful, for sad would be the day if no voice should testify to the One who upholds the universe.

The dynamic influence of the Son made New Testament times rich in bold and faithful witnesses to the love of God in Christ, and in the following 20 centuries the Lord has never been without courageous representatives. Now, prior to His return, He needs a multitude who will witness to His redemptive power, both by word and by life, that citizens for His kingdom might be made ready for His coming.

It is our privilege to have the royal words of our memory verse spoken to us today!

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Essential Qualification**
(Matt. 10:32)
2. **The First Witnesses**
(John 1:41)
3. **Witnesses to Miracles**
(Mark 5:19)
4. **Secret of Witnessing**
(2 Cor. 5:14)
5. **How to Witness**
(Matt. 5:16)
6. **Christian Witness**
(Acts 26:18)

**Part 1
ESSENTIAL
QUALIFICATION****In His evangelistic instruction to the Twelve, what promise did Jesus make to those who would publicly acknowledge Him as Lord?****“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).**

At first sight this might appear a commonplace statement—a bargain struck between two parties: you speak up for me, and I will speak up for you. But the setting for Christ’s words forbids such an easy analysis. He has commissioned His disciples (verses 1-4) and instructed them in their mission (verses 5-15), forewarned them of its often dangerous nature (verses 16-28), and now acquaints them with a law. Their confession—their public acknowledgement of Him as their Lord and Saviour—will enable Him to acknowledge them as His own before His heavenly Father. They will have declared themselves to be His followers, His servants, His representatives; they will have suffered for loyalty to His cause.

The day will come when Christ will be proud to testify in God’s presence that His disciples have been faithful ministers and are worthy of being with Him eternally. But there are two sides to the picture. Those who publicly deny Him cannot then expect Him to claim them as His own, for He must be truthful and say, “I never knew you: depart from me” (Matt. 7:23). Confession of or witnessing to the lordship of Christ is therefore a matter of life or death.

What was an essential qualification for apostleship? Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 21, 22.

Christ bequeathed to His disciples the task of continuing the work that He had begun. They were to testify to the miracle of the incarnation as “eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16), observers of His sinless life, His sacrificial death, His triumphant resurrection, and His glorious ascension. This was then their lifelong calling. The New Testament shows how humbly willing they were to accept this task as soon as the cloud had received their beloved Master out of their sight (Acts 1:9; Luke 24:51-53).

THINK IT THROUGH**Try to grasp the splendor and awesomeness of the responsibility that came to the disciples after the ascension.****FURTHER STUDY***The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 27-34

**Part 2
THE FIRST
WITNESSES**

After John the Baptist's testimony concerning the Lamb of God (John 1:29), who first bore witness to Jesus as the Messiah?

"He [Andrew] first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:41).

The Baptist's inspired example in testifying to the divinity and office of our Lord quickly bore fruit in the transfer of two of his own disciples to the group that formed around the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The two who left the Baptist to follow Jesus were Andrew and John. The former became the first Christian missionary as he testified, "We have found the Messiah"—which confident declaration has been termed, "this great Eureka" (from the Greek *heurékamen*, "we have found").

One day later, what further personal witness was given by one who had already been directly recruited by Jesus? John 1:43-45.

The spiritual magnetism that flowed from Jesus fires Philip to find Nathanael and to announce, "We have found him." But his confidence seems to have fallen short of Andrew's. He does not boldly announce the Messiah; rather, he contents himself by referring to the One of whom Moses and the prophets had written—"Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (verse 45)—stressing the humanity rather than the divinity of the newfound Leader. But the witness bore good fruit. After some hesitation, Nathanael acknowledged the Man from Nazareth to be "the Son of God" (verse 49). It would be unfair to expect a full understanding of Jesus' nature at a first meeting, but both Philip and Nathanael made a commendable beginning, and both proved to be faithful apostles. Such was the fruitage of this early personal witness by one to another.

What effect did her discovery of Jesus have on the Samaritan woman at Sychar? John 4:28-30, 39-42.

The woman had the greatest of blessings in a long personal interview with the Messiah. She immediately bore witness to the Stranger, speaking with such fervor that many of her fellow townspeople believed on Him, while others were convicted "because of his own word" (John 4:41).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the common factor in these three witnessing events? What can we learn from them concerning the science of witnessing?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 138-143, 191-195

Part 3
WITNESS TO
MIRACLES

When the healed madman asked to remain with Christ, what did Jesus tell him to do?

"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19).

Mark and Luke (Luke 8:27) mention one demoniac only, but Matthew (Matt. 8:28) speaks of two. The three writers record the request to remain with the Healer and that Christ gave the commission, instead, to share news of the cure with friends. "The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to preach the gospel in the region of Decapolis. For a few moments only these men had been privileged to hear the teachings of Christ. Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears. . . . But they bore in their own persons the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 340.

When the greatest of all miracles took place, how did those who first learned of it respond?

The most notable proclaimers of the resurrection were the following people:

Mary Magdalene (John 20:18)

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Matt. 28:1, 7-10)

Peter (Luke 24:34)

Cleopas and friend at Emmaus (Luke 24:13, 33-35)

At first, there were mixed reactions to the amazing, unbelievable news that the crucified Jesus had risen from His tomb; but when Mary Magdalene personally met Him in the garden and other meetings followed, doubt began to disappear. (See John 20:20.)

Ere long, the once-frightened group, empowered by the Spirit, gave bold witness to the truth of the resurrection. Peter first proclaimed it at Pentecost, others followed, and Saul, having met the Resurrected One, preached that "he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). And so it has ever been—those who have experienced the truth of the resurrection have vigorously witnessed to its reality and its redeeming power.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have we personally experienced spiritual renewal by an abiding belief in the power of the resurrection?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 60-69

**Part 4
SECRET OF
WITNESSING****What was the driving power behind Paul's tireless witness?**

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5:14).

A moment's thought reveals two possible interpretations of the phrase "the love of Christ"—it refers either to the love which Christ has for us, or the love which we have for Christ, or both meanings are valid. But the significance of these few words is best discovered in the context of this well-known verse, and for that one needs to pick up the thread of thought in 2 Corinthians 4:1.

Paul has received a commission (compare Acts 9:15, 16), which he fulfills by openly sharing the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:2, 4) which had illumined his own life (verses 5, 6). Such sharing was only done at great personal cost (verses 8-12), but he willingly paid the price because he knew the value of the eternal in contrast to the temporal (verses 16-18). Knowledge that all must appear in judgment (2 Cor. 5:10) drives him to address his appeal to all men (verse 11). Indeed, the love of Christ and the knowledge that He died for all "leaves us no choice" (verse 14, NEB). Those who share this knowledge should no longer live for themselves, but for Christ, who died and rose again (verse 15).

The climax to this close-knit reasoning is reached in verses 18-21, where Paul shares with the Corinthians and with us his understanding of the redeeming love of God revealed in Christ's ministry. It is this that impels Paul's own evangelistic witness. We, in turn, shall only be fired for similar witness when a similar love possesses us. Therein lies the secret of genuine evangelism. When we find it, we shall say, with Peter and John, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). "No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. . . .

"Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 141, 142.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we overcome the staleness that creeps through our understanding of what God has done for us in His Son?

FURTHER STUDY

Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1100-1102

**Part 5
HOW TO
WITNESS**

What did Jesus recommend as an effective and essential way of witnessing, and to what purpose?

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

This counsel arises from the giving of the Beatitudes (verses 1-12) and the observation that true Christians are the salt and the light of the world (verses 13-15). But even the brightest of lights is useless unless its beams are allowed to illumine its surroundings. Jesus is thus exhorting us so to live the truly godly life that our conduct, especially “our good works,” will bring glory to God. The persuasive power of the dedicated life that leads others to follow the same Lord brings our Father the greatest glory of all, for it increases the number of those who adore and serve Him.

“Let us remember that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, and that a cheap Christian character works more harm in the world than the character of a worldling. Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life. Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 21.

In addition to the living of godly lives, what worldwide form of witness are Christians called to render? Mark 16:15.

It was by scattering that the gospel was first carried beyond the boundry of Jerusalem, and it is by this same law that the gospel will be spread today. The quality of believers' lives is a first means of sharing the good news; but if no other steps are taken, we shall not be fulfilling the divine command. We must “go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” either by personal service beyond our local setting or by sending others who are able to go where we cannot. “All who are ordained unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. The same longing of soul that He felt for the saving of the lost is to be manifest in them. . . . All upon whom God’s blessings have been bestowed are to respond by actual service; every gift is to be employed for the advancement of His kingdom.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 16.

THINK IT THROUGH

How am I going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 19-23

**Part 6
CHRISTIAN
WITNESS**

For what comprehensive purpose did the Lord personally call Saul of Tarsus to be His witness?

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

The real meaning of this verse is best grasped by reading verses 16 and 17, which show that Christ appeared to Saul to make him “a minister and a witness” to the Gentiles for their eternal salvation. This purpose is not restricted to the dramatic call that came to Saul, for “every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195. We, therefore, can be witnesses who will open eyes that are spiritually blind, turning them from the darkness of unbelief to the light of the gospel, from bondage to Satan to freedom in God. Such witness is able first to bring our friends pardon from sin and holiness of life, then a place in the kingdom of God.

“You are not to wait for great occasions or to expect extraordinary abilities before you go to work for God. You need not have a thought of what the world will think of you. If your daily life is a testimony to the purity and sincerity of your faith, and others are convinced that you desire to benefit them, your efforts will not be wholly lost.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 83.

What twofold result will flow from our fulfillment of the high calling given us by God? 1 Peter 2:9-12.

Those whom God has chosen to be His own people and who have themselves responded to that choice will (1) display in their own characters the virtues of the One who has called them out of spiritual darkness (verse 9) and (2) find that nonbelievers observing Christians' faithful adherence to their declared principles (verse 11) will themselves be led to glorify God (verse 12).

Witness that bears such welcome fruitage must be of a high order. It is possible for all who faithfully fulfill that high calling by living Christlike lives.

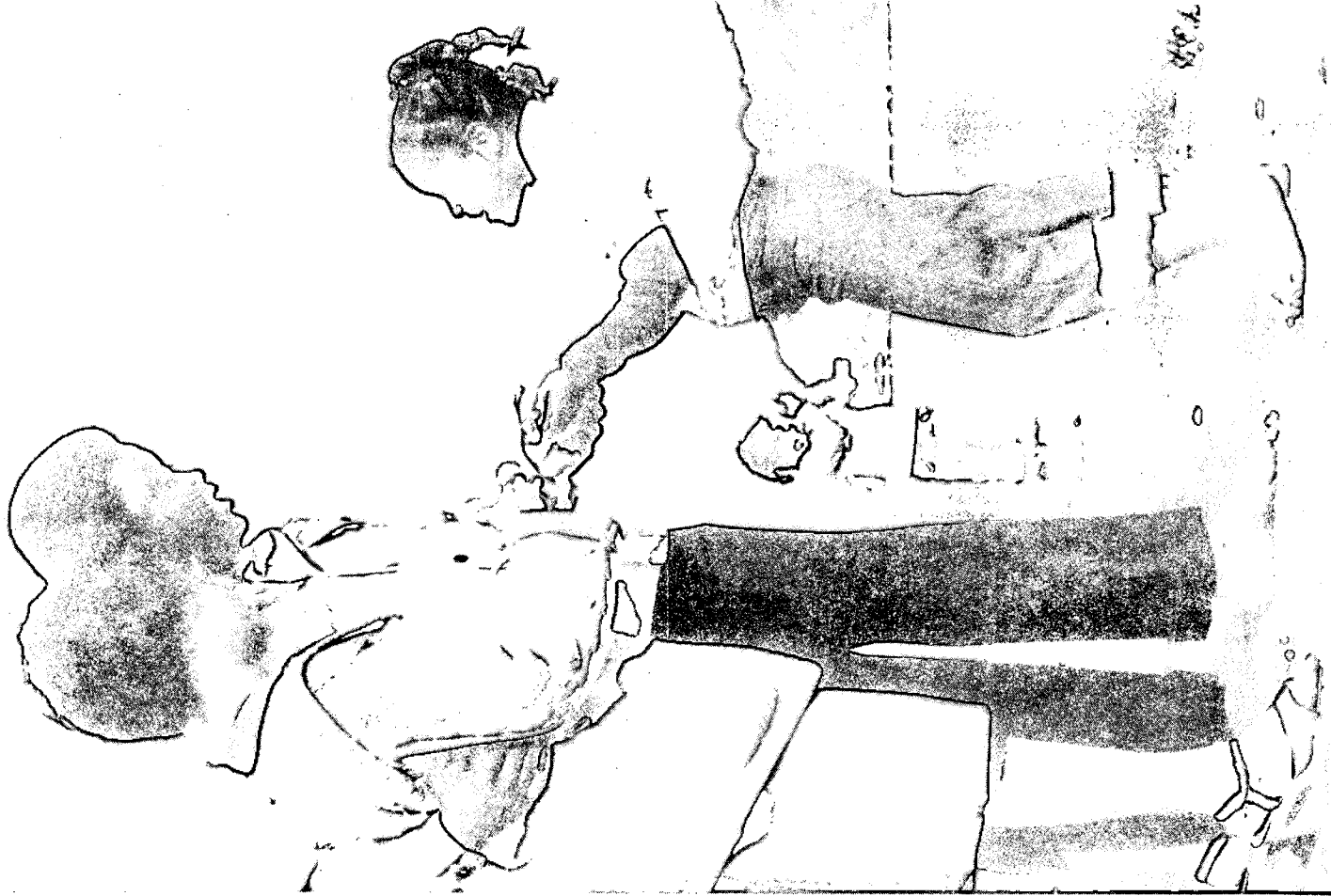
The picture painted by Peter is really a portrait of the Christian that should be produced by daily adherence to the total body of doctrine. Unless profession of belief results in such a life, that profession will not lead to salvation. This is in no sense salvation by works—it concerns the presence or absence of fruitage from our beliefs.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I and my fellow Sabbath School class members fulfill God's purpose in calling us to be His people?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 150-154



13. The Life That Counts

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (2 Peter 3:18).

What more bitter disappointment can there be for any parents than to see their newborn babe, perfect in feature and form, apparently possessing every faculty, and then to see him fail to respond in normal growth? What a parental tragedy is that!

Yet our divine Parent must often face such disappointment in His earthly children. He sees them born, baptized, and taking their first spiritual steps; then they stagnate, standing still. Although going through the motions of life, they remain stunted. In respect to religious growth, they are no more than undeveloped infants.

Not one of us has reached his possible spiritual potential. The best of us must be pygmies in contrast to the giants we might be. But God loves us still!

The apostle Peter gives us the counsel we all need, in the last of his words that have been preserved

for us. He exhorts us to *grow*, and that is the theme that undergirds this study at the close of two quarter's lessons. He who does not grow is on his way to death. He who continues to grow has prospects for eternal life.

Peter's advice is couched in words that bid us to keep on growing, never satisfied with past progress, always developing our spiritual powers. We are to grow not only in an understanding of the principal doctrines of our Christian faith, but, specifically, to keep on growing in *grace*. This is primarily a divine attribute, "the grace of God" that makes salvation possible; but it is also a quality we can acquire as we develop spiritually. We are also to grow in *knowledge*, particularly in knowing our Lord. Such knowledge must come not only from books or from others, but from a personal acquaintance with the Redeemer, with each day adding to our experience of His perfect nature and His transforming power in our own lives. Growth in these two areas must be continual. Then we shall be numbered among those who give to the Saviour "glory both now and for ever."

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Our Inner Life
(Isa. 26:3)
2. Our Aspiring Life
(Matt. 5:6)
3. Our Family Life
(Matt. 6:11)
4. Our Social Life
(Col. 3:9, 10)
5. Our Quality of Life
(Col. 3:12, 13)
6. Our Eternal Life
(Matt. 16:24)

Part 1
OUR INNER
LIFE

How may we obtain the peace of mind so much sought after in these troubled days?

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3).

The prophet proposes two steps to serenity—first, staying, fixing, or reposing the mind on the Eternal; second, trusting in the Lord. He who takes these steps is assured of mental and spiritual peace. He is encouraged (verse 4) to trust in the Lord at all times because the Eternal is the Rock of Ages and well able to bring peace of mind to those who commit their ways to Him. The New Testament version of this promise can be found in Philippians 4:6, 7.

Brother Lawrence, a remarkable lay brother who joined a religious community in Paris in 1666, described Isaiah's program as "The Practice of the Presence of God." "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."—*The Practice of the Presence of God*, 1977 ed. (London: Mowbrays), p. 23.

By what means does God intend that we may renew our physical and spiritual strength? Isa. 40:31.

This counsel must be tried to be trusted. Those who have waited on the Lord in prayer have found new reserves of strength that have hitherto been unsuspected. They have risen from their knees refreshed and have been able to do exploits that were earlier considered impossible. This "practice" is not acquired in a day. It is realized only after persistent observance. But a host of Christians will testify to its reality and reliability, and we can join their ranks by following their example.

"All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. . . . When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' . . . This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 58.

THINK IT THROUGH

During a normal working day, how often do I "wait upon the Lord"?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Privilege of Prayer," pp. 93-104

Part 2
OUR ASPIRING
LIFE

What benediction does the Saviour pronounce upon those who cherish high spiritual goals?

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

Blessed are those who feel hungry and thirsty for the right, for they shall be satisfied. Those spoken of in this beatitude must have a finely honed conscience that leads them to want that righteousness or justice, or what is right. This is not often a comfortable doctrine. It is easier to eat and drink the world's fare than to aspire to the finer heavenly diet. But it is possible to develop an appetite for whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8). Much depends on the food which we feed our souls. If physical diet affects our spiritual appetites—and it does—our mental food has an even greater effect on our spiritual health. We must set our affections "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). And in the matter of "happiness," or "blessedness," it is well to remember this truth: "Happiness is not, essentially, something we have, but something we are, though we become what we are by doing."—Gerald Vann, *The Divine Pity* (New York: Fontana Books, 1962), p. 94.

In the light of His faultless knowledge, what counsel on "first things" does Jesus give His followers? Matt. 6:33.

For most of us this is a hard doctrine, for "the things which are seen" so easily claim our attention and affection; the unseen seems so far away and easy to neglect. But herein lies the heart of the Christian philosophy of life—the seen is temporal because "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof"; the unseen is eternal, and "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17). Christ does not ignore everyday needs, but He assigns them their rightful place while the Christian seeks *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And this, when we pause to think it through, leaves no area of our lives untouched.

"Those who are willing to make any sacrifice for eternal life, will have it; and it will be worth suffering for, worth crucifying self for, and sacrificing every idol for. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory swallows up everything and eclipses every earthly pleasure."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 126.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does my present daily program reveal about my spiritual interests? Are they temporal, or eternal? Where does God and His concept of right stand in my list?

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Beatitudes" (Matt. 5:13), pp. 34-38

Part 3
OUR FAMILY
LIFE

Today's study embraces us all, married and single, for we all have family ties, distant though some of them may seem to be. We all have had a father and mother; we all are children, growing or grown. And if we now stand without immediate close family connections, we create our own familial world for domestic purposes and in addition rub shoulders with other family units. How, then, shall we order this daily responsibility of family living?

What is the first request framed for us in our Lord's "family" prayer?

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

It is by no accident that these familiar words find their place early in our Master's model prayer. Just before them, He gives the petition that God's will should be done on earth as it is done in heaven (verse 10). Then He follows them with the request for pardon in respect to neighborly relations (verse 12). The prime reference in verse 11, then, is to spiritual food, and that on a daily basis. Since we do not go to church each day, this calls for taking that food at home; and this calls for "family" worship, with father, mother, and children if that is how we live, or by ourselves if our family unit has been dispersed by time or circumstance or if we otherwise live alone.

It is hardly possible to overstress the importance of family worship in our daily spiritual life. There can be only one competitor for first place there, namely, the personal devotions of each member of the family. After that, family worship holds the central position. Its faithful observance, morning and evening, keeps the parents in daily touch with the Infinite and opens the children's hearts to the converting influence of the Holy Spirit.

What should be the holy ambition of each Christian parent? Eph. 6:4.

After the very necessary negative admonition against goading children to resentment by harsh discipline, Paul offers parents this positive counsel: "Give them the instruction, and the correction, which belong to a Christian upbringing" (Eph. 6:4, NEB). Happy the family where this advice is followed!

THINK IT THROUGH

What is our experience in family worship? How can we improve its quality? What suggestions for worship at home can we share with our fellow class members?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 392-394

Part 4
OUR SOCIAL
LIFE

What standard of honesty is expected of Christians?

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:9, 10).

Christian doctrine holds before its followers an extremely high moral and social standard that comes from the character of Christ, who is truth personified. If we then “be risen with Christ” (verse 1), we shall not wish to lie “one to another,” for such conduct is alien to the new men and women who are ever gaining a fresh personal knowledge of Christ until they themselves take on their Creator’s image.

How will our new life affect our social relations, and how shall we find the spiritual resources to achieve the Christian ideal? Col. 3:11-13.

In verse 11 Paul is swiftly covering the population of the world in which the early Christians lived. By “Greek” he refers to non-Jews from a national-political point of view, as distinct from the chosen people. “Circumcision” and “uncircumcision” cares for religious differences; “Barbarian” cares for linguistic distinctions; “Scythian” covers those outside the bounds of civilization. Having thus dealt with various classes into which the human family was then divided, he formulates the Christian response to these sin-induced divisions—“Christ is all, and in all,” that is, Christ identifies Himself with each and all of these sections of human society. It is now for us to apply this undiluted Christian approach to our present world situation. This is not easy. Some find it the hardest test of their religious sincerity. We all need the fine qualities listed in verses 12 and 13 in order to reach the ideal conduct.

“Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. . . . [He] came to break down every wall of partition. . . .

“The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 46.

THINK IT THROUGH

Where shall we find the love and grace that are needed to translate into practice the Christian ideals presented in today’s lesson?

FURTHER STUDY

John Oxenham’s hymn, “In Christ There Is No East nor West,” *The Church Hymnal*, no. 436

Part 5 **In view of the high standard required of Christians in all**
OUR QUALITY **aspects of daily life, what Christlike qualities should we deliber-**
OF LIFE **ately cultivate?**

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another” (Col. 3:12, 13).

Here we again meet the biblical picture of clothing ourselves with clean garments. (Compare Isa. 52:1; 61:10; Matt. 22:11-14.) But we must also heed the counsel not to use high-flown sentiments as a cloak to disguise our true natures (John 15:22; 1 Thess. 2:5; 1 Peter 2:16). We are to be genuine, “the elect of God, holy and beloved.” We are to possess compassionate hearts, a hard-hearted Christian being an impossible kind of creature. As John Ruysbroek, the fourteenth-century Flemish mystic, has said: “Be kind, be kind, and you will be saints.” That is not the whole truth, for sainthood requires much more than kindness; *but* saints must be kind! They must also be humble, meek, patient, tolerant of others’ weaknesses, and ready to forgive. As always, Christ is the model.

To which three virtues does Paul give exceptional emphasis? Col. 3:14, 15.

Beyond dispute, first place is ever reserved for “charity,” or love. Without it other spiritual qualities are of little avail (compare 1 Cor. 13:13), for it binds all other good qualities together. We should also allow the peace of *Christ* (better supported than “of God”) to reign in our hearts and exert its unifying influence in our relations, and we should always be a grateful people.

How may we attain these high standards? Col. 3:16, 17.

These suggestions are closely associated with worship, both formal and otherwise. We should so study Christ’s Word that it will make its home in our hearts; we should wisely teach and counsel one another; we should sing psalms (might we do more of this?), hymns, and sacred songs, not merely with our lips, but also in our hearts, as expressions of gratitude to the Father sung in Christ’s name. What a stimulating program! But how easy to forget.

THINK IT THROUGH **In what ways do our doctrinal beliefs enrich the quality of**
our daily spiritual lives?

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 312-318

Part 6
OUR ETERNAL
LIFE

Contemplate Jesus' summary of the cost of discipleship.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

True Christianity is not a matter of assent to a set of doctrinal statements, though these are necessary in order to formulate belief. True Christianity, as its name implies, is Christ's way of life, a matter of Christlikeness, of bringing together those who reach out to be like their Master. The way is one of self-denial, not as a punishing exercise for gathering merit, but as an imitation of the example of the Lord who, "though he was rich, . . . became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9). Just as Jesus did not allow earthly considerations to interfere with the fulfillment of His mission, so he who follows Him must be willing to "deny himself, and take up his cross," whatever form that cross may take.

There are good reasons for this hard condition to discipleship (Matt. 16:25). If we expend our energies in "saving" our lives, we shall lose them, for true eternal life will slip from our grasp. If we are willing to renounce our own interests in order to promote those of Christ's cause and to follow Christ's example, denying ourselves as He did, then we shall find eternal life. Since eternal life is the farthest boundary beyond which none can pass, it is worthy of our most severe self-discipline, most dedicated service, deepest trust, and highest aspirations.

Since personal experience, human history, and biblical revelation show that we can in no wise save ourselves, to whom can we turn for salvation? Jude 24 and 25.

We bring our 26 weeks of doctrinal study to a close by humbly and gratefully addressing a reverent doxology to the One to whom all doctrine should point—the Eternal Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit. He and He alone has power to keep us from stumbling into sin, enabling us to stand not only faultless but blameless and exultingly happy in His presence. To Him, then, the only God who has saved us through our Lord Jesus Christ—to this one God be there ascribed glory, majesty, power, and authority in the past and through eternity. And may this praise be rendered by us as faithful members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in company with all the innumerable host of the redeemed, forever and ever. Amen.

THINK IT THROUGH

In which areas of Christian belief do I need to strengthen my knowledge and my practice?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 503-508

Lessons for 1st Quarter / 1982

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the first quarter of 1982 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is LAW, LOVE, AND LIFE.

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1. *What Love Is (1 Cor. 13:4, 6, 7)*
2. *What Love Is Not (1 Cor. 13:4-6)*
3. *When There Is No Love (1 Cor. 13:1-3)*
4. *True Love Is Timeless (1 Cor. 13:8)*
5. *Perfect Love (1 Cor. 13:9-12)*
6. *Faith, Hope, and Love (1 Cor. 13:13)*

Second Lesson

CONSCIENCE AND THE SPIRIT. Memory Text, Isa. 30:21

1. *The Inner Voice (Isa. 30:21)*
2. *"Voice" of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8)*
3. *Gift to All (Rom. 2:14, 15)*
4. *Good and Weak Consciences (1 Tim. 1:5)*
5. *Can Be Put Away (1 Tim. 1:19)*
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Polish	35,000,000	121	4,084	4,676
Swedish	8,433,000	56	3,655	4,241
West Nordic	9,253,429	128	9,181	7,815
DIVISION TOTALS	131,777,318	575	41,478	37,075

*Attached Field

Figures as of March 31, 1980