

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Second Half 2018

THIRD QUARTER

THE FIGHT OF FAITH

FOURTH QUARTER

“COME AND FOLLOW ME”

Published by the
General Conference
International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

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Review and editing of content
by the General Conference Ministerial Department

Translation, editing, and design
by the General Conference Publishing Department

American Union edition designed, printed, and distributed by
Religious Liberty Publishing Assn.
9999 E. Mississippi Avenue
Denver, CO 80247
www.sda1888.org

Cover: © Shutterstock
Back Cover: www.worldatlas.com

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INTRODUCTION

At the moment when man yielded to sin and became a slave of evil, a conflict ensued that has continued ever since. From one generation to another, the forces of good and evil have contended with each other with mixed results, awaiting the time when the great Conqueror and Saviour would appear. Referring to the enmity and stern conflicts that would characterize the story of God's people and the victory of God's Son, the prophecy given in Eden stated: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Genesis 3:15.

The first of the woman's seed to fall victim to the violence of the enemy was innocent Abel, followed by a long line of others. Over the centuries, they "were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Hebrews 11:35-37. Nevertheless, despite the bitter conflict and suffering they endured, the report is that they were victorious and by faith obtained promises, despite enmity, opposition, and conflict.

"In all ages," writes the Spirit of prophecy, "the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one." —*The Great Controversy*, p. ix.

"... When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son,..." Galatians 4:4. He overcame the forces of evil on every front. From the manger to the desert and from Gethsemane to Golgotha, in all circumstances, cities, and villages, there were clashes with the forces of evil; but the Son of God was victorious. Full of joy, He could say, "I have overcome the world." John 16:33. Thanks to Him and His blood, we can also be overcomers. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Revelation 12:11.

"'These things I have spoken unto you,' He said, 'that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' John 16:33. Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged; and the disciples were to show a faith of the same enduring nature. They were to work as He had worked, depending on Him for strength. Though their way would be obstructed by apparent impossibilities, yet by His grace they were to go forward, despairing of nothing and hoping for everything." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 23.

After the intense struggle won by the Master, the conflict continued for His disciples and His church. Indeed, the closer we come to the end, the more intense “the good fight of faith” will become. Scripture warns: “The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

“The condition of the world previous to the first appearing of Christ,” writes the Spirit of prophecy, “is a picture of the condition of the world just previous to His second advent. The same iniquity will exist; Satan manifests the same delusive power upon human minds.... He is securing his army of human agents to engage in the last conflict against the Prince of life, to overthrow the law of God, which is the foundation of His throne. Satan will work with miraculous presentations to confirm people in the belief that he is what he claims to be—the prince of this world—and that victory is his. He will turn his forces against those who are loyal to God; but though he may cause pain, distress, and human agony, he cannot defile the soul.... The people of God in these last days must expect to enter into the thick of the conflict, for the prophetic word says, ‘The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’” —(*Review and Herald*, October 29, 1895) *Christ Triumphant*, p. 259.

How can we face this battle? How can we be sure of victory? What armor should we wear? To these serious questions the reassuring answer is given: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” “Therefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:10, 11, 13.

May the Lord bless every student to learn the lessons necessary to have the whole armor of God, to fight valiantly, and to gain the promised reward.

*—The Brothers and sisters of the General Conference
and the Ministerial Department*

SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING FOR ESTABLISHING HEADQUARTERS

God bless your loving sacrifice for Him!

1

Sabbath, July 7, 2018

The Good Fight

“When we accepted Christ as our Redeemer, we accepted the condition of becoming laborers together with God. We made a covenant with Him to be wholly for the Lord; as faithful stewards of the grace of Christ, to labor for the upbuilding of His kingdom in the world. Every follower of Christ stands pledged to dedicate all his powers, of mind and soul and body, to Him who has paid the ransom money for our souls. We engaged to be soldiers, to enter into active service, to endure trials, shame, reproach, to fight the fight of faith, following the Captain of our salvation.” —*Evangelism*, p. 618.

A PERSONAL BATTLE

1. What counsel that is for every Christian did the apostle Paul give to Timothy?

1 TIMOTHY 6:12; 1:18, 19 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses....^{1:18}This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;^{1:19}Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.*

“The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose.

“No one will be borne upward without stern, persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves; no one else can fight our battles. Individually we are responsible for the issues of the struggle; though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land they could deliver neither son nor daughter by their righteousness.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 453.

2. What fight is every soul who decides to leave the enemy's camp inevitably involved in? How long will this conflict continue?

1 PETER 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

“No man can serve God without uniting against himself evil men and evil angels. Evil spirits will be put upon the track of every soul that seeks to join the ranks of Christ, for Satan wishes to recover the prey taken from his grasp. Evil men will give themselves over to believe strong delusions, that they may be damned. These men will put on the garments of sincerity and deceive, if possible, the very elect.” —(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 590) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 595.

“If Satan sees he is in danger of losing one soul, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. And when the individual is aroused to his danger, and, with distress and fervor, looks to Jesus for strength, Satan fears he shall lose a captive, and he calls a reinforcement of his angels to hedge in the poor soul, and form a wall of darkness around him, that heaven’s light may not reach him. But if the one in danger perseveres, and in helplessness and weakness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ, Jesus listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a reinforcement of those angels which excel in strength to deliver him....

“And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost.” —(*Review and Herald*, May 13, 1862) *Messages to Young People*, p. 53.

INDISPENSABLE STRENGTH AND GRACE TO DEFEND THE TRUTH

3. What is the dual nature of this battle?

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14 *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

1 TIMOTHY 4:10 *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*

“It is not enough to merely profess to believe the truth. All the soldiers of the cross of Christ virtually obligate themselves to enter the crusade against the adversary of souls, to condemn wrong and sustain righteousness.” —(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 329) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 254.

“When souls are converted their salvation is not yet accomplished. They then have the race to run; the arduous struggle is before them to do, what? ‘To fight the good *fight of faith*,’ to press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus. There is no release in this warfare; the battle is lifelong, and must be carried forward with determined energy proportionate to the value of the object you are in pursuit of, which is eternal life. Immense interests are here involved. We are made partakers of Christ’s self-sacrifice here in this life, and then we are assured that we shall be partakers of all its benefits in the future immortal life, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Think of this.” —*My Life Today*, p. 313.

4. What is absolutely indispensable?

HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

1 JOHN 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

“Faith is what you need. Do not let faith waver. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. It will be a severe fight, but fight it at any cost, for the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Put your hand in the hand of Christ. There are difficulties to be overcome, but angels that excel in strength will cooperate with the people of God. Face Zion, press your way to the city of solemnities. A glorious crown and a robe woven in the loom of heaven await the overcomer. Though Satan would cast his hellish shadow athwart your pathway and seek to hide from your view the mystic ladder that stretches from earth to the throne of God, on which ascend and descend the angels who are ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation, yet press your way upward, plant your feet on one round after another, and advance to the throne of the Infinite.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 462, 463.

5. What will God give every Christian soldier so he will be able stand?

PSALM 27:1; 28:7 *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?...^{28:7}The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:1 *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

“If the Christian feels his weakness, his inability, by putting his trust in God, he will find the grace of Christ sufficient for every emergency.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 260.

“The soldier of Christ must meet many forms of temptation, and resist and overcome them. The fiercer the conflict, the greater the supply of grace to meet the need of the soul.... The true Christian will understand what it means to pass through severe conflicts and trying experiences; but he will steadily increase in the grace of Christ to meet successfully the enemy of his soul.... The darkness will press upon his soul at times; but the true light will shine, the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness will dispel the gloom; and ... through the grace of Christ he will be enabled to be a faithful witness of the things which he has heard from the inspired messenger of God.... By thus communicating truth to others, the worker for Christ obtains a clearer view of the abundant provisions made for all, of the sufficiency of the grace of Christ for every time of conflict, sorrow, and trial.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 260.

“All our powers of soul, body, and spirit, must be engaged in the Christian warfare. We must look to Christ for strength and grace, and we shall gain the victory as surely as Jesus died for us....” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 115.

EXAMPLES FROM THE PAST

6. Of what do some examples in the Old Testament remind us? What did the believers achieve through firm faith in God?

HEBREWS 11:29-32 *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.³¹By faith the harlot Rahab perished*

not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. ³²And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.

“There are lessons for us to learn at this time from the experience of those who labored for God in past generations. How little we know of the conflicts and trials and labors of these men, as they fitted themselves to meet the armies of Satan. Putting on the whole armor of God, they were able to stand against the wiles of Satan....”

“These men who in the past gave themselves to God and to the uplifting of His cause were as true as steel to principle. They were men who would not fail nor be discouraged; men who, like Daniel, were full of reverence and zeal for God, full of noble purposes and aspirations. They were as weak and helpless as any of those who are now engaged in the work, but they put their whole trust in God. They had wealth, but it consisted of mind and soul culture. This every one may have who will make God first and last and best in everything. Although destitute of wisdom, knowledge, virtue, and power, we may receive all these if we will learn from Christ the lessons that it is our privilege to learn.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 33.

7. What will be the result of the fight of faith for those who, like the apostle Paul, endure faithfully to the end?

2 TIMOTHY 4:7, 8 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

“There is a rich and abundant promise to those who overcome. It is not enough to enter upon this warfare, we must pursue it to the end. We must know nothing of yielding. We must fight the good fight of faith to the very end. To the overcomer is promised the triumphal victory. ‘To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.’” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 361.

“If we are overcomers at last, there are battles for us to fight, and we will find that the flesh warreth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. It is for us to say which will triumph.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 211.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“We have before us a warfare—a lifelong conflict with Satan and his seductive temptations. The enemy will use every argument, every deception, to entangle the soul; and in order to win the crown of life, we must put forth earnest, persevering effort. We must not lay off the armor or leave the battlefield until we have gained the victory, and can triumph in our Redeemer. As long as we continue to keep our eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of our faith, we shall be safe. But our affections must be placed upon things above, not on things of the earth. By faith we must rise higher and still higher in the attainment of the graces of Christ. By daily contemplating His matchless charms, we must grow more and more into His glorious image. While we thus live in communion with Heaven, Satan will lay his nets for us in vain.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 104.

* * *

Captain of the Army

“In earnest, determined exercise as faithful soldiers, obeying the orders of the Captain of our salvation, there is genuine enjoyment such as can be obtained in no other employment. The peace of Christ will be in the heart of the faithful soldier. There is rest for the soul in wearing Christ’s yoke, in lifting Christ’s burdens. It seems a contradiction to say that there is no rest for the soul except that which is found in continuous and devoted service. But this is true. Happiness comes in willing, obedient service, where all the powers of our being are moving in happy, healthy, harmonious action in obeying our Captain’s orders. The more responsible the task assigned to Christ’s soldiers, the more the soul exults in the Saviour’s love and approval. The soul realizes a freedom in the performance of the weightiest and most taxing duties.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 346.

THE CAPTAIN GIVES THE ORDERS

1. Who leads the spiritual battle?

1 SAMUEL 17:47 *And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hands.*

2 CHRONICLES 20:15 *And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.*

PSALM 48:14 *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*

“The people whom God is leading must venture out upon His word. They must walk forward by faith. Truths have been committed to them which they must obey. The work of God is aggressive. No one can stand in a neutral position and yet be a soldier in the Lord’s army. God has commands for His people, and if they keep in close connection with Him, they will hear His voice, and will keep in step with their Captain. They will go forward in the conflict to fight the battles of the Lord. But those who place themselves in an indifferent, noncommittal position will gain no victories.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 339.

2. Who is the Representative of the Captain of the host?

JOHN 16:7, 13, 14 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.... ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. ¹⁴He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

“The children of God are cooperating with all the invisible host of light. And more than angels are in their ranks; the Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our mistakes and sins numerous, but forgiveness is for all who, with contrition of heart, will confess and forsake their sins. Angels of light are sent to render them all the help that is required.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 82.

THE CAPTAIN IS ALWAYS WITH HIS ARMY

3. Having all power and knowing that the battle would not be easy, what promise did Jesus give His disciples?

MATTHEW 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

JOHN 14:18 *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

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

4. How does the Lord intervene to save His disciples in response to faithful prayer?

PROVERBS 16:7 *When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

PSALM 34:7 *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

2 KINGS 6:15-17 *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? ¹⁶And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. ¹⁷And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.*

“The Captain of our salvation will strengthen His people for the conflict in which they must engage. How often when Satan has brought all his forces to bear against the followers of Christ, and death stares them in the face, have earnest prayers put up in faith brought the Captain of the Lord’s host upon the field of action and turned the tide of battle and delivered the oppressed.

“Now is the time when we should closely connect with God, that we may be hid when the fierceness of His wrath is poured upon the sons of men.” –(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 31, 32) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 137.

“Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ’s patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril....

“The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it.” –*The Great Controversy* (1911), pp. 630, 633.

SPIRIT OF SERVICE

5. With what spirit will His soldiers fight and labor for those who stand under Jesus’ banner?

1 PETER 4:10 *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

“And so it is in the army of Prince Emmanuel. Our General, who has never lost a battle, expects willing, faithful service from every one who has enlisted under His banner. In the closing controversy now waging between the forces for good and the hosts of evil, He expects all, laymen as well as ministers, to take part. All who have enlisted as His soldiers are to render faithful service as minutemen, with a keen sense of the responsibility resting upon them individually.” –*Gospel Workers*, p. 351.

“Those selected for the work of God should be men and women who are faithful and true, workers whom God can instruct, who will impart what they receive, proclaiming without reserve the will of God, pointing out the better way to all with whom they come in contact. New men and women in Christ are born to conflict, toil, and labor, born to engage in the good fight of faith. There is ever within their reach a power by which they may obtain the victory at every onset, power that will enable them to be more than conquerors over the difficulties they meet.” –*Christ Triumphant*, p. 309.

6. What characterizes the spirit of those who follow the heavenly Captain?

LUKE 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

“But this doing the duty of a soldier means work. It is not always just such work as we would choose. Outward inconveniences, difficulties, and trials have to be borne by the soldiers of Jesus. There is a constant warfare to be maintained

against the evils and inclinations of our own natural hearts. We must not pick and choose the work most agreeable to us; for we are Christ's soldiers, under His discipline, and we are not to study our own pleasure. We must fight the battles of the Lord manfully. We have enemies to conquer that would gain the control of all our powers.

"Self-will in us must die; Christ's will alone must be obeyed. The soldier in Christ's army must learn to endure hardness, deny self, take up the cross, and follow where his Captain leads the way. There are many things to do which are trying to human nature, and painful to flesh and blood. This work of self-subduing requires determined, continuous effort. In fighting the good fight of faith, obtaining precious victories, we are laying hold of eternal life." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 346.

THE CAPTAIN HAS OVERCOME THE ENEMY

7. What is a great encouragement to those who fight the battle?

JOHN 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

REVELATION 17:14 *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

"Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, 'It is finished.' John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost.

"To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, 'It is finished,' had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 758.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"What is our path to heaven? Is it a road with every inviting convenience? No, it is a path that is narrow and apparently inconvenient; it is a path of conflict, of trial, of tribulation and suffering. Our Captain, Jesus Christ, has hid nothing from us in regard to the battles we are to fight. He opens the map before us and shows us the way." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 243, 244.

"The principalities and powers of heaven are watching the warfare which, under apparently discouraging circumstances, God's servants are carrying on. New conquests are being achieved, new honors won, as the Christians, rallying round the banner of their Redeemer, go forth to fight the good fight of faith. All the heavenly angels are at the service of the humble, believing people of God; and as the Lord's army of workers here below sing their songs of praise, the choir above join with them in ascribing praise to God and to His Son.

"We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angels. It would be well to remember that every true child of God has the cooperation of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and

claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim, and angels that excel in strength, stand at God's right hand, 'all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' Hebrews 1:14." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 154.

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3

Sabbath, July 21, 2018

The Lord's Army

"We are soldiers of Christ on the field of battle, and we cannot expect to have an easy time. We must obey the orders of our Captain. He is leading His army on to victory. All that we have to do is to keep close watch of Him, and obey His orders, and we shall be successful in fighting the battles of the Lord." –Manuscript 8, October 24, 1885.

"The privates in an army must obey orders. They often have to perform duties, the purpose of which they cannot see. They are sometimes brought into places of danger when no reason for the move is given them. So in the army of Christ; we must have confidence in our great Commander, we must rely implicitly upon His guidance, and He will bring us safe out of every danger, victorious through every conflict." –*Signs of the Times*, September 7, 1891.

EFFORTS AND SUFFERING

1. If a recruit wants to become a good soldier, what must he be ready to face?

2 TIMOTHY 2:3; 4:5 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ....^{4:5}But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

"We are soldiers of Christ; and those who enlist in His army are expected to do difficult work, work which will tax their energies to the utmost. We must understand that a soldier's life is one of aggressive warfare, of perseverance and endurance. For Christ's sake we are to endure trials. We are not engaged in mimic battles." –*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 37.

"Let us remember that we are laborers together with God. We are not wise enough to work by ourselves. God has made us His stewards, to prove us and to try us, even as He proved and tried ancient Israel. He will not have His army composed of undisciplined, un sanctified, erratic soldiers, who would misrepresent His order and purity." –*Evangelism*, p. 95.

FULL COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

2. What is expected from every soldier who enlists in the army of Prince Emmanuel? Who is part of His army?

2 TIMOTHY 2:4, 5 *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. ⁵And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*

“The strength of an army is measured largely by the efficiency of the men in the ranks. A wise general instructs his officers to train every soldier for active service. He seeks to develop the highest efficiency on the part of all. If he were to depend on his officers alone he could never expect to conduct a successful campaign. He counts on loyal and untiring service from every man in his army. The responsibility rests largely upon the men in the ranks.

“And so it is in the army of Prince Immanuel. Our General, who has never lost a battle, expects willing, faithful service from everyone who has enlisted under His banner. In the closing controversy now waging between the forces for good and the hosts of evil He expects all, laymen as well as ministers, to take part. All who have enlisted as His soldiers are to render faithful service as minutemen, with a keen sense of the responsibility resting upon them individually.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 29.

TALENTS

3. What does God give everyone who joins His army?

ROMANS 12:6-8 *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; ⁷Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ⁸Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

1 CORINTHIANS 7:7 *For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*

“God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 209.

“Our Lord designed that His church should reflect to the world the fullness and sufficiency that we find in Him. His children derive their enjoyment from a Source higher than the world can comprehend; and as they are constantly receiving of God’s bounty in spiritual and temporal gifts, they are to represent to the world the love and beneficence of Christ.” —*Review and Herald*, December 11, 1888.

4. How does the enemy react when the Lord’s army on this earth is given talents and gifts?

JOHN 15:18-21 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. ²¹But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

“Not without a struggle does Satan allow the kingdom of God to be built up in the earth. The forces of evil are engaged in unceasing warfare against the agen-

cies appointed for the spread of the gospel, and these powers of darkness are especially active when the truth is proclaimed before men of repute and sterling integrity....

"Thus the fallen foe ever works to keep in his ranks men of influence who, if converted, might render effective service in God's cause. But the faithful gospel worker need not fear defeat at the hand of the enemy; for it is his privilege to be endowed with power from above to withstand every satanic influence." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 167, 168.

SUBJECT TO GOD'S WILL

5. When Christian soldiers submit to God's will, how does He fight the battles for them?

PHILIPPIANS 2:13; 4:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure....^{4:13} I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

ISAIAH 41:10 *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

"Although it may seem that you are alone, yet you are not alone, for Christ is with you; you are in blessed company. And you have the words sounding down along the line from the prophets and apostles to encourage you in steadfastness." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 205.

"The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. 'Fear thou not,' He bids them; 'for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.' 'I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.' Isaiah 41:10, 13, 14." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 316.

6. What is the key to success for every soldier to the very end of the fight?

JAMES 1:22 *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

COLOSSIANS 3:23, 24 *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

"In order to be true soldiers of Jesus Christ we must meet the requirements of His word as loyal subjects of the heavenly kingdom.... Those who claim to believe the truth must appreciate the great warfare before us and what is comprehended in being a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ.... The Saviour's army invites voluntary enlistment. There must be a complete surrender of the passions, will, and ways to the will of the Master. Our work is to obey the orders of the mighty General of armies. A strong and active bodily organization is to be maintained. The senses must be enlightened as to perfect obedience; duties are to be done which cannot always be seen as essential; but now comes in the necessity of faith in a higher wisdom and power than your own. Have faith in God, unshaken faith in the skill

and ability and fidelity of your Commander, who knows the plan of the battle.”
—*The Upward Look*, p. 230.

THE ARMY WILL GROW

7. What will happen in our time if Christ’s disciples put forth efforts to proclaim the present truth as did the apostles after Pentecost?

ACTS 2:42, 46, 47 *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers....*⁴⁶*And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people.*⁴⁷*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

“As God’s children devote themselves to this work, many will lay hold of the hand stretched out to save them. They are constrained to turn from their evil ways. Some of the rescued ones may, through faith in Christ, rise to high places of service and be entrusted with responsibilities in the work of saving souls. They know by experience the necessities of those for whom they labor, and they know how to help them; they know what means can best be used to recover the perishing. They are filled with gratitude to God for the blessings they have received; their hearts are quickened by love, and their energies are strengthened to lift up others who can never rise without help. Taking the Bible as their guide and the Holy Spirit as their helper and comforter, they find a new career opening before them. Every one of these souls that is added to the force of workers, provided with facilities and instruction as to how to save souls for Christ, becomes a co-laborer with those who brought him the light of truth. Thus God is honored and His truth advanced.”
—(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 497) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 260.

8. When the elderly standard bearers are laid to rest, whom will the Lord commission to take their places?

PROVERBS 23:26 *My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.*

1 TIMOTHY 4:11-14 *These things command and teach.*¹²*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*¹³*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*¹⁴*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*

TITUS 1:5 *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*

“Christ is calling for volunteers to enlist under His standard, and bear the banner of the cross before the world. The church is languishing for the help of young men who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God’s people, and so increase the power of the church in the world. Young men are wanted who will resist the tide of worldliness, and lift a voice of warning against taking the first steps in immorality and vice.

“But first the young men who would serve God, and give themselves to His work, must cleanse the soul temple of all impurity, and enthrone Christ in the heart; then they will be enabled to put energy into their Christian effort, and will manifest enthusiastic zeal in persuading men to be reconciled to Christ. Will not

our young men respond to the invitation of Christ, and answer, ‘Here am I; send me’? Young men, press to the front, and identify yourselves as laborers together with Christ, taking up the work where He left it, to carry it on to its completion.”
–*Messages to Young People*, pp. 24, 25.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The world is to be warned, and no soul should rest satisfied with a superficial knowledge of truth. You know not to what responsibility you may be called. You know not where you may be called upon to give your witness of truth. Many will have to stand in the legislative courts; some will have to stand before kings and before the learned of the earth, to answer for their faith.

“Those who have only a superficial understanding of truth will not be able clearly to expound the Scriptures, and give definite reasons for their faith. They will become confused, and will not be workmen that need not to be ashamed. Let no one imagine that he has no need to study because he is not to preach in the sacred desk. You know not what God may require of you.

“It is a lamentable fact that the advancement of the cause is hindered by the dearth of educated laborers who have fitted themselves for positions of trust. The Lord will accept of thousands to labor in His great harvest field, but many have failed to fit themselves for the work. But every one who has espoused the cause of Christ, who has offered himself as a soldier in the Lord’s army, should place himself where he may have faithful drill.” –*Messages to Young People*, pp. 186, 187.

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4

Sabbath, July 28, 2018

Girded by Truth

“The true Christian carefully cherishes the truth, realizing that it is more precious than gold. He has an argument that is proof against all the assaults of the enemy.

“Nothing but the truth of God can meet the needs of the soul. This truth must be enshrined in the heart, becoming a part of the life. Thus an experience is gained that makes the soul watchful, careful to do nothing that would be out of harmony with the will of Him who died that men and women might have eternal life. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. He knows how to succor those who are tempted.”
–*The Upward Look*, p. 214.

THE BIBLE REVEALS THE TRUTH

1. What must the Christian soldier do to prepare to take up spiritual arms and go into battle?

EPHESIANS 6:14, FIRST PART *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.*

“God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle.

Our loins must be girt about with truth.... We are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 502.

"The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold.... Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God so that when the testing time shall come and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear...." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 30.

2. What is the truth that sanctifies man? What is his only safeguard as the enemy seeks to falsify and destroy God's holy word?

JOHN 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

PSALM 119:160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

"The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 56.

"Those who are truly converted to Christ [must] keep on constant guard lest they shall accept error in place of truth. Those who think that it matters not what they believe in doctrine, so long as they believe in Jesus Christ, are on dangerous ground. There are some who think that they will be just as acceptable to God by obeying some other law than the law of God—by meeting some other conditions than those He has specified in the gospel—as if they obeyed His commandments and complied with His requirements. But they are under a fatal delusion, and unless they renounce this heresy and come into harmony with His requirements, they cannot become members of the royal family." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 235.

3. While the church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), what must each believer do so his faith and testimony are established on the truth? Who makes this possible?

PSALM 25:4, 5; 51:6 Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. ⁵Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.... ^{5:16}Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

JOHN 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

"There is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth. No man can stand firm for right in whose heart the truth does not abide. There is only one power that can make and keep us steadfast—the power of God, imparted to us through the grace of Christ.

“There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth....

“... Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God so that when the testing time shall come and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear....” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 30.

A PROLONGED BATTLE REQUIRING STRENGTH

4. According to the Scriptures, who is girded with strength and prepared for the battle?

PSALM 18:32, 39; 29:11 *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect....³⁹For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me....^{29:11}The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.*

“God has given me strength. He is the health of my countenance. Every morning I rejoice in Him. I *know* I have committed the keeping of my soul to Him, as unto a faithful Creator; and I *know* He has never failed me. If you place your trust in Him, the Lord will also give to every one of you His strength, His grace, His salvation....

“As you receive the rich grace of God you will diffuse it. The faithful discharge of today’s duties will be the best preparation for tomorrow’s trials. We will not gather together all tomorrow’s liabilities and cares to add unto the burdens of today. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. God gives us strength for each day.” —*The Upward Look*, pp. 306, 44.

5. When the battle is long and difficult, what does the Lord do?

ISAIAH 40:29-31 *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:³¹But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

“If the time seems long to wait for our Deliverer to come, if, bowed by affliction and worn with toil, we feel impatient for our commission to close, and to receive an honorable release from the warfare, let us remember—and let the remembrance check every murmur—that God leaves us on earth to encounter storms and conflicts, to perfect Christian character, to become better acquainted with God our Father and Christ our Elder Brother, and to do work for the Master in winning many souls to Christ, that with glad heart we may hear the words: ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant:... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ Matthew 25:21.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 185.

6. What counsel do the apostles Peter and Paul give to every believer?

1 PETER 1:13 *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

“We have each of us an individual work to do, to gird up the loins of our minds, to be sober, to watch unto prayer. The mind must be firmly controlled to dwell upon subjects that will strengthen the moral powers.... The thoughts must be pure, the meditations of the heart must be clean, if the words of the mouth are to be words acceptable to Heaven and helpful to your associates.

“The mind should be guarded carefully. Nothing should be allowed to enter that will harm or destroy its healthy vigor. But to prevent this, it should be pre-occupied with good seed, which, springing to life, will bring forth fruit-bearing branches.... A field left uncultivated speedily produces a rank growth of thistles and tangled vines, which exhaust the soil and are worthless to the owner. The ground is full of seeds blown and carried by the wind from every quarter; and if it is left uncultivated, they spring up to life spontaneously, choking every precious fruit-bearing plant that is struggling for existence. If the field were tilled and sown to grain, these valueless weeds would be extinguished, and could not flourish.”
—*My Life Today*, p. 83.

JESUS GIRDED HIMSELF WITH TRUTH

7. What did Jesus do during His ministry that made it possible for Him to resist Satan’s attacks?

MATTHEW 22:16 *And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.*

JOHN 18:37 *Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

“While the deceiver is constantly crying, Light is here, truth is here; Jesus is saying, ‘I am the truth; I have the words of eternal life. If any man follow Me, he shall not walk in darkness. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.’” —*Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1886.

“Christ seldom gathered His disciples alone to receive His words. He did not choose for His audience those only who knew the way of life. It was His work to reach the multitudes who were in ignorance and error. He gave His lessons of truth where they could reach the darkened understanding. He Himself was the Truth, standing with girded loins and hands ever outstretched to bless, and in words of warning, entreaty, and encouragement, seeking to uplift all who would come unto Him.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 298.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The thoughts must be trained. Gird up the loins of the mind that it shall work in the right direction and after the order of well-formed plans; then every step is one in advance, and no effort or time is lost in following vague ideas and random plans.

We must consider the aim and object of life, and ever keep worthy purposes in view. Every day the thoughts should be trained and kept to the point as the compass to the pole. Everyone should have his aims and purposes, and then make every thought and action of that character to accomplish that which he purposes. The thoughts must be controlled. There must be a fixedness of purpose to carry out that which you shall undertake." –*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 656.

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5

Sabbath, August 4, 2018

Breastplate of Righteousness

"Fiction, spurious interpretations of the Scriptures, dishes of fables, are everywhere presented for your acceptance. But great discernment is needed that the girdle should be the golden chain of truth. 'And having on the breastplate of righteousness'—not your own, but the righteousness of Christ. This is the fortress of the soul. We may, with Christ's righteousness going before us, withstand the moral darkness and penetrate the devices of the satanic agencies." –*That I May Know Him*, p. 346.

"All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power." –*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 31.

CLOTHED WITH CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. **What protective gear must be worn by the Christian who engages in the battle against the great adversary?**

EPHESIANS 6:14, LAST PART ... *And having on the breastplate of righteousness.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:7 *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,*

"To be independent and self-reliant in some respects is [a] duty that we owe to ourselves. But here, where the enemy will come in with his delusive snares, pride takes the place of humility. And when you or I trust to our own resources, our own wisdom, and seek counsel of our own heart, then certain disappointment, shame, and confusion will be our portion at last. We are in a fair way to triumph only when we are closely connected with God, and have on the whole armor of righteousness." –*The Upward Look*, p. 349.

"These words inspired of God are appropriate for us. They apply in a special manner to those who are endeavoring to keep the commandments of God amidst a crooked and perverse nation among whom they shine as lights in the world. O how solemn, how fearfully solemn is this time for the youth among us who have had great light,... that their words, spirit, and character shall not be misleading to those with whom they associate...." –*That I May Know Him*, p. 346.

2. What must the Christian do so Jesus can clothe him with the breastplate of righteousness?

ISAIAH 64:6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

ROMANS 13:12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

PROVERBS 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. ‘I counsel thee,’ He says, ‘to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.’” —*My Life Today*, p. 311.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 555.

3. What does it mean to be clothed with Christ’s righteousness?

1 JOHN 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

1 PETER 2:21 *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*

“When on earth, He said to His disciples, ‘I have kept My Father’s commandments.’ John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312.

“When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the sufferings of the Son of God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 360.

THE CRUSADE AGAINST SATAN

4. Girded with truth and clothed with righteousness, what will the Christian do?

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God*

to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

SONG OF SOLOMON 6:10 *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?*

“Church members, awake to the importance of the circulation of our literature, and devote more time to this work. Place in the homes of the people papers, tracts, and books that will preach the gospel in its several lines. There is no time to be lost. Let many give themselves willingly and unselfishly to the canvassing work, and thus help to sound a warning that is greatly needed. When the church takes up her appointed work, she will go forth ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’” —(*Southern Watchman*, November 20, 1902) *Christian Service*, p. 147.

“Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,’ she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.” —*My Life Today*, p. 311.

“There is a great work to be done in a short time. We need to understand our work, and to do it with fidelity. Everyone who is finally crowned victor will, by noble, determined effort to serve God, have earned the right to be clothed with Christ’s righteousness. To enter the crusade against Satan, bearing aloft the blood-stained banner of the cross of Christ—this is the duty of every Christian.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 43.

5. What characterizes those who are clothed with Christ’s righteousness?

PSALM 119:7 *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.*

PROVERBS 14:2, FIRST PART; 8:13, FIRST PART *He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord....^{8:13}The fear of the Lord is to hate evil...*

“We must put on every piece of the armor, and then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1119.

THE WATCHWORD

6. What should be the Christian’s watchword in the spiritual battle?

GALATIANS 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:15 *And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

“Jesus wants you to be happy, but you cannot be happy in having your own way and following the impulses of your own heart.... Our notions, our peculiarities, are wholly human and must not be humored or indulged. Self is to be crucified, not now and then but daily, and the physical, mental, and spiritual must be subordinate to the will of God. The glory of God, the perfection of Christian character, is to be the aim, the purpose, of our life. Christ’s followers must imitate Christ in disposition.... *Like Christ* is the watchword, not like your father or your mother, but like Jesus Christ—hid in Christ, clothed with Christ’s righteousness, imbued with the Spirit of Christ.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 643, 644.

7. What is one who wears the breastplate of righteousness assured of?

REVELATION 17:14 *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

ROMANS 16:20 *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

“In life’s conflict we must meet evil agencies that have arrayed themselves against the right. Our hope is not in man, but in the living God. With full assurance of faith we may expect that He will unite His omnipotence with the efforts of human instrumentalities, for the glory of His name. Clad with the armor of His righteousness, we may gain the victory over every foe.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 111.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The people whom God is leading must venture out upon His word. They must walk forward by faith. Truths have been committed to them which they must obey. The work of God is aggressive. No one can stand in a neutral position and yet be a soldier in the Lord’s army. God has commands for His people, and if they keep in close connection with Him, they will hear His voice, and will keep in step with their Captain. They will go forward in the conflict to fight the battles of the Lord. But those who place themselves in an indifferent, noncommittal position will gain no victories.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 339.

“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. ‘I counsel thee,’ He says, ‘to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.’...

“To every one God has made an offer that will help to brace every nerve and spiritual muscle for the time of test that is to come to us all. I am charged with the message, Clothe yourself with the whole armor of Christ’s righteousness.... And, having done all you can do on your part, you have the assurance of victory. To every soul is granted the gracious opportunity of standing on the Rock of Ages.” —*My Life Today*, p. 311.

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Footwear of the Gospel

“The gospel is a message of peace. Christianity is a system, which, received and obeyed, would spread peace, harmony, and happiness throughout the earth. The religion of Christ will unite in close brotherhood all who accept its teachings.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 32.

“The light of truth must shine forth to the world. Those who love God and keep His commandments are called to aggressive warfare, not against one another, but against the armies of the invisible foe. There is to be no such thing as laying off the armor. At no time are those who claim to be Christ’s disciples to feel at ease in their church capacity, content to do nothing to rescue fallen human beings, and bring them back to their loyalty....

“Where are the men and women who will unite with these heavenly messengers? Where are those who will use their abilities in cooperation with divine power?” —*The Upward Look*, p. 71}

A MESSAGE OF PEACE

1. In addition to the girdle, or belt, and the breastplate, what else does a Christian soldier wear?

EPHESIANS 6:15 *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*

ISAIAH 52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

“Let every minister learn to wear the gospel shoes. He who is shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace will walk as Christ walked. He will be able to speak right words, and to speak them in love. He will not try to drive home God’s message of truth. He will deal tenderly with every heart, realizing that the Spirit will impress the truth on those who are susceptible to divine impressions. Never will he be vehement in his manner. Every word spoken will have a softening, subduing influence....” —*Evangelism*, p. 174.

2. Is there peace today? What shows that the powers of darkness are intensely at work and that the gospel is desperately needed?

ISAIAH 24:5; 60:2 *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant....^{60:2} For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:3, 4 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

"We are living in the midst of an 'epidemic of crime,' at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand aghast. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of political strife, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind and defile and destroy the body?..."

"Everywhere there are hearts crying out for something which they have not. They long for a power that will give them mastery over sin, a power that will deliver them from the bondage of evil, a power that will give health and life and peace. Many who once knew the power of God's word have dwelt where there is no recognition of God, and they long for the divine presence." —*My Life Today*, p. 312.

3. What is the only real solution for the world's difficulties amid the billions of inhabitants? What are the special nature and effect of the gospel?

ACTS 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

EPHESIANS 1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

COLOSSIANS 1:5 *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.*

"The gospel of Christ is the Good News of grace, or favor, by which man may be released from the condemnation of sin and enabled to render obedience to the law of God. The gospel points to the moral code as a rule of life. That law, by its demands for undeviating obedience, is continually pointing the sinner to the gospel for pardon and peace." —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 563.

"The gospel is a revelation to man of beams of light and hope from the eternal world. All the light does not burst upon us at once, but it comes as we can bear it. Inquiring minds that hunger for a knowledge of God's will are never satisfied; the deeper they search, the more they realize their ignorance and deplore their blindness. It is beyond the power of man to conceive the high and noble attainments that are within his reach if he will combine human effort with the grace of God, who is the Source of all wisdom and power. And there is an eternal weight of glory beyond. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 446.

THE ENEMY OF THE GOSPEL IS UNRELENTING

4. How does the enemy fight against the message of peace? Does the Christian soldier need to fear such attacks?

EPHESIANS 2:17 *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

REVELATION 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

ROMANS 13:12; 8:38, 39 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light....^{8:38}For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

"In a time like this, we should have but one object in view—the employing of every means that God has provided by which the truth may be planted in the hearts of men.... It is the duty of every Christian to strive to the utmost of his ability to spread abroad the knowledge of the truth." —*Maranatha*, p. 107.

"Not without a struggle does Satan allow the kingdom of God to be built up in the earth. The forces of evil are engaged in unceasing warfare against the agencies appointed for the spread of the gospel, and these powers of darkness are especially active when the truth is proclaimed before men of repute and sterling integrity." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 167.

"Let us not spare ourselves, but carry forward in earnest the work of reform that must be done in our lives. Let us crucify self. Unholy habits will clamor for the mastery, but in the name and through the power of Jesus we may conquer. To him who daily seeks to keep his heart with all diligence, the promise is given, 'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 8:38, 39." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 223.

PEACEMAKERS

5. What beautiful description do the Scriptures give of those who preach the gospel of peace?

ISAIAH 52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

MATTHEW 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

"Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

"And 'blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 28.

6. Who will sustain those who are zealous in proclaiming the message of truth?

MATTHEW 28:19, 20 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

“Brethren and sisters, will you put on the Christian armor? ‘Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,’ you will be prepared to walk from house to house, carrying the truth to the people. Sometimes you will find it trying to do this kind of work; but if you go forth in faith, the Lord will go before you, and will let His light shine upon your pathway. Entering the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven, which will abide in these homes.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 114, 115.

“To us also the commission is given. We are bidden to go forth as Christ’s messengers, to teach, instruct, and persuade men and women, to urge upon their attention the word of life. And to us also the assurance of Christ’s abiding presence is given. Whatever the difficulties with which we may have to contend, whatever the trials we may have to endure, the gracious promise is always ours, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’” —(Manuscript 24, 1903) *Evangelism*, p. 15.

ALL CHURCH MEMBERS ARE WORKERS FOR GOD

7. Knowing that the devil will multiply the numbers in his ranks and that only a short time is left, what divine commission is given to every child of God to bless those who are yearning for deliverance from sin and evil in all its forms?

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

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20 *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

MATTHEW 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

“Every hour, every minute, is precious. We have no time to spend in self gratification. All around us there are souls perishing in sin. Every day there is something to do for our Lord and Master. Every day we are to point souls to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” —(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 310) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 48.

“Ambassadors for Christ have a solemn and important work, which rests upon some altogether too lightly. While Christ is the minister in the sanctuary above, He is also, through His delegates, the minister of His church on earth. He speaks to the people through chosen men, and carries forward His work through them, as when in the days of His humiliation He moved visibly upon the earth. Although centuries have passed, the lapse of time has not changed His parting promise to His disciples: ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’ From Christ’s

ascension to the present day, men ordained of God, deriving their authority from Him, have become teachers of the faith. Christ, the True Shepherd, superintends His work through the instrumentality of these undershepherds. Thus the position of those who labor in word and doctrine becomes very important. In Christ's stead they beseech the people to be reconciled to God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 393.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"The Holy Spirit, Christ's representative, arms the weakest with might to press forward unto victory. God has organized His instrumentalities to draw all men unto Him. He sends forth to His work many who have not been dedicated by the laying on of hands. He answers objections that would arise against this method of labor, even before they arise. God sees the end from the beginning. He knows and anticipates every want, and provides for every emergency. If finite men to whom He commits His work do not bar the way, God will send forth laborers into His vineyard." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 171.

"The Lord is soon coming. Talk it, pray it, believe it. Make it a part of the life. You will have to meet a doubting, objecting spirit, but this will give way before firm, consistent trust in God. When perplexities or hindrances present themselves, lift the soul to God in songs of thanksgiving. Gird on the Christian armor, and be sure that your feet are 'shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'" —*My Life Today*, p. 312.

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7

Sabbath, August 18, 2018

Shield of Faith

"Satan watches his opportunity to seize the precious graces when we are unguarded, and we shall have a severe conflict with the powers of darkness to retain them, or to regain a heavenly grace if through lack of watchfulness we lose it. But ... it is the privilege of Christians to obtain strength from God to hold every precious gift. Fervent and effectual prayer will be regarded in heaven. When the servants of Christ take the shield of faith for their defense, and the sword of the Spirit for war, there is danger in the enemy's camp....

"Man has little power, and can accomplish but a small work at his very best.... God is omnipotent, and at every point where we need divine help and seek for it in sincerity, it will be given. God has pledged His word that His grace will be sufficient for you in your greatest necessity, in your sorest distress. Christ will be to you a present help if you will appropriate His grace." —*God's Amazing Grace*, pp. 33, 260.

THE MEANS OF PROTECTION

- 1. What part of the armor is indispensable to be safe from the enemy's darts and to advance against him?**

EPHESIANS 6:16 *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

PSALMS 115:11; 119:114 *Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield....^{119:114}Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.*

1 JOHN 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

“The work of conquering evil is to be done through faith. Those who go into the battlefield will find that they must put on the whole armor of God. The shield of faith will be their defense and will enable them to be more than conquerors. Nothing else will avail but this—faith in the Lord of hosts, and obedience to His orders. Vast armies furnished with every other facility will avail nothing in the last great conflict. Without faith, an angel host could not help. Living faith alone will make them invincible and enable them to stand in the evil day, steadfast, unmovable, holding the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 33.

“Faith in God’s word, prayerfully studied and practically applied, will be our shield from Satan’s power and will bring us off conquerors through the blood of Christ.” —*My Life Today*, p. 313.

THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

2. What is the only foundation of true faith?

PSALMS 18:2, 3; 31:2; 18:30 *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. ³I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies....^{31:2}Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me....^{18:30}As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

PROVERBS 30:5 *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*

“As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God’s presence. ‘All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.’ He is ‘of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.’ Hebrews 4:13; Habakkuk 1:13. This thought was Joseph’s shield amidst the corruptions of Egypt. To the allurements of temptation his answer was steadfast: ‘How ... can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’ Genesis 39:9. Such a shield, faith, if cherished, will bring to every soul.” —*Education*, p. 255.

3. What is needed to avoid falling into the enemy’s traps?

2 TIMOTHY 2:1 *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

“Amidst the snares to which all are exposed, they need strong and trustworthy defenses on which to rely. Many in this corrupt age have so small a supply of the

grace of God, that in many instances their defense is broken down by the first assault, and fierce temptations take them captives. The shield of grace can preserve all unconquered by the temptations of the enemy, though surrounded with the most corrupting influences. By firm principle, and unwavering trust in God, their virtue and nobleness of character can shine, and, although surrounded with evil, no taint need be left upon their virtue and integrity...

"The lessons contained in the words of Paul to Timothy are of the greatest importance to us today. He charges him to 'be strong'—in his own wisdom? No, but 'in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' He who would be a follower of Christ is not to rely upon his own capabilities, or to feel confident in himself. Neither is he to be dwarfed in his religious efforts, to shun responsibilities, and remain inefficient in the cause of God....

"If the Christian feels his weakness, his inability, by putting his trust in God, he will find the grace of Christ sufficient for every emergency." —*God's Amazing Grace*, pp. 33, 260.

HOLDING FAITH WITHOUT WAVERING

4. What trusting attitude makes it possible for one to resist the devil's seductions and drive him away?

HEBREWS 10:23 *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).*

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13 *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

1 PETER 5:9, 10 *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. ¹⁰But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

"That time will soon come, and we shall have to keep hold of the strong arm of Jehovah.... Our minds must be stayed upon God, and we must not fear the fear of the wicked, that is, fear what they fear, and reverence what they reverence, but be bold and valiant for the truth. Could our eyes be opened, we should see forms of evil angels around us, trying to invent some new way to annoy and destroy us. And we should also see angels of God guarding us from their power; for God's watchful eye is ever over Israel for good, and He will protect and save His people, if they put their trust in Him. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

"Said the angel, 'Remember, thou art on the enchanted ground.' I saw that we must watch and have on the whole armor and take the shield of faith, and then we shall be able to stand, and the fiery darts of the wicked cannot harm us." —*Early Writings*, p. 60.

LOOKING TO GOD FOR CONSTANT SUPPORT

5. What keeps the enemy from seizing our shield?

MICAH 7:7, 8, 10 *Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. ⁸Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.... ¹⁰Then*

she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

PSALM 5:3, 8 *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up....⁸Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*

"I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said, 'Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.' I was then pointed to Elijah. He was subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly. His faith endured the trial. Seven times he prayed before the Lord, and at last the cloud was seen. I saw that we had doubted the sure promises, and wounded the Saviour by our lack of faith. Said the angel, 'Gird the armor about thee, and above all take the shield of faith; for that will guard the heart, the very life, from the fiery darts of the wicked.' If the enemy can lead the desponding to take their eyes off from Jesus, and look to themselves, and dwell upon their own unworthiness, instead of dwelling upon the worthiness of Jesus, His love, His merits, and His great mercy, he will get away their shield of faith and gain his object; they will be exposed to his fiery temptations. The weak should therefore look to Jesus, and believe in Him; they then exercise faith." —*Early Writings*, p. 73.

6. At every moment and in all circumstances, who is the Christian's protector and strength? What does the Lord ask of His people?

PSALM 89:13-18 *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. ¹⁴Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. ¹⁵Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. ¹⁶In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. ¹⁷For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. ¹⁸For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.*

PROVERBS 2:1, 7 *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;... ⁷He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*

"God has blessed His commandment-keeping people and all the opposition and falsehoods that may be brought against them will only strengthen those who stand firm in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But if those who profess to be the depositaries of God's law become transgressors of that law, His protecting care will be withdrawn, and many will fall through perverseness and licentiousness. Then we shall indeed be unable to stand before our enemies. But if His people remain separate and distinct from the world, as a nation that do righteousness, God will be their defense, and no weapons formed against them shall prosper.

"In view of the dangers of this time shall not we, as God's commandment-keeping people, put away from among us all sin, all iniquity, all perverseness? Shall not the women professing the truth keep strict guard over themselves, lest the least encouragement be given to unwarrantable familiarity? They may close many a door of temptation if they will observe at all times strict reserve and propriety of

deportment. Let men find an example in the life of Joseph and stand firm in principle, however strongly tempted. We want to be strong men and women for the right.... But there are those who go into temptation like a fool to the correction of stocks.... They unnerve themselves, are weakened in moral power, and shame and confusion are the result.”—(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 243) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 601, 602.

FOLLOWING THE DIVINE EXAMPLE

7. What made it possible for Jesus to be His people’s shield?

HEBREWS 12:2, 3 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

“If we would be saved at last we must all learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross. Christ suffered humiliation to save us from everlasting disgrace. He consented to have scorn, mockery, and abuse fall upon Him in order to shield us. It was our transgression that gathered the veil of darkness about His divine soul and extorted the cry from Him, as of one smitten and forsaken of God. He bore our sorrows; He was put to grief for our sins. He made Himself an offering for sin, that we might be justified before God through Him. Everything noble and generous in man will respond to the contemplation of Christ upon the cross.”—(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 515) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 374.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“... It is the privilege of Christians to obtain strength from God to hold every precious gift. Fervent and effectual prayer will be regarded in heaven. When the servants of Christ take the shield of faith for their defense, and the sword of the Spirit for war, there is danger in the enemy’s camp, and something must be done. Persecution and reproach only wait for those who are endowed with power from on high to call them into action. When the truth in its simplicity and strength prevails among believers, and is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, it will be evident that there is no concord between Christ and Belial. The disciples of Christ must be living examples of the life and spirit of their Master.”—(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 159) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 407, 408.

“The soldier of Christ must meet many forms of temptation, and resist and overcome them. The fiercer the conflict, the greater the supply of grace to meet the need of the soul.... The true Christian will understand what it means to pass through severe conflicts and trying experiences; but he will steadily increase in the grace of Christ to meet successfully the enemy of his soul.... The darkness will press upon his soul at times; but the true light will shine, the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness will dispel the gloom; and ... through the grace of Christ he will be enabled to be a faithful witness of the things which he has heard from the inspired messenger of God.... By thus communicating truth to others, the worker for Christ obtains a clearer view of the abundant provisions made for all, of the sufficiency of the grace of Christ for every time of conflict, sorrow, and trial.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 260.

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**Please read the Missionary Report
from the Oceania Division on page 41.**

8

Sabbath, August 25, 2018

Helmet of Salvation

“God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 502.

“Especially important to the church in our time are the teachings of the apostle upon this point. To those living so near the great consummation, the words of Paul should come with telling force: ‘Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.’” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 260, 261.

NOBLE, EXALTED THOUGHTS

1. How can a person’s thoughts be raised to a higher—a divine—level?

EPHESIANS 6:17, FIRST PART *And take the helmet of salvation,...*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:8 *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

“... Whenever he [man] has sought to fill his mind with any other object than God, he has been disappointed. There must be an altogether higher grade of thought, an altogether higher class of studies, and higher objects for you to seek to obtain than you have had in the past. The disorders and imperfections of human words and human characters can be restored only by the Lord Jesus Christ. He, then, should be the object of your contemplation, the theme of your conversation. You must have an altogether higher exercise of thought and action if you would understand the great plan of redemption.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 663.

“God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of the Scriptures.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 34.

2. What should be the subjects of our thoughts?

COLOSSIANS 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

PSALM 105:2 *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*

JOHN 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

“We should meditate upon the Scriptures, thinking soberly and candidly upon the things that pertain to our eternal salvation. The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and you will have a daily, living experience in the willingness and power of Christ to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 34.

“Your last thought at night, your first thought in the morning, should be of Him in whom is centered your hope of eternal life.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 666.

3. What is the apostle Paul’s counsel concerning this?

PHILIPPIANS 4:8, 9 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. ⁹Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

“We have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.

“The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest. ‘Girding up the loins of your mind,’ says the apostle Peter, ‘be sober, ... not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in ... your ignorance: but like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living.’ 1 Peter 1:13-15, R.V.

“This will require earnest prayer and unceasing watchfulness. We must be aided by the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit, which will attract the mind upward, and habituate it to dwell on pure and holy things. And we must give diligent study to the word of God.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 460; *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, pp. 107, 108.

4. How does the enemy attempt to steal one's thoughts from Christ and the divine plan of redemption?

PSALM 13:2 *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

LUKE 21:34 *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*

“When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan’s constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life’s cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections—to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. Do not be misled by his devices. Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses, and thus by separating them from Christ he hopes to gain the victory.... Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, ‘I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 71, 72.

5. How are one's intelligence and thoughts preserved when he wears the helmet of faith?

EPHESIANS 4:20-24 *But ye have not so learned Christ; ²¹If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

“Let every weak, tempest-tossed soul find anchorage in Jesus Christ and not become so self-centered that he can think only of his little disappointments and the interruption of his plans and hopes. Is not the subject of the plan of salvation all-absorbing? If the infinite God justifies me, ‘who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.’ Verse 34. He has in His dying for man revealed how much He loves man—enough to die for Him! The law condemns the sinner and drives him to Christ. It is God that justifies and pardons....

“Then if God be for us, who can be against us? Oh, the bright glorious truth. Why do not men discern it? Why not walk in its bright beams? Why do not all who believe talk of Christ’s matchless love?...

“God lives and reigns. All who are saved must fight manfully as soldiers of Jesus Christ; then they will be registered in heaven’s books as true and faithful. They are to work the works of Jesus Christ, fight the good fight of faith.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 377.

JESUS SAW SOULS WHO WOULD BE SAVED

6. What were Christ's thoughts in the proclamation of the plan of salvation and all through its realization? Therefore, what will be the thoughts of those who have the faith of Jesus?

1 PETER 1:20 *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*

JOHN 12:32 *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:6 *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

"... Jesus comforted and cheered the angels and informed them that hereafter those whom He should redeem would be with Him, and that by His death He should ransom many and destroy him who had the power of death. And His Father would give Him the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, and He would possess it forever and ever.... Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that His Father had accepted and rejoice that through His death fallen man could again be exalted to obtain favor with God and enjoy heaven." —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 44.

"It was the joy of Christ in His humiliation and pain that His disciples should be glorified with Him. They are the fruit of His self-sacrifice. The outworking in them of His own character and spirit is His reward, and will be His joy throughout eternity. This joy they share with Him as the fruit of their labor, and sacrifice is seen in other hearts and lives. They are workers together with Christ, and the Father will honor them as He honors His Son." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

7. Knowing that Christ has already overcome the enemy, what should be foremost in our minds so we are strengthened for the battle?

ROMANS 8:31-35 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ³²He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

JAMES 1:12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18 *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

"Holiness, dignity, honor, and felicity in the presence of God are things now unseen except by the eye of faith. But the things which are seen, worldly honor, worldly pleasure, riches, and glory, are eclipsed by the excellency, the beauty, and

resplendent glory of the things now unseen. The things of this world are temporal, enduring only for a time, while the things which are not seen are eternal, enduring through endless ages. To secure this infinite treasure is to gain everything and lose nothing....

“Temporal things are not to engage our whole attention, or engross our minds until our thoughts are entirely of the earth and the earthly. We are to train, discipline, and educate the mind so that we may think in a heavenly channel, that we may dwell on things unseen and eternal, which will be discerned by spiritual vision. It is by seeing Him who is invisible that we may obtain strength of mind and vigor of spirit.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1100.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The mind must be kept meditating upon pure and holy subjects. An impure suggestion must be dismissed at once, and pure, elevating thoughts, holy contemplation, be entertained, thus obtaining more and more knowledge of God by training the mind in the contemplation of heavenly things. God has simple means open to every individual case, sufficient to secure the great end, the salvation of the soul.

“Resolve to reach a high and holy standard; make your mark high; act with earnest purpose, as did Daniel, steadily, perseveringly, and nothing that the enemy can do will hinder your improvement. Notwithstanding inconveniences, changes, perplexities, you may constantly advance in mental vigor and moral power.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, pp. 236, 237.

“Intellect ennobled, purified, heaven directed, is the universal power to build up the kingdom of God. Intellect perverted, has exactly the opposite influence; it is a corrupting of the human power given in trust to be multiplied in earnest labor for good. It deceives and destroys. God has given sufficient endowments to make men capable and wise to carry forward, and strongly and graciously to represent, the Lord’s wonderful works to all those who love Him and obey His commandments.

“Satan cannot touch the mind or intellect unless we yield it to him.”—(Manuscript 17, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1105.

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MISSIONARY REPORT from the Oceania Division

To be read on Sabbath, August 25, 2018

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, September 1, 2018*

“Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.” “Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands.” Isaiah 42:10, 12.

My dear brethren, I am pleased to extend to you my warm greetings from the Oceania Division. The fulfillment of the prophetic signs that we witness nearly every day show that Christ’s coming is at hand. Now is not the time to wait but to prepare the way for our Saviour’s coming by surrendering entirely to His transforming power and spreading the last warning far and wide. Have good courage in our Lord and Saviour.

We are grateful to our heavenly Father for His wonderful work and for the progress made in His vineyard in the Oceania Division. Spreading the last message of salvation to the whole world is very important, but there is a special goal that our Lord requires us to reach—His children living in the area of the Oceania Division. This is expressed in the command for us to go “unto the ends of the earth.” Acts 13:47.

God wants us to “sing unto the Lord a new song.” What kind of new song do we need to sing, and how are we to praise Him? What do we have to do? We have to “go down to the sea, and all that is therein,” to deliver to the people in the Pacific islands the last message of God’s love and righteousness. What does God require from the inhabitants of the Islands after they receive the last message—“ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof”?

The entire Pacific region covers one third of the earth’s surface. You could fit all of the land in the world into the space that it occupies, with room left over for an extra Canada. Put another way, it is bigger than the surface of Mars. The largest country is Australia, and the smallest independent country is Nauru, which is so tiny that you need less than one hour to drive around it. There are fourteen independent countries and twelve dependent overseas territories within this area. Oceania is divided into several regions, and the areas where we are working right now are Australia, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Indonesia.

Countries where we have members include Australia, Polynesia, New Zealand, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga and Cook Islands, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Indonesia (the Indonesian Field).

The Oceania Union was established in 2000, with 22 members in four countries and with its headquarters in New Zealand. In 2012, during the General Conference in South Africa, the Oceania Division was established, with eight countries. We were pleased that the Indonesian Field became a part of the Division at that time. Now the Oceania Division has increased to twelve countries with 333 members.

During the last two years, the Lord helped mightily. He performed miracles, helping us to enter three new countries—Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and the Cook Islands. His work has developed very well in these countries and in many islands in between. Sometimes the trips are very risky. Recently Brother Sanaila Ravia, the current Union leader, traveled by boat to some remote islands of Papua and was attacked by pirates on the way. By God’s miracle, he and the others who were traveling with him survived. Often such attacks end very badly for boat passengers; some are even killed by the pirates.

Our goal is to spread the last message of Reformation in the remaining fourteen countries in the Oceania Division that have not yet been entered. We are putting forth efforts to make this happen as quickly as possible, for we know that what we do not do in times of peace will have to be done in troublesome times. We are doing our best, but we need your help as well.

We are increasing our missionary efforts in Australia, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Indonesia. Micronesia is the next goal for us to enter and develop the Lord’s work. We expect to enter this region very soon and are already in contact with individuals who are interested in the message.

I am pleased that the committees at all levels, the gospel workers, and the members in the Oceania Division understand and accept the mission the Lord has given us. We are doing our best and have been blessed with good results, even as Satan was and is still trying his best to create many obstacles and problems to complicate and negate the efforts made to open new places for worship and develop the existing churches and groups of believers in the Pacific.

Additional hurdles to overcome include the high cost of flights and travel to and within the islands (often to quite remote islands), support of the workers, building new churches (even very simple ones), and assisting the brethren with their needs. Visiting the islands where there is already a church presence and the people are waiting to be visited is also a financial challenge. After we begin the Lord’s work, we need to visit the believers regularly and then follow with necessary efforts to build and maintain the work.

The Lord needs our and your financial help to fulfill His order to “go down to the sea, and all that is therein,” to the ends of the earth. Isaiah 42:10. Let us all become singers in the amazing choir that will “sing unto the Lord a new song.” Psalm 96:1.

—Anton Salavyov
Oceania Division President

**SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING FOR THE
OCEANIA DIVISION**

God bless your loving sacrifice for Him!

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Sabbath, September 1, 2018

Sword of the Spirit

“A familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures sharpens the discerning powers and fortifies the soul against the attacks of Satan. The Bible is the sword of the Spirit, which will never fail to vanquish the adversary. It is the only true guide in all matters of faith and practice. The reason why Satan has so great control over the minds and hearts of men is that they have not made the word of God the man of their counsel, and all their ways have not been tried by the true test. The Bible will show us what course we must pursue to become heirs of glory.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 89.

GOD’S WORD IS LIKE A SWORD

1. What image did the apostle Paul use to represent the power of God’s word?

EPHESIANS 6:17, SECOND PART ... *The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’ God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 502.

2. How are the effectiveness and depth of the holy word described?

HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

“The truths of the Bible, treasured in the heart and mind and obeyed in the life, convince and convert the soul, transform the character, and comfort and uplift the heart.... The word makes the proud humble, the perverse meek and contrite, the disobedient obedient. The sinful habits natural to man are interwoven with the daily practice. But the word cuts away the fleshly lusts. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the mind. It divides the joints and marrow, cutting away

the lusts of the flesh, making men willing to suffer for their Lord.” —*Our Father Cares*, p. 129.

“You need the perfect armor of truth now, the sword of the Spirit, whose edge will never be blunted, but will cut its way through sin and unrighteousness.” —*My Life Today*, p. 315.

“The word of the Lord is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. The word is a power as we practice it. The great change that the truth makes is inward. It begins in the heart, and works outwardly.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 30.

SPIRITUAL SWORD AND VICTORY

3. Being very sharp, how is God’s word the standard of our character and the test of doctrine? Like the sword, what are the characteristics of other spiritual weapons?

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, 17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4 *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*

“In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. ‘Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.’ 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, R.V.” — *The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

“God’s word is the sword of the Spirit, and with a knowledge of revealed truth, which is our spiritual weapon, we must go to work, laboring to pull down the strongholds of the enemy.” —*Review and Herald*, March 8, 1887.

“Not only does our own salvation depend upon our knowledge of the word of God, but the salvation of others is to a large degree dependent upon our faithfulness to this duty.... The knowledge of revealed truth is the spiritual weapon by which God is to make us mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy. It is through the power of the word that souls are to be delivered out of darkness into light.” —*The Medical Missionary*, May 1, 1892.

4. What powerful spiritual weapon did Jesus use against the enemy in the wilderness? What was the result of the conflict?

MATTHEW 4:4, 7, 10 *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.... ⁷Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.... ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

LUKE 4:13 *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

“Temptation is not sin. Jesus was holy and pure; yet He was tempted in all points as we are, but with a strength and power that man will never be called upon to endure. In His successful resistance He has left us a bright example, that we should follow His steps. If we are self-confident or self-righteous we shall be left to fall under the power of temptation; but if we look to Jesus and trust in Him, we call to our aid a power that has conquered the foe on the field of battle, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit, and Jesus will be our helper and will lift up for us a standard against him. The father of lies quakes and trembles when the truth of God, in burning power, is thrown in his face.” –(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 135) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 425.

“We live in an age when to resist evil calls for constant watchfulness and prayer. God’s precious word is the standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory, and acquire a knowledge.... And in trial let the youth spread out the word of God before them, and with humble hearts, and in faith, seek the Lord for wisdom to find out His way, and for strength to walk in it....” –*My Life Today*, p. 315.

FOLLOWING JESUS’ EXAMPLE

5. What results did Jesus obtain by using this spiritual weapon? Considering these victories, how should we receive and use God’s word?

MARK 1:23-26; 5:8; 9:25-27 *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. ²⁵And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. ²⁶And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.... ^{5:8}For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.... ^{9:25}When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. ²⁶And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.*

“At the command of Jesus the evil spirits departed from their victims, leaving them calmly sitting at the Saviour’s feet, subdued, intelligent, and gentle.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 514.

“As we contemplate the great things of God’s word, we look into a fountain that broadens and deepens beneath our gaze. Its breadth and depth pass our knowledge. As we gaze, the vision widens; stretched out before us we behold a boundless, shoreless sea.

“Such study has vivifying power. The mind and heart acquire new strength, new life.

“This experience is the highest evidence of the divine authorship of the Bible. We receive God’s word as food for the soul, through the same evidence by which we receive bread as food for the body. Bread supplies the need of our nature; we know by experience that it produces blood and bone and brain. Apply the same test to the Bible; when its principles have actually become the elements of character, what has been the result? What changes have been made in the life?” –*Education*, pp. 171, 172.

6. In Jesus, where were the law and word of God deeply engraved? What should we do, like Him, if we desire to gain the victory over sin?

PSALMS 40:8; 119:97, 98, 11 *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart....^{119:97}O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.⁹⁸Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me....¹¹Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

“Let the youth, then, be taught to give close study to the word of God. Received into the soul, it will prove a mighty barricade against temptation. ‘Thy word,’ the psalmist declares, ‘have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.’ ‘By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.’ Psalms 119:11; 17:4.” —*Education*, p. 190.

“Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God’s promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. Thus ‘when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.’ Isaiah 59:19.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 599.

BEST USE OF THE SPIRITUAL SWORD

7. Since the Bible is like a sword, what is necessary for those who wield it?

2 TIMOTHY 2:15; 4:2 *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth....^{4:2}Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

LUKE 11:28 *But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

“To the youth of today, as surely as to Timothy, are spoken the words, ‘Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.’

“The burden bearers among us are falling in death. Many of those who have been foremost in carrying out the reforms instituted by us as a people are now past the meridian of life and are declining in physical and mental strength. With the deepest concern the question may be asked, Who will fill their places? To whom are to be committed the vital interests of the church, when the present standard-bearers fall? We can but look anxiously upon the youth of today as those who must take these burdens, and upon whom responsibilities must fall.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 536.

“You who mourn your spiritual dearth, do you seek to know and to do the will of God? Are you striving to enter in at the straight gate? There is work, earnest work, to be done for the Master. The evils condemned in God’s word must be overcome. You must individually battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The word of God is called ‘the sword of the Spirit,’ and you should become skillful in its use, if you would cut your way through the hosts of opposition and darkness.” —*Christian Education*, p. 117.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“When the word of God, as a sharp, two-edged sword, cuts its way to the heart and arouses the conscience, many suppose that this is enough; but the work is only begun. Good impressions have been made, but unless these impressions are deepened by careful, prayerful effort, Satan will counteract them. Let not the laborers rest content with what has been done. The plowshare of truth must go deeper, and this it will surely do if thorough efforts are made to direct the thoughts and establish the convictions of those who are studying the truth.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 367.

“But armed with the word of God, having it treasured in heart and mind, they will come forth unharmed by all the assaults of the foes of God or man....

“Let them take the word of truth as the man of their counsel, and become skillful in the use of ‘the sword of the Spirit.’ Satan is a wise general; but the humble, devoted soldier of Jesus Christ may overcome him.” —*My Life Today*, p. 315.

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10

Sabbath, September 8, 2018

The Battle Plan

“Now the Saviour’s eye penetrates the future; He beholds the broader fields in which, after His death, the disciples are to be witnesses for Him. His prophetic glance takes in the experience of His servants through all the ages till He shall come the second time. He shows His followers the conflicts they must meet; He reveals the character and plan of the battle. He lays open before them the perils they must encounter, the self-denial that will be required. He desires them to count the cost, that they may not be taken unawares by the enemy. Their warfare is not to be waged against flesh and blood, but ‘against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.’ Ephesians 6:12, R.V. They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 352.

THE ENEMY’S PLAN

1. How does the enemy seek to ensnare God’s children? How can they be safe from such things?

GENESIS 3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

JOHN 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

COLOSSIANS 4:2 *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

LUKE 21:36 *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

“Satan is well aware that the weakest soul who abides in Christ is more than a match for the hosts of darkness, and that, should he reveal himself openly, he would be met and resisted. Therefore he seeks to draw away the soldiers of the cross from their strong fortification, while he lies in ambush with his forces, ready to destroy all who venture upon his ground. Only in humble reliance upon God, and obedience to all His commandments, can we be secure.

“No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His word. Here are revealed the wiles of the tempter and the means by which he may be successfully resisted. Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages, by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually: ‘Lead us not into temptation.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 530.

2. Even though God’s children are Satan’s special targets, what encouragement did the apostle Paul give?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13; 1:8, 9 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it....^{1:8}Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

“Satan will not sift the chaff, because he gains nothing in this. He sifts the wheat. The devil will not try and tempt and persecute those whom he is sure of, because they are living in known transgression of the law of God. Those who have enlisted in the army of the Lord standing under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel, Satan will seek to harass and destroy. Christians will meet and have many and severe conflicts with the wily foe, who is merciless. He will bring them into the most difficult places and then exult in their distress. But, thank God, Jesus lives to make intercession for every one of us. Our safety is in committing ourselves to God and resting by faith in His merits who has said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ Hebrews 13:5....

“Satan will use every possible device to make you like himself, and thus separate you from the One who gave His life for you. Evil angels will strive for the mastery in your life. If you have not on the whole armor of God, you will be overcome. Shall it be thus, or shall you sign the pledge that you will not be intemperate in word or in spirit, that you will keep the divine Pattern ever before you?” —*The Upward Look*, pp. 222, 24.

CARRYING OUT GOD’S PLAN

3. What should every soldier of the Lord ask for to face his responsibilities?

JAMES 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

PSALMS 119:66; 51:10 *Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments....* ^{51:10}*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

“... Wise generalship is needed in the service of Christ as is needed over the battalions of an army that protects the life and liberty of the people. It is not everyone who can labor judiciously for the salvation of souls. There is much close thinking to be done. We must not enter into the Lord’s work haphazard and expect success. The Lord needs men of mind, men of thought. Jesus calls for co-workers, not blunderers. God wants right-thinking and intelligent men to do the great work necessary to the salvation of souls.

“... In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth.”
–(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 453) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 67.

4. What is the key to success for every soldier?

JAMES 1:22, 25 *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves....* ²⁵*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

1 JOHN 5:3, 4 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.* ⁴*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

“In order to be true soldiers of Jesus Christ we must meet the requirements of His word as loyal subjects of the heavenly kingdom.... Those who claim to believe the truth must appreciate the great warfare before us and what is comprehended in being a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ.... The Saviour’s army invites voluntary enlistment. There must be a complete surrender of the passions, will, and ways to the will of the Master. Our work is to obey the orders of the mighty General of armies. A strong and active bodily organization is to be maintained. The senses must be enlightened as to perfect obedience; duties are to be done which cannot always be seen as essential; but now comes in the necessity of faith in a higher wisdom and power than your own. Have faith in God, unshaken faith in the skill and ability and fidelity of your Commander, who knows the plan of the battle.”
–*The Upward Look*, p. 230.

“Resolve, not in your own strength, but in the strength and grace given of God, that you will consecrate to Him now, just now, every power, every ability. You will then follow Jesus because He bids you, and you will not ask where, or what reward will be given.” –*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 37.

HELPED BY THE ANGELS

5. With the eyes of faith, what can we see all around us?

PSALM 34:7 *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

2 KINGS 6:16 *And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*

“The Lord has not concealed from His followers the plan of the battle. He has presented before His people the great conflict, and He has given them words of encouragement. He charges them not to enter into the battle without counting the cost, while He assures them that they do not fight alone, but that supernatural agencies will enable the weak, if they trust in Him, to become strong against the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against them. He points them to the universe of heaven, and assures them that holy beings are wrestling against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

“The children of God are cooperating with all the invisible host of light. And more than angels are in their ranks; the Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our mistakes and sins numerous, but forgiveness is for all who, with contrition of heart, will confess and forsake their sins. Angels of light are sent to render them all the help that is required.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 82.

6. Part of God’s plan is for His people to go and evangelize. What is the responsibility of every Christian soldier facing the errors spread by the enemy?

ROMANS 10:9, 13, 14 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.... ¹³For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

2 TIMOTHY 4:2-5 *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

“Bear with a certain voice an affirmative message. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary, higher and still higher. There is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ....

“Christ is to be preached, not controversially, but affirmatively. Take your stand without controversy. Let not your words at any time be uncertain. The word of the living God is to be the foundation of our faith. Gather up the strongest affirmative statements regarding the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world. Show the necessity for this atonement and tell men and women that they may be saved if they will repent and return to their loyalty to God’s law. Gather all the affirmatives and proofs that make the gospel the glad tidings of salvation to all who receive and believe on Christ as a personal Saviour.” —*Evangelism*, p. 187.

7. How will they use the sword of the Spirit—God’s word—to save souls, not lose them, and to witness the same results as at Pentecost?

1 PETER 3:15, 16 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*

with meekness and fear: ¹⁶Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

2 TIMOTHY 2:24-26 *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, ²⁵In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; ²⁶And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

“The truth is to be set forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. This alone can make our words effective. Only through the Spirit’s power will victory be gained and held. The human agent must be worked by the Spirit of God. The workers must be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. They must have divine wisdom, that nothing may be uttered which would stir up men to close our way. Through the inculcation of spiritual truth we are to prepare a people who shall be able, in meekness and fear, to give a reason for their faith before the highest authorities in our world.

“We need to present the truth in its simplicity, to advocate practical godliness; and we should do this in the spirit of Christ. The manifestation of such a spirit will have the best influence upon our own souls, and it will have a convincing power upon others. Give the Lord opportunity to work through His own agents. Do not imagine that it will be possible for you to lay out plans for the future; let God be acknowledged as standing at the helm at all times and under every circumstance. He will work by means that will be suitable, and will maintain, increase, and build up His own people.” —(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, pp. 46, 47) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 396.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The true minister will do nothing that would belittle his sacred office. He will be circumspect in deportment, and wise in his course of action. He will work as Christ worked; he will do as Christ did. He will use all his powers in carrying the tidings of salvation to those who know it not. A deep hunger for the righteousness of Christ will fill his heart. Feeling his need, he will seek earnestly for the power that must come to him before he can present in simplicity, truthfulness, and humility the truth as it is in Jesus.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 17.

“But unless we are constantly on guard, we shall be overcome by the enemy. Although a solemn revelation of God’s will concerning us has been revealed to all, yet a knowledge of His will does not set aside the necessity of offering earnest supplications to Him for help, and of diligently seeking to cooperate with Him in answering the prayers offered. He accomplishes His purposes through human instrumentalities.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1119.

“When you die to self, when you surrender to God, to do His work, to let the light that He has given you shine forth in good works, you will not labor alone. God’s grace stands forth to cooperate with every effort to enlighten the ignorant and those who do not know that the end of all things is at hand. But God will not do your work. Light may shine in abundance, but the grace given will convert your soul only as it arouses you to cooperate with divine agencies.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 37.

* * *

The Battlefield

“The fallen world is the battlefield for the greatest conflict the heavenly universe and earthly powers have ever witnessed. It was appointed as a theater on which would be fought out the grand struggle between good and evil, between heaven and hell. Every human being acts a part in this conflict. No one can stand on neutral ground. Men must either accept or reject the world’s Redeemer. All are witnesses, either for or against Christ. Christ calls upon those who stand under His banner to engage in the conflict with Him as faithful soldiers, that they may inherit the crown of life.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 36.

TWO CAMPS

1. What two camps are in constant opposition to each other?

REVELATION 12:17 *And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

“There are only two parties upon this earth—those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation is represented the great conflict between the obedient and the disobedient. [Revelation 12:17; 13:11-17 quoted.]” —(Manuscript 16, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

“In that time [before the Flood], as in this, there were two classes, the righteous and the wicked. Enoch and others walked with God in uprightness. But the great majority of the inhabitants of the earth were given over to iniquity, and their wickedness rose before God.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 56.

“The great conflict now being waged is not merely a strife of man against man. On one side stands the Prince of life, acting as man’s substitute and surety; on the other, the prince of darkness, with the fallen angels under his command. [Ephesians 6:12, 13, 10, 11 quoted.]” —(*Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

2. What does the Faithful Witness say to God’s people who are tempted to retreat from the battlefield?

REVELATION 3:14-18 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; ¹⁵I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ¹⁸I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be*

clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

“God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a constant battle and a march. There is no rest from the warfare. It is by constant, unceasing effort that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. Sin prevails among the people of God. The plain message of rebuke to the Laodiceans is not received. Many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing. They think the testimony of the Spirit of God in reproof is uncalled for or that it does not mean them. Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge. They lack almost every qualification necessary to perfect Christian character. They have not a practical knowledge of Bible truth, which leads to lowliness of life and a conformity of their will to the will of Christ. They are not living in obedience to all God’s requirements.” —(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 328) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 253.

UNSEEN ALLIES

3. As the intensity of the conflict grows right before the end and the scenes on the battlefields are horrendous, of what are Christ’s soldiers assured?

PSALM 91:5-11 *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; ⁶Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. ⁷A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. ⁸Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. ⁹Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; ¹⁰There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. ¹¹For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

“The Christian life is a warfare. But ‘we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.’ In this conflict of righteousness against unrighteousness we can be successful only by divine aid. Our finite will must be brought into submission to the will of the Infinite; the human will must be blended with the divine. This will bring the Holy Spirit to our aid; and every conquest will tend to the recovery of God’s purchased possession, to the restoration of His image in the soul.

“... Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ ‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him.’ Colossians 2:9, 10.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 344.

"If we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us." —(*Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1119.

4. Because the battle is ceaseless, the soldiers may become weary or even frightened during the terrible conflict. To whom must they turn, and what must they remember?

ISAIAH 40:29-31 *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. ³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: ³¹But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

1 SAMUEL 7:12, LAST PART ... *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

"Battles are to be fought every day. A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life.... The Prince of life is at the head of His work. He is to be with you in your daily battle with self, that you may be true to principle; that passion, when warring for the mastery, may be subdued by the grace of Christ; that you come off more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us. Jesus has been over the ground. He knows the power of every temptation. He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger.

"God will have a people zealous of good works, standing firm amid the pollutions of this degenerate age. There will be a people who hold so fast to the divine strength that they will be proof against every temptation. Evil communications in flaming handbills may seek to speak to their senses and corrupt their minds; yet they will be so united to God and angels that they will be as those who see not and hear not. They have a work to do which no one can do for them, which is to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 36.

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

5. Even though the enemy is active day and night to destroy God's children, how can they support each other, and what words must they recall?

ISAIAH 41:6 *They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.*

HEBREWS 12:12-15 *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. ¹⁴Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: ¹⁵Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*

JOHN 16:33, LAST PART ... *In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

"We are now on the battlefield. There is no time for resting, no time for ease, no time for selfish indulgence. After gaining one advantage, you must do battle

again; you must go on conquering and to conquer, gathering fresh strength for fresh struggles. Every victory gained gives an increase of courage, faith, and determination. Through divine strength you will prove more than a match for your enemies." –*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 345.

"When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change, wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook. He will do this for the glory of His name. God calls upon His faithful ones, who believe in Him, to talk courage to those who are unbelieving and hopeless. May the Lord help us to help one another, and to prove Him by living faith." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 12; *Christian Service*, pp. 234, 235.

6. While the Christian soldier must fight for his own salvation, what is his primary purpose on the battlefield?

1 TIMOTHY 4:10 *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*

JOHN 9:4 *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

"This is a time for everyone to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The forces of the enemy are strengthening, and as a people we are misrepresented. We desire the people to become acquainted with our doctrines and work. We want them to know what we are, and what we believe. We must find our way to their hearts. Let the army of the Lord be on the ground to represent the work and cause of God. Do not plead an excuse. The Lord has need of you. He does not do His work without the cooperation of the human agent." – (*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 379) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 40.

"The standard-bearers are falling, and young men must be prepared to take the places left vacant, that the message may still be proclaimed. The aggressive warfare is to be extended. Those who have youth and strength are to go into the dark places of the earth, to call perishing souls to repentance. But they must first cleanse the soul-temple of all impurity, and enthrone Christ in the heart." –*Gospel Workers*, p. 104.

7. What are two main watchwords on the battlefield?

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4 *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

JOHN 17:21-23 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²²And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

EXODUS 14:15 *And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.*

“Let each one who claims to follow Christ esteem himself less and others more. Press together, press together! In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat. These words have been spoken to me from heaven. As God’s ambassador I speak them to you.

“Let everyone seek to answer the prayer of Christ: ‘That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.’ Oh, what unity is this! And says Christ: ‘By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.’ John 17:21; 13:35.”—(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 190, 191) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 488, 489.

“Our watchword is to be, Onward, ever onward! Angels of heaven will go before us to prepare the way. Our burden for the regions beyond can never be laid down till the whole earth is lightened with the glory of the Lord.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 470; *Evangelism*, p. 707.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“In this age we can see the necessity of drawing men to Christ. This draws them to one another in that confidence, that love, that unity, for which Christ prayed in His last prayer with and for His disciples. This unity was essential for their spiritual growth. This world is a battlefield, upon which the powers of good and evil are in ceaseless warfare.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 110.

“We have before us a warfare—a lifelong conflict with Satan and his seductive temptations. The enemy will use every argument, every deception, to entangle the soul; and in order to win the crown of life, we must put forth earnest, persevering effort. We must not lay off the armor or leave the battlefield until we have gained the victory, and can triumph in our Redeemer.

“As long as we continue to keep our eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of our faith we shall be safe. But our affections must be placed upon things above, not on things on the earth. By faith we must rise higher and still higher in the attainments of the graces of Christ. By daily contemplating His matchless charms, we must grow more and more into His glorious image. While we thus live in communion with Heaven, Satan will lay his nets for us in vain.”—*My Life Today*, p. 105.

* * *

Am I a Good Soldier?

“The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the warfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth.

“We are soldiers of Christ. He is the Captain of our salvation, and we are under His orders and rules. We are to wear His armor; we are to be marshaled only under His banner.... We are to keep on the whole armor of God, and work as in view of the universe of heaven.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 37.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES

1. Is it wise to consider everyone in Christ’s army a loyal soldier? Because one can make mistakes, what does the apostle Paul urge?

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

GALATIANS 6:4 *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

“All the members of the church, if they are sons and daughters of God, will have to undergo a process of discipline before they can be lights in the world. God will not make men and women channels of light while they are in darkness and are content to remain so, making no special efforts to connect with the Source of light. Those who feel their own need, and arouse themselves to the deepest thought and the most earnest, persevering prayer and action, will receive divine aid. There is much for each to unlearn with respect to himself, as well as much to learn. Old habits and customs must be shaken off, and it is only by earnest struggles to correct these errors, and a full reception of the truth in carrying out its principles, by the grace of God, that the victory can be gained.

“I wish I could speak words which would impress us all that our only hope as individuals is to connect with God. Purity of soul must be obtained; and there is much heart searching to be done and much obstinacy and self-love to be overcome, which will require constant, earnest prayer.” —(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 564) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 485, 486.

SELF-DENIAL AND ENDURANCE

2. What important principles guide the Christian soldier?

COLOSSIANS 3:23 *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9, 10 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

ROMANS 12:11 *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*

“Those who enlist in Christ’s army are also expected to do difficult work, and to bear painful trials patiently for Christ’s sake. But those who suffer with Him shall also reign with Him.

“Then who of us have entered the service to expect the conveniences of life, to be off duty when we please, laying aside the soldier’s armor and putting on the civilian’s dress, sleeping at the post of duty, and so exposing the cause of God to reproach? The ease-loving ones will not practice self-denial and patient endurance; and when men are wanted to make mighty strokes for God, these are not ready to answer, ‘Here am I; send me.’ Hard and trying work has to be done, but blessed are those who are ready to do it when their names are called....

“We are now on the battlefield. There is no time for resting, no time for ease, no time for selfish indulgence. After gaining one advantage, you must do battle again; you must go on conquering and to conquer, gathering fresh strength for fresh struggles. Every victory gained gives an increase of courage, faith, and determination. Through divine strength you will prove more than a match for your enemies.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 34.

3. What other essential counsel was given by the apostles Paul and John?

2 TIMOTHY 2:3, 4 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

1 JOHN 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness....

“In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him. Hence the Saviour says, ‘Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.’ Luke 14:33. Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s children unless we are such entirely.” —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 43, 44.

OBEDIENCE, CONSECRATION, AND COURAGE

4. As the perfect example of obedience, what does Jesus tell every Christian?

JOHN 12:25, 26 *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. ²⁶If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

“Every good soldier is implicit and prompt in the obedience he renders to his captain. The will of the commander is to be the will of the soldier. Sometimes the soldier may be surprised at the command given, but he is not to stop to inquire the reason for it. When the order of the captain crosses the wishes of the soldier, he is not to hesitate and complain, saying, I see no consistency in these plans. He must not frame excuses and leave his work undone. Such soldiers would not be accepted as fitted to engage in earthly conflicts, and much more will they not be accepted in Christ’s army. When Christ commands, His soldiers must obey without hesitation. They must be faithful soldiers, or He cannot accept them. Freedom of choice is given to every soul, but after a man has enlisted, he is required to be as true as steel, come life or come death.” –*Evangelism*, p. 648.

5. Can one expect to reap a bountiful harvest if he sows the seed sparsely? How should one work?

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6 *But thus I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

ECCLESIASTES 11:6 *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

“We need to break up the monotony of our religious labor. We are doing a work in the world, but we are not showing sufficient activity and zeal. If we were more in earnest, men would be convinced of the truth of our message. The tameness and monotony of our service for God repels many souls of a higher class, who need to see a deep, earnest, sanctified zeal.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 417; *Christian Service*, p. 230.

“True holiness is wholeness in the service of God. This is the condition of true Christian living. Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. Self is not to be cherished. He who lives to himself is not a Christian.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 48, 49; *Christian Service*, p. 235.

“No man can succeed in the service of God unless his whole heart is in the work, and he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. No man who makes any reserve can be the disciple of Christ, much less can he be His co-laborer.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 273; *Christian Service*, p. 236.

TENDERNESS, GENTLENESS, AND KINDNESS

6. How does a Christian act when he is defending the truth?

JAMES 3:13, 17, 18 *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.... ¹⁷But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be*

intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

COLOSSIANS 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

“A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring, and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His words—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 129; *Christian Service*, p. 241.

7. How will the Christian soldier overcome obstacles?

DEUTERONOMY 31:6, 8 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.... ⁸And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

2 SAMUEL 22:29-31 For thou art my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness. ³⁰For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall. ³¹As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

“Hope and courage are essential to perfect service for God. These are the fruit of faith. Despondency is sinful and unreasonable.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164.

“Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess. Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace they are to go forward. Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called upon to surmount them. They are to despair of nothing, and to hope for everything. With the golden chain of His matchless love, Christ had bound them to the throne of God. It is His purpose that the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the Source of all power, shall be theirs. They are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 39; *Christian Service*, p. 235.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The Christian life is a life of warfare, of continual conflict. It is a battle and a march. But every act of obedience to Christ, every act of self-denial for His sake, every trial well endured, every victory gained over temptation, is a step in the march to the glory of final victory.

“When difficulties arise, as they will, remember that Jesus is by your side, a very present help in time of need. To meet trial bravely is part of the Christian warfare, and in this warfare all heaven is interested. Christ knows what temptations you will meet. He knows that when one accepts the truth he or she will have a cross to lift, and He is ready to give the needed help....

“At the moment when you are offering your prayer for help, you may not feel all the joy and blessing that you would like to feel; but if you believe that Christ will hear and answer your petition, the peace of Christ will come.” —*Christ Triumphant*, pp. 204, 205.

* * *

Victory through Christ

“The great Captain of our salvation has conquered in our behalf, that through Him we might conquer, if we would, in our own behalf. But Christ saves none against their choice; He compels none to obedience. He made the infinite sacrifice that they might overcome in His name and His righteousness be imputed unto them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 457.

VICTORY

1. To be victorious, what is indispensable for the Christian soldier who is clothed with the armor of God?

EPHESIANS 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6, 7 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

1 JOHN 5:4, 5 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

“It is only by watching unto prayer, and the exercise of living faith, that the Christian can preserve his integrity in the midst of the temptations that Satan brings to bear upon him. But ‘whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ 1 John 5:4. Talk to your heart constantly the language of faith: ‘Jesus said He would receive me, and I believe His word. I will praise Him; I will glorify His name.’ Satan will be close by your side to suggest that you do not feel any joy. Answer him, ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ I have everything to be glad of; for I am a child of God. I am trusting in Jesus. The law of God is in my heart; none of my steps shall slide.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 360.

2. Through whom will the promised victory be gained? What wonderful vision did the Lord’s messenger see?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

PSALMS 118:15; 108:13 *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.... ^{108:13}Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

"In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world's insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust, as company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: 'Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters. Let all who will come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.'...

"The Captain of our salvation was ordering the battle and sending support to His soldiers. His power was mightily displayed, encouraging them to press the battle to the gates. He taught them terrible things in righteousness as He led them on step by step, conquering and to conquer."—(*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 224) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 41.

PROMISES FOR THE OVERCOMERS

3. What merits will the Christian soldier plead—his own or Christ's righteousness?

REVELATION 12:11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

EPHESIANS 2:4-9 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;); ⁶And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: ⁷That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

"He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure.... All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation."—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 177.

"We should realize in our inmost soul that all our efforts in and of ourselves will be utterly worthless; for it is only in the name and strength of the Conqueror that we shall be overcomers."—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 369.

4. With what will the overcomers be clothed? What wonderful promise does Jesus give them?

REVELATION 3:5 *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

MATTHEW 10:32 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

“The overcomer is to be clothed in the white raiment of Christ’s righteousness, and of Him it is written: ‘I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.’ Oh, what a privilege it is to be an overcomer, and to have our names presented before the Father by the Saviour Himself! And when, as overcomers, we shall be ‘clothed in white raiment,’ the Lord will acknowledge our faithfulness as verily as in the days of the early Christian church. He acknowledged the ‘few names even in Sardis’ who had ‘not defiled their garments’ (Revelation 3:4); and we shall walk with Him in white, for through His atoning sacrifice we shall be accounted worthy.” –*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 364.

THEIR REWARD

5. Where will the overcomers be seated? What emblems of victory and royal insignia does Jesus offer them?

REVELATION 3:21, 12; 15:2; 7:9 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne....¹²Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.^{15:2}And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God....^{7:9}After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*

“Before entering the City of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. The glittering ranks are drawn up in the form of a hollow square about their King, whose form rises in majesty high above saint and angel, whose countenance beams upon them full of benignant love. Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory whose ‘visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.’ Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own ‘new name’ (Revelation 2:17), and the inscription, ‘Holiness to the Lord.’ In every hand are placed the victor’s palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise: ‘Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.’ Revelation 1:5, 6.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 645, 646.

6. When the great tribulation has ended, what welcome will the risen dead in Christ and the living saints receive in the heavenly courts?

MATTHEW 25:34 *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

“In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son. The angels, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King and His trophies of victory.... A song of triumph will peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts, accompanied by His redeemed ones, the witnesses that His mission of suffering and sacrifice has not been in vain....

“We may have a vision of the future, the blessedness of heaven. In the Bible are revealed visions of the future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, and these are dear to His church. By faith we may stand on the threshold of the eternal city, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life cooperate with Christ, regarding it as an honor to suffer for His sake. As the words are spoken, ‘Come ye blessed of My Father,’ they cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaiming. ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.... Honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’ Matthew 25:34; Revelation 5:12, 13.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, pp. 355, 349.

THE SONG OF VICTORY

7. What triumphant vision does the prophet of Patmos describe?

REVELATION 15:2, 3 *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. ³And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*

“What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 349.

“What a song that will be when the ransomed of the Lord meet at the gate of the Holy City, which is thrown back on its glittering hinges and the nations that have kept His word—His commandments—enter into the city, the crown of the overcomer is placed upon their heads, and the golden harps are placed in their hands! All heaven is filled with rich music, and with songs of praise to the Lamb. Saved, everlastingly saved, in the kingdom of glory! To have a life that measures with the life of God—that is the reward.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 982.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the City of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding

garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God." —*The Adventist Home*, pp. 542, 543.

"Let us thank God with heart and soul and voice; and let us learn to approach unto Him as through an open door, believing that we may come freely with our petitions, and that He will hear and answer. It is by a living faith in His power to help, that we shall receive strength to fight the battles of the Lord with the confident assurance of victory." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 364.

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SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Fourth Quarter 2018

“COME, AND FOLLOW ME”

INTRODUCTION

As soon as Jesus began His ministry preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand, He called certain men to follow Him and become His disciples. Andrew and Simon, James and John on the shores of the Sea of Galilee heard His holy appeal—“Follow Me”—and immediately followed Him. They left their daily work, from which they earned their livelihood, and followed the Master. Later Levi-Matthew, an employee in the tax office, was called to leave his occupation and join the disciples, which he did. Matthew became not only an apostle of the good news but also an evangelist whose writings have reached to our days!

Christian discipleship is not a question of a simple, theoretical promise without a practical commitment. To follow Jesus requires the denial of one’s personal interests and pursuits and full engagement in the Master’s service. Sadly, many Christians are unwilling to practice such self-denial; they wish to continue in their own way. Not all are prepared to dedicate everything they have and are to the Lord. It is high time for God’s people to rediscover what true discipleship is, to put their own interests in second place, and to follow the Master, as Jesus said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Luke 9:23.

“... Jesus bade His followers take up the cross and bear it after Him. To the disciples His words, though dimly comprehended, pointed to their submission to the most bitter humiliation—submission even unto death for the sake of Christ. No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour’s words have pictured. But all this He had accepted for them. Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life

of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven's priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 416.

"We are Christ's witnesses, and we are not to allow worldly interests so to absorb our time and attention that we pay no heed to the things that God has said must come first. There are higher interests at stake. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.' Christ gave His all to the work that He came to do, and His word to us is, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' 'So shall ye be My disciples.'" —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 302.

"Following Christ ... is not a pretense, a farce. Jesus expects His disciples to follow closely in His footsteps, enduring what He endured, suffering what He suffered, overcoming as He overcame. He is anxiously waiting to see His professed followers revealing the spirit of self-sacrifice." —*Counsels on Health*, p. 511.

This quarter's lessons focus on Jesus' invitation, "Come and follow Me" (Matthew 19:21), an invitation that is full of His unending love. How many are willing and ready to respond as did the disciples? The blessings are great; the joy, immeasurable!

"'If any man serve Me,' said Jesus, 'let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor.' All who have borne with Jesus the cross of sacrifice will be sharers with Him of His glory. It was the joy of Christ in His humiliation and pain that His disciples should be glorified with Him. They are the fruit of His self-sacrifice. The outworking in them of His own character and spirit is His reward, and will be His joy throughout eternity. This joy they share with Him as the fruit of their labor and sacrifice is seen in other hearts and lives. They are workers together with Christ, and the Father will honor them as He honors His Son." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

May the Lord bless all who study these lessons to learn to follow the Master and dedicate themselves to serve Him wholeheartedly, as did the disciples.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference
and the Ministerial Department*

The Gift of God

“The gifts of God are on every hand, and all His gifts come to us through the merit of Jesus, whom He gave to the world. The apostle Paul breaks forth in an exclamation of gratitude, saying, ‘Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.’ And with Christ God has given us all things. The opening bud, the blooming flowers in their variety and loveliness, delightful to the senses, are the work of the Master Artist’s expressions of His love toward us. What beautiful things His hands have made, and yet many behold the lovely things of nature, and do not associate God with these blessings. They do not realize that the beautiful things about them are tokens of God’s love to fallen humanity, His efforts to attract them to Himself. The Lord has taken great care that everything should be grateful and pleasant to us, and yet how much greater effort He has made to provide us with that gift whereby we may perfect a Christian character, after the pattern of Christ.” —*Signs of the Times*, June 19, 1893.

GOD’S GREATEST GIFT

1. What bond keeps man close to God? What is the greatest gift that He has given to humanity?

JOHN 3:16; 4:10 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life....^{4:10}Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

“God has not only supplied us with temporal benefits, but has provided for our eternal welfare; ‘for God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ ‘If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.’ Oh, if we did but know the gift of God, if we did but appreciate what this gift of God means to us, we would have been earnestly seeking for it with unwavering perseverance! We would have offered such supplication, such appeals to God, that the gift of grace would not have been withheld, and the living water would have come to satisfy our longing, thirsty souls. ‘If thou knewest the gift of God.’ Yes, if the gift of God had been known, there would not be prayerless homes, and hearts as unimpressible as stone.” —*Signs of the Times*, June 19, 1893.

2. In the midst of growing darkness, where can that true light that enlightens every conscience be found?

JOHN 1:4, 9; 9:5 *In him was life; and the life was the light of men....⁹That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world....^{9:5}As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

“Only the believer in Christ can receive life everlasting. Only by continually feeding on Christ’s flesh and blood can we have the assurance that we are partakers of the divine nature. No one should be indifferent on this subject, saying, If we are honest, it is no matter what we believe. You cannot with safety surrender any seed of vital truth in order to please yourself or anybody else. Do not seek to avoid the cross. If we receive no light from the Sun of Righteousness, we have no connection with the Source of all light; and if this life and light do not abide in us, we can never be saved.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 299.

SACRIFICE TO SET MAN FREE

3. What great sacrifice did the Saviour make to come face to face with every human being and solve the painful problem of sin?

1 JOHN 3:5; 2:2 *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.... 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

“Jesus Christ, the Majesty of heaven, has been offered to the world, has been given to man as his Saviour and Redeemer. Well may the inhabitants of heaven and the unfallen worlds look with astonishment upon man’s lack of discernment, upon his ingratitude. Many have hated and spurned the gift of God, although Jesus clothed His divinity with humanity, and for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. He left the courts of heaven, and came to the world, all seared and marred and polluted with sin; He practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice, descending lower and lower in the path of humiliation, that we might be enriched and exalted. Rich in houses and lands, in worldly honor? No, but that we might have all heaven’s imperishable treasure, an eternal weight of glory.”—*Signs of the Times*, June 19, 1893.

4. How may the sinful human being now appear before the throne of God? What does it mean to move from a condition of condemnation and death to that of forgiveness and justification?

ROMANS 5:15-17 *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.*

“Man broke God’s law, and through the Redeemer new and fresh promises were made on a different basis. All blessings must come through a Mediator. Now every member of the human family is given wholly into the hands of Christ, and whatever we possess—whether it is the gift of money, of houses, of lands, of reasoning powers, of physical strength, of intellectual talents—in this present life, and the blessings of the future life, are placed in our possession as God’s treasures to be faithfully expended for the benefit of man. Every gift is stamped with the cross and bears the image and superscription of Jesus Christ. All things come of God. From the smallest benefits up to the largest blessing, all flow through the one

Channel—a superhuman mediation sprinkled with the blood that is of value beyond estimate because it was the life of God in His Son.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 22.

INTERCEDING IN MAN’S BEHALF

5. In addition to His great suffering and sacrifice on the cross, what ministry is Jesus continually performing for sinful man still today?

1 JOHN 2:1 *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.*

ROMANS 8:34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

“‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16. Jehovah did not deem the plan of salvation complete while invested only with His love. He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed in our nature. As our Intercessor, Christ’s office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters. He intercedes in behalf of those who receive Him. With His own blood He has paid their ransom. By virtue of His merits He gives them power to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. And the Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ by receiving and welcoming Christ’s friends as His friends.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 177.

6. What amazing, supreme gift does God give those who truly believe in His Son?

ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

1 JOHN 5:11, 12 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

“‘In him was life; and the life was the light of men.’ John 1:4. It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. ‘I lay it down of Myself’ (John 10:18), He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. ‘This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.’ John 17:3. This is the open fountain of life for the world.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 296, 297.

“Christ ‘brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’ 2 Timothy 1:10. No man can have an independent spiritual life apart from Him.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 297.

“If through faith man becomes one with Christ, he can win life everlasting. God loves those who are redeemed through Christ, even as He loves His Son. What

a thought! Can God love the sinner as He loves His own Son? Yes; Christ has said it, and He means just what He says.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 300.

7. What is the Lord’s desire for everyone who loves Him and is seeking for the Light of the world? If one desires to be one of the Redeemer’s sheep, whom will he or she follow?

JOHN 8:12; 10:27 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life....* ^{10:27}*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

“The work of Christ is to draw men from the false and spurious to the true and genuine. ‘He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ There is no danger of going into error while we follow in the footsteps of ‘the Light of the world.’ We are to work the works of Christ. We must engage heart and soul in His service; we must search the word of life, and present it to others.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 128.

“This is Jesus, the life of every grace, the life of every promise, the life of every ordinance, the life of every blessing. Jesus is the substance, the glory and fragrance, the very life itself.... Let us repeat them by day and meditate upon them in the night season, and be happy.”—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 244.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Have you always been aware of God’s great gift to man?*
- *How deeply do you appreciate this greatest gift?*
- *What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Shall we open our hearts to Jesus Christ? Shall we enthrone Him in the temple of the soul? Shall we not cast away our idols, and surrender our all to God? God has had power to make the flowers fair and fragrant, and He has power to give meekness and lowliness to the heart, to impart purity and nobility to the character, to make us complete in Jesus. We may have loveliness of disposition, a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Let us consider the precious gifts of God, think upon His tender mercies, yield our all to Him, that He may give us hearts filled with gratitude, lives filled with the fragrance of deeds of love, a disposition to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, seeking to save those that are lost.”—*Signs of the Times*, June 19, 1893.

* * *

“Come and See”

“When you give up your own will, your own wisdom, and learn of Christ, you will find admittance into the kingdom of God. He requires entire, unreserved surrender. Give up your life for Him to order, mold, and fashion. Take upon your neck His yoke. Submit to be led and taught by Him. Learn that unless you become as a little child, you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.

“Abiding in Christ is choosing only the disposition of Christ, so that His interests are identified with yours. Abide in Him, to be and to do only what He wills. These are the conditions of discipleship, and unless they are complied with, you can never find rest. Rest is in Christ; it cannot be as something apart from Him.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 110.

HEARING THE TESTIMONY AND DECIDING TO FOLLOW HIM

1. What deep interest did two of John the Baptist’s disciples show after he pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God? What is significant about the title by which they addressed the Lord?

JOHN 1:35-38 *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; ³⁶And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! ³⁷And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?*

“Leaving John, they went to seek Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, the brother of Simon; the other was John the evangelist. These were Christ’s first disciples. Moved by an irresistible impulse, they followed Jesus—anxious to speak with Him, yet awed and silent, lost in the overwhelming significance of the thought, ‘Is this the Messiah?’

“Jesus knew that the disciples were following Him. They were the first fruits of His ministry, and there was joy in the heart of the divine Teacher as these souls responded to His grace. Yet turning, He asked only, ‘What seek ye?’ He would leave them free to turn back or to speak of their desire.

“Of one purpose only were they conscious. One presence filled their thought. They exclaimed, ‘Rabbi,... where dwellest Thou?’ In a brief interview by the way-side they could not receive that for which they longed. They desired to be alone with Jesus, to sit at His feet, and hear His words.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 138.

2. How long did they stay with Him? Who followed Jesus without even being called by Him?

JOHN 1:39, 40 *He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.*

"If John and Andrew had possessed the unbelieving spirit of the priests and rulers, they would not have been found as learners at the feet of Jesus. They would have come to Him as critics, to judge His words.... But not so did these first disciples. They had responded to the Holy Spirit's call in the preaching of John the Baptist. Now they recognized the voice of the heavenly Teacher. To them the words of Jesus were full of freshness and truth and beauty. A divine illumination was shed upon the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. The many-sided themes of truth stood out in new light....

"The disciple John was a man of earnest and deep affection, ardent, yet contemplative. He had begun to discern the glory of Christ—not the worldly pomp and power for which he had been taught to hope, but 'the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' John 1:14. He was absorbed in contemplation of the wondrous theme." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

3. What did these men consider Jesus to be? Did Andrew keep the great discovery to himself, or did he share it with others?

JOHN 1:41, 42 *He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.*

"Andrew sought to impart the joy that filled his heart. Going in search of his brother Simon, he cried, 'We have found the Messiah.' Simon waited for no second bidding. He also had heard the preaching of John the Baptist, and he hastened to the Saviour. The eye of Christ rested upon him, reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all, and He said, 'Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.'...

"All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. His promise is, 'I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.' Ezekiel 34:26." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 139, 141.

THE MASTER'S INVITATION

4. Whom did Jesus find the next day and personally invite to follow Him and become His disciple?

JOHN 1:43, 44 *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. ⁴⁴Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*

"Philip obeyed the command, and straightway he also became a worker for Christ." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

"Those who stand in the highest positions may lead astray. The wisest err; the strongest may falter and stumble. There is need that light from above should be constantly shed upon our pathway. Our only safety lies in trusting our way implicitly to Him who has said, 'Follow Me.'" —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 556.

"All are not constituted alike. Conversions are not all alike. Jesus impresses the heart, and the sinner is born again to new life. Often souls have been drawn to Christ when there was no violent conviction, no soul rending, no remorseful terrors. They looked upon an uplifted Saviour, they lived. They saw the soul's need, they saw the Saviour's sufficiency, and His claims, they heard His voice saying, 'Follow Me,' and they rose up and followed Him. This conversion was genuine, and the religious life was just as decided as was that of others who suffered all the agony of a violent process."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 177, 178.

5. Once he became Jesus' disciple, with whom did Philip share the news of the great discovery? Was Nathanael equally willing to accept what he heard, or did he have reservations about believing that Jesus was the Messiah?

JOHN 1:45, 46 *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. ⁴⁶And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

"The life of Jesus was a life in harmony with God. While He was a child, He thought and spoke as a child; but no trace of sin marred the image of God within Him. Yet He was not exempt from temptation. The inhabitants of Nazareth were proverbial for their wickedness. The low estimate in which they were generally held is shown by Nathanael's question, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' John 1:46. Jesus was placed where His character would be tested. It was necessary for Him to be constantly on guard in order to preserve His purity. He was subject to all the conflicts which we have to meet, that He might be an example to us in childhood, youth, and manhood."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 71.

THE MASTER KNEW THOSE HE WAS CALLING

6. How did Jesus address Nathanael's objection? How difficult was it for him to understand how Jesus was able to know him?

JOHN 1:47, 48 *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! ⁴⁸Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*

"The prayer that Nathanael offered came from a sincere heart, and it was heard and answered by the Master. The Lord reads the hearts of all, and 'the prayer of the upright is His delight.' Proverbs 15:8. He will not be slow to hear those who open their hearts to Him, not exalting self, but sincerely feeling their weakness and unworthiness."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 257.

"Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' Nathanael said, 'Whence knowest Thou me?' Jesus answered, 'Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.' John 1:47, 48. And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer if we will seek Him for light that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 91.

7. What was Nathanael's wonderful confession? In following the Son of God, what experiences would confirm the disciples' faith?

JOHN 1:49-51 *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.* ⁵⁰*Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.* ⁵¹*And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

"This ladder represented Christ, who had opened the communication between earth and heaven. In Christ's humiliation He descended to the very depth of human woe in sympathy and pity for fallen man, which was represented to Jacob by one end of the ladder resting upon the earth, while the top of the ladder, reaching unto heaven, represents the divine power of Christ, who grasps the Infinite, and thus links earth to heaven and finite man to the infinite God. Through Christ the communication is opened between God and man. Angels may pass from heaven to earth with messages of love to fallen man, and to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. It is through Christ alone that the heavenly messengers minister to men." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 280.

"Planted firmly upon the earth, and reaching heavenward to the throne of God, is a ladder of shining brightness. God is above the ladder, and His light is shining along its whole length. This ladder is Christ. Every round that you climb, you are coming step after step into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and are becoming fashioned after His divine similitude. The angels of God are constantly ascending and descending this glorious ladder. They will not let you fall, if you keep your eye fixed upon the glory of God which is at the top of the ladder...." —*The Upward Look*, p. 256.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"With the calling of John and Andrew and Simon, of Philip and Nathanael, began the foundation of the Christian church. John directed two of his disciples to Christ. Then one of these, Andrew, found his brother, and called him to the Saviour. Philip was then called, and he went in search of Nathanael. These examples should teach us the importance of personal effort, of making direct appeals to our kindred, friends, and neighbors. There are those who for a lifetime have professed to be acquainted with Christ, yet who have never made a personal effort to bring even one soul to the Saviour. They leave all the work for the minister. He may be well qualified for his calling, but he cannot do that which God has left for the members of the church.

"Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed. In the very family, the neighborhood, the town, where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries for Christ. If we are Christians, this work will be our delight. 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." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 141.

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The Most Wonderful Invitation

“These men [the disciples] were as true as steel to principle. They were men who would not fail nor be discouraged. They were full of reverence and zeal for God, full of noble purposes and aspirations. They were by nature as weak and helpless as any of those now engaged in the work, but they put their whole trust in the Lord. Wealth they had, but it consisted of mind and soul culture; and this every one may have who will make God first and last and best in everything. They toiled long to learn the lessons given them in the school of Christ, and they did not toil in vain. They bound themselves up with the mightiest of all powers, and were ever longing for a deeper, higher, broader comprehension of eternal realities, that they might successfully present the treasures of truth to a needy world.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 25.

- 1. What did the people living on the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim (the area beyond Jordan and Galilee, where the Gentiles were enshrouded in spiritual darkness) see when the Saviour visited those regions?**

MATTHEW 4:13-16 *And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: ¹⁴That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, ¹⁵The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; ¹⁶The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.*

“These humble fishermen were Christ’s first disciples. He did not say that they were to receive a certain sum for their services. They were to share with Him His self-denial and sacrifices.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 317.

“The religion of Christ is not a selfish religion. It is not to be kept under lock and key, but it is to be an influence of power going forth from every genuine Christian to enlighten those that sit in darkness. Every soul connected with a true Christian will be made better thereby. We are to be God’s light bearers, reflecting the steady beams of heaven upon others.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 205.

THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM AT HAND

- 2. What specific message did Jesus preach everywhere? What was connected with the news of the heavenly kingdom?**

MATTHEW 4:17; 18:11 *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.... ^{18:11}For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

LUKE 19:10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

“The message He had proclaimed throughout the land, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (Matthew 4:17), had arrested the attention of all classes, and had

still further fanned the flame of their ambitious hopes. The fame of the new Teacher had spread beyond the limits of Palestine, and, notwithstanding the attitude of the hierarchy, the feeling was widespread that this might be the hoped-for Deliverer. Great multitudes thronged the steps of Jesus, and the popular enthusiasm ran high." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 2, 3.

"No soul knows what God is until he sees himself a sinner in the light from the cross of Calvary; but when in his great need he cries out for a sin-pardoning Saviour, God is revealed to him as gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature and are to be laborers together with God. We are to bind up the bruised and wounded soul; and if a brother or a sister has erred, we are not to join with the enemy in destroying and ruining, but to work with Christ to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 291.

3. Whom did Jesus meet as He was walking on the shore of the Sea of Galilee? What were they doing?

MATTHEW 4:18 *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

"... The words of Christ were an invitation that implied all that He meant it should. There was an impelling influence in His words. There was no long explanation, but what He said had a drawing power....

"Christ would make these humble fishermen, in connection with Himself, the means of taking men out of the service of Satan, and making them believers in Christ, teaching them in regard to the kingdom of God. In this work they would become His ministers, fishers of men...." —*Our Father Cares*, pp. 226, 227.

4. What special call did He address to them? What great change did He make in their lives?

MATTHEW 4:19 *And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

"Wherever hearts were open to receive the divine message, He unfolded the truths of the way of salvation. He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said, 'Follow Me.' On His journeys through country and cities, He took them with Him, that they might see how He taught the people. They traveled with Him from place to place. They shared His frugal fare, and like Him were sometimes hungry and often weary. On the crowded streets, by the lakeside, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They saw Him in every phase of life." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 17.

5. Whom else did He meet when they were hard at work? What special call did He address to them?

MATTHEW 4:21 *And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.*

“The old-time spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice is too seldom met with. But this is the only spirit that can actuate a true follower of Jesus. Our divine Master has given us an example of how we are to work. And to those whom He bade, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men,’ He offered no stated sum as a reward for their services. They were to share with Him His self-denial and sacrifice.”
—*Messages to Young People*, p. 303.

READINESS TO RESPOND TO THE APPEAL

6. How did Simon, Andrew, James, and John respond to Jesus’ call? What did all four men leave behind to follow the Master?

MATTHEW 4:20, 22 *And they straightway left their nets, and followed him....²²And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

“The prompt, unquestioning obedience of these men, with no promise of wages, seems remarkable; but the words of Christ were an invitation that carried with it an impelling power. Christ would make these humble fishermen, in connection with Himself, the means of taking men out of the service of Satan, and placing them in the service of God. In this work they would become His witnesses, bearing to the world His truth unmingled with the traditions and sophistries of men. By practicing His virtues, by walking and working with Him, they were to be qualified to be fishers of men.

“Thus were the first disciples appointed to the work of the gospel ministry. For three years they labored in connection with the Saviour, and by His teaching, His works of healing, His example, they were prepared to carry on the work that He began. By the simplicity of faith, by pure, humble service, the disciples were taught to carry responsibilities in God’s cause.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 24.

7. How did Jesus carry on His work of evangelism in different regions? What drew people to Him? What did multitudes of people do, even though Jesus had not called them as He had the disciples?

MATTHEW 4:23-25 *And 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.²⁴And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.²⁵And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.*

“Christ might have occupied the highest place among the highest teachers of the Jewish nation. But He chose rather to take the gospel to the poor. He went from place to place, that those in the highways and byways might catch the words of the gospel of truth. He labored in the way in which He desires His workers to labor today. By the sea, on the mountainside, in the streets of the city, His voice was heard explaining the Old Testament Scriptures. So unlike the explanations of the scribes and Pharisees was His explanation that the attention of the people was arrested. He taught as one having authority,... With clearness and power He proclaimed the gospel message.” —*Evangelism*, p. 54.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *If I had been in the disciples' place, would I have so gladly accepted Jesus' invitation?*
- *Would I have been willing, without hesitation, to leave the sea, my nets, and my profession to become one of His disciples?*
- *Whom did they see in the Master of Galilee?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Workers of this character are needed now, men who will consecrate themselves without reserve to the work of representing the kingdom of God to a world lying in wickedness. The world needs men of thought, men of principle, men who are constantly growing in understanding and discernment. There is great need of men who can use the press to the best advantage, that the truth may be given wings to speed it to every nation, and tongue, and people." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 25.

"Mark the features of Christ's work. He moved in the greatest simplicity. Although His followers were fishermen, He did not advise them to go first into the school of the rabbis before entering upon the work. He called His disciples from their fishers' nets, and said: 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' He called Matthew from the receipt of customs, and said, 'Follow Me.' All that they were required to do was to follow Jesus, to do as He commanded them, and thus enter into His school, where God could be their teacher. As long as time shall last, we shall have need of schools. There will always be need for education; but we must be careful lest education shall absorb every spiritual interest." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 359.

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**Read the Missionary Report of the
Philippine Union College on page 85.**

4

Sabbath, October 27, 2018

True Discipleship

“Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order. ‘Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.’ 1 John 2:3.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146, 147.

I WILL FOLLOW YOU

- 1. What expression of discipleship and apparently full dedication did a certain man give to Jesus? Was he a common person, as were the other disciples?**

LUKE 9:57 *And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

MATTHEW 8:19 *And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

“While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples. With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared, ‘Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.’ Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words: ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.’ Matthew 8:19, 20. Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 293, 294.

- 2. Considering Jesus’ response to this man, rather than immediately accepting him as a disciple and perhaps making some promise to him, why did He let him know that he could expect no material benefit from his association with Jesus?**

LUKE 9:58 *And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

“The Saviour lived not to please Himself.... He had no home in this world, only as the kindness of His friends provided Him one, yet it was heaven to be in His presence. Day by day He met trials and temptations, yet He did not fail or become discouraged. He was always patient and cheerful, and the afflicted hailed Him as a messenger of life and peace and health. His life held nothing that was not pure and noble....” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 37.

“Jesus came to this world in humility. He was of lowly birth. The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, the Commander of all the angel host, He humbled Himself to accept humanity, and then He chose a life of poverty and humiliation. He had no opportunities that the poor do not have. Toil, hardship, and privation were a part of every day’s experience.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 197.

3. What appeal did Jesus address to another person? What did the man’s reply show? Was it even possible first to manage his father’s funeral service and then to follow the Master?

LUKE 9:59 *And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

MATTHEW 8:21 *And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

“Punctuality and decision in the work and cause of God are highly essential. Delays are virtually defeats. Minutes are golden, and should be improved to the very best account. Earthly relations and personal interests should ever be secondary. Never should the cause of God be left to suffer in a single particular, because of our earthly friends or dearest relatives....

“No earthly ties, no earthly considerations, should weigh one moment in the scale against duty to the cause and work of God. Jesus severed His connection from everything to save a lost world; and He requires of us a full and entire consecration. There are sacrifices to be made for the interests of God’s cause. The sacrifice of feeling is the most keen that is required of us; yet, after all, it is a small sacrifice.” —*Gospel Workers* (1892), pp. 247, 248.

FIRST PRIORITY

4. What was more urgent? In our personal decisions, do we give priority to the preaching of God’s kingdom, as Jesus said, or to our own needs?

MATTHEW 8:22 *But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.*

LUKE 9:60 *Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

“When souls are deciding for or against the truth, do not, I beseech you, allow yourselves to be drawn away from your field of labor. Do not abandon it to the enemy, I might say, even if one lay dead in your house. Christ said, ‘Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead.’ If you could only see the importance of the work as it has been presented to me, the paralysis that is upon many would be shaken off, and there would be a rising from the dead and a coming to life through Jesus Christ....

“If we firmly take our stand as God’s workmen, saying, ‘The Lord has given us a message, and we cannot be faithful watchmen unless we stand at our post of

duty; we will carry the work through at all hazards,' then we shall find that angels of God will minister to our households at home, and will say to the enemy, 'Stand back.'" –*Evangelism*, p. 655.

5. What appeal did the Lord address to another person? Since he accepted the Master's invitation, what should one think about the man's request for a brief postponement?

LUKE 9:61 *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

"You should realize the value of time. You are not excusable for leaving the most important, though unpleasant work, hoping to get rid of doing it altogether, or thinking that it will become less unpleasant, while you occupy your time upon pleasant matters not really taxing. You should first do the work which must be done and which involves the vital interests of the cause, and only take up the less important matters after the more essential are accomplished. Punctuality and decision in the work and cause of God are highly essential. Delays are virtually defeats. Minutes are golden and should be improved to the very best account. Earthly relations and personal interests should ever be secondary. Never should the cause of God be left to suffer, in a single particular, because of our earthly friends or dearest relatives." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 499,500.

DO NOT TAKE YOUR HAND OFF THE PLOW

6. Since the man accepted the Master's call, could He not accept the simple request? But how did Jesus consider this?

LUKE 9:62; 16:13 *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God....* ^{16:13}*No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

"The Lord requires a loyalty so supreme and undivided that the most sacred relationship is to be subordinate to it.

"Luke 14:20: And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." –*Pamphlet 048—Living by Principle*, pp. 26, 27.

"The pleadings of affection and love, the yearnings of friendship, will not move you to turn aside from truth and duty; you will not sacrifice duty to inclination....

"No earthly ties, no earthly considerations, should weigh one moment in the scale against duty to the cause and work of God." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 44, 500.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***After reading the three answers Jesus gave to various ones who were called to be disciples, what clear difference is there between a human concept of discipleship and that of Jesus?***
- ***Therefore, what do we need to do?***
- ***According to Jesus, do we need simply to change our ideas, or to put our hand to the plow and dedicate ourselves to His work?***

STRIVING FOR THE MASTERY

7. What should have first priority—our interests or those of the kingdom of God? What does our choice show?

PHILIPPIANS 3:13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:3-5 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. ⁵And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*

“Paul did many things. He was a wise teacher. His many letters are full of instructive lessons setting forth correct principles. He worked with his hands, for he was a tent-maker, and in this way earned his daily bread.... He carried a heavy burden for the churches. He strove most earnestly to present their errors before them, that they might correct them, and not be deceived and led away from God. He was always seeking to help them in their difficulties; and yet he declares, ‘One thing I do.’ ... The responsibilities of his life were many, yet he kept always before him this ‘one thing.’ The constant sense of the presence of God constrained him to keep his eye ever looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 353.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“‘If any man will come after Me,’ Christ said, ‘let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’ Matthew 16:24. Self-denial and sacrifice will mark the Christian’s life.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 523.

“The great purpose that constrained Paul to press forward in the face of hardship and difficulty should lead every Christian worker to consecrate himself wholly to God’s service. Worldly attractions will be presented to draw his attention from the Saviour, but he is to press on toward the goal, showing to the world, to angels, and to men that the hope of seeing the face of God is worth all the effort and sacrifice that the attainment of this hope demands.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 353.

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MISSIONARY REPORT of the Philippine Union College

To be read on Sabbath, October 27, 2018

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, November 3, 2018*

“Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law.” Deuteronomy 31:12.

The Philippines is a sovereign island nation located in the western Pacific Ocean with an area of 343,448 square kilometers (132,606 square miles) composed of 7,100 islands. Bounded by the South China Sea on the west, the Philippine Sea on the east, and the Celebes Sea on the southwest, the Philippines shares maritime borders with Taiwan to the north, Vietnam to the west, Palau to the east, and Malaysia and Indonesia to the south. The population is 102,068,400. As of January 2018, the Philippines was the eighth most populous country in Asia; and the twelfth, in the world. It is the top Christian country in Asia and the fifth in the world, with 86,790,000 Christians.

The International Missionary Society’s initial entrance into the Philippines was in 1964 under Elder Raul Escobar. Elders Carlos Kozel, Augusto Pizzaro, Henry Andrade, Siegmund Gutknecht, and Wilhelm Egerter, to name a few, also visited and supported the missionary efforts.

The Philippine Union was officially registered on March 14, 1978, under the name International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, Philippine Union Conference, with three Fields—Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The primary missionary methods used over the decades include medical missionary outreach; health fairs; seminars and training; house-to-house canvassing; distribution of books, pamphlets, and tracts; personal Bible studies; Bible expositions; radio evangelism; prison ministry; clothing and food distribution; disaster relief, and music ministry. These activities are carried out by the local churches with the assistance of the Philippine Union as necessary.

A large project was put in motion in 2016 to establish a College as another method for spreading the gospel. The Philippine Union owns a 300-square-meter (2,730 square feet) lot that was purchased in the Mindanao Field with the help of the General Conference Education Department, in the southernmost part of the Philippines. The property is too small to meet the minimum requirements of the Philippine Department of Education for a school; however,

once additional land is obtained, the foundation can be laid and a few buildings can be erected. The Philippine Union has several members who are credentialed teachers, and they are able to assist with this project.

One big challenge for members and interested souls is the requirement of both public and private schools that students attend classes on the Sabbath day. If this project can go forward by the grace of God, it will be an excellent encouragement for new souls and current interested individuals to accept the Reformation message and be a part of God's family, since there will be no educational hindrance to keeping the Sabbath holy. In addition, the young people will be educated according to the Holy Scriptures, which will be a very great blessing in this secular age. It is planned for this project to generate funds to help the Philippine Union establish a health clinic in the Visayan Field, start a primary school in the Luzon Field, and support missionary outreach in neighboring countries.

With this in view, the Philippine Union requests your support for this special project to help the work in the Philippines and Asia. May the Lord continue to bless every generous heart. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:9.

*—Roland N. De La Paz
Asian Division President*

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**SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING FOR THE
PHILIPPINE UNION COLLEGE**

God bless your loving sacrifice for Him!

5

Sabbath, November 3, 2018

Self-Denial

“There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 118.

- 1. To be a follower of Jesus, what does every individual need to do? Why is self-denial so necessary? Was Jesus’ message only for a few people or for everyone?’**

MATTHEW 16:24, FIRST PART *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,...*

MARK 8:34, FIRST PART *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself,...*

“There are many in the church who at heart belong to the world, but God calls upon those who claim to believe the advanced truth, to rise above the present attitude of the popular churches of today. Where is the self-denial, where is the cross-bearing that Christ has said should characterize His followers? The reason we have had so little influence upon unbelieving relatives and associates is that we have manifested little decided difference in our practices from those of the world. Parents need to awake, and purify their souls by practicing the truth in their home life.... ‘We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.’” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 289.

- 2. How do we know that Jesus is speaking about the disciple’s life? What will the disciple be prepared to give up, if necessary? What will happen if he does not?**

MATTHEW 16:25, FIRST PART *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it...*

“Those who forsake God in order to save their lives will be forsaken by Him. In seeking to save their lives by yielding the truth, they will lose eternal life.” —*Select- ed Messages*, book 3, p. 401.

“What can be compared with the loss of a human soul? It is a question which every soul must determine for himself—whether to gain the treasures of eternal life or to lose all because of his neglect to make God and His righteousness his first and only business. Jesus, the world’s Redeemer,... looks with grief upon the large number of those who profess to be Christians who are not serving Him but themselves. They scarcely think of eternal realities, notwithstanding He calls their attention to the rich reward awaiting the faithful who will serve Him with their undivided affections. He brings eternal realities within the range of their vision. He bids them to count the cost now of being an obedient and faithful follower of Christ, and says, ‘Ye cannot serve God and mammon.’ Matthew 6:24.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 321.

LOSS THAT IS GAIN

3. What will true disciples be willing to lose for Jesus? In such a case, does a person actually lose his life forever, or will he eventually receive it back?

MATTHEW 16:25, LAST PART ... *And whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

MARK 8:35 *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.*

“The efficiency that the Lord designs to see in His people has been sadly lacking in the church. How can we account for this? Have those who profess the name of Christ been truly converted? Have they consecrated to God their reason, their knowledge, their affections, their thoughts? Have they employed their talents of means and ability in the service of the Master? or have they devoted all their energies of mind and body to the building up of worldly enterprises?... He who is a child of God henceforth should look upon himself as a part of the cross of Christ, a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and to save the lost. He is ever to realize that he has consecrated himself to God, and that in character he is to reveal Christ to the world. The self-denial, the self-sacrifice, the sympathy, the love that was manifested in the life of Christ, is to reappear in the life of the worker for God.... They will manifest the most tender solicitude for the erring ... and will be known as the disciples of Christ.” —*Australian Union Gleaner*, July 12, 1905.

4. In comparing eternal life with the whole world, what did Jesus say? Is it worth it to acquire this world’s wealth and then lose one’s life for all eternity?

MATTHEW 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

LUKE 9:25 *For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?*

“The Saviour saw that men were absorbed in getting gain, and were losing sight of eternal realities. He undertook to correct this evil. He sought to break the infatuating spell that was paralyzing the soul. Lifting up His voice He cried, ‘What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what

shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Matthew 16:26. He presents before fallen humanity the nobler world they have lost sight of, that they may behold eternal realities. He takes them to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the indescribable glory of God, and shows them the treasure there.

"The value of this treasure is above gold or silver. The riches of earth's mines cannot compare with it." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 106, 107.

THE REWARD IN HEAVEN

5. How will a person fare if instead of following the Master he dedicates himself to acquiring status in the world? Instead, how wonderful will it be to follow the Master and put all of one's entrusted gifts into His service?

MATTHEW 16:27 *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.*

"'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Isaiah 60:1. Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. And the holy angels will attend Him on His way. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee, Christ's followers will rejoice in His presence. Then it is that the redeemed from among men will receive their promised inheritance." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 720.

6. What can be expected in the future if we ignore His call and decide to walk in our own ways? What would then be expected at His coming?

LUKE 9:26 *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

MARK 8:38 *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

"Christ is truth, and those who hesitate to obey the truth, deny Christ. They show that they are ashamed to stand under His blood-stained banner, ashamed to own that they are doers of the word, ashamed to place themselves on the side of Christ as keepers of His law. They feel that it is dishonoring to them to love His commandments, to respect the memorial of God's work of creation. Christ declares, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.'

"This is the sure result. Will you risk it? Will you become disloyal to God because your neighbors are disloyal? Will you be found among the transgressors because your neighbors are there? Are you content to be outside the city of God, to perish with the companions you have chosen in the world?" —*Signs of the Times*, July 28, 1898.

FUTURE GLORY

7. To what glorious event did Jesus point in confirmation of His mission and promises? To what event was He referring in this wonderful prophecy?

MATTHEW 16:28 *Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*

LUKE 9:27-31 *But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.²⁸ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.²⁹ And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.³⁰ And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:³¹ Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

“Jesus had told His disciples that there were some standing with Him who should not taste of death till they should see the kingdom of God come with power. At the transfiguration this promise was fulfilled. The countenance of Jesus was there changed and shone like the sun. His raiment was white and glistening. Moses was present to represent those who will be raised from the dead at the second appearing of Jesus. And Elijah, who was translated without seeing death, represented those who will be changed to immortality at Christ’s second coming and will be translated to heaven without seeing death. The disciples beheld with astonishment and fear the excellent majesty of Jesus and the cloud that overshadowed them, and heard the voice of God in terrible majesty, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son; hear Him.’” –*Early Writings*, p. 164.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“‘If any man will come after Me,’ Christ said, ‘let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’ Luke 9:23. This is the proof of discipleship. If church members would be doers of the word, as they solemnly pledged themselves to be when they received baptism, they would love their brethren, and would be constantly seeking for unity and harmony....

“Those who believe in Christ and walk humbly with Him,... who watch to see what they can do to help and bless and strengthen the souls of others, cooperate with the angels who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus gives them grace, and wisdom, and righteousness, making them a blessing to all with whom they are brought in contact. The more humble they are in their own estimation, the more blessings they receive from God, because receiving does not exalt them. They make a right use of their blessings, for they receive to impart.” –*This Day with God*, p. 356.

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Love and Service for the Master

“Personal labor is greatly needed. Many, many souls might be saved if those who claim to be followers of Christ would work as Christ worked, living not to please self, but to glorify God, acting as missionaries, showing genuine love for the Master by making every possible use of their entrusted talents. From the very nature of work in Christ’s lines, those who do it will lose sight of self. We are called upon to love souls as Christ loved them, to feel a travail of soul that sinners shall be converted. Present the matchless love of Christ. Hide self out of sight.” –*Review and Herald*, June 21, 1898.

THE MASTER LOVES HIS DISCIPLES DEEPLY

1. What strong ties did Jesus have with His disciples? How strong was His love for them, and still is for His disciples today?

JOHN 13:34; 15:12, 13 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another....^{15:12}This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.¹³Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

“His [Christ’s] very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, ‘A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.’ To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ’s sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.” –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 677, 678.

2. What do the holy Scriptures say about the Saviour’s love for His disciples right before His terrible agony in Gethsemane?

JOHN 13:1 *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

“Christ knew that the time had come for Him to depart out of the world, and go to His Father. And having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end. He was now in the shadow of the cross, and the pain was torturing His heart. He knew that He would be deserted in the hour of His betrayal. He knew that by the most humiliating process to which criminals were subjected He

would be put to death. He knew the ingratitude and cruelty of those He had come to save. He knew how great the sacrifice that He must make, and for how many it would be in vain. Knowing all that was before Him, He might naturally have been overwhelmed with the thought of His own humiliation and suffering. But He looked upon the twelve, who had been with Him as His own, and who, after His shame and sorrow and painful usage were over, would be left to struggle in the world. His thoughts of what He Himself must suffer were ever connected with His disciples. He did not think of Himself. His care for them was uppermost in His mind."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 643.

THE DISCIPLES' LOVE FOR THEIR MASTER

3. What can we say about a person's love if he puts the Master in the second or third place? What love alone is worthy of Him? Can we say that our greatest love is for the Lord?

MATTHEW 10:37 *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

LUKE 14:26 *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

"But in order to accept the invitation to the gospel feast, they must make their worldly interests subordinate to the one purpose of receiving Christ and His righteousness. God gave all for man, and He asks him to place His service above every earthly and selfish consideration. He cannot accept a divided heart. The heart that is absorbed in earthly affections cannot be given up to God.

"The lesson is for all time. We are to follow the Lamb of God whithersoever He goeth. His guidance is to be chosen, His companionship valued above the companionship of earthly friends. Christ says, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.' Matthew 10:37."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 223.

4. What is a clear sign that a person loves the Master with all his heart? What will automatically follow?

JOHN 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

"No one can love God supremely and transgress one of His commandments. The heart softened and subdued with the beauty of Christ's character and bridled by the pure and lofty rules which He has given us will put into practice what it has learned of love, and will follow Jesus forthwith in humble obedience. The living power of faith will reveal itself in loving acts.

"What evidence have we that we have the pure love, without alloy? God has erected a standard—His commandments. 'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.' John 14:21. The words of God must have an abiding place in our hearts."—*Our High Calling*, p. 73.

5. What question did the Lord ask the disciple who had denied Him under temptation? What was the answer?

JOHN 21:15 *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

“This heart-searching question was necessary in the case of Peter, and it is necessary in our case. The work of restoration can never be thorough unless the roots of evil are reached. Again and again the shoots have been clipped, while the root of bitterness has been left to spring up and defile many; but the very depth of the hidden evil must be reached....” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 322.

“It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and entire reliance upon divine power, that he received his call to act as an undershepherd. Christ had said to Peter, before his denial of Him, ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’ Luke 22:32. These words were significant of the wide and effectual work which this apostle was to do in the future for those who should come to the faith.

“For this work, Peter’s own experience of sin and suffering and repentance had prepared him. Not until he had learned his weakness, could he know the believer’s need of dependence on Christ. Amid the storm of temptation he had come to understand that man can walk safely only as in utter self-distrust he relies upon the Saviour.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 515.

6. With what did Jesus entrust him after Peter firmly repeated his love for Him? What similar mission does the Lord entrust to all who love Him?

JOHN 21:16 *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

“Christ mentioned to Peter only one condition of service—‘Lovest thou Me?’ This is the essential qualification.... The love of Christ is not a fitful feeling, but a living principle, which is to be made manifest as an abiding power in the heart....

“The Saviour’s manner of dealing with Peter had a lesson for him and his brethren. Although Peter had denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him had never faltered. And as the apostle should take up the work of ministering the word to others, he was to meet the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. Remembering his own weakness and failure, he was to deal with the sheep and lambs committed to his care as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 515, 516.

THE TEST OF LOVE

7. Why did the Lord ask Peter the same question three times? What would our answer be under similar circumstances? As His disciples, how would we feel if someone led us to a place where we did not want to go?

JOHN 21:17-19 *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when*

*thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*¹⁹*This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

“When, the third time, Christ said to Peter, ‘Lovest thou Me?’ the probe reached the soul center. Self-judged, Peter fell upon the Rock, saying, ‘Lord, Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee.’

“This is the work before every soul who has dishonored God, and grieved the heart of Christ, by a denial of truth and righteousness. If the tempted soul endures the trying process, and self does not awake to life to feel hurt and abused under the test, that probing knife reveals that the soul is indeed dead to self, but alive unto God....

“Peter was now humble enough to understand the words of Christ, and without further questioning, the once restless, boastful, self-confident disciple became subdued and contrite. He followed his Lord indeed—the Lord he had denied. The thought that Christ had not denied and rejected him was to Peter a light and comfort and blessing. He felt that he could be crucified from choice, but it must be with his head downward. And he who was so close a partaker of Christ’s sufferings will also be a partaker of His glory when He shall ‘sit upon the throne of His glory.’”
—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 322.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Every church-member who has been truly converted is to be given some work. ‘The cause which I knew not I searched out,’ Job declared. Consideration is to be given as to what service for God means. It means that we are to do the same kind of ministry that Christ did when He was in our world. In this work, whether we are rich or poor, we are called upon to wear Christ’s yoke, and learn of Him to be meek and lowly in heart. Some more especially may be given the work of setting forth Christ from the pulpit, opening the oracles of God to the churches. Yet they should not seclude themselves from visiting families, talking with them, praying with them, exhorting them, encouraging those who need encouraging, and presenting a ‘Thus saith the Lord’ to meet every cause of deficiency. Altogether too little of this work is done. Personal labor is greatly needed.” —*Review and Herald*, June 21, 1898.

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Discipleship and Commitment

“All should learn their lesson from this, that they are individually amenable to God. When they love God with all their hearts, they will be wise unto salvation. They will do His will, and their light will ever be their glory, and be undiminished because they recognize and fear and serve their Lord. The solemn work rests upon every soul to consider that he is a servant of Jesus Christ, solemnly pledged by his baptismal vows to clothe himself with the righteousness of Christ. Will we carry out the living example of the Lord Jesus?” —*This Day with God*, p. 128.

CARRYING OUR CROSS

1. What must all who want to follow the Lord accept as His disciples? Is the invitation limited only to the first twelve disciples?

MATTHEW 16:24 *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.*

MARK 8:34 *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

LUKE 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

“The Lord of life and glory did not consult His convenience or pleasure when He left His station of high command to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, accepting ignominy and death in order to deliver man from the consequence of his disobedience. Jesus died, not to save man in his sins, but from his sins. Man is to leave the error of his ways, to follow the example of Christ, to take up his cross and follow Him, denying self, and obeying God at any cost.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 250.

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

2. Is it possible to become one of Jesus’ disciples without bearing our cross and following Him? Is it sufficient if this happens only from time to time?

LUKE 14:27 *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

JOHN 8:31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*

“The soul finds rest only in cherishing meekness and lowliness of heart. The peace of Christ is never found where selfishness reigns. The soul cannot grow in grace when it is self centered and proud. Jesus assumed the position that man must take in order that the peace of Christ may abide in the heart. Those who have offered themselves to Christ to become His disciples must deny self daily, must lift up the cross and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. They must go where His example leads the way.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 45.

THE DISCIPLES’ FAILURE

3. When Jesus was arrested and put in chains, what did the disciples do?

MARK 14:46, 50 *And they laid their hands on him, and took him.... ⁵⁰And they all forsook him, and fled.*

“Nothing is more offensive to God than a self-sufficient spirit. In the life of Peter is a sad lesson which should be a warning to all the professed followers of Christ. The Saviour had faithfully warned him of the approaching danger, but, self-confident and presumptuous, he asserted his constant fidelity and zeal, and declared himself willing to follow his Master to prison and to death. The test came for Peter when the storm burst upon the disciples by the humiliation of their Leader. Mournful are the words traced by the pen of inspiration: ‘Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled.’ Matthew 26:56. And the ardent, zealous, self-confident Peter repeatedly denied his Lord. He afterward bitterly repented; but this example should admonish all to beware of self-confidence and self-righteousness.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 138.

4. What is impossible if one is not willing to follow Him and carry his cross daily? What makes the Lord’s yoke and burden light?

MATTHEW 10:38; 11:29, 30 *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.... ^{11:29}Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

“Every earthly interest must be made subordinate to the great work of redemption. Remember that in the lives of the followers of Christ must be seen the same devotion, the same subjection to God’s work of every social claim and every earthly affection, that was seen in His life. God’s claims must ever be made paramount. ‘He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.’ Christ’s life is our lesson book. His example is to inspire us to put forth untiring, self-sacrificing effort for the good of others.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 52, 53.

“Many long for special talent with which to do a wonderful work, while the duties lying close at hand, the performance of which would make the life fragrant, are lost sight of.... Success depends not so much on talent as on energy and willingness. It is not the possession of splendid talents that enables us to render acceptable service, but the conscientious performance of daily duties, the contented spirit, the unaffected, sincere interest in the welfare of others. In the humblest lot

true excellence may be found. The commonest tasks, wrought with loving faithfulness, are beautiful in God's sight." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 219.

GUIDED BY THE MASTER

5. Who guides the disciples who listen for the Master's voice? What will happen in the valley of the shadow of death?

JOHN 10:3 *To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

1 PETER 2:21 *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*

PSALM 23:3, 4 *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

"What pains the Great Shepherd takes to call His sheep by name and invite them to follow in His footsteps. He seeks the wandering. He flashes the light from His word to show them their peril. He speaks to them from heaven in warning and reproofs, and in invitations to return to the right path. He seeks to help the erring by His presence and to lift them when they fall. But many have followed the path of sin so long that they will not hear the voice of Jesus. They leave all that can give them rest and security...." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 503.

"Jesus, the world's Redeemer, knows all His children by name, and on those who believe shall come the glory of God.... Those who behold Jesus become changed to His image, become assimilated to His nature, and the glory of God that shines in the face of Jesus is reflected in the lives of His followers. More and more the Christian is changed from glory to glory.... The more he looks on Christ, the more he loves and longs to look again, and the more light and love and glory he sees in Christ, the more his light increases...." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 61.

6. Besides listening to His voice, what do His disciples do? What will be inherited by those who have left their homes to follow the Master in His service?

JOHN 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

MATTHEW 19:29 *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*

"... The Lord will lead His people; for He says that His sheep will follow if they hear His voice, but a stranger will they not follow. Then it becomes us to thoroughly understand the Scriptures. And we will not have to inquire whether others have the truth, for it will be seen in their characters." —*Faith and Works*, p. 56.

"'I know My sheep.' How do souls become Christ's sheep? By choosing to receive Him. But Christ had first chosen them. He knew every one who would respond to His drawing, and He knew every one who would be inclined to receive Him but who, through popular opposing influences, would turn from Him, John says to all, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' John 1:29. Those who heard the voice and did behold Jesus as the Lamb of God believed

in Him and became His property from their own choice. But ... their choosing of Christ was in response to His drawing. The love of Jesus was expressed to us before we loved Him....” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 52.

STANDING WITH THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

7. One day, where will those who have followed the Lamb during their lives here on earth stand?

REVELATION 14:4 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

“The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armor, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 298.

“We are to follow the Lamb of God whithersoever He goeth. His guidance is to be chosen, His companionship valued above the companionship of earthly friends.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 223.

“We shall follow the Lamb of God in the courts above only if we follow Him here.... We are not to follow Christ fitfully or capriciously, only when it is for our advantage. We must choose to follow Him. In daily life we must follow His example, as a flock trustfully follows its shepherd. We are to follow Him by suffering for His sake, saying at every step, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’ Job 13:15. His life practice must be our life practice. And as we thus seek to be like Him and to bring our wills into conformity to His will, we shall reveal Him.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 298.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“How easy would be the way to heaven if there was no self-denial or cross! How worldlings would rush in the way, and hypocrites would travel in it without number! Thank God for the cross, the self-denial. The ignominy and shame our Saviour endured for us is none too humiliating for those saved by the purchase of His blood. Heaven will indeed be cheap enough.” —*Our Father Cares*, p. 110.

“Many would be followers of Christ if He would come down from the cross and appear to them in such a manner as they desire. If He would come with riches and pleasure, many would receive Him gladly and would be in haste to crown Him Lord of all. If He would only lay aside His humiliation and sufferings and cry, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him please himself and enjoy the world and he shall be My disciple,’ multitudes would believe on Him.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 288.

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Jesus' Call

“There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Jesus, the power of divine grace makes him a new creature. Christ’s love transforms, sanctifies him. But when persons profess to be Christians, and their religion does not make them better men and better women in all the relations of life—living representatives of Christ in disposition and character—they are none of His.” —*My Life Today*, p. 257.

- 1. When the Lord called him to become His disciple, was Matthew looking for work, or did he already have a job? Did he make excuses for refusing the call, as did others? What was shown by the fact that he immediately left his work and followed the Master?**

MATTHEW 9:9 *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.*

MARK 2:13, 14 *And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. ¹⁴And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.*

“When Christ called His disciples to follow Him, He offered them no flattering prospects in this life. He gave them no promise of gain or worldly honor, nor did they make any stipulation as to what they should receive. To Matthew as he sat at the receipt of custom, the Saviour said, ‘Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him.’ Matthew 9:9. Matthew did not, before rendering service, wait to demand a certain salary, equal to the amount received in his former occupation. Without question or hesitation he followed Jesus. It was enough for him that he was to be with the Saviour, that he might hear His words and unite with Him in His work.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 113.

HONORED BY THE MASTER’S PRESENCE

- 2. How great was Matthew’s joy when the Lord called him to become one of His disciples? In honor of whom did this disciple prepare a feast? Who were present?**

LUKE 5:29 *And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.*

MATTHEW 9:10 *And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.*

MARK 2:15 *And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.*

“When invited to a feast, Christ accepted the invitation, that He might, while sitting at the table, sow the seeds of truth in the hearts of those present. He knew that the seed thus sown would spring up and bring forth fruit. He knew that some of those sitting at meat with Him would afterward respond to His call, ‘Follow Me.’ Ours is the privilege of studying Christ’s manner of teaching as He went from place to place, everywhere sowing the seeds of truth.” —*Evangelism*, p. 58.

3. To the scribes and Pharisees, was it acceptable for Jesus as a rabbi to sit and eat with publicans and sinners? Turning to the disciples, what objection did they raise against Him?

MARK 2:16 *And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?*

LUKE 5:30 *But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*

“He was the Prince of heaven, yet He did not choose His disciples from among the learned lawyers, the rulers, the scribes, or the Pharisees. He passed these by, because they prided themselves on their learning and position. They were fixed in their traditions and superstitions. He who could read all hearts chose humble fishermen who were willing to be taught. He ate with publicans and sinners, and mingled with the common people, not to become low and earthly with them, but in order by precept and example to present to them right principles, and to uplift them from their earthliness and debasement.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 197.

SEEING OTHERS AND ONESELF AS JESUS DOES

4. What did the scribes and Pharisees think of the publicans, sinners, and even Jesus, who welcomed them?

LUKE 7:34 *The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!*

“Of the Roman officials in Palestine, none were more hated than the publicans. The fact that the taxes were imposed by a foreign power was a continual irritation to the Jews, being a reminder that their independence had departed. And the tax gatherers were not merely the instruments of Roman oppression; they were extortioners on their own account, enriching themselves at the expense of the people. A Jew who accepted this office at the hands of the Romans was looked upon as betraying the honor of his nation. He was despised as an apostate, and was classed with the vilest of society.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 272.

5. How did Jesus face the opposition? How many people in the world are spiritually sick? Therefore, what should be every disciple’s greatest interest?

MATTHEW 9:12 *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*

"It is when you are prospered, when all men speak well of you, that you are in danger. Be on your guard, for you will be tried. My greatest fear for you has been that you would have too great prosperity, and that you would fail to learn that your dependence is alone upon God. You have been placed in a position of great trust and honor, and there has been danger of your becoming dizzy and forgetting your dependence upon God. You have been placed where you can exert a far-reaching influence for good if you keep your eye single to the glory of God. Your heavenly Father loves you, and He will draw you to Himself by the trials that seem to you severe." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 124.

WHAT THE LORD DESIRES

6. Does God prefer sacrifice or mercy? Therefore, what was Jesus' purpose in calling Matthew to be His disciple? Is he still calling men and women to become His followers?

MATTHEW 9:13 *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

MARK 2:17 *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

"In His teaching, Christ sought to educate and train the Jews to see the object of that which was to be abolished by the true offering of Himself, the living Sacrifice. 'Go ye,' said He, 'and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' He presented a pure character as of supreme importance. He dispensed with all pomp, demanding that faith that works by love and purifies the soul, as the only qualification required for the kingdom of heaven." –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 398.

"Christ ate with publicans and sinners, as well as with Pharisees. When He was invited to their homes, He accepted the invitation. In this He offended the scribes and Pharisees, who thought that a Jew should not thus forget the wall of partition that tradition had erected. But with God there is no sect or nationality. When thus accused, Christ answered, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' He placed Himself in the very avenue where He could gain access to perishing souls, and plant in human hearts the seeds of truth, seeds that would spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God." –*Daughters of God*, pp. 236, 237.

7. What heavenly principle was Jesus following when He chose one who belonged to a socially despised class? What made it possible for Levi-Matthew to become a disciple, apostle, and evangelist?

1 CORINTHIANS 1:27-29 *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

"To this class belonged Levi-Matthew, who, after the four disciples at Genesaret, was the next to be called to Christ's service. The Pharisees had judged Matthew according to his employment, but Jesus saw in this man a heart open

for the reception of truth. Matthew had listened to the Saviour's teaching. As the convicting Spirit of God revealed his sinfulness, he longed to seek help from Christ; but he was accustomed to the exclusiveness of the rabbis, and had no thought that this Great Teacher would notice him.

"Sitting at his toll booth one day, the publican saw Jesus approaching. Great was his astonishment to hear the words addressed to himself, 'Follow Me.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 272, 273.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"The Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily the worker for God must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the word of God, learning its meaning and obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the standard of Christian excellence. Day by day God works with him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the time of final test. And day by day the believer is working out before men and angels a sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings....

"Today the Saviour calls us, as He called Matthew and John and Peter, to His work. If our hearts are touched by His love, the question of compensation will not be uppermost in our minds. We shall rejoice to be co-workers with Christ, and we shall not fear to trust His care. If we make God our strength, we shall have clear perceptions of duty, and unselfish aspirations; our life will be actuated by a noble purpose, which will raise us above sordid motives." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 113, 114.

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Sabbath, December 1, 2018

Discipleship Has a Cost

"Wrench yourself away from hurtful associations. Count the cost of following Jesus, and make it, with a determined purpose to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Eternal life is worth your all, and Jesus has said, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.' Luke 14:33. He who does nothing, but waits to be compelled by some supernatural agency, will wait on in lethargy and darkness." —*Christian Education*, p. 117.

NATURAL AFFECTION SHOULD NOT BE A HINDRANCE

- 1. Considering the great multitudes that followed the Master, can we say that they all became His disciples? What is part of being Christ's disciple?**

LUKE 14:25, 26 *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, ²⁶If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

“Natural affection for relatives and friends should not lead any soul who sees the light to reject the light, to dishonor God the Father and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Every possible excuse for disobedience will be framed by men who choose, as many did in Christ’s day, the favor of men rather than the favor of God. If one chooses wife or children, father or mother, before Christ, that choice will stand through eternal ages, with all its weight of responsibility....” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 401.

2. Is the path of the disciple of Christ like a nice walk in the park? What is part of the disciple’s life?

LUKE 14:27 *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

“The word of God has not widened the narrow way, and if the multitude have found a path where they can wear a form of godliness and not bear the cross or suffer tribulation, they have found a way where our Saviour did not walk and they follow another example than that which Christ set before us. Is it not enough that Jesus left the felicity and glory of heaven, endured a life of poverty and deep affliction, and died a cruel, shameful death to provide for us the joys of holiness and heaven? And can it be that we, the worthless objects of so great a condescension and love, will seek after a better portion in this life than was given to our Redeemer?” —*Our High Calling*, p. 288.

DISCIPLESHIP HAS A COST

3. Jesus compared discipleship to building an expensive tower. What does one risk if he is not fully aware of the cost?

LUKE 14:28-30 *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? ²⁹Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

“The folly of beginning a work without counting the cost is a reproach to God.” —*Pacific Union Recorder*, September 26, 1901.

“God calls upon those to whom He has entrusted His goods to acquit themselves as faithful stewards. The Lord would have all things of temporal interest occupy a secondary place in the heart and thoughts; but Satan would have the matters of the earth take the first place in our lives. The Lord would have us approve the things that are excellent. He shows us the conflict in which we must engage, reveals the character and plan of redemption. He lays open before you the perils you will meet, the self-denial that will be required, and He bids you count the cost, assuring you that if you zealously engage in the conflict, divine power will combine with human effort.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 92.

“Every soul must count the cost. Not one will succeed but by strenuous effort. We must spiritually exercise all our powers and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Crucifixion means much more than many suppose....” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 117.

4. What other important illustration did the Lord give to help people understand what it means to be His follower? Since the warfare is a spiritual one against the powers of darkness, what type of help is absolutely essential?

LUKE 14:31, 32 *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? ³²Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*

“The Christian’s warfare is not a warfare waged against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places. The Christian must contend with supernatural forces, but he is not to be left alone to engage in the conflict. The Saviour is the captain of his salvation, and with Him man may be more than conqueror.” –*Faith and Works*, pp. 92, 93.

“In order to be true soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must meet the requirements of His word as loyal subjects of the heavenly kingdom.... Those who claim to believe the truth must appreciate the great warfare before us and what is comprehended in being a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ.... The Saviour’s army invites voluntary enlistment. There must be a complete surrender of the passions, will, and ways to the will of the Master. Our work is to obey the orders of the mighty General of armies.” –*The Upward Look*, p. 230.

5. Is it enough, like Andrew and Peter, to leave behind the boat, nets, and shore, or does it require more than this to be the Lord’s true disciples?

LUKE 14:33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

“Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s children unless we are such entirely....” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 154.

“Those who deny self to do others good, and who devote themselves and all they have to Christ’s service, will realize the happiness which the selfish man seeks for in vain. Said our Saviour: ‘Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.’ Luke 14:33. Charity ‘seeketh not her own.’ This is the fruit of that disinterested love and benevolence which characterized the life of Christ. The law of God in our hearts will bring our own interests in subordination to high and eternal considerations.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 397.

PRESERVING CHRISTLIKENESS

6. To what are Christ’s followers compared among society? In what way do they act as a preservative?

LUKE 14:34 *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?*

“True Christians are a savor of life unto life, because Christ abides in their hearts. Reflecting His image, they are children of the light.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 296.

“God requires those who claim to believe the Bible, the standard of Christian character, to bring the Christlikeness into all their service, that not one particle of the salt shall lose its preserving influence. The Christlikeness is ever to be preserved. The mind and heart are to be cleansed from all sin, all unlikeness to Christ.” —*This Day with God*, p. 201.

7. If the salt loses its saltiness, will it still be of use as a seasoning and preservative? Likewise, what will happen to all who lose the wonderful effectiveness of the gospel?

LUKE 14:35 *It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

“In like manner the disciples of Jesus will go into the dark places of the earth, disseminating the light of truth until the pathway of those in darkness shall be illuminated by the light of truth. In what contrast to this is the life of the professed child of God who is as the salt without the savor.... These sunless professors are shadows of darkness.... All may be channels of light if they will connect with the Source of light. They can communicate the bright rays of light to the world. None need strengthen unbelief by talking darkness. Every expression of doubt strengthens unbelief. Every thought and word of hope, courage, light, and love strengthens faith and fortifies the soul to withstand the moral darkness that exists in the world.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 296.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“God has need of workers who, as they labor with Him, will comprehend the sacredness of the work, and the conflicts they must meet in order to carry it forward successfully—workers who will not grow despondent as they see the arduous task before them. The Lord does not try to conceal from His people the stern conflicts they will meet in these last days. Instead, He shows the plan of battle; He points out the hazardous work to be done; He lifts His voice in warning, bidding men count the cost of their discipleship: but He encourages all to take up the weapons of their warfare; for the heavenly host will stand with them in the defense of truth and righteousness.” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, October 26, 1899.

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Hindrances to Following the Master

“The ruler’s possessions were entrusted to him that he might prove himself a faithful steward; he was to dispense these goods for the blessing of those in need. So God now entrusts men with means, with talents and opportunities, that they may be His agents in helping the poor and the suffering. He who uses his entrusted gifts as God designs becomes a co-worker with the Saviour....” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 300.

LIFE PRINCIPLES

1. What searching question did a young ruler ask the great Teacher one day? In what did the man seem genuinely interested?

LUKE 18:18 *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

MARK 10:17 *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

“There is a great work for us to do if we would inherit eternal life. We are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live a life of righteousness.... There is no salvation for us except in Jesus, for it is through faith in Him that we receive power to become the sons of God. But it is not merely a passing faith, it is faith that works the works of Christ.... Living faith makes itself manifest by exhibiting a spirit of sacrifice and devotion toward the cause of God. Those who possess it stand under the banner of Prince Emmanuel and wage a successful warfare against the powers of darkness. They stand ready to do whatsoever their Captain commands. Each one is exhorted to be ‘an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity’ (1 Timothy 4:12), for we are to ‘live soberly, righteously, and godly’ in this present evil world, representing the character of Christ, and manifesting His spirit....” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 316.

2. Why did Jesus say that only One is good? What principles was the young man urged to keep with all his heart?

LUKE 18:19 *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.*

MATTHEW 19:17 *And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

“Jesus desired to test the ruler’s sincerity, and to draw from him the way in which he regarded Him as good. Did he realize that the One to whom he was speaking was the Son of God? What was the true sentiment of his heart?”

"This ruler had a high estimate of his own righteousness. He did not really suppose that he was defective in anything, yet he was not altogether satisfied. He felt the want of something that he did not possess. Could not Jesus bless him as He blessed the little children, and satisfy his soul want?" —*A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 14.

PRINCIPLES OF THE LAW

3. In His reply, why did Jesus mention only certain commandments? With whom do these sacred precepts have to do? What is specifically required in the commandments relating to one's neighbors?

MARK 10:19 *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.*

MATTHEW 19:18, 19 *He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, ¹⁹Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

"It is unsafe to trust to feelings or impressions; these are unreliable guides. God's law is the only correct standard of holiness. It is by this law that character is to be judged. If an inquirer after salvation were to ask, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' the modern teachers of sanctification would answer, 'Only believe that Jesus saves you.' But when Christ was asked this question He said, 'What is written in the law? how readest thou?' And when the questioner replied, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,... and thy neighbour as thyself,' Jesus said, 'Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.' Luke 10:25-29.

"True sanctification will be evidenced by a conscientious regard for all the commandments of God, by a careful improvement of every talent, by a circumspect conversation, by revealing in every act the meekness of Christ." —*Faith and Works*, pp. 52, 53.

4. Why was the young man unmoved by the Saviour's listing of the commandments concerning one's neighbor, asserting that he was guiltless in those things?

LUKE 18:21 *And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*

MATTHEW 19:20 *The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*

"The young man answered without hesitation, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?' His conception of the law was external and superficial. Judged by a human standard, he had preserved an unblemished character. To a great degree his outward life had been free from guilt; he verily thought that his obedience had been without a flaw. Yet he had a secret fear that all was not right between his soul and God. This prompted the question, 'What lack I yet?'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 391.

5. What is the foundation and fulfillment of the holy law? How do these principles contradict the young man's assertion that he had kept the commandments for his entire life?

ROMANS 13:9, 10 *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁰Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

"The character of God is expressed in His law; and in order for you to be in harmony with God, the principles of His law must be the spring of your every action..." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 391.

"The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' Romans 13:10. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: 'Thy law is the truth:' 'all Thy commandments are righteousness.' Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares: 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' Romans 7:12. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 467.

6. What did Jesus instruct this young ruler to do to become His follower? In doing this, was He asking more from him than He does from others?

LUKE 18:22 *Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.*

MATTHEW 19:21 *Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

MARK 10:21 *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

"Thousands are passing through this ordeal, weighing Christ against the world; and many choose the world. Like the young ruler, they turn from the Saviour, saying in their hearts, I will not have this Man as my leader.... All should consider what it means to desire heaven, and yet to turn away because of the conditions laid down. Think of what it means to say 'No' to Christ. The ruler said, No, I cannot give You all. Do we say the same?..."

"To those who, like the young ruler, are in high positions of trust and have great possessions, it may seem too great a sacrifice to give up all in order to follow Christ. But this is the rule of conduct for all who would become His disciples. Nothing short of obedience can be accepted. Self-surrender is the substance of the teachings of Christ." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 523.

THE OBSTACLE OF RICHES

7. When Jesus asked the other disciples to leave their current situations, how did they respond? But when the rich young man received the call to become one of the Saviour's disciples, was he willing to practice self-denial and follow Him? How would we respond if we were in that position?

LUKE 18:23 *And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.*

MARK 10:22 *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

MATTHEW 19:22 *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*

“The lover of self is a transgressor of the law. This Jesus desired to reveal to the young man, and He gave him a test that would make manifest the selfishness of his heart. He showed him the plague spot in his character. The young man desired no further enlightenment. He had cherished an idol in the soul; the world was his god. He professed to have kept the commandments, but he was destitute of the principle which is the very spirit and life of them all. He did not possess true love for God or man. This want was the want of everything that would qualify him to enter the kingdom of heaven. In his love of self and worldly gain he was out of harmony with the principles of heaven.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 392.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“God sees how strong man's inclination is to accumulate earthly treasure, and in the highways and byways of life His voice is heard saying, ‘What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ Mark 8:36. ‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but 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.’ Matthew 6:19-21.” —*This Day with God*, p. 30.

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Perseverance

“The disciples of Christ are to feel a noble, generous sympathy for every line of work carried on in the great harvest field. They are to be interested in everything that concerns the good of their fellow men. By their baptismal vows they are pledged to make persevering, self-denying efforts to promote, in the hardest parts of the field, the work of soul-saving. God has placed on every believer the responsibility of striving to rescue the helpless and the oppressed. They are to break every yoke, letting the oppressed go free from the power of vicious habits and sinful practices.” —*Signs of the Times*, November 28, 1906.

THE MOST IMPORTANT MATTER

1. Can we imagine that in life things will always go the way we wish? What does the Lord advise, no matter what risks one faces?

JOHN 21:18, 19 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

“Before His death, Jesus had said to him [Peter], ‘Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.’... That he might be strengthened for the final test of his faith, the Saviour opened to him his future. He told him that after living a life of usefulness, when age was telling upon his strength, he would indeed follow his Lord. Jesus said, ‘When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God.’

“Jesus thus made known to Peter the very manner of his death; He even foretold the stretching forth of his hands upon the cross. Again He bade His disciple, ‘Follow Me.’ Peter was not disheartened by the revelation. He felt willing to suffer any death for his Lord.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 815.

2. What is the danger of allowing anything to distract one’s attention from his goal? According to the Lord’s instructions, what should be everyone’s first and only objective?

JOHN 21:20-22 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? ²¹Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? ²²Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

“As Peter walked beside Jesus, he saw that John was following. A desire came over him to know his future, and he ‘saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.’ Peter should have considered that his Lord would reveal to him all that it was best for him to know. It is the duty of everyone to follow Christ, without undue anxiety as to the work assigned to others. In saying of John, ‘If I will that he tarry till I come,’ Jesus gave no assurance that this disciple should live until the Lord’s second coming. He merely asserted His own supreme power, and that even if He should will this to be so, it would in no way affect Peter’s work. The future of both John and Peter was in the hands of their Lord. Obedience in following Him was the duty required of each.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 816.

OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDMENTS

3. How do we reveal that we truly love the Lord? What is the sign of genuine discipleship?

JOHN 14:15, 21 *If ye love me, keep my commandments....²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

2 JOHN 1:6 *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.*

“Love is of God.... Love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennoble the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around....

“But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled.... Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship.” –*Steps to Christ*, pp. 59, 60.

4. If we say that we are His disciples and do not respect His commandments, what are we doing?

1 JOHN 2:3-5 *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

“Many are forfeiting the condition of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us. We present to God His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by so doing He would dishonor His own name....

“One of Christ’s last commands to His disciples was ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ John 13:34. Do we obey this command, or are we indulging sharp, unchristlike traits of character? If we have in any way grieved or wounded others, it is our duty to confess our fault and seek for reconciliation. This is an essential preparation that we may come before God in faith, to ask His blessing.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 143, 144.

DEEP LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

5. What will distinguish Christ’s disciples? Since this is not natural to the human being, of what is it clear evidence?

JOHN 13:34, 35 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

“This love is the evidence of their discipleship. ‘By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples,’ said Jesus, ‘if ye have love one to another.’ When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

6. If God’s love is missing, what is the reason? Then, who alone is able to change the deadly situation?

1 JOHN 2:9-11; 3:14 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. ¹⁰He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. ¹¹But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.... ^{3:14}We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

“No one can hate his brother, or even his enemy, without placing himself under condemnation.” —(*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 13, 1898) *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 529.

“I have been thinking how little we appreciate the decided declaration of the word of God to us in regard to our relation with each other. There is that selfishness in the human heart that centers our thoughts upon ourselves; and even those who seem to have a connection with God, we are pained sometimes to see how much of their thoughts are centered upon themselves, not seeing nor sensing the needs of others. We are connected together as in the great web of humanity, and in all our associations with one another we should seek to have the mind of Christ. To close the eyes to the needy and perishing, to leave sinners unwarned, and by indifference and selfishness tempt them to say, ‘No man careth for my soul,’ is to dishonor God and bring reproach upon the cause of God. Our work is to build up one another in the most holy faith.” —*This Day with God*, p. 274.

7. Despite all outward forces, what will make it possible for all who desire to be Jesus’ disciples really to be so?

JOHN 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

MATTHEW 10:22; 24:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved....^{24:13} But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

“We are soldiers of Christ; and those who enlist in His army are expected to do difficult work, work which will tax their energies to the utmost. We must understand that a soldier’s life is one of aggressive warfare, of perseverance and endurance. For Christ’s sake we are to endure trials. We are not engaged in mimic battles. We have to meet most powerful adversaries; for ‘we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.’ Ephesians 6:12. We are to find our strength just where the early disciples found their strength: ‘These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.’ ‘And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.’ Acts 1:14; 4:31, 32.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 140.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Daily beset by temptation, constantly opposed by the leaders of the people, Christ knew that He must strengthen His humanity by prayer. In order to be a blessing to men, He must commune with God, pleading for energy, perseverance, and steadfastness. Thus He showed His disciples where His strength lay. Without this daily communion with God, no human being can gain power for service. It is the privilege of every one to commit himself, with all his trials and temptations, his sorrows and disappointments, to the loving Heavenly Father. No one who does this, who makes God his confidant, will fall a prey to the enemy.” –(*Review and Herald*, November 10, 1910) *In Heavenly Places*, p. 85.

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Bearing Fruit

“It is the Lord’s desire that His followers shall grow in grace, that their love shall abound more and more, that they shall be filled with the fruits of righteousness.... Where there is life, there will be growth and fruit bearing; but unless we grow in grace, our spirituality will be dwarfed, sickly, fruitless. It is only by growing, by bearing fruit, that we can fulfill God’s purpose for us. ‘Herein is My Father glorified,’ Christ said, ‘that ye bear much fruit.’ John 15:8. In order to bear much fruit, we must make the most of our privileges. We must use every opportunity granted us for obtaining strength.”
—*That I May Know Him*, p. 164.

EXPECTING FRUIT

- 1. In a parable that Jesus related, what kind of plant did a man have in his vineyard? What did he naturally expect in season? To his great dismay, what did he see for three straight years?**

LUKE 13:6, 7 *He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. ⁷Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*

“God cannot connect with those who live to please themselves, to make themselves first. Those who do this will in the end be last of all. The sin that is most nearly hopeless and incurable is pride of opinion, self-conceit. This stands in the way of all growth. When a man has defects of character, yet fails of realizing this; when he is so imbued with self-sufficiency that he cannot see his fault, how can he be cleansed? ‘They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.’ Matthew 9:12. How can one improve when he thinks his ways perfect?

“When one who is supposed to be led and taught by God turns out of the way, because of self-confidence, many follow his example. His false step may result in misleading thousands.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 199, 200.

- 2. Did the gardener simply accept the instruction of the owner? What did he suggest to save the tree? What did the Lord state clearly about any tree that does not produce good fruit?**

LUKE 13:8, 9 *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: ⁹And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

MATTHEW 7:19 *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

“‘Then after that.’ In these words there is a lesson for all who are connected with the work of God. A period of probation was granted to the tree that bore no

fruit. And in like manner God bears long with His people. But of those who have had great advantages, and who are standing in positions of high and sacred trust, and yet bear no fruit, He says: 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'

"Let those connected with the Lord's special instrumentalities remember that He will call for fruit from His vineyard. Proportionate to the blessings bestowed will be the returns required. Heavenly angels have visited and ministered in every place where God's institutions are established. Unfaithfulness in these institutions is a greater sin than it would be elsewhere, for it has a greater influence than it would elsewhere have. Unfaithfulness, injustice, dishonesty, conniving at wrong, obstruct the light which God designs shall shine forth from His instrumentalities." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 200, 201.

GLORIFYING THE FATHER

3. Similarly, what does the Lord expect from His disciples? What was Jesus' intention when He chose and ordained His twelve disciples?

JOHN 15:8, 16 *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples....¹⁶Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

"He who does not feel the binding claims of God's law, and neglects to keep every requirement, violates the whole law. He who is content to partially meet the standard of righteousness, and who does not triumph over every spiritual foe, will not meet the designs of Christ. He cheapens the whole plan of his religious life, and weakens his religious character, and under the force of temptation his defects of character gain the supremacy, and evil triumphs. We need to be persevering and determined, to meet the highest standard possible. Pre-established habits and ideas must be overcome in many cases, before we can make advancement in religious life. The faithful Christian will bear much fruit; he is a worker; he will not lazily drift, but will put on the whole armor to fight the battles of the Lord. The essential work is to conform the tastes, the appetite, the passions, the motives, the desires, to the great moral standard of righteousness. The work must begin at the heart." –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 118.

4. Does any human being have the ability by himself to bear fruit for God's glory? What is constantly necessary for anyone to produce abundant fruit?

JOHN 15:4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

"Every individual, by his own act, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish His spirit and follow His example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience. We must, each for himself, choose Christ, because He has first chosen us. This union with Christ is to be formed by those who are naturally at enmity with Him. It is a relation of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud heart. This is close work, and many who profess to be followers of Christ know nothing of it. They nominally accept the Saviour, but not as the sole ruler of their hearts." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 46, 47.

5. As a branch must be connected to the vine, to whom must we be connected if we wish to bear fruit? How can we live in Him?

JOHN 15:5 *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

“‘Without Me,’ Christ says, ‘ye can do nothing.’ Those who undertake to carry forward the work in their own strength will certainly fail. Education alone will not fit a man for a place in the work, will not enable him to obtain a knowledge of God.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 196.

Remember that in working with Christ as your personal Saviour lies your strength and your victory. This is the part all are to act. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. He declares: ‘Without Me ye can do nothing.’ John 15:5. And the repentant, believing soul responds: ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ Philippians 4:13. To those who do this comes the assurance: ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.’ John 1:12.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 152.

6. If a person abides permanently in the Lord and His word is in him, what will happen to his prayers and requests, all of which are in harmony with the divine will?

JOHN 15:7 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

“‘If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ When you pray, present this promise. It is our privilege to come to Him with holy boldness. As in sincerity we ask Him to let His light shine upon us, He will hear and answer us. But we must live in harmony with our prayers. They are of no avail if we walk contrary to them.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 499.

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

RICH FRUIT

7. When individuals truly accept God’s message, what will be the visible result? Will there be meager or abundant fruit?

PHILIPPIANS 1:11 *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

MARK 4:20 *And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.*

“You have an experience before you to gain. You cannot be self-centered and be prepared for whatever work or responsibility, however difficult or dangerous, which is in Christ’s line. Your eye must be single to the glory of God, and then your profiting [growth] will appear unto all. You need to employ every means of

grace, that your love to God, and to all with whom you associate, may be pure and Christlike. Then you will approve the things that are excellent and be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." –*Daughters of God*, p. 137.

"All the riches of heaven are to be revealed through God's people. 'Herein is My Father glorified,' Christ says, 'that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.' John 15:8." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 301.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Let those who profess to believe the truth seek most earnestly to follow in the footsteps of the Master, ministering to all who need a Saviour. Christ has plainly laid down the conditions upon which salvation depends. 'If any man will come after Me,' He says, 'let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' Matthew 16:24. Yes, follow Christ. Let every dear soul who desires to obey God walk in the footsteps of the Redeemer. We must be meek and lowly in heart. We are to bring forth fruits of righteousness according to the capabilities God has given us." –*The Upward Look*, p. 329.

"All Christ's followers have as deep an interest in this lesson as had the disciples who listened to His words. In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God. The separation is wide and fearful; but Christ has made provision again to connect us with Himself. The power of evil is so identified with human nature that no man can overcome except by union with Christ. Through this union we receive moral and spiritual power. If we have the spirit of Christ we shall bring forth the fruit of righteousness, fruit that will honor and bless men, and glorify God." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 230.

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**Read the Missionary Report of the
General Conference Retirement Fund on page 122.**

13

Sabbath, December 29, 2018

“What Will We Receive?”

“There are men and women who have left all for Christ’s sake. Their own temporal interests, their own enjoyment of society and of family and friends, are made of less importance than the interests of the kingdom of God. They have not made houses and lands, and relatives and friends however dear, first in their affections, and God’s cause second. And those who do this, who devote their lives to the advancement of the truth, to bringing many sons and daughters to God, have the promise that they shall have a hundredfold in this life and in the world to come life everlasting. Those who work from a noble standpoint and with unselfish motives will be consecrated to God, body, soul, and spirit.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 428.

CHOOSING BETWEEN THE MASTER AND OTHERS

1. Whom did James, John, Andrew, and the other disciples have to put Jesus in front of when they became His disciples?

MATTHEW 10:37 *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

LUKE 14:26 *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

“Natural affection for relatives and friends should not lead any soul who sees the light to reject the light, to dishonor God the Father and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Every possible excuse for disobedience will be framed by men who choose, as many did in Christ’s day, the favor of men rather than the favor of God. If one chooses wife or children, father or mother, before Christ, that choice will stand through eternal ages, with all its weight of responsibility....” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 401.

2. When Jesus’ disciples went by faith to preach in villages, what did they leave behind? Do we also trust that our needs will be supplied? What was necessary to do a great work without even a little means?

MARK 6:7, 8; 9:23 *And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; ⁸And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip,*

no bread, no money in their purse....^{9,23}If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

“We have a great and sacred trust in the elevated truths committed to us. We are glad that there are men who will enter into our mission fields who are willing to work with small remuneration. Money does not weigh with them in the scale against the claims of conscience and duty, to open the truth to those who are in the darkness of error in far-off countries for the love of Christ and their fellow men.

“The men who will give themselves to the great work of teaching the truth are not the men who will be bribed with wealth or frightened by poverty. But God would have His delegated servants constantly improving.” —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 302.

3. What did Peter ask after hearing what Jesus said? Was it easy for the disciples to leave everything, even their families, to do His work?

MARK 10:28 *Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*

MATTHEW 19:27 *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*

“... Peter’s question, ‘What shall we have therefore?’ had revealed a spirit that uncorrected would unfit the disciples to be messengers for Christ; for it was the spirit of a hireling. While they had been attracted by the love of Jesus, the disciples were not wholly free from Pharisaism. They still worked with the thought of meriting a reward in proportion to their labor.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 396.

“The desire that some of our brethren possess to earn means fast, leads them to engage in a new enterprise and invest means, but often their expectations of making money are not realized. They sink that which they could have spent in God’s cause.... If means is lost, the person looks upon it as a misfortune to himself—as his loss. But he must remember that it is the means of another which he is handling, that he is only a steward, and God is displeased with the unwise management of that means which could have been used to advance the cause of present truth. At the reckoning day the unfaithful steward must give an account of his stewardship.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 226.

HE WHO SOWS WILL REAP

4. Could one who had left his house, parents, and children for the sake of God’s kingdom expect to see them again? What was included in Jesus’ promise to those who were doing His service? How did that which the disciples left behind compare with what they would receive?

LUKE 18:29, 30, FIRST PART *And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake,³⁰Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time,...*

“The greater man’s influence for good, under the control of the Spirit of God, the more determined will be the enemy to indulge his envy and jealousy toward him by religious persecution. But all heaven is on the side of Christ, not of anti-

christ. Those who love God and are willing to be partakers with Christ in His sufferings, God will honor.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 40.

“With God all things are possible. Truth, set home to the heart by the Spirit of God, will crowd out the love of riches. The love of Jesus and of riches cannot dwell in the same heart. The love of God so far surpasses the love of riches that the possessor breaks away from his riches and transfers his affections to God.... Love to God and his fellow men predominates, and he holds all that he has as not his own, and faithfully discharges his duty as God’s steward. Then can he keep both the great commandments of the law.... In this way it is possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God....

“Here is the reward for those who sacrifice for God. They receive a hundred-fold in this life....” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 172, 173.

5. What is one great privilege that the faithful followers of Christ will enjoy in the future, after His return?

MATTHEW 19:28 *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

“‘Eat and drink at My table’—that is, be admitted to close communion with Me, as those who are placed in a position of honor near the king. Christ’s faithful ones are to minister, under His authority, the affairs of His spiritual kingdom. ‘Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.’ Matthew 19:28, 29.” —*Australasian Union Conference Record*, January 15, 1904.

6. In the future, what will be the reward of those who, in addition to leaving their homes and families, sacrifice their lives for the Master?

MARK 10:29, 30 *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, ³⁰But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

“It is when we look upon every gift as the Lord’s, to be used in His service, that we secure the heavenly benediction. Give back to God your entrusted possessions, and more will be entrusted to you. Keep your possessions to yourself, and you will receive no reward in this life, and will lose the reward of the life to come.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 191.

“We should live for the next world. It is so wretched to live a haphazard, aimless life. We want an object in life—to live for a purpose. God help us all to be self-sacrificing, less self-caring, more forgetful of self and selfish interest; and to do good, not for the honor we expect to receive here, but because this is the object of our life and will answer the end of our existence. Let our daily prayer go up to God that He will divest us of selfishness....” —*This Day with God*, p. 280.

WONDERFUL GIFTS

7. What great glory is promised to all who love the Saviour and follow Him to the end?

MATTHEW 25:34 *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

“Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God’s purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God,’ ‘conformed to the image of His Son.’ ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.’ Psalm 90:17; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:9. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God’s image, may attain.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 60, 61.

“God is infinite; in Him are ‘all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ And to all eternity men may be ever searching, ever learning, and yet they can never exhaust the treasures of His wisdom, His goodness, and His power.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 703.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life. ‘She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.’ 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 61.

“I have seen that those who live for a purpose, seeking to benefit and bless their fellow men and to honor and glorify their Redeemer, are the truly happy ones on the earth, while the man who is restless, discontented, and seeking this and testing that, hoping to find happiness, is always complaining of disappointment. He is always in want, never satisfied, because he lives for himself alone. Let it be your aim to do good, to act your part in life faithfully.” —*This Day with God*, p. 280.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

of the General Conference Retirement Fund

To be read on Sabbath, December 29, 2018

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, January 5, 2019*

The General Conference delegates in session in 2017 made the decision that the General Conference should provide retirement benefits to workers and missionaries who put their very lives and health on the line to serve in foreign countries, especially in Africa and Asia, where many governments do not provide social security benefits.

The word of God states that the elderly and the needy are to be taken care of. In the Old Testament, the Levites were released from their temple service at the age of 50, but they continued to receive the normal provisions of all who served in the temple. "And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more: But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge." Numbers 8:25, 26. Today, ministers and workers retire at whatever age is customary in the countries where they live. The average is 65 years of age.

We find pointed explanations concerning this subject in *Gospel Workers*, pp. 426, 427: "Some provision should be made for the care of ministers and others of God's faithful servants who through exposure or overwork in His cause have become ill and need rest and restoration, or who through age or loss of health are no longer able to bear the burden and heat of the day. Ministers are often appointed to a field of labor that they know will be detrimental to their health; but, unwilling to shun trying places, they venture, hoping to be a help and blessing to the people. After a time they find their health failing. A change of climate and of work is tried, without bringing relief; and then what are they to do?"

"These faithful laborers, who for Christ's sake have given up worldly prospects, choosing poverty rather than pleasure or riches; who, forgetful of self, have labored earnestly to win souls to Christ; who have given liberally to advance various enterprises in the cause of God, and have then sunk down in the battle, wearied and ill, and with no means of support, must not be left to struggle on in poverty and suffering, or to feel that they are paupers. When sickness or infirmity comes upon them, let not our workers be burdened with the anxious query, 'What will become of my wife and little ones, now that I can no longer labor and supply their necessities?' It is but just that provision

be made to meet the needs of these faithful laborers, and the needs of those who are dependent on them....

“The Lord is greatly displeased with this neglect of His faithful servants. Our people should be as willing to assist these persons when in adverse circumstances as they have been to accept their means and services when in health.”

During the last General Conference administrative term, the work of God was established in many new countries. We thank Him that there are now active workers in more than 130 countries. However, in many of these countries there are widespread poverty, a low standard of living, very low wages, and no social security benefits. Therefore, the General Conference Full Committee has resolved to create a Retirement Fund in the General Conference Treasury Department. The fund is to be increased by wise investment, deductions from workers’ salaries, and donations.

The administration of such a fund involves several challenges. For example, the different countries have different currencies that fluctuate constantly. This is connected to inflation, which constantly devalues almost all currencies, making it impossible for deductions from workers’ salaries alone to cover such retirement benefits. Furthermore, sometimes a missionary works in one country but retires in a different one, where the living standard is different. Nevertheless, the church is responsible to see that the daily needs of the retired missionaries, pastors, and workers are met.

Your support is very important in this area. May God give you generous hearts. Remember the words of the Lord in Psalm 82:3: “Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.” A special blessing is promised to all who respect and provide sustenance for the elderly and those in need.

May God bless every contributor and contribution and increase them with His bounties.

—Tzvetan Petkov
General Conference President

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