

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Third Quarter 2015

Keep the Truth Faithfully
Part 1

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

625 West Avenue
Cedartown, GA 30125
Telephone 770-748-0077
Fax 770-748-0095
Email: info@sda1844.org
Internet: www.sda1844.org

Author: Antonino Di Franca

Review and editing of content
by the General Conference Ministerial Department

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

CONTENTS

Introduction 4

Part 1

1. Living Daily by the Word of God 7

2. Our Loving Father 12

3. Emmanuel, God with Us 17

4. Comforter and Spirit of Truth 21

5. Man's Origin 26

6. The Plan of Redemption 30

7. The Ten Commandments 35

8. The Holy Sabbath 40

9. Respect for Life 45

Missionary Report from Ethiopia 50

10. A Holy Commitment 52

12. Tampering with God's Law 57

13. The Law of Sacrifices 62

13. The Old and New Covenants 67

INTRODUCTION

He had studied Roman law. He was the governor of Judea, and to a great degree the freedom of millions depended on his decisions. He even had the authority to judge whether the Son of God should live or die. But he was ignorant of the truth. He lived in such darkness that, when Jesus was in his presence and mentioned the word “truth,” his immediate question was: “What is truth?” John 18:38. The judge of an entire region did not know what the truth was! How could Pilate make decisions when he was ignorant of the most basic factor in decision making? And he was not alone.

Two men had a problem and submitted themselves to arbitration before a judge. The plaintiff was very eloquent and persuasive in presenting his case.

When he finished, the judge nodded in approval and said, “That’s right.”

On hearing this, the defendant jumped up and said, “Wait a moment, Judge! You haven’t even heard my side of the case yet.” So, the judge told the defendant to state his case. And he, too, was very persuasive and eloquent.

When he finished, the judge said, “That’s right.”

When the court clerk heard this, he jumped up and said, “Judge, they both can’t be right!”

The judge looked at the clerk of court and said, “That’s also right.” It seems that this judge had no more understanding of the truth than did Pilate in his day.

Can we say that people know more truth today than is represented in these two cases?

We can thank the Lord that we are not abandoned to the confusion of the world, for the greatest Authority in the universe has revealed who is the truth and where we can find it. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Later, referring to the word of God, He stated: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” John 14:6; 17:1. Thus, Jesus and God’s holy word are the truth; we have this truth in our hands, just as Pilate had Jesus in his presence. Did the governor value for His excellence the One who was the truth? And what about us? What use are we making of this great treasure?

Knowing the great darkness of error and sin existing in the world, Jesus gave the great commission to His people to go and preach the truth of the gospel. “And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach

the gospel to every creature.” “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20. Faithful to this mandate, the apostle Paul could say that he had “not shunned to declare ... all the counsel of God.” To the believers in his charge he repeated that “by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” Acts 20:27, 31.

To carry out the divine commission, we have to study the word of the Lord with all that it contains. The Spirit of prophecy states: “If we are to be sanctified through a knowledge of the truth found in the word of God, we must have an intelligent knowledge of His will therein revealed. We must search the Scriptures, not merely rush through a chapter and repeat it, taking no pains to understand it, but we must dig for the jewel of truth which will enrich the mind, and fortify the soul against the wiles and temptations of the archdeceiver.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 19.

These Sabbath School Lessons have been prepared so we can understand “all the counsel of God.” They cover the list of subjects found in the *Principles of Faith*. In the last half of 2015 and in the first quarter of 2016, we will study the Principles in order. It is our sincere desire that this will result in a great blessing for God’s people all around the world.

Truth is like light; and as light scatters darkness, so truth reveals and conquers error. More than this, divine truth has the capacity to transform. “The Scriptures are the great agency in ... transformation of character.... If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us, body, soul, and spirit, to His will.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 100.

Let us make this wonderful experience of transformation as from Sabbath to Sabbath we study the truth deeply, not just consider it as a theoretical message from God. We are urged to go even further, bringing all truth into our daily lives, for “However enlightened the youth may be through Bible studies, their nature is such that unless the truth of which they have knowledge is practiced in the daily life, every attempt to elevate and ennoble will be unavailing.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 68.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us study these lessons not only to know the truth and be able to present it to others, but with a much

higher goal—to obey it, to “be established in the present truth.” And being established in the truth, let us be purified in our “souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:12; 1 Peter 1:22.

“The Father,” writes the Spirit of prophecy, “sets His love upon His elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of His own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as His obedient children. Upon them is manifested the free grace of God, the love wherewith He hath loved them. Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the Word of God with a child’s simplicity will be among the elect of God.” — *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1114.

Let us pray earnestly together that this will be our experience as from day to day and from Sabbath to Sabbath we study and live the precious truth that the Lord permits to shine on our pathway.

—The brothers and sisters of the General Conference

**Special Sabbath School Offering for
GENERAL CONFERENCE
INTERNET BROADCASTING AND WEBSITE**

Let God's great love for you be seen in your gifts!

1

Sabbath, July 4, 2015

Living Daily by the Word of God

“Christ resisted Satan with Scripture. He might have had recourse to His own divine power, and used His own words; but He said, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ If the Sacred Scriptures were studied and followed, the Christian would be fortified to meet the wily foe; but the word of God is neglected, and disaster and defeat follow.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 210.

GOD'S INSPIRED WORD

1. Where did the instructions to write the books of the Holy Scriptures come from? Is there anything in the Bible that was written directly by God?

EXODUS 34:27 *And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.*

ISAIAH 30:8 *Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.*

REVELATION 1:11, FIRST PART *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia...*

EXODUS 31:18 *And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. (See Exodus 32:16).*

“He did not even then trust His precepts to the memory of a people who were prone to forget His requirements, but wrote them upon tables of stone. He would remove from Israel all possibility of mingling heathen traditions with His holy precepts, or of confounding His requirements with human ordinances or customs. But He did not stop with giving them the precepts of

the Decalogue. The people had shown themselves so easily led astray that He would leave no door of temptation unguarded. Moses was commanded to write, as God should bid him, judgments and laws giving minute instruction as to what was required. These directions relating to the duty of the people to God, to one another, and to the stranger were only the principles of the Ten Commandments amplified and given in a specific manner, that none need err. They were designed to guard the sacredness of the ten precepts engraved on the tables of stone.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 364.

2. In what ways did the Lord convey His messages to the prophets? What special guidance did they receive as they recorded the messages?

AMOS 3:7 *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

NUMBERS 12:6 *And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

1 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

“‘The secret things,’ says Moses, ‘belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever;’ and the Lord declares by the prophet Amos, that He ‘will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.’ Deuteronomy 29:29; Amos 3:7. The students of God’s word may, then, confidently expect to find the most stupendous event to take place in human history clearly pointed out in the Scriptures of truth.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 324.

“The Saviour had spoken through all the prophets. ‘The Spirit of Christ which was in them’ ‘testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.’ 1 Peter 1:11.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

“Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mold.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 22.

3. What are the Scriptures called, reflecting their holy origin and manner of transmission?

2 SAMUEL 22:31 *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.*

1 CHRONICLES 17:3 *And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan,...*

REVELATION 1:1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*

ROMANS 3:2 *Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

“This Holy Book has withstood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven.... This Word ... is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them, that by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way....

“How many are betrayed into sin, because they have not, through prayerful study of the Word of God, realized the sinfulness of sin, and found out how they may steadfastly resist it. When temptation comes upon them, they seem to be off guard, and ignorant of the devices of the enemy. We are living in perilous times, and as we draw near the close of earth’s history, there will be no safety for those who do not become familiar with the Word of God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 190.

FOR LIGHT AND INSPIRATION

4. For what purpose did the Lord give this valuable resource to man? Having a divine origin, how long will it be valid?

PSALM 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

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: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

ISAIAH 40:8 *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*

LUKE 21:33 *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*

“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.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

“The Bible is the standard by which to test the claims of all who profess sanctification. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be sanctified through the truth, and He says, ‘Thy word is truth;’ while the psalmist declares, ‘Thy law is the truth.’ All whom God is leading will manifest a high regard for the Scriptures in which His voice is heard. The Bible will be to them ‘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.’” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5. p. 1147.

POWER TO CREATE AND REGENERATE

5. How powerful is God’s word? What happened when the Lord spoke at creation or when Jesus responded to those who pleaded for healing?

JOHN 6:63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

PSALM 33:9 *For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

MARK 4:39, 41 *And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm....⁴¹And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*

MATTHEW 12:13 *Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

“The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.” —*Education*, p. 126.

“The word of God—the truth—is the channel through which the Lord manifests His Spirit and power. Obedience to the word produces fruit of the required quality —‘unfeigned love of the brethren.’ This love is heaven-born and leads to high motives and unselfish actions.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 519.

CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE BLESSINGS

6. In studying the inspired letter of our heavenly Father, what is a prerequisite for understanding it? What attitude makes it possible for one to receive the promised blessings?

2 CHRONICLES 20:20, LAST PART *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

JOHN 11:40 *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*

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

ROMANS 2:13 *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*

“We are accountable only for the light that shines upon us. The commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus are testing us. If we are faithful and obedient, God will delight in us, and bless us as His own chosen, peculiar people. When perfect faith and perfect love and obedience abound, working in the hearts of those who are Christ’s followers, they will have a powerful influence....

“The light of prophecy still burns for the guidance of souls, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’ It shines on the pathway of the just to commend, and on the way of the unjust to lead to repentance and conversion. Through its agency sin will be rebuked and iniquity unmasked. It is progressive in the performance of its duty to reflect light on the past, the present, and the future.” —*My Life Today*, pp. 42, 43.

7. What other attitudes are necessary to receive divine revelation? What does this spiritual food produce when it is “eaten” daily like bread?

MATTHEW 11:25 *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (See Matthew 18:3.)*

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

MATTHEW 4:4 *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.*

JEREMIAH 15:16 *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.*

“We must be constantly meditating upon the word, eating it, digesting it, and by practice, assimilating it, so that it is taken into the life current. He who feeds on Christ daily will by his example teach others to think less of that which they eat, and to feel much greater anxiety for the food they give to the soul.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 89, 90.

“The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us just as surely as though we could hear Him with our ears. The word of the living God is not merely written, but spoken. Do we receive the Bible as the oracle of God? If we realized the importance of this Word, with what awe would we open it, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts. The reading and contemplating of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Most High.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 134.

- *How much do I love the word of God and eating it as daily spiritual food?*
- *Do I consider the Bible’s messages merely as information or as living principles?*
- *What do I choose to follow when discrepancies seem to appear between God’s word and man’s interests?*

* * *

Our Loving Father

“God is love’ is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass.... The word of God reveals His character. He Himself has declared His infinite love and pity. When Moses prayed, ‘Show me Thy glory,’ the Lord answered, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before thee.’ Exodus 33:18, 19. This is His glory.”
—*Steps to Christ*, p. 10.

CREATION REVEALS GOD’S EXISTENCE

- 1. Before the alphabet was developed or any word of the Bible was written, what powerful evidence did men receive of God’s existence? Do you see differences between nature’s revelation and the written revelation in the Holy Scriptures?**

PSALM 19:1, 2 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. ²Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

ISAIAH 40:26 *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*

“In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20.

“God has surrounded us with nature’s beautiful scenery to attract and interest the mind. It is His design that we should associate the glories of nature with His character. If we faithfully study the book of nature, we shall find it a fruitful source for contemplating the infinite love and power of God.” —*Messengers to Young People*, pp. 365, 366.

“His works, as seen in the natural world, are not one half comprehended or appreciated. These silent preachers will teach human beings their lessons, if they will only be attentive hearers....

“Sin has obscured his [man’s] vision, and of himself he cannot interpret nature without placing it above God. He cannot discern in it God, or Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. He is in the same position as were the Athenians, who erected their altars for the worship of nature.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1067, 1068.

THE BIBLE BEGINS BY PRESENTING GOD AND HIS WORK

- 2. Of whom do the first book, first chapter, and first line of the Holy Bible testify? How is God presented here and elsewhere?**

GENESIS 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

PSALM 33:6 *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

“Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths.” —*Education*, p. 128.

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power.... Says the psalmist: ‘Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.’ ‘O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.’ Psalms 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things.’ Revelation 4:11.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 436, 437.

GOD IS REVEALED AS PERSONAL

3. Is God presented as an abstract entity, or as a personal being with a clear identity? What reveals His loving, joyful generosity?

GENESIS 1:26, 27 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

JOHN 14:9 *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

PSALM 145:15, 16 *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. ¹⁶Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

“The Lord created man out of the dust of the earth. He made Adam a partaker of His life, His nature. There was breathed into him the breath of the Almighty, and he became a living soul. Adam was perfect in form—strong, comely, pure, bearing the image of his Maker.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1081.

“In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.” —*Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

4. What is revealed about God's superior nature? Can we imagine or understand everything about His nature?

JOHN 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

LUKE 24:39, LAST PART ... *A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

JOB 36:26 *Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the numbers of his years be searched out.*

“The mighty power that works through all nature and sustains all things is not, as some men of science claim, merely an all-pervading principle, an actuating energy. God is a spirit; yet He is a personal being, for man was made in His image. As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. Jesus, the outshining of the Father's glory, ‘and the express image of His person’ (Hebrews 1:3), was on earth found in fashion as a man. As a personal Saviour He came to the world. As a personal Saviour He ascended on high. As a personal Saviour He intercedes in the heavenly courts. Before the throne of God in our behalf ministers ‘One like the Son of man.’ Daniel 7:13.” —*Education*, pp. 131, 132.

5. While man receives life as a gift and can retain it for a limited time, what great prerogative does God possess? Despite being so different and so much higher than man, how does He relate to those who believe in Him as well as to those who do not?

PSALM 36:9 *For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*

JEREMIAH 10:10, FIRST PART *But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king:...*

JOHN 5:26 *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.*

MATTHEW 5:16, 45 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven....⁴⁵That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

“God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, blessings flow out from Him to all the creatures He has made. In His infinite love He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature, and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 23.

“God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of

sinner. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see 'God with us.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

MORE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

6. What other wonderful characteristics show the enormous difference between God and man?

1 TIMOTHY 1:17 *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

ROMANS 11:33-36 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? ³⁵Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? ³⁶For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

LEVITICUS 19:2 *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.*

LUKE 18:19 *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.*

"The Lord existed before He purposed to create the world. He is 'from everlasting.' 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.'" —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 249.

"Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

"Each heartbeat, each breath, is the inspiration of Him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life—the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM...."

"Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties, and year by year continue its motion around the sun." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 9.

7. What holy attributes are often mentioned about God? Therefore, what should constantly increase in our lives?

1 JOHN 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

EXODUS 34:6 *And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*

HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

PSALM 9:10 *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

“God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. ‘His glory is His children’s good; His joy, His tender Fatherhood.’” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 77.

“We are called to represent to the world the character of God as it was revealed to Moses. In answer to the prayer of Moses, ‘Show me Thy glory,’ the Lord promised, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before thee.’ ‘And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7. This is the fruit that God desires from His people. In the purity of their characters, in the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they are to demonstrate that the ‘law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.’ Psalm 19:7.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 221.

8. What affectionate term did Jesus use when He spoke about God? What does this mean for us?

MATTHEW 5:16, 45, 48 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.... ⁴⁵That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.... ⁴⁸Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

“The first lesson that children are to be taught is that God is their Father. This lesson should be given them in their earliest years. Parents are to realize that they are responsible before God for making their children acquainted with their heavenly Father.... That God is love is to be taught by every lesson.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 487.

“The Creator of the universe addresses you as an affectionate Father. If you separate from the world in your affections, and remain free from its contamination, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, God will be your Father, He will adopt you into His family, and you will be His heir. In place of the world, He will give you, for a life of obedience, the kingdom under the whole heavens. He will give you an eternal weight of glory and a life that is as enduring as eternity.

“Your heavenly Father proposes to make you a member of the royal family, that through His exceeding great and precious promises you may be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 44.

- ***What personal knowledge do I have of God? Where did I get this from?***
- ***Do I have the faith that He wants to see in me as His child?***
- ***What am I doing every day to become better acquainted with Him?***

* * *

Emmanuel, God with Us

“Emmanuel, God with us,’ this means everything to us. What a broad foundation does it lay for our faith. What a hope big with immortality does it place before the believing soul. God with us in Christ Jesus to accompany us every step of the journey to heaven. The Holy Spirit with us as a comforter, a guide in our perplexities, to soothe our sorrows, and shield us in temptation. ‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!’” —*My Life Today*, p. 290.

JESUS’ EXISTENCE BEFORE HIS INCARNATION

1. What did the prophets testify concerning Messiah’s existence before coming to earth as a baby? What special names were applied to Him?

MICAH 5:2 *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

ISAIAH 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

MATTHEW 1:23 *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

ISAIAH 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

“Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners....

“‘God with us’ is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.

“Christ sought to teach the grand truth so needful for us to learn, that God is always with us, an inmate of every dwelling, that He is acquainted with every action performed on earth. He knows the thoughts that are framed in the mind and endorsed by the soul. He hears every word that falls from the lips of human beings.” —*My Life Today*, p. 290.

PROPHECIES OF HIS COMING

2. What great mission was He to fulfill when He came to earth? Like travelers who supply their itinerary to those who are waiting for them, what was specified by the Lord so the people would recognize and watch for Him?

ISAIAH 53:10, 11 *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

DANIEL 9:24, 25 *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. ²⁵Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

MICAH 5:2 *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

“God could not do more for man than He has done in giving His beloved Son, nor could He do less and yet secure the redemption of man and maintain the dignity of the divine law.... In this act He unveiled to man the character of His Father, showing to every human being that God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

“The Majesty of heaven pleased not Himself. Whatever He did was in reference to the salvation of man. Selfishness in all its forms stood rebuked in His presence. He assumed our nature that He might suffer in our stead, making His soul an offering for sin. He was stricken of God and afflicted to save man from the blow which he deserved because of the transgression of God’s law. By the light shining from the cross, Christ proposed to draw all men unto Him. His human heart yearned over the race. His arms were opened to receive them, and He invited all to come to Him. His life on earth was one continued act of self-denial and condescension.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 418.

A HEAVENLY VOICE CONFIRMING HIS DIVINE NATURE

3. What voice was heard at various times affirming the Messiah’s divine nature? What did Jesus say concerning His relationship to the heavenly Father?

MATTHEW 3:17; 17:5 *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.... ^{17:5}While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

JOHN 10:29, 30 *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. ³⁰I and my Father are one.*

“Jesus claimed His sonship to the Eternal.... Jesus was no less the Son of God in His lowly home, in His submission to His parents, than when God spoke from His eternal throne, saying, “This is My beloved Son.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 129.

“The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells of the power of prayer—how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. The light that fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour, will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice that spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, “This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 156.

PARTAKER OF FLESH AND BLOOD

4. At the same time, what is known about His human nature? Why was it necessary for Him to be made like His brethren?

JOHN 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

HEBREWS 2:14, 17 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil....¹⁷Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

“Christ alone was able to represent the Deity. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone sufficient to accomplish this work. No verbal description could reveal God to the world. Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God Himself must be revealed to humanity. In order to do this, our Saviour clothed His divinity with humanity. He employed the human faculties, for only by adopting these could He be comprehended by humanity. Only humanity could reach humanity. He lived out the character of God through the human body which God had prepared for Him. He blessed the world by living out in human flesh the life of God, thus showing that He had the power to unite humanity to divinity.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 924.

PROCLAIMED SAVIOUR AND LORD

5. Although He took the nature of His brethren, as what was He announced before and on the day of His birth? What testimony do we have of His character and life?

MATTHEW 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

LUKE 2:11 *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

HEBREWS 7:26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*

1 PETER 2:22 *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

“The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? The infinite love and mercy of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, calls for the most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. As we thus contemplate heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger, and 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 intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and a daily, living experience in His power to save to the utmost all that come unto God by Him.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 88.

PLEADING IN HEAVEN

6. After His sacrifice on the cross, what ministry did Jesus go to heaven to carry out on man’s behalf? Being assured that He is pleading for us, what should we do?

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.*

HEBREWS 7:25; 10:22 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.... ^{10:22}Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

“Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of wrath on our world, full of hypocrisy and sin, destroying those who are filled with hatred to God. He might blot this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help. ‘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.’

“Jesus is to be loved and trusted. All who will be obedient He leads upward step by step, as fast as they can advance, that, while standing by the side of the Sin-bearer, in the light that proceeds from the throne of God, they may breathe the air of the heavenly courts.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 240.

RETURNING IN GLORY

7. What will happen when Jesus’ ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is finished? What glory will accompany Him when He comes to take the redeemed to His Father’s house?

JOHN 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

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.*

1 PETER 5:4 *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

“Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives....

“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.

- *How do you feel when you think of your Saviour giving His life to save you from eternal death?*
- *What is your desire, since He lives to intercede for you?*
- *What do you expect to happen on the glorious day of His coming?*

* * *

4

Sabbath, July 25, 2015

Comforter and Spirit of Truth

“The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.

THE LORD’S SPIRIT AT CREATION

- 1. What stupendous work did the Spirit of God carry out in this earth’s creation? Are we debtors to the Holy Spirit for our existence?**

PSALM 33:6 *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

JOB 33:4 *The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*

GENESIS 2:7 *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

PSALM 104:30 *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*

“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.’ John 16:13. Only by the aid of that Spirit who in the beginning ‘was brooding upon the face of the waters;’ of that Word by whom ‘all things were made;’ of that ‘true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,’ can the testimony of science be rightly interpreted. Only by Their guidance can its deepest truths be discerned.” —*Education*, p. 134.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PROPHECY

2. What happens when people are filled with the Holy Spirit? Who even made this experience in past times?

1 SAMUEL 10:9-12 *And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. ¹⁰And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. ¹¹And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? ¹²And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?*

“The Lord would not leave Saul to be placed in a position of trust without divine enlightenment. He was to have a new calling, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. The effect was that he was changed into a new man. The Lord gave Saul a new spirit, other thoughts, other aims and desires than he had previously had. This enlightenment, with the spiritual knowledge of God, placing him on vantage ground, was to bind his will to the will of Jehovah.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1013.

“The manifestation of the Holy Spirit was similar to its manifestation in the days of Samuel and Saul in the school of the prophets. On one occasion the showers of grace were outpoured, and all that were gathered together were prophesying.” —*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 79.

“When the Spirit of the Lord rested upon the elders about the tabernacle, it fell also upon them, and they prophesied, speaking words of wisdom and eloquence.” —*The Signs of the Times*, August 12, 1880.

INSPIRING THE PROPHETS

3. Who were inspired during the centuries to convey light and guidance to God’s people? Thanks to this wonderful process, what did they receive from the Lord’s mouth?

2 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

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: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

“I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible....

“The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit....

“The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 17, 19, 25.

POWERFUL SUPPORT DURING JESUS' MINISTRY

4. How was the Holy Spirit's presence revealed after Jesus' baptism? In His ministry, did Jesus receive this precious Gift in a limited way?

LUKE 3:21, 22; 4:18 *Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased....*

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

JOHN 3:34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

“The Lord had promised to give John a sign whereby he might know who was the Messiah, and now as Jesus went up out of the water, the promised sign was given; for he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, hovered over the head of Christ, and a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’...

“What does this scene mean to us?... The Holy Spirit will be given to those who seek for its power and grace, and will help our infirmities when we would have audience with God. Heaven is open to our petitions, and we are invited to come ‘boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.’ We are to come in faith, believing that we shall obtain the very things we ask of Him.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1077, 1078.

COMFORTER AND GUIDE TO THE TRUTH

5. What special guidance was promised to the church following Jesus' ascension? Being another Comforter and Spirit of truth, into what will those who receive this divine light be guided?

JOHN 14:16; 15:26; 16:13, 8 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever....^{15:26} But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me....^{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 show you things to come....⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

“Christ declared that, after His ascension, He would send to His church, as His crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take His place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit—the soul of His life, the efficacy of His church, the light and life of the world. With His Spirit, Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power to take away sin.” —*This Day with God*, p. 257.

“From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His ‘good Spirit to instruct them.’ Nehemiah 9:20. And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God’s faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

FULLNESS OF GIFTS

6. What gifts, administrations, and operations were supported by the Holy Spirit in the apostolic church? What are the believers urged to do?

1 CORINTHIANS 12:8-11, 31 *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.... ³¹But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.*

“The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 327.

“The gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord’s work. The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles.... This is the privilege of God’s children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an endorsement of faith.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 823.

7. To whom is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised at the end of time? Who received this fullness in the apostolic days?

JOEL 2:28, 29 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: ²⁹And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

ACTS 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth,... the Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

AN ABUNDANCE OF FRUIT

8. What do those who receive the gift of the Spirit produce? What else is possible through the power of the Spirit?

GALATIANS 5:22, 23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

EPHESIANS 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

“Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, ‘love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.’ Galatians 5:22, 23.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 58.

“As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 67.

“To all who believe, He is as the tree of life in the Paradise of God. His branches reach to this world, that the blessings which He has purchased for

us may be brought within our reach.... He has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which will present to us the precious fruit from the tree of life. From this tree we may pluck and eat, and we may then guide others to it, that they also may eat." —*My Life Today*, p. 50.

- *For what mission was the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to the disciples?*
- *In your church, is there harmony and continual mutual prayer as there was in the days of Pentecost?*
- *What obstacles keep the Holy Spirit from empowering your life and ministry?*
- *What would you do if tomorrow the Lord poured the Holy Spirit upon you with all power?*

* * *

5

Sabbath, August 1, 2015

Man's Origin

"Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths. Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from her research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works." —*Education*, p. 128.

CREATION OF THE EARTH

1. **What clear testimony is given of God's work in creating the earth, in total contradiction to evolutionary ideas?**

GENESIS 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

NEHEMIAH 9:6 *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*

JEREMIAH 32:17 *Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.*

"Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort

to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years.

“Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for.” –*Education*, pp. 128, 129.

“The Bible recognizes no long ages in which the earth was slowly evolved from chaos.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 112.

“The Bible is the most instructive and comprehensive history that has ever been given to the world. Its sacred pages contain the only authentic account of the creation. Here we behold the power that ‘stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth.’ Here we have a truthful history of the human race, one that is unmarred by human prejudice or human pride.” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 84, 85.

2. How did the world come into existence? What clear refutation of long geological ages do we find in the holy Scriptures?

PSALM 33:6-9; 148:4, 5 *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ⁷He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. ⁸Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. ⁹For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.... ^{148:4}Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. ⁵Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.*

HEBREWS 11:3 *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

2 PETER 3:5 *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.*

“In the formation of our world, God was not beholden to preexistent substance or matter. For the ‘things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.’ Hebrews 11:3. On the contrary, all things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice, and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things that are therein, are not only the work of His hand; they came into existence by the breath of His mouth.” –*Upward Look*, p. 340.

THE DAYS OF CREATION

3. What numerous Bible verses give the length of the days of creation? What is natural to conclude when the record states that every creation day was made of an evening and a morning, or day and night?

GENESIS 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.... ⁸And God*

called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day....¹²And the evening and the morning were the third day....¹⁹And the evening and the morning were the fourth day....²³And the evening and the morning were the fifth day....³¹And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

“Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed. At the close of each day is given the result of the Creator’s work. The statement is made at the close of the first week’s record, ‘These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created.’ Genesis 2:4. But this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were other than literal days.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 112.

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.’ Exodus 20:8-11. This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the days of creation to be literal. The first six days of each week are given to man for labor, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation.” —*Christian Education*, p. 190.

4. Do the Holy Scriptures refer to the days of creation in other places? Is there any indication of a day of creation being longer than a normal day?

EXODUS 20:11; 31:17, LAST PART *For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.^{31:17}... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.*

“Human philosophy declares that an indefinite period of time was taken in the creation of the world. Does God state the matter thus? No; He says, ‘It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days [not six indefinite periods of time; for then there would be no possible way for man to observe the day specified in the fourth commandment] the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.’ Please read carefully the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. God says again, ‘Remember [do not forget] the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.’” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 135.

5. Because the first seventh day was a day of rest, is it conceivable that this Sabbath was longer than any other day? Is it imaginable that Adam rested for thousands of years?

GENESIS 2:1-3 *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.³And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

MARK 2:27, FIRST PART *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man....*

“Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and he then blessed this day, and set it apart as a day of rest for man.” —*Christian Education*, p. 190.

THE CREATION OF MAN

6. While many people follow human hypotheses, what clear, irrefutable statement does God’s word provide regarding man’s origin? What can we conclude from the fact that Adam found no suitable companion among the animals?

GENESIS 1:26, 27; 9:6 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.... ^{9:6}Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

“There is no ground for the supposition that man was evolved by slow degrees of development from the lower forms of animal or vegetable life. Such teaching lowers the great work of the Creator to the level of man’s narrow, earthly conceptions. Men are so intent upon excluding God from the sovereignty of the universe that they degrade man and defraud him of the dignity of his origin. He who set the starry worlds on high and tinted with delicate skill the flowers of the field, who filled the earth and the heavens with the wonders of His power, when He came to crown His glorious work, to place one in the midst to stand as ruler of the fair earth, did not fail to create a being worthy of the hand that gave him life. The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was ‘the son of God.’” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 44.

KEEP HUMAN THEORY IN ITS PROPER PLACE

7. What was written long ago about those who accept fanciful ideas and human hypotheses? What will help us avoid falling victim to fables?

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-4 *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ²Preach 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.*

“Jesus brought into His teaching none of the science of men. His teaching is full of grand, ennobling, saving truth, to which man’s highest ambitions and proudest inventions can bear no comparison; and yet things of minor consequence engross the minds of men. The great plan of the redemption of a fallen race was wrought out in the life of Christ in human flesh. This scheme of restoring the moral image of God in debased humanity entered into every purpose of the life and character of Christ. His majesty could not mingle with human science, which will disconnect from the great source of all wisdom in a day. The topic of human science never escaped His hallowed lips.” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 408.

- ***How many sources has God provided for those who want to know the truth?***
- ***Do you believe that the evolutionary theory is supported by the Bible?***
- ***How should one consider atheism, evolution, theistic evolution, and similar constructs?***

* * *

6

Sabbath, August 8, 2015

The Plan of Redemption

“The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God’s favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God’s original purpose in its creation is accomplished. ‘The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’ Daniel 7:18.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 342.

MAN’S ORIGINAL STATE AND FALL

1. With what dignity and glory was man created? What happened to them?

GENESIS 1:27; 3:6, 17 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ^{3:6}And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.... ¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb*

of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

“Created to be ‘the image and glory of God’ (1 Corinthians 11:7), Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker. Nor was this likeness manifest in the physical nature only. Every faculty of mind and soul reflected the Creator’s glory. Endowed with high mental and spiritual gifts, Adam and Eve were made but ‘little lower than the angels’ (Hebrews 2:7), that they might not only discern the wonders of the visible universe, but comprehend moral responsibilities and obligations.” –*Education*, p. 20.

“The race from that time forward was to be afflicted by Satan’s temptations. A life of perpetual toil and anxiety was appointed unto Adam, instead of the happy, cheerful labor he had hitherto enjoyed. They should be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally come to dissolution. They were made of the dust of the earth, and unto dust should they return.” –*The Story of Redemption*, p. 40.

OTHER CONSEQUENCES

2. Which other consequences resulted from man’s fall into sin? Could he get out of the abyss into which he had fallen?

ISAIAH 59:2 *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

ROMANS 5:12; 3:23 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:...^{3:23}For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

JEREMIAH 13:23 *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ Job 14:4; Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

GOD’S LOVE FOR MAN

3. How did the Lord view mankind’s fall and its terrible consequences? As the loving Father, what is His greatest wish?

EZEKIEL 33:11 *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

1 TIMOTHY 2:3, 4 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; ⁴Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

“God is our Father, who loves and cares for us as His children; He is also the great King of the universe. The interests of His kingdom are our interests, and we are to work for its upbuilding.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 107.

“Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father’s love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209.

THE PROMISE OF REDEMPTION

4. What good news was given to our first parents immediately after they fell? What was included in this promise?

GENESIS 3:15 *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.*

MATTHEW 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

“In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation of redemption. ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman,’ God said, ‘and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.’ Genesis 3:15. This sentence, spoken in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise.” —*Education*, p. 27.

“This declaration contained the first gospel promise to man.” —*Confrontation*, p. 18.

“Plain and specific prophecies had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan,... was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 222.

A PLAN LAID BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

5. Was the plan of salvation a resolution thought up by God after sin’s entrance, or was it in place before that? When was it ordained that the Lamb of God would give His precious life for man in the event that sin should enter the world?

1 PETER 1:19, 20 *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*

2 TIMOTHY 1:9, 10 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,¹⁰ But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of ‘the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.’ Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

6. What do other verses confirm about when the plan of redemption was laid? What do Jesus’ words indicate about when the kingdom was prepared?

REVELATION 13:8; 17:8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world....^{17:8} The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

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.*

“The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’ (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But ‘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. Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which ‘passeth knowledge’? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

SEARCHING FOR THE TIME OF FULFILLMENT

7. Who lived in hope of the day of redemption? Over the centuries, who searched diligently to find out the manner and time when God’s grace would be manifested for man’s salvation?

HEBREWS 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

1 PETER 1:10, 11 *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

“Even the prophets who were favored with the special illumination of the Spirit did not fully comprehend the import of the revelations committed to them. The meaning was to be unfolded from age to age, as the people of God should need the instruction therein contained.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 344.

“The prophets to whom these great scenes were revealed longed to understand their import. They ‘inquired and searched diligently:... searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.... Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you;... which things the angels desire to look into.’ 1 Peter 1:10-12.

“To us who are standing on the very verge of their fulfillment, of what deep moment, what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come—events for which, since our first parents turned their steps from Eden, God’s children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!” —*Education*, p. 183.

- ***What reveals the marvelous plan for man’s redemption?***
- ***How does our interest in the fulfillment of the plan of redemption compare with that of the patriarchs and prophets?***
- ***How is one’s faith affected by the reality that the plan of redemption has been progressively revealed to God’s people?***

* * *

The Ten Commandments

“The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind, and they were given for the instruction and government of all. Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and all based upon the great fundamental principle of love. ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.’ Luke 10:27.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

IMPORTANT GUIDE FOR ALL MANKIND

1. **What did the Lord give as a daily guide for His people and indeed for all mankind? How important is the observance of His holy law?**

DEUTERONOMY 4:13 *And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.*

ECCLESIASTES 12:13 (IN SOME VERSIONS, VERSE 15) *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*

“Those commandments Christ shows to be exceedingly broad, reaching even the thoughts, intents, and purposes of the heart. Here is where many are delinquent. Their heart imaginings are not of the pure, holy character which God requires; and however high their calling, however talented they may be, God will mark iniquity against them and will count them as far more guilty and deserving of His wrath than those who have less talent, less light, less influence.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 594.

“The commandments of God are comprehensive and far reaching; in a few words they unfold the whole duty of man.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 320.

EFFECTIVE IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

2. **What role did the Ten Commandments play in the time of the patriarchs? How is this shown in the book of Genesis?**

GENESIS 4:10; 39:7-9 *And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;... ^{39:7}And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. ⁸But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the*

house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; ⁹There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

“The law of God existed before man was created. The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed the principles of God’s government. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them His law. It was not then written, but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah.” –*The Story of Redemption*, p. 145.

“The descendants of Cain were not careful to respect the day upon which God rested. They chose their own time for labor and for rest, regardless of Jehovah’s special command. There were two distinct classes upon the earth. One class were in open rebellion against God’s law; while the other class obeyed His commandments, and revered His Sabbath.” –*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 53.

JESUS TAUGHT FIDELITY

3. What did Jesus teach concerning the Ten Commandments? What is said of those who view lightly even one of the holy commandments?

MATTHEW 19:16-19; 5:18, 19 *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? ¹⁷And 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. ¹⁸He 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.... ^{5:18}For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. ¹⁹Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

“If God’s commandments are to be binding for a thousand generations, it will take them into the kingdom of God, into the presence of God and His holy angels. This is an argument that cannot be controverted. The commandments of God will endure through all time and eternity. Are they, then, given us as a burden?” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 413, 414.

“The most eloquent sermon that can be preached upon the law of Ten Commandments is to do them. Obedience should be made a personal duty. Negligence of this duty is flagrant sin. God lays us under obligations not only to secure heaven ourselves, but to feel it a binding duty to show others the way and, through our care and disinterested love, to lead toward Christ those who come within the sphere of our influence. The singular absence of principle that characterizes the lives of many professed Christians is alarming. Their disregard of God’s law disheartens those who recognize its sacred claims and tends to turn those from the truth who would otherwise accept it.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 58.

4. What did the apostles teach in this regard? What is the foundation of God's law?

JAMES 2:10, 11 *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. ¹¹For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*

ROMANS 13:8-10 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. ⁹For 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 first four of the Ten Commandments are summed up in the one great precept, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.’ The last six are included in the other, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ Both these commandments are an expression of the principle of love.... And only as we love God supremely is it possible to love our neighbor impartially.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 607.

“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 Great Controversy*, p. 467.

THE COMMANDMENTS IN PRACTICAL LIFE

5. How fully do you value the first four commandments in your practical life? With your view of God, in what ways are you tempted to follow worldly customs and ideas in place of Scripture?

EXODUS 20:1-11 *And God spake all these words, saying, ²I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³Thou shalt have no other gods before me. ⁴Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; ⁶And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. ⁷Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. ⁸Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

“Those who would be worshipers of the true God must sacrifice every idol.... The first four precepts of the Decalogue allow no separation of affections from God. Nor must anything share our supreme delight in Him. We cannot advance in Christian experience until we put away everything that separates us from God.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 329.

“Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists—the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions—is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia.

“No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven,... none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God’s law is no longer binding upon men.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 583, 584.

6. When you compare the last six commandments with your personal experience and character, what do you see? How is God’s love evident in every commandment?

EXODUS 20:12-17 *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. ¹³Thou shalt not kill. ¹⁴Thou shalt not commit adultery. ¹⁵Thou shalt not steal. ¹⁶Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. ¹⁷Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.*

“Let those who feel inclined to make a high profession of holiness look into the mirror of God’s law. As they see its far-reaching claims, and understand its work as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, they will not boast of sinlessness. ‘If we,’ says John, not separating himself from his brethren, ‘say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’ ‘If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.’ ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1:8, 10, 9.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 562.

“God’s law is the mirror presenting a complete reflection of the man as he is, and holding up before him the correct likeness. Some will turn away and forget this picture, while others will employ abusive epithets against the law, as though this would cure their defects of character. Still others who are condemned by the law will repent of their transgressions and, through faith in Christ’s merits, will perfect Christian character.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 31.

DIVINE HELP

7. Is it natural for us to keep these fundamental principles? What makes it possible to do so?

ROMANS 7:12; 8:7, 3, 4 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.... ⁸7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.... ³For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son*

in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

"In the ten commandments God has laid down the laws of His kingdom."
—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1105.

"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, 'I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.' Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, 'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.' 'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 60, 61.

8. What does the Lord promise to those who love and obey His holy commandments?

ISAIAH 48:18 *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.*

PSALM 119:165 *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

Are the ten commandments only orders and prohibitions? "The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 56.

"Through love 'the righteousness of the law' will be 'fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Romans 8:4." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 77.

"Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. 'Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them' (Psalm 119:165), says the Inspired Word." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 218, 219.

- ***How are the Ten Commandments like a wall of protection?***
- ***What can we do in this time of the end to help people receive the light of the Ten Commandments?***
- ***What will be the result when the Commandments and the gospel are shown to be inseparable?***

* * *

The Holy Sabbath

“Since the Sabbath is the memorial of creative power, it is the day above all others when we should acquaint ourselves with God through His works. In the minds of the children the very thought of the Sabbath should be bound up with the beauty of natural things. Happy is the family who can go to the place of worship on the Sabbath as Jesus and His disciples went to the synagogue—across the fields, along the shores of the lake, or through the groves. Happy the father and mother who can teach their children God’s written word with illustrations from the open pages of the book of nature; who can gather under the green trees, in the fresh, pure air, to study the word and to sing the praise of the Father above.”
—*Education*, p. 251.

ESTABLISHED IN THE BEGINNING

1. When was the sacred day of rest instituted? Who participated in the work of creation and thus also in the Sabbath?

GENESIS 2:1-3 *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

COLOSSIANS 1:16 *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.*

“The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ Job 38:7. Peace brooded over the world; for earth was in harmony with heaven. ‘God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good;’ and He rested in the joy of His completed work. Genesis 1:31.

“Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, ‘God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it’—set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God’s power and His love...

“All things were created by the Son of God. ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.... All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.’ John 1:1-3. And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 281.

- 2. During the forty years the Israelites encamped in the wilderness, why did the manna not fall on the seventh day? What special provision was there for the people's sustenance when the manna was not provided?**

EXODUS 16:25, 4, 5, 16, 19, 20, 24 And Moses said, *Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to day ye shall not find it in the field....* ⁴*Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.* ⁵*And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily....* ¹⁶*Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the numbers of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents....* ¹⁹*And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.* ²⁰*Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them....* ²⁴*And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.*

“Every week during their long sojourn in the wilderness the Israelites witnessed a threefold miracle, designed to impress their minds with the sacredness of the Sabbath: a double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none on the seventh, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time it became unfit for use.

“In the circumstances connected with the giving of the manna, we have conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was not instituted, as many claim, when the law was given at Sinai. Before the Israelites came to Sinai they understood the Sabbath to be obligatory upon them. In being obliged to gather every Friday a double portion of manna in preparation for the Sabbath, when none would fall, the sacred nature of the day of rest was continually impressed upon them. And when some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, the Lord asked, ‘How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?’” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 296, 297.

DAY OF REST AND HOLY CONVOCATION

- 3. What did the Lord say about the Sabbath day when He gave the Ten Commandments and later? What phrase in the fourth commandment indicates that the Sabbath is for all people?**

EXODUS 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

LEVITICUS 23:3 *Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.*

“The Sabbath was given to all mankind to commemorate the work of creation. The great Jehovah, when He had laid the foundations of the earth, when He had dressed the whole world in its garb of beauty, and created all the wonders of the land and the sea, instituted the Sabbath day and made it holy. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, the Sabbath was set apart as God’s memorial. God sanctified and blessed the day in which He has rested from all His wondrous work. And this Sabbath, sanctified of God, was to be kept for a perpetual covenant. It was a memorial that was to stand from age to age, till the close of earth’s history....

“There are those who hold that the Sabbath was given only for the Jews; but God has never said this...; but the very fact that the desert of Sinai, and not Palestine, was the place selected by Him in which to proclaim His law, reveals that He intended it for all mankind. The law of ten commandments is as old as creation. Therefore the Sabbath institution has no special relation to the Jews, any more than to all other created beings. God has made the observance of the Sabbath obligatory upon all men.” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 53.

THE MOST CONSISTENT SABBATH KEEPER

4. Who observed the Sabbath for His entire life, joining the worship services in the synagogue? Describe one of the miracles that Jesus performed on the Sabbath, thereby confirming that it is a sacred day.

LUKE 4:16 *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

MATTHEW 12:10-13 *And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. ¹¹And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? ¹²How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. ¹³Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

“During His childhood and youth, Jesus had worshiped among His brethren in the synagogue at Nazareth.... As He again appeared among them, their interest and expectation were excited to the highest pitch. Here were the familiar forms and faces of those whom He had known from infancy. Here were His mother, His brothers and sisters, and all eyes were turned upon Him as He entered the synagogue upon the Sabbath day, and took His place among the worshippers....

“Upon another Sabbath, as Jesus entered a synagogue. He saw there a man who had a withered hand.... The Saviour well knew that in healing on the Sabbath He would be regarded as a transgressor, but He did not hesitate to break down the wall of traditional requirements....

“In the healing of the withered hand, Jesus condemned the custom of the Jews, and left the fourth commandment standing as God had given it. ‘It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days,’ He declared. By sweeping away the senseless restrictions of the Jews, Christ honored the Sabbath....” –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 236, 286, 287.

KEPT BY THE APOSTLES AND EARLY CHRISTIANS

5. What did the first Christians do at the time of Jesus’ death? Like Him, how did the apostles spend the Sabbath day?

LUKE 23:54-56 *And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. ⁵⁵And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

ACTS 13:42-44 *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. ⁴³Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.*

“Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption; and though there was grief among those who loved Him on earth, yet there was joy in heaven.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 769.

“The Saviour was buried on Friday, the sixth day of the week. The women prepared spices and ointments with which to embalm their Lord, and laid them aside, until the Sabbath was past. Not even the work of embalming the body of Jesus would they do upon the Sabbath day.

“And when the Sabbath was past,... very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun.’ Mark 16:1, 2.” –*The Story of Jesus*, p. 157.

After the death of Christ the disciples ‘rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.’ After the ascension of Christ, Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, preached to both Jews and Gentiles ‘on the Sabbath day.’” –*Signs of the Times*, November 12, 1894.

THE SABBATH IN THE FUTURE

6. For what did Jesus tell the first Christians to pray when Jerusalem would be besieged in the future? Where will the redeemed have the privilege of worshipping God on the Sabbath day?

MATTHEW 24:20 *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.*

ISAIAH 66:23 *And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.*

“He who made the Sabbath did not abolish it, nailing it to His cross. The Sabbath was not rendered null and void by His death. Forty years after His crucifixion it was still to be held sacred. For forty years the disciples were to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day....

“When there shall be a ‘restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph’s tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as ‘from one Sabbath to another’ (Isaiah 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb.” –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 630, 769, 770.

“When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. ‘From one sabbath to another’ the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall ... ‘worship before Me, saith the Lord.’” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 37.

BLESSINGS FOR TODAY

7. How does God view those who honor His holy day and refuse to profane it? What blessings are reserved for those who faithfully observe the day that He sanctified and blessed?

ISAIAH 56:2, 4, 5; 58:13, 14 *Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil....* ⁴*For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; ⁵Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off....* ^{58:13}*If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: ¹⁴Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

“The Sabbath ... is God’s time, not ours; when we trespass upon it we are stealing from God.... God has given us the whole of six days in which to do our work, and has reserved only one to Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us—a day when we should lay aside all our secular matters and center our thoughts upon God and heaven....

“But while we worship God, we are not to consider this a drudgery. The Sabbath of the Lord is to be made a blessing to us and to our children. They are to look upon the Sabbath as a day of delight, a day which God has sanctified; and they will so consider it if they are properly instructed.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 152.

“God teaches that we should assemble in His house to cultivate the attributes of perfect love. This will fit the dwellers of earth for the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for all who love Him. There they will assemble in the sanctuary from Sabbath to Sabbath, from one new moon to another, to unite in loftiest strains of song, in praise and thanksgiving to Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 37.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The Sabbath is not introduced as a new institution but as having been founded at creation. It is to be remembered and observed as the memorial of the Creator’s work. Pointing to God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, it distinguishes the true God from all false gods. All who keep the seventh day signify by this act that they are worshipers of Jehovah. Thus the Sabbath is the sign of man’s allegiance to God as long as there are any upon the earth to serve Him. The fourth commandment is the only one of all the ten in which are found both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It is the only one that shows by whose authority the law is given. Thus it contains the seal of God, affixed to His law as evidence of its authenticity and binding force.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

- *When is one truly able to receive and appreciate the blessing of the holy Sabbath day?*
- *When the Sabbath is consistently respected now, how does this lay the foundation for one’s fidelity to His will when His day will come under attack in the future?*
- *The Lord has made the Sabbath a unique sign between Him and His people. How does one’s faithfulness to Him in this regard exalt its sacredness now and bless others?*

* * *

Read the Missionary Report from Ethiopia on page 50

9

Sabbath, August 29, 2015

Respect for Life

“The spirit of hate and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit.... In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed... All were created in His image, and even the most degraded are to be treated with respect and tenderness. God will hold us accountable for even a word spoken in contempt of one soul for whom Christ laid down His life....” –*Reflecting Christ*, p. 70.

CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING LIFE

1. **What sentence was pronounced against Cain when he became guilty of his brother’s death? What will happen to those who threaten man’s life?**

GENESIS 4:9-12; 9:6 *And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? ¹⁰And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. ¹¹And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; ¹²When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.... ^{9:6}Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

“Notwithstanding that Cain had by his crimes merited the sentence of death, a merciful Creator still spared his life, and granted him opportunity for repentance. But Cain lived only to harden his heart, to encourage rebellion against the divine authority, and to become the head of a line of bold, abandoned sinners. This one apostate, led on by Satan, became a tempter to others; and his example and influence exerted their demoralizing power, until the earth became so corrupt and filled with violence as to call for its destruction.

“In sparing the life of the first murderer, God presented before the whole universe a lesson bearing upon the great controversy. The dark history of Cain and his descendants was an illustration of what would have been the result of permitting the sinner to live on forever, to carry out his rebellion against God. The forbearance of God only rendered the wicked more bold and defiant in their iniquity.... The longer men lived in sin, the more abandoned they became.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 78.

HUMAN LIFE AND PRESERVATION

2. What commandment did the Lord repeat orally and in writing to protect human life? What instructions did He give concerning those who would not respect this holy principle?

EXODUS 20:13; 21:12-14 *Thou shalt not kill.... ^{21:12}He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. ¹³And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. ¹⁴But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.*

“All acts of injustice that tend to shorten life; the spirit of hatred and revenge, or the indulgence of any passion that leads to injurious acts toward others, or causes us even to wish them harm (for ‘whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer’); a selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health—all these are, to a greater or less degree, violations of the sixth commandment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

“The law of God takes note of the jealousy, envy, hatred, malignity, revenge, lust, and ambition that surge through the soul, but have not found expression in outward action, because the opportunity, not the will, has been wanting. And these sinful emotions will be brought into the account in the day when ‘God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ *Ecclesiastes 12:14.*”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 217.

3. How did Jesus uphold the validity of the sixth commandment? How deep did He go in presenting the spiritual meaning of this precept?

MATTHEW 19:17-19; 5:21, 22 *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. ¹⁸He 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.... ^{5:21}Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: ²²But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

“Here Jesus describes murder as first existing in the mind. That malice and revenge which would delight in deeds of violence is of itself murder. Jesus goes further still, and says, ‘Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.’ There is an anger that is not of this criminal nature. A certain kind of indignation is justifiable, under some circumstances, even in the followers of Christ. When they see God dishonored, His name reviled, and the precious cause of truth brought into disrepute by those who profess to revere it, when they see the innocent oppressed and persecuted, a righteous indignation stirs their soul; such anger, born of sensitive morals, is not a sin.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 219, 220.

“Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. ‘Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.’ 1 John 3:15.

“In the gift of His Son for our redemption, God has shown how high a value He places upon every human soul, and He gives to no man liberty to speak contemptuously of another.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 56.

CHRISTIAN NON-RESISTANCE

4. In harmony with His previous teaching, what did the Lord say about the system of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth? How did He present the principle of Christian non-resistance?

MATTHEW 5:38-42 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: ³⁹But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. ⁴¹And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. ⁴²Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

“These words were but a reiteration of the teaching of the Old Testament. It is true that the rule, ‘Eye for eye, tooth for tooth’ (Leviticus 24:20), was a

provision in the laws given through Moses; but it was a civil statute. None were justified in avenging themselves, for they had the words of the Lord: 'Say not thou, I will recompense evil.' 'Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me.' ... Proverbs 20:22; 24:29." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 70, 71.

"The example of Jesus was a practical illustration of the lesson here taught; contumely and persecution never caused Him to retaliate upon His enemies. But this was a hard saying for the revengeful Jews, and they murmured against it among themselves." —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 223.

THE LAW OF RECOMPENSE

5. What is the place of revenge when one suffers an offense or injury? How is the Christian law of recompense carried out in practice?

ROMANS 12:17-21 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. ²¹Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

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

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

CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL WHO TAKE THE SWORD

6. Consistent with the principle of non-resistance, what did the Lord say to a disciple when he felt compelled to use force against force? Was the Lord referring to just that one isolated incident, or was He applying this principle to everyone in every time and place?

MATTHEW 26:51-53 *And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. ⁵²Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his*

place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. ⁵³Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

“The disciples had thought that their Master would not suffer Himself to be taken. For the same power that had caused the mob to fall as dead men could keep them helpless, until Jesus and His companions should escape. They were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved. Peter in his anger rashly drew his sword and tried to defend his Master, but he only cut off an ear of the high priest’s servant. When Jesus saw what was done, He released His hands, though held firmly by the Roman soldiers, and saying, ‘Suffer ye thus far,’ He touched the wounded ear, and it was instantly made whole. He then said to Peter, ‘Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?’—a legion in place of each one of the disciples.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 696.

CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

7. How should one’s enemies be treated? If we are children of the heavenly Father, how will we react to those who persecute us and attempt to take our lives?

MATTHEW 5:43-45 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ⁴⁵That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

“The manifestation of hatred never breaks down the malice of our enemies. But love and kindness beget love and kindness in return. Although God faithfully rewards virtue and punishes guilt, yet He does not withhold His blessings from the wicked, although they daily dishonor His name. He allows the sunshine and the showers to fall upon the just and the unjust, bringing alike worldly prosperity to both. If a holy God exercises such forbearance and benevolence toward the rebellious and the idolatrous, how necessary it is that erring man should manifest a like spirit toward his fellowmen. Instead of cursing those who injure him, it is his duty to seek to win them from their evil ways by a kindness similar to that with which Christ treated them who persecuted Him.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 224.

- ***Despite the sixth commandment and Jesus’ clear teaching in support of it, what is one form of widespread killing that many people support?***
- ***List some forms of disrespect for human life of which you are aware.***
- ***Considering that Jesus came to save human life, what will His followers do?***

* * *

MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM ETHIOPIA

To be read on Sabbath, August 29, 2015

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, September 5, 2015*

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, even the daughter of My dispersed, shall bring Mine offering.” Zephaniah 3:10, King James Version.

“From beyond the rivers of Cush (Ethiopia) My worshippers, My scattered people, will bring Me offerings.” Zephaniah 3:10, New International Version.

Ethiopia is located in the horn of Africa, bordering Eritrea on the north, Djibouti and Somalia on the east, Kenya on the South, and Sudan and South Sudan on the west.

This country is esteemed in Africa for the following reasons.

- It has a very rich early Biblical history.
- The capital, Addis Ababa, is considered Africa’s political capital.
- It is the second most populous country on the continent, after Nigeria.
- It is one of only two countries in Africa that have never been colonized, the other being Liberia. Italians tried to colonize Ethiopia, but they were defeated on the battlefield.
- It has its own unique official national language, Amharic, although other tribal languages are also widely spoken, such as Oromo. English is spoken by a few as a foreign language. Ethiopia also has a distinct calendar and a unique culture.

The country covers an area of about 1,104,300 square kilometers, and 2014 statistics show it to be the home of about 96.5 million people. There are two main religions—Christianity and Islam. Coptic Christianity is the state religion, and therefore Christian holy days dominate the holiday calendar of activities.

Seventh-day Adventists number about 150,000 in this country, and the message of Reformation gained entrance in 2005. Among the pioneering missionaries were Pastors Idel Suarez, Jr., Tzevtan Petkov, and Parmenas Shirima. Later, the Ethiopian Union was visited by many other missionaries, including Pastors Raul Escobar, Bright Fue, Sevith Moyo, Henry Der-ing, Larry Watts, Francesco Caputo, Stefano Salemi, Sister Leila McTav-ish, and other sisters from Canada.

The first contact came through a Macedonian call sent to the General Conference by an interested person known as Gabre. Although at the beginning the missionary work seemed very difficult and discouraging due to strong opposition from the S.D.A. Church members and other independent groups, the light of Reformation was accepted by more than 2,000 believers. Two years later, there was a setback caused by unbiblical doctrines, and some people left the church. But we thank God that the greater number of souls stood firm in the truth and today form the Ethiopian Union.

The Union has four Fields: 1) Western Field, 2) Hossana Field, 3) Southern Field, and 4) Sidama Field. In terms of membership, it is among the largest Unions in Africa. Now the main objective is to consolidate the missionary activities in the central region of the country and then extend those efforts to the north. One of the main challenges is the lack of a central office and Union headquarters. For ten years, the administrative activities have been housed in various rented buildings. The General Conference desires to acquire property in or near the capital city, Addis Ababa, in the central part of the country; but land and buildings are quite expensive. The requirements of the work make it necessary to purchase something appropriate near the capital. Acquiring property instead of spending money to rent a place for the headquarters will be a much better use of funds.

A Special Sabbath School Offering was gathered for Ethiopia on January 3, 2009, and approximately \$60,000 is available from that offering for this project. However, this amount is not sufficient to accomplish what is needed. At least \$100,000 more is required.

Therefore, we implore you to give generously to support the work of extending the missionary efforts by helping the Ethiopian Union at this time in this way. May the following words from the inspired pen motivate us to take advantage of this opportunity to give our means to secure a heavenly institution: “The Lord could carry forward His work without our cooperation. He is not dependent on our money, our time, or our labor. But the church is very precious in His sight. It is the case which contains His jewels, the fold which encloses His flock, and He longs to see it without spot or blemish or any such thing. He yearns after it with unspeakable love. This is why He has given us opportunities to work for Him, and He accepts our labor as tokens of our love and loyalty.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 261.

May His grace be poured upon all of us. Amen!

—*Parmenas N. Shirima*
African Division Leader

Special Sabbath School Offering for ETHIOPIA

Let God's great love for you be seen in your gifts!

10

Sabbath, September 5, 2015

A Holy Commitment

“God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honourable’; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.” —*The Adventist Home*, pp. 25, 26.

ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

1. What did Adam exclaim when he saw the person who was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh? In God’s plan, what do a man and his wife become?

GENESIS 2:22-24 *And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

“God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided ‘an help meet for him’—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. ‘For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.’ ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one.’” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 25.

2. Besides being given the mission to be fruitful and multiply, what else did the holy couple receive in the beginning? According to God’s law, how long does the marriage union last?

GENESIS 1:27, 28 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

ROMANS 7:2 *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*

1 CORINTHIANS 7:39 *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*

“The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 356, 357.

“The marriage union is taken as a symbol of the sacred and enduring character of the relation that exists between Christ and His church. He says, ‘I will betroth thee unto Me forever;’ and again, ‘I am married unto you;’ and Paul employs the same figure in the New Testament when he declares, ‘I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.’ –*Signs of the Times*, August 19, 1889.

THE PROBLEM OF DIVORCE

3. What attack against marriage began a century ago and is spreading rapidly in modern society? What lesson of the Saviour should we take to heart so as to be protected from this painful plague?

MATTHEW 5:31, 32 *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: ³²But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

MALACHI 2:16 *For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

MATTHEW 19:6, LAST PART *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

“When the Pharisees afterward questioned Him concerning the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus pointed His hearers back to the marriage institution as ordained at creation. ‘Because of the hardness of your hearts,’ He said, Moses

‘suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.’ He referred them to the blessed days of Eden when God pronounced all things ‘very good.’... Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock,... He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. That which the eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man....

“Wrong sentiments in regard to marriage had found a place in the minds of the teachers of Israel. They were making of none effect the sacred institution of marriage. Man was becoming so hard hearted that he would for the most trivial excuse separate from his wife, or, if he chose, he would separate her from the children and send her away.... Christ came to correct these evils.”
—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 340, 341.

UNFAITHFULNESS

4. In opposition to God’s holy ideal, what things destroy marriage and morality? What commandment was given to protect this holy institution and moral purity?

MATTHEW 15:19 *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

JAMES 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

EXODUS 20:14 *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

“Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations corrupt.... Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions and be controlled by principle. Unless he does this, he is unworthy of the Christian name.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 328.

5. Does temptation to unfaithfulness and uncleanness always come from the outside? What other commandment and teachings close the door to temptation?

EXODUS 20:17 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.*

MATTHEW 5:27-30 *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. ²⁹And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for*

it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. ³⁰*And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:22 *Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

“Not all who profess to keep the commandments of God possess their bodies in sanctification and honor.... They profess to be standing upon the elevated platform of eternal truth, keeping all of God’s commandments; therefore, if they indulge in sin, if they commit fornication and adultery, their crime is of tenfold greater magnitude than is that of the classes I have named, who do not acknowledge the law of God as binding upon them. In a peculiar sense do those who profess to keep God’s law dishonor Him and reproach the truth by transgressing its precepts.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 567.

“‘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.’ The first work for those who would reform, is to purify the imagination.... When tempted to yield to a corrupt imagination, then flee to the throne of grace and pray for strength from Heaven. In the strength of God the imagination can be restricted to dwell upon things which are pure and heavenly.” —*An Appeal to Mothers*, p. 29.

6. What do the Scriptures say about those who engage in impure practices of any and every kind?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9, 15, 16 *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind....* ¹⁵*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.* ¹⁶*What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

“Fornication and adultery are estimated by many professing Christians as sins which God winketh at. These sins are practiced to a great extent. They do not acknowledge the claims of God’s law upon them. They ... are ... declaring that the law of God is abolished, and consequently has no claims upon them. In accordance with this free state of things, sin does not appear so exceedingly sinful; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. We may expect to find men among those who thus teach, who will deceive, and lie, and give loose rein to lustful passions. But men and women who acknowledge the ten commandments binding, should carry out in their lives, the principles of all ten of the precepts given in awful grandeur from Sinai.” —*A Solemn Appeal*, p. 141.

“All fornicators will be outside the City of God.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 431.

“Israel’s sin at Beth-peor brought the judgments of God upon the nation, and though the same sins may not now be punished as speedily, they will as surely meet retribution. ‘If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.’ 1 Corinthians 3:17.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 461.

7. What counsel will be heeded by all who wish to have happiness and maintain integrity in their moral conduct? When carefully followed, what deep spiritual principle will protect everyone from the prevailing moral sins?

HEBREWS 13:4 *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

PROVERBS 4:23 *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

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.*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:4, 5 *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; ⁵Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.*

“Not one word should be spoken, not one action performed, that you would not be willing the holy angels should look upon and register in the books above. You should have an eye single to the glory of God. The heart should have only pure, sanctified affection, worthy of the followers of Jesus Christ, exalted in its nature, and more heavenly than earthly. Anything different from this is debasing, degrading in courtship; and marriage cannot be holy and honorable in the sight of a pure and holy God, unless it is after the exalted Scriptural principle.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 55.

“The windows of impulse, of feeling must be opened up toward heaven, and the dust of selfishness and earthliness must be expelled. The grace of God must sweep through the chambers of the mind, the imagination must have heavenly themes for contemplation, and every element of the nature must be purified and vitalized by the Spirit of God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 107.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“In the marriage vows they [husband and wife] have promised to be as one, the wife covenanting to love and obey her husband, the husband promising to love and cherish his wife. If the law of God is obeyed, the demon of strife will be kept out of the family, and no separation of interests will take place, no alienation of affection will be permitted.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 106.

“I come again to Christians. If all who profess to obey the law of God were free from iniquity, my soul would be delivered; but they are not. Even some who profess to keep all the commandments of God are guilty of the sin of adultery. What can I say to arouse their benumbed sensibilities? Moral principle, strictly carried out, becomes the only safeguard of the soul.” —*Counsels on Health*, pp. 621, 622.

“The thoughts must be bound about, restricted, withdrawn from branching out and contemplating things that will only weaken and defile the soul. The

thoughts must be pure, the meditations of the heart must be clean.... The noble powers of the mind have been given to us by the Lord, that we may employ them in contemplating heavenly things. God has made abundant provision that the soul may make continual progression in the divine life.” –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 107.

- *What do you see as the causes of so many crises in marriage?*
- *What can prevent such pain and unhappiness?*
- *What did Jesus use victoriously to resist every temptation?*

* * *

11

Sabbath, September 12, 2015

Tampering with God’s Law

“Such are the warnings which God has given to guard men against changing in any manner that which He has revealed or commanded. These solemn denunciations apply to all who by their influence lead men to regard lightly the law of God. They should cause those to fear and tremble who flippantly declare it a matter of little consequence whether we obey God’s law or not. All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation, all who would change the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming to the world, are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility. The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this unerring test shall declare wanting.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 268.

NOT ALWAYS FAITHFUL

- 1. In the times of the prophets, how did the people of Israel regard God’s holy law? What did Jesus say about people’s attitudes toward the Ten Commandments in His day?**

JEREMIAH 9:13; 16:11 *And the Lord saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;... ^{16:11}Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law.*

MATTHEW 15:3, 6 *But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?... ⁶And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*

“When Christ came to the earth, humanity seemed to be fast reaching its lowest point. The very foundations of society were undermined. Life had become false and artificial. The Jews, destitute of the power of God’s word, gave to the world mind-benumbing, soul-deadening traditions and speculations. The worship of God ‘in Spirit and in truth’ had been supplanted by the glorification of men in an endless round of man-made ceremonies. Throughout the world all systems of religion were losing their hold on mind and soul. Disgusted with fable and falsehood, seeking to drown thought, men turned to infidelity and materialism. Leaving eternity out of their reckoning, they lived for the present.” —*Education*, pp. 74, 75.

“Christ had shown them [the Jewish leaders of His day] that they continued to disbelieve because they had not the spirit which leads to obedience. He had declared to them, ‘Ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.’” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 276.

DISREGARDING THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

2. What does the second commandment teach about the way to worship God? How do some religious organizations attempt to override this commandment?

EXODUS 20:4-6 *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; ⁶And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

MATTHEW 4:10 *Then 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.*

JOHN 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

“To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship. The decree of a general council finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 51.

“I saw that at last the standard was lowered, and that the heathen were uniting with the Christians. Although these worshipers of idols professed to be converted, they brought their idolatry with them into the church, only changing the objects of their worship to images of saints, and even of Christ and of Mary His mother. As the followers of Christ gradually united with them, the Christian religion became corrupted and the church lost its purity and power.” —*Early Writings*, p. 211.

3. What did two prophets write about lack of respect for God's law and attempts to change it?

ISAIAH 24:5 *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.*

DANIEL 7:25 *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

“The spirit of concession to paganism opened the way for a still further disregard of Heaven’s authority. Satan tampered with the fourth commandment also, and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified, and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as ‘the venerable day of the sun.’ This change was not at first attempted openly. In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians. They were jealous for the honor of God, and, believing that His law is immutable, they zealously guarded the sacredness of its precepts.” —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 328, 329.

“Satan has caused the change of the Sabbath in the hope of carrying out his purpose for the defeat of God’s plans. He seeks to make the commands of God of less force in the world than human laws. The man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, and who has always oppressed the people of God, will cause laws to be made enforcing the observance of the first day of the week. But God’s people are to stand firm for Him.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 229, 230.

TRYING TO CHANGE THE DAY AND THE COMMANDMENT

4. What commandment at the heart of God's law became the special object of subversion?

EXODUS 20:8-11 *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

“The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God’s commandments. Says Daniel, of the little horn, the papacy: ‘He shall think to change times and the law.’ Daniel 7:25, R.V. And Paul styled the same power the ‘man of sin,’ who was to exalt himself above God. One prophecy is a complement of the other. Only by changing God’s law could the papacy exalt itself above God....” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 446.

“While the worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandments—since this is the sign of His creative power

and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage—the worshipers of the beast will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome. It was in behalf of the Sunday that popery first asserted its arrogant claims...; and its first resort to the power of the state was to compel the observance of Sunday as 'the Lord's day.' But the Bible points to the seventh day, and not to the first, as the Lord's day."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 446, 447.

CLAIMING THE CHANGE

5. Does the Catholic Church admit its role in undermining this commandment?

"... You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."—James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of our Fathers*, 1917, pp. 72, 73.

"The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday."—*The Catholic Mirror*, September 23, 1893.

"We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."—*The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, 1951, p. 50.

"I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! the entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church."—T. Enright, C.S.S.R. of the Redemptoral College, Kansas City, in a lecture held at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884.

6. Although Protestants claim to believe and follow the Bible and the Bible only, what day do they honor? Do some of them recognize that this has no Biblical foundation?

Lutherans. "But they err in teaching that Sunday has taken the place of the Old Testament Sabbath and therefore must be kept as the seventh day had to be kept by the children of Israel.... These churches err in their teaching, for Scripture has in no way ordained the first day of the week in place of the Sabbath. There is simply no law in the New Testament to that effect."—John Theodore Mueller, *Sabbath or Sunday*, pp. 15, 16.

Anglicans. "And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day.... The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church has enjoined it."—Isaac Williams, *Plain Sermons on the Catechism*, vol. 1, pp. 334, 336.

“We have made the change from the seventh day to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy Catholic Church.” –Bishop Seymour, *Why We Keep Sunday*, Article 12.

Baptists. “There’s nothing in Scripture that requires us to keep Sunday rather than Saturday as a holy day.” –Harold Lindsell, Editor, *Christianity Today*, November 5, 1976.

“The Scriptures nowhere call the first day of the week the Sabbath.... There is no Scriptural authority for so doing nor, of course, any Scriptural obligation.” –*The Watchman*.

CONSEQUENCES

7. What do the Scriptures say about those who keep the law in general while violating it in even one particular? What did Jesus teach about those who break even one commandment and teach others to do the same?

JAMES 2:10 *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

MATTHEW 5:19 *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

MATTHEW 15:8, 9 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. ⁹But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

PROVERBS 30:5, 6 *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. ⁶Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

“Those who depart from the plain precepts of God, will support error, and be ranged against the soldiers of Christ. They will make manifest who is their leader by the course they will pursue in opposing the truth of God, and in enforcing error on the conscience by oppressive measures. It is now time to take a decided stand on the side of truth; and as God has given to every one his measure of influence, he should exert it to the glory of God and for the good of his associates. Not one of the faithful stewards of Christ will be idle in such a time as this, or will be content to live simply for self.” –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 269.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

“Rome is clearly involved in idolatry in her use of images and pictures as worship centers, to which people bow in their prayers.... She seeks to avoid the clear teaching of the Law on this subject by subsuming the Second Commandment under the First, and splitting the Tenth Commandment to make up ten.” –Morton H. Smith, “Rome and the Second Commandment,” *The Counsel of Chalcedon*, February/March 1991, p. 5.

“Here is the test of every man’s profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God’s only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God’s precepts, if they break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 472, 473.

- *Can we imagine that such huge changes were made quickly without much thought?*
- *Against whom are those who tamper with God’s law working?*
- *What should be our prayer so we do not fall because of blindness and apostasy?*

* * *

12

Sabbath, September 19, 2015

The Law of Sacrifices

“The types and shadows of the sacrificial service, with the prophecies, gave the Israelites a veiled, indistinct view of the mercy and grace to be brought to the world by the revelation of Christ. To Moses was unfolded the significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ. He saw to the end of that which was to be done away when, at the death of Christ, type met antitype.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 237.

INSTITUTED AFTER THE FALL

- 1. Where do the Scriptures first mention sacrifices and offerings? Who in ancient times received a command from God to offer a sacrifice that would ultimately help him understand the great sacrifice of God’s Son?**

GENESIS 4:3, 4; 22:2 *And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. ⁴And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.... ^{22:2}And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

“Adam and his sons began to offer the ceremonial sacrifices ordained by God as a type of the coming Redeemer....” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 26.

“Through type and promise God ‘preached before the gospel unto Abraham.’ Galatians 3:8. And the patriarch’s faith was fixed upon the Redeemer to

come. Said Christ to the Jews. 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.' John 8:56, R.V., margin. The ram offered in the place of Isaac represented the Son of God, who was to be sacrificed in our stead.... The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

PURPOSE OF SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS

2. What offerings are listed in the law of sacrifices, pointing to the greatest sacrifice of all?

LEVITICUS 7:37 *This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings.*

"Every dying victim was a type of Christ, which lesson was impressed on mind and heart in the most solemn, sacred ceremony, and explained definitely by the priests. Sacrifices were explicitly planned by God Himself to teach this great and momentous truth, that through the blood of Christ alone there is forgiveness of sins.

"This grand and saving truth is oft repeated in the hearing of believers and unbelievers, and yet it is with amazement that angels behold the indifference of men to whom these truths mean so much. How little is evidenced that the church feels the force of the wonderful plan of redemption. How few make this truth, that only through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ there is forgiveness of the sins that cling to human beings like the foul leprosy, a living reality." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 107.

3. What was God's purpose in commanding the sacrifices and ordinances? But what did the prophets preach, since the people were not paying attention to their real spiritual meaning?

GALATIANS 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

1 SAMUEL 15:22 *And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

HOSEA 6:6 *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

"All who did service in connection with the sanctuary were being educated constantly in regard to the intervention of Christ in behalf of the human race. This service was designed to create in every heart a love for the law of God, which is the law of His kingdom. The sacrificial offering was to be an object lesson of the love of God revealed in Christ—in the suffering, dying victim, who took upon Himself the sin of which man was guilty, the innocent being made sin for us." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 233.

4. What characterized the sacrificial law with all its ceremonies? For how long were the sacrifices, offerings, washings, and every other ceremonial ordinance to be carried out?

HEBREWS 10:1; 9:9, 10 *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect....^{9,9}Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;¹⁰Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

“Paul endeavored to direct the minds of his hearers to the one great Sacrifice for sin. He pointed to the sacrifices that were shadows of good things to come, and then presented Christ as the antitype of all those ceremonies—the object to which they pointed as the only source of life and hope for fallen man. Holy men of old were saved by faith in the blood of Christ. As they saw the dying agonies of the sacrificial victims, they looked across the gulf of ages to the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 424, 425.

“There are many who try to blend these two systems, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 365.

5. What had been taught even in the time of the prophets regarding sacrifice and oblation? When Jesus died, what happened in the temple as a sign that the typical services, laws, and ceremonies had ended?

DANIEL 9:27, FIRST PART *And he the Messiah shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*

MATTHEW 27:50, 51 *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.⁵¹And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.*

“Then, said the angel, ‘He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven years].’ For seven years after the Saviour entered on His ministry, the gospel was to be preached especially to the Jews, for three and a half years by Christ Himself, and afterward by the apostles. ‘In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’ Daniel 9:27. In the spring of A.D. 31, Christ, the true Sacrifice, was offered on Calvary. Then the

veil of the temple was rent in twain, showing that the sacredness and significance of the sacrificial service had departed. The time had come for the earthly sacrifice and oblation to cease.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 699.

6. What had the temple become in the time of Jesus? What did He say about it?

MATTHEW 21:12, 13; 23:38; 24:1, 2 *And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, ¹³And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.... ^{23:38}Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.... ^{24:1}And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

“The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 259, 260.

“As Christ’s attention was attracted to the magnificence of the temple, what must have been the unuttered thoughts of that Rejected One! The view before Him was indeed beautiful, but He said with sadness, I see it all. The buildings are indeed wonderful. You point to these walls as apparently indestructible; but listen to My words: The day will come when ‘there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 627.

END OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

7. Did the Levitical priesthood bring about the fullness of blessing and sanctification? Therefore, what had to happen to it?

HEBREWS 7:11, 12, 18, 19 *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? ¹²For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.... ¹⁸For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. ¹⁹For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

“The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; but the eyes of men were turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and ‘to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.’ ‘The

way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:... but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,... by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Hebrews 12:24; 9:8-12." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 166.

COMMANDMENTS MORE LASTING THAN THE EARTH

8. In contrast to the sacrificial laws and ceremonial ordinances that ended when Jesus died on the cross, what did the Lord say about the commandments of the Decalogue?

MATTHEW 5:17-19 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* ¹⁸*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* ¹⁹*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

“But concerning the law of Ten Commandments the psalmist declares, ‘Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.’ Psalm 119:89. And Christ Himself says, ‘Think not that I am come to destroy the law.... Verily I say unto you’—making the assertion as emphatic as possible—‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.’ Matthew 5:17, 18. Here He teaches, not merely what the claims of God’s law had been, and were then, but that these claims should hold as long as the heavens and the earth remain. The law of God is as immutable as His throne. It will maintain its claims upon mankind in all ages.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 365.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“As they departed from God, the Jews in a great degree lost sight of the teaching of the ritual service. That service had been instituted by Christ Himself. In every part it was a symbol of Him; and it had been full of vitality and spiritual beauty. But the Jews lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to the dead forms. They trusted to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of resting upon Him to whom they pointed. In order to supply the place of that which they had lost, the priests and rabbis multiplied requirements of their own; and the more rigid they grew, the less of the love of God was manifested. They measured their holiness by the multitude of their ceremonies, while their hearts were filled with pride and hypocrisy.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 29.

- *What is more pleasing to the Lord—offerings and sacrifices, or faith, love, and obedience to His will?*
- *Why did a certain time come when the Lord no longer accepted the ceremonial sacrifices brought by the people?*
- *If there is no faith and love in us, will following rules and carrying out even good practices be of more value than the offering of the Old Testament sacrifices?*

* * *

The Old and New Covenants

“Man gains everything by obeying the covenant-keeping God. God’s attributes are imparted to man, enabling him to exercise mercy and compassion. God’s covenant assures us of His unchangeable character. Why, then, are those who claim to believe in God changeable, fickle, untrustworthy? Why do they not do service heartily, as under obligation to please and glorify God? It is not enough for us to have a general idea of God’s requirements. We must know for ourselves what His requirements and our obligations are. The terms of God’s covenant are, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.’ These are the conditions of life. ‘This do,’ Christ said, ‘and thou shalt live.’” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 932.

THE LORD’S COVENANT

1. What promises did the Lord make to His people on condition of their obedience?

EXODUS 19:5, 6 *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ¹⁹And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

“A covenant is an agreement by which parties bind themselves and each other to the fulfillment of certain conditions. Thus the human agent enters into agreement with God to comply with the conditions specified in His Word. His conduct shows whether or not he respects these conditions.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 932.

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

THE COVENANT RATIFIED AT SINAI

2. What followed after the promises and God’s law were made known? What promise did the people make before the covenant was ratified?

EXODUS 24:3-8 *And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. ⁴And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. ⁶And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. ⁸And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.*

“Another compact—called in Scripture the ‘old’ covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice....

“God brought them to Sinai; He manifested His glory; He gave them His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: ‘If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ... ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.’ Exodus 19:5, 6. The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’ Exodus 24:7.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

THE COVENANT DISHONORED

3. Did the people of Israel keep the promises they made under the covenant? How was it renewed on the border of Canaan?

EXODUS 32:1, 4 *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.... ⁴And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

DEUTERONOMY 29:5, 9-15 *And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.... ⁹Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. ¹⁰Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, ¹¹Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: ¹²That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: ¹³That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ¹⁴Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; ¹⁵But with him that stand-*

eth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.

“They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image....

*“While God was writing down His law, to be committed to His covenant people, the Israelites, denying their loyalty to Jehovah, were demanding gods of gold! When Moses came from the awful presence of the divine glory, with the precepts of the law which they had pledged themselves to obey, he found them, in open defiance of its commands, bowing in adoration before a golden image.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 372, 335.*

OTHER VIOLATIONS

4. After those of the adult generation that left Egypt and Joshua passed away, what did the next generation do? What happened to the spirituality and faithfulness of later generations?

JUDGES 2:11-13 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: ¹²And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. ¹³And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*

*“Prophets had wept over the apostasy of Israel and the terrible desolations by which their sins were visited. Jeremiah wished that his eyes were a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people, for the Lord’s flock that was carried away captive. Jeremiah 9:1; 13:17.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 21.*

*“During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he ruled with a terrible power as though through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. Even the covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself, had so far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 738.*

A NEW COVENANT

5. After centuries of weakness and departure from the covenant, what did the Lord present through His grace? What does this covenant consist of?

JEREMIAH 31:31-34 *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³²Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: ³³But this*

shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

“Under the new covenant, the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old—perfect obedience. Under the old covenant, there were many offenses of a daring, presumptuous character, for which there was no atonement specified by law. In the new and better covenant, Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors of law, if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.’ Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to take away their sins. In the better covenant we are cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ....

“The blessings of the new covenant are grounded purely on mercy in forgiving unrighteousness and sins. The Lord specifies, I will do thus and thus unto all who turn to Me, forsaking the evil and choosing the good.... All who humble their hearts, confessing their sins, will find mercy and grace and assurance.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7. p. 931.

RATIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

6. When the time of the new testament came, who announced it? How and when was it ratified?

MATTHEW 26:27, 28 *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

“In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs. This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 656, 659.

“This covenant deed was to be ratified by Christ’s own blood, which it had been the office of the old sacrificial offerings to keep before the minds of His chosen people.”—(*Review and Herald*, June 22, 1897) *Evangelism*, p. 276.

COMPARISON OF THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

7. What is said about the new covenant? What do you see as the main differences between the old and the new covenants?

HEBREWS 8:6-12 *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. ⁸For finding fault with them, he saith,*

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: ⁹Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. ¹⁰For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: ¹¹And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. ¹²For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

“Christ’s death and resurrection completed His covenant. Before this time, it was revealed through types and shadows, which pointed to the great offering to be made by the world’s Redeemer, offered in promise for the sins of the world. Anciently believers were saved by the same Saviour as now, but it was a God veiled. They saw God’s mercy in figures. The promise given to Adam and Eve in Eden was the gospel to a fallen race. The promise was made that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, and it should bruise His heel. Christ’s sacrifice is the glorious fulfillment of the whole Jewish economy. The Sun of Righteousness has risen. Christ our righteousness is shining in brightness upon us.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 932.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The terms of the ‘old covenant’ were, Obey and live: ‘If a man do, he shall even live in them;’ but ‘cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.’ Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 27:26. The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins, and of the grace of God to renew the heart, and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 78.

“The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God—the ‘two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.’ Hebrews 6:18.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371.

- ***What do you feel when you consider that the Lord has always been willing to make a covenant with men?***
- ***What do we learn from the Lord’s dealing with His people in the time of the old covenant?***
- ***Knowing that the new covenant was granted by the life of God’s dear Son, how much do we value it?***

* * *

