

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Fourth Quarter 2015

Keep the Truth Faithfully
Part 2

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

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Man's Fall

“In looking to ourselves for righteousness, by which to find acceptance with God, we look to the wrong place, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.’ Romans 3:23. We are to look to Jesus; for ‘we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.’ 2 Corinthians 3:18. You are to find your completeness by beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” –*Faith and Works*, p. 108.

FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS TO UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

1. What is said about how man was originally created? How did His state change after the fall?

ECCLESIASTES 7:29 *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

MATTHEW 19:17, FIRST PART *And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

ROMANS 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.*

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

“When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil...” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 505.

“God declares, ‘There is none righteous, no, not one.’ Romans 3:10. All have the same sinful nature. All are liable to make mistakes. No one is perfect. The Lord Jesus died for the erring that they might be forgiven. It is not our work to condemn. Christ did not come to condemn, but to save.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 292.

THE GENERAL CONDITION

2. How far have sin and death reached? Is anyone an exception to this?

ROMANS 5:12; 3:11, 12 *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:...*
^{3:11}*There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.* ¹²*They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

“The Word of God declares, ‘All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.’ Romans 3:23. ‘There is none that doeth good, no, not one.’ Romans 3:12. Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 320.

“Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. While ‘death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,’ Christ ‘hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’ Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10. And only through Christ can immortality be obtained.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 533.

NOT WILLING TO SURRENDER

3. Is man’s carnal nature willing to be subdued and surrender to the Lord’s will? What have human beings become by following their natural tendencies to sin?

ROMANS 8:7 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

COLOSSIANS 1:21 *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.*

“But the heart that is surrendered to God, loves the truth of God’s word; for through the truth the soul is regenerated. The carnal mind finds no pleasure in contemplating the word of God, but he who is renewed in the spirit of his mind, sees new charms in the living oracles; for divine beauty and celestial light seem to shine in every passage. That which was to the carnal mind a desolate wilderness, to the spiritual mind becomes a land of living streams. That which to the unrenewed heart appeared a barren waste, to the converted soul becomes the garden of God, covered with fragrant buds and blooming flowers.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 182.

IMPURE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

4. What desires and lusts dominate human flesh? Where does sin start before it matures and becomes active?

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

JAMES 1:14, 15 *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

“Our improvement in moral purity depends on right thinking and right acting. ‘Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.’ ‘For out of the heart proceed

evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man.” Matthew 15:11, 19, 20.

“Evil thoughts destroy the soul. The converting power of God changes the heart, refining and purifying the thoughts. Unless a determined effort is made to keep the thoughts centered on Christ, grace cannot reveal itself in the life. The mind must engage in the spiritual warfare. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. All the habits must be brought under God’s control.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 69.

INABILITY TO DO GOOD

5. When one wishes to do good things, what is the result? Can he trust his good intentions?

ROMANS 7:18, 19 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

“As we see the condition of mankind today, the question arises in the minds of some, Is man by nature totally and wholly depraved? Is he hopelessly ruined?

“Men have sold themselves to the enemy of all righteousness. They cannot redeem themselves. Of themselves they can do no good thing. But there is a way of escape. When man sinned, Christ offered to stand as his substitute and surety, in order to provide a way whereby the guilty race might return to loyalty. He took humanity, and passed over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell. Without swerving from His allegiance, He met the temptations wherewith man is beset.” —*The Signs of the Times*, June 14, 1905.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

6. Although children do not inherit the specific sins of their parents, what do they receive from them? Is there any hope of overriding bad inclinations and tendencies?

EZEKIEL 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity or sins of the fathers, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

DEUTERONOMY 24:16 *The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.*

1 PETER 1:18 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.*

“How can we expect anything else of the children, with their inherited tendencies, while the older ones set them such an example? God pity the poor slave to these indulgences!” —*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 18.

“As a rule, children inherit the dispositions and tendencies of their parents, and imitate their example; so that the sins of the parents are practiced by the children from generation to generation.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 118.

“Children inherit inclinations to wrong, but they also have many lovely traits of character. These should be strengthened and developed, while the tendencies to evil should be carefully guarded against and repressed.” —*Mind, Character and Personality*, pp. 144, 145.

CLEANSED BY CHRIST

7. Although this is our difficult condition, what is possible through the Lord Jesus and the infilling of His Holy Spirit? What may a person become by faith?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:11; 1:30 *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God....* ^{1:30}*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

ROMANS 6:17 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

JOHN 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

“We must learn in the school of Christ. Nothing but His righteousness can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. We have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings, but have not received them because we have cherished the idea that we could do something to make ourselves worthy of them. We have not looked away from ourselves, believing that Jesus is a living Saviour. We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. Through His prophet the Lord promises, ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon’ (Isaiah 55:7). We must believe the naked promise, and not accept feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 351.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The eye of Him who sees the present condition of things has portrayed the state of things existing in the world and the church today. Psalm 14:1-4. And what has brought about this terrible condition? It is the making void of the law of God.” —*The Signs of the Times*, March 20, 1901.

“Those who put their trust in Christ are not to be enslaved by any hereditary or cultivated habit or tendency. Instead of being held in bondage to the lower nature, they are to rule every appetite and passion. God has not left us to battle with evil in our own finite strength. Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that He is ready to impart....” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 440.

* * *

The Gift of Grace

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:24-26. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8.

UNABLE TO STAND

1. **What illustration do the Scriptures give of man’s nature? If the Lord were to deal with him according to his ideas and behavior, would a person be able to stand?**

PSALM 103:14; 130:3 *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.... ^{130:3}If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*

“Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. ‘He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.’ Psalm 103:14. All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 362.

“Now when you can no longer be active, and infirmities press upon you, all that God requires of you is to trust Him. Commit the keeping of your soul to Him as unto a faithful Creator. His mercies are sure, His covenant is everlasting. Happy is the man whose hope is in the Lord his God, who keepeth truth forever. Let your mind grasp the promises and hold to them. If you cannot call to mind readily the rich assurance contained in the precious promises, listen to them from the lips of another. What fullness, what love and assurance are found in these words from the lips of God Himself, proclaiming His love, His pity and interest in the children of His care.” –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 231.

DIVINE TREASURES TO DISCOVER

2. **Completely different from man’s nature, what is God’s character? Because He is so gracious, how does He deal with our shortcomings and with us?**

EXODUS 34:6, 7 *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, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the*

fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

PSALM 103:10 *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

“It was when Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock that he beheld the glory of God. It is when we hide in the riven Rock that Christ will cover us with His own pierced hand, and we shall hear what the Lord saith unto His servants. To us as to Moses, God will reveal Himself as ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Exodus 34:6, 7.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 162.

“The Lord is full of compassion for His suffering ones. What sins are too great for His pardon? He is merciful, and as such is infinitely more ready and more pleased to pardon than to condemn. He is gracious, not looking for wrong in us; He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are but dust. In His boundless compassion and mercy He heals all our backslidings, loving us freely while we are yet sinners, withdrawing not His light, but shining on us for Christ’s sake.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 231.

THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

3. Because of His love and mercy, what did He establish before the foundation of the world? What appeared in the fullness of time?

EPHESIANS 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*

TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.*

GALATIANS 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*

“In heaven’s council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.... Providence had directed the movements of nations, and the tide of human impulse and influence, until the world was ripe for the coming of the Deliverer....” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.

“We ourselves owe everything to God’s free grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our exaltation to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 250.

THE HIGH PRICE PAID BY MERCY

4. What high price was paid to redeem man from his iniquity? How far will the Lord remove every confessed transgression?

TITUS 2:14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

PSALM 103:12 *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

MICAH 7:19 *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

“In giving His only-begotten Son to die for sinners, God has manifested to fallen man love that is without a parallel.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 311.

“Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted.’ Let this thought be kept uppermost. In labor for the erring, let every eye be directed to Christ. Let the shepherds have a tender care for the flock of the Lord’s pasture. Let them speak to the erring of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour. Let them encourage the sinner to repent, and believe in Him who can pardon. Let them declare, on the authority of God’s word, ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1:9. All who repent have the assurance, ‘He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.’ Micah 7:19.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 806.

GRACE AND JUSTIFICATION

5. What other blessing is granted by grace to all who have faith in Jesus? In addition to forgiveness, what does justification encompass?

ROMANS 3:24; 4:16, FIRST PART *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:...* ^{4:16}*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;...*

“Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul may be kept free from sin; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. Christ is the end of law for righteousness to everyone who believeth. In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1, 2.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 394.

GRACE AND SALVATION

6. What will be the final result of the Lord’s grace? Therefore, what can the redeemed look forward to?

EPHESIANS 2:8, 7 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:...* ⁷*That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

TITUS 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

“Ample provision has been made for all who sincerely, earnestly, and thoughtfully set about the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Strength and grace have been provided through Christ, to be brought by ministering angels to the heirs of salvation. None are so low, so corrupt and vile, that they cannot find in Jesus, who died for them, strength and purity and righteousness, if they will put away their sins, turn from their course of iniquity, and with full purpose of heart seek the living God. He is waiting to take away their stained garments, polluted by sin, and to put upon them the pure robe of His righteousness, to bid them live and not die. In Him, as branches of the Living Vine, they may flourish. Their boughs will not wither nor be fruitless. If they abide in Him, they can draw nourishment from Him, be imbued with His spirit, walk as He walked, overcome as He overcame, and be exalted to His own right hand.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 140.

A GRACIOUS INVITATION

7. Having this wonderful certainty, what is everyone invited to do? What is possible through the blood of Christ?

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

PSALM 86:5 *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

EPHESIANS 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

“The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. This is a precious promise, given to fallen man to encourage him to trust in the God of love and to seek for eternal life in His kingdom.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 635.

“With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 121.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The redemption of the soul is precious. Christ has paid an infinite price for our salvation, and no one who appreciates the value of this great sacrifice or the worth of the soul will despise God’s offered mercy because others choose to do so.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 162.

“Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner’s substitute and surety. But while he is justified because of the merit of Christ, he is not free to work unrighteousness.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 398.

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Christ Our Righteousness

“When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness....” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 311.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS GOD’S PREROGATIVE

1. **Although many people see themselves as honest and respectful, what completely different picture does God’s word present? In whom alone is righteousness found?**

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

JEREMIAH 23:6 *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.*

“We have a living Saviour. He is not in Joseph’s new tomb; He is risen from the dead and has ascended on high as a Substitute and Surety for every believing soul. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. The sinner is justified through the merits of Jesus, and this is God’s acknowledgment of the perfection of the ransom paid for man. That Christ was obedient even unto the death of the cross is a pledge of the repenting sinner’s acceptance with the Father. Then shall we permit ourselves to have a vacillating experience of doubting and believing, believing and doubting? Jesus is the pledge of our acceptance with God. We stand in favor before God, not because of any merit in ourselves, but because of our faith in ‘the Lord our righteousness.’” —*Faith and Works*, p. 107.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE GOSPEL

2. **Where is the righteousness of God especially revealed? How is justification explained by the Spirit of prophecy?**

ROMANS 1:16, 17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

“What is righteousness? It is the satisfaction that Christ gave the divine law in our behalf. He bore the test on every point on which the sinner must bear

it. He was tempted in all points as we are tempted,... He did not yield in the least degree to the power of the enemy.” –*Review and Herald*, August 21, 1894.

“The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God’s forgiving grace.” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 107.

BY GRACE ALONE

3. How may one obtain righteousness—by works or by grace? Is there anyone who can be justified by his own merits and deeds?

ROMANS 3:20, 28 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.... ²⁸Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

“Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do. The matter has been presented before me in clear lines that if the rich man has money and possessions, and he makes an offering of the same to the Lord, false ideas come in to spoil the offering by the thought he has merited the favor of God, that the Lord is under obligation to him to regard him with special favor because of this gift....

“Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God’s boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal.” –*Faith and Works*, pp. 20, 104.

FAITH IS REQUIRED

4. As with Abraham, what is necessary for one to be justified? Is it possible to please God and receive the imputation of His righteousness without believing Him?

GALATIANS 3:6 *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

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.*

LUKE 17:5 *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

“Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the

position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption.” –*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

RESULTS OF THE JUSTIFICATION

5. When a person is declared just, or justified, what happens to the condemnation that he deserves?

ROMANS 8:1, 34 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit....* 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.*

“Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds.” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 112.

“The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: ‘This is My child, I reprieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy—eternal life—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.’ Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ’s righteousness, stands faultless before God.” –*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

6. In what relationship will one stay with God if he is justified? What effect will righteousness have?

ROMANS 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

ISAIAH 32:17 *And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*

“Christ is ‘the Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Romans 5:1. Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 27.

“Justification by faith in Christ will be made manifest in transformation of character. This is the sign to the world of the truth of the doctrines we profess. The daily evidence that we are a living church is seen in the fact that we are practicing the Word. A living testimony goes forth to the world in consistent Christian action. –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1071.

7. What guarantee is given to those who have been justified by faith in Jesus? What will the Lord do for those He has justified?

ROMANS 8:33, 30, MIDDLE AND LAST PARTS *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth....* ³⁰*Whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

“Jesus does not desire those who have been purchased at such a cost to become the sport of the enemy’s temptations. He does not desire us to be overcome and perish. He who curbed the lions in their den, and walked with His faithful witnesses amid the fiery flames, is just as ready to work in our behalf to subdue every evil in our nature. Today He is standing at the altar of mercy, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Whosoever will, may take hold of God’s strength, and make peace with Him, and He will make peace.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 90.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat;... without money and without price.’ Isaiah 55:1. ‘Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord,’ and, ‘This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.’ Isaiah 54:17; Jeremiah 23:6.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 109.

“Our faith must reach within the veil, where Jesus has entered for us. We must lay hold with firmer grasp on the unfailing promises of God. We must have faith that will not be denied, faith that will take hold of the unseen, faith that is steadfast, immovable. Such faith will bring the blessing of heaven to our souls.” —*My Life Today*, p. 8.

“Justification is the reward of faith in the righteousness of Christ. His imputed righteousness brings everyone who accepts Him as a personal Saviour into conformity to the will of God. His righteousness goes before them. He leads the way, bidding us follow Him. He who follows Christ must live in obedience to the law of God. Sin and holiness cannot unite.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 96.

“The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand besides the great Sin Bearer in the light proceeding from the throne of God.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 90.

* * *

Need of Repentance

“The True Witness says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.’ Revelation 3:20. Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the word of God or through His messengers is a knock at the door of the heart. It is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, the disposition to open becomes weaker. The impressions of the Holy Spirit if disregarded today, will not be as strong tomorrow. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of life, and of the great eternity beyond.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 489, 490.

IMPENITENCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

1. What may people who continue to cherish hardness of heart and an impenitent spirit expect? Why is the Lord so patient and kind in spite man’s sinfulness?

ROMANS 2:5-8, 4 *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶Who will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: ⁸But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.... ⁴Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

“The longer the youth remain in impenitence, the more confirmed they become in their resistance of the Spirit of God. With increase of years it is probable that there will be a decrease of sensibility to divine things, a diminished susceptibility to the influences of religion. Every day Satan works to fasten them in their habits of disobedience, their spirit of impenitence, and there is less probability that they will become Christians.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 80.

“Today sin is the same malignant thing that it was in the time of Adam. The gospel does not promise the favor of God to anyone who in impenitence breaks His law. The depravity of the human heart, the guilt of transgression, the ruin of sin, are all made plain by the cross where Christ has made for us a way of escape.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 96.

CALLING FOR REPENTANCE

2. What was Jesus’ mission as He went from place to place? What is He calling for today?

MARK 2:17 *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

ACTS 17:30, 31 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

“Not one will be forced against his will to come to Jesus Christ. The Majesty of heaven, the only-begotten Son of the true and living God, opened the way for you to come to Him, by giving His life as a sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. But while He suffered all this for you, He is too pure, He is too just, to behold iniquity. But even this need not keep you away from Him; for He says, ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ Let perishing souls come to Him just as they are, without one plea, and plead the atoning blood of Christ, and they will find acceptance with God, who dwelleth in glory between the cherubim above the mercy seat. The blood of Jesus is a never-failing passport, by which all your petitions may find access to the throne of God.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 251, 252.

OF DIVINE ORIGIN

3. Is repentance a human or a divine action? Therefore, what should one do without delay?

JOHN 16:7, 8 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

ACTS 5:30, 31 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. ³¹Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

HEBREWS 3:7, 8 *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness).*

“The office of the Holy Spirit is distinctly specified in the words of Christ: ‘When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.’ John 16:8. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. If the sinner responds to the quickening influence of the Spirit, he will be brought to repentance and aroused to the importance of obeying the divine requirements.

“To the repentant sinner, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the Holy Spirit reveals the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.

DO NOT WAIT FOR A BETTER OPPORTUNITY

4. Should one wait to open the heart’s door until he repents, or should he respond as soon as he hears Jesus’ call?

REVELATION 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

JOHN 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

“The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’ Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, ‘Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ Acts 5:31. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 26.

TRUE REPENTANCE IS CHARACTERIZED BY SORROW

5. What does repentance from sin produce under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? How does Jesus consider those who mourn for their sins?

2 CORINTHIANS 7:10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

MATTHEW 5:4 *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

PSALM 32:1-5 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. ³When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. ⁴For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. ⁵I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

“The mourning here brought to view is true heart sorrow for sin... Such mourning ‘shall be comforted.’ God reveals to us our guilt that we may flee to Christ, and through Him be set free from the bondage of sin, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God. In true contrition we may come to the foot of the cross, and there leave our burdens.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 9, 10.

“Everyone who has presumed upon the mercy of God, and practiced iniquity, will be judged according to his works. God has warned you to depart from all iniquity. He has commanded you individually to resist the devil, not to entertain him as an honored guest. The time has come when Jerusalem is being searched as with lighted candles. God is at work investigating character, weighing moral worth, and pronouncing decisions on individual cases. It may not be too late for those who have sinned to be zealous and repent;’ for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 448.

6. What are people who hear and follow the divine voice ready to do?

ACTS 2:37, 38; 9:4-6 *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.... ³⁴And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁵And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. ⁶And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

“We are wounded, polluted with sin. What shall we do to be healed from its leprosy?... In the wilderness, when the Lord permitted poisonous serpents to sting the rebellious Israelites, Moses was directed to lift up a brazen serpent and bid all the wounded look to it and live.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 112.

“Will you do that? Will you wrestle with God at this meeting until you know that He reveals Himself to you? There are sins that afflict your souls; your sins grieve you. Will you say, ‘Now, Lord, I must have pardon written opposite my name,’ and wrestle and plead with God, laying hold upon the righteousness of Christ. ‘He must save; I believe in Him; I take Him at His word.’ Now, brethren, what shall we do?” —*Faith and Works*, p. 75.

REPENTANCE AND CHANGE

7. When one’s repentance is genuine, what great change will take place in the way he thinks and acts?

LUKE 15:17-19 *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, ¹⁹And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

“All who became the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, he said, would give evidence of faith and repentance. Kindness, honesty, and fidelity would be seen in their lives. They would minister to the needy, and bring their offerings to God. They would shield the defenseless, and give an example of virtue and compassion. So the followers of Christ will give evidence of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. In the daily life, justice, mercy, and the love of God will be seen. Otherwise they are like the chaff that is given to the fire.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 107.

SINCERE CONVERSION

8. When he was touched by God, what did one man decide to do and openly admit? What did the Lord say about him?

LUKE 19:5, 6, 8, 9 *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. ⁶And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.... ⁸And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. ⁹And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*

“He felt that he was a sinner in the sight of God.... Repentance, reformation of life, was possible, even to him....

“In the presence of the multitude, ‘Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.’

“And Jesus said unto him, ‘This day is salvation come to this house.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 552, 555.

“There are those who have had very meager opportunities, who have walked in ways of error because they knew no better way, to whom beams of light will come. As the word of Christ came to Zacchaeus, ‘Today I must abide at thy house,’ so the word will come to them; and those who were supposed to be hardened sinners will be found to have hearts as tender as a child’s because Christ has deigned to notice them. Many will come from the grossest error and sin, and will take the place of others who have had opportunities and privileges but have not prized them. They will be accounted the chosen of God, elect, precious; and when Christ shall come into His kingdom, they will stand next His throne.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 236.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? ‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.’ Jeremiah 13:23. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 31.

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*Read the Missionary Report from the
International Health Organization on page 27*

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Sabbath, October 31, 2015

Confession of Sin

“The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 37.

A UNIVERSAL PROBLEM

1. Can someone think that he is free of sin? If he does, what is the truth of the matter, and what is he saying about God?

ROMANS 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

1 JOHN 1:8, 10 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

“I was shown that those who triumphantly claim to be sinless, show by their very boasting that they are far from being without taint of sin. The more clearly fallen man comprehends the character of Christ, the more distrustful will he be of himself, and the more imperfect will his works appear to him, in contrast with those which marked the life of the spotless Redeemer. But those who are far from Jesus, those whose spiritual perceptions are so clouded by error that they cannot comprehend the character of the great Exemplar, conceive of Him as altogether such a one as themselves, and dare to talk of their own perfection of holiness. But they are far from God; they know little of themselves, and less of Christ.” —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 84.

HIDING IS NO SOLUTION

2. Can we hide our sin from the Lord? What will happen if we try to cover it?

NUMBERS 32:23 *But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.*

PSALM 32:3-5 *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. ⁴For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. ⁵I acknowledged my sin unto thee,*

and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

“Never seek to cover sin...” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 380.

“Even before the divine sentence was pronounced against David he had begun to reap the fruit of transgression. His conscience was not at rest. The agony of spirit which he then endured is brought to view in the thirty-second psalm.... The king of Israel recounted his sin, his repentance, and his hope of pardon through the mercy of God. Instead of endeavoring to conceal his guilt he desired that others might be instructed by the sad history of his fall.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 725.

AN INVITATION TO ALL

3. What is the Lord inviting everyone to do? Even if one’s sins are many and his spiritual garments are completely filthy, what assurance does Jesus give him?

JEREMIAH 3:13, FIRST PART *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God... .*

1 JOHN 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

ISAIAH 1:18 *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

“Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted. His life is our example. He shows by His willing obedience that man may keep the law of God and that transgression of the law, not obedience to it, brings him into bondage. The Saviour was full of compassion and love; He never spurned the truly penitent, however great their guilt; but He severely denounced hypocrisy of every sort. He is acquainted with the sins of men, He knows all their acts and reads their secret motives; yet He does not turn away from them in their iniquity. He pleads and reasons with the sinner, and in one sense—that of having Himself borne the weakness of humanity—He puts Himself on a level with him. ‘Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 294.

4. What attitude are we invited to have in our relationship with our brethren? How quickly should we confess our mistakes as well as forgive those of others?

JAMES 5:16 *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

HEBREWS 3:13 *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

EPHESIANS 4:32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

“Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is brought before the only true Mediator, our great High Priest, who ‘was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,’ and who is ‘touched with the feeling of our infirmities,’ and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity. Hebrews 4:15.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 37.

CONSIDER GOOD EXAMPLES

5. Who is ready to hear our confession if we fall into sin? What is one of the well-known confessions brought about by the Holy Spirit?

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

LUKE 15:18, 21 *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,...²¹ And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*

“It is not enough that the sinner believe in Christ for the pardon of sin; he must, by faith and obedience, abide in Him. ‘For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.’ Hebrews 10:26, 27.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 517.

“God’s appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit. The throne of grace is itself the highest attraction, because occupied by One who permits us to call Him Father. But Jehovah did not deem the plan of salvation complete while invested only with His love. He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed in His nature. As our intercessor, Christ’s office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters. He intercedes in behalf of those who receive Him. With His own blood He has paid their ransom. By virtue of His own merits He gives them power to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. And the Father demonstrates His infinite love for Christ by receiving and welcoming Christ’s friends as His friends. He is satisfied with the atonement made. He is glorified by the incarnation, the life, death, and mediation, of His Son.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 14.

6. What is part of true confession when damage has been inflicted or someone has been hurt? What example do we have in the Bible of heartfelt repentance, confession, and restitution?

EXODUS 22:1 *If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.*

NUMBERS 5:6, 7 *Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; ⁷Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.*

LUKE 19:8, 9 *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. ⁹And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*

“Zacchaeus declared: ‘If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.’ You could at least have made efforts to correct your acts of injustice to your fellow men. You cannot make every case right, for some whom you have injured have gone into their graves, and the account stands registered against you. In these cases the best you can do is to bring a trespass offering to the altar of the Lord, and He will accept and pardon you. But where you can, you should make reparation to the wronged ones.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 339.

SINCERE CONFESSION IS REWARDED

7. What happens when one sincerely confesses his sins? What spiritual blessing will follow?

PSALM 32:1, 2 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

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

“David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul, and believed that God’s promise to forgive would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and was reconverted. In the rapture of the assurance of forgiveness, he exclaimed, ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.’ The blessing comes because of pardon; pardon comes through faith that the sin, confessed and repented of, is borne by the great Sin-bearer. Thus from Christ cometh all our blessings. His death is an atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the great Medium through whom we receive the mercy and favor of God. He, then, is indeed the Originator, the Author, as well as the Finisher, of our faith.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1146.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Adam and Eve ... supplied the place of this heavenly garment by sewing together fig-leaves for aprons.

“This is the covering that the transgressors of the law of God have used since the days of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig-leaves to cover their nakedness, caused by transgression.... When the Lord calls the attention of men and women to the truth, the making of fig-leaves into aprons will be begun, to hide the nakedness of the soul. But the nakedness of the sinner is not covered. All the arguments pieced together by all who have interested themselves in this flimsy work will come to naught.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1084.

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MISSIONARY REPORT
FROM THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION

To be read on Sabbath, October 31, 2015

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, November 7, 2015*

Dear brothers and sisters around the world,
May the peace and love of God be upon you in abundance. Greetings with Psalm 67:2, 3: “That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.”

“Medical missionary work is the right hand of the gospel. It is necessary to the advancement of the cause of God. As through it men and women are led to see the importance of right habits of living, the saving power of the truth will be made known. Every city is to be entered by workers trained to do medical missionary work. As the right hand of the third angel’s message, God’s methods of treating disease will open doors for the entrance of present truth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 59.

On December 31, 1989, at the General Conference session in Florida, U.S.A., by God’s grace the proposal of the General Conference Health Department to adopt the name International Health Organization as its official name was accepted by the delegates. This is a non-profit department under the General Conference.

It is important to note that especially in Islamic and Communist countries which prohibit the exercise of freedom of religion, the name International Health Organization (IHO) can be used instead of International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, for the registration of the church. This has been done in Yemen, Iraq, and China, to name a few where the registration of IMSSDACRM is prohibited. The Reformation message needs to spread around the world, and God has given us this means to hasten His coming. “It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69.

Furthermore, the medical missionary plays an important role in this. “I can see in the Lord’s providences that the medical missionary work is to be a great entering wedge, whereby the diseased soul may be reached.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 535.

And to deal with prejudice, the testimonies say: “As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work

must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed. We are to work as gospel medical missionaries, to heal the sin-sick souls by giving them the message of salvation. This work will break down prejudice as nothing else can.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 211.

This work is from God. “True medical missionary work is of heavenly origin. It was not originated by any person who lives....” We need to reveal Christ now. “How shall we reveal Christ? I know of no better way ... than to take hold of the medical missionary work in connection with the ministry.” —*Medical Ministry*, pp. 24, 319.

The International Health Organization’s primary objectives are to.

- Assist in establishing health clinics in viable Unions and Fields
- Organize health symposia and health fairs in Divisions, Unions, and Fields
- Train young people in medical missionary service and motivate them to cooperate in God’s work
- Promote health reform through our website (IHO21.org)
- Pursue the possibility of founding a licensed technical college to prepare both members and non-members for health careers
- Conduct health seminars in Unions and Fields and form health teams to serve the people and gather souls for Jesus
- Provide free basic medical and dental services wherever the organization (IHO) is required by a government to do so for the issuance of a registration permit

“Medical missionary work brings to humanity the gospel of release from suffering. It is the pioneer work of the gospel. It is the gospel practiced, the compassion of Christ revealed. Of this work there is great need, and the world is open for it. God grant that the importance of medical missionary work shall be understood, and that new fields may be immediately entered.” —*Medical Ministry*, p. 239.

To implement these objectives, seminars will be conducted, projects will be planned, and activities will be coordinated with the General Conference, Divisions, Unions, and Fields. “Soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work.” —*Evangelism*, p. 523. Therefore, let us encourage this vital work.

For the Special Sabbath School Offering to be gathered this coming Sabbath, we appeal to every generous heart to help make these goals reality so Heaven’s influence can reach especially diseased souls as a great entering wedge while time permits. The apostle Paul wrote, “He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully,” and “God loveth a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7. Your generous offerings will be highly valued.

May the grace of God and the abundance of His blessings be poured upon you as you respond to this earnest appeal.

Your fellow servant in Jesus,

Dr. Roland N. De La Paz
General Conference
Health/Medical Department Leader

**Special Sabbath School Offering for the
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

Let your gifts be given with abundance and joy!

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Sabbath, November 7, 2015

Birth by the Spirit

“The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

A NECESSITY

- 1. Does being born into a respected family and having a good position in society guarantee one’s entrance into God’s kingdom? What is absolutely necessary to be able to enter that holy, wonderful place?**

JOHN 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

MATTHEW 18:3 *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

“All who would enter the city of God must during their earthly life set forth Christ in their dealings. It is this that constitutes them the messengers of Christ, His witnesses. They are to bear a plain, decided testimony against all evil practices, pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He gives to all who receive Him, power to become the sons of God. Regeneration is the only path by which we can enter the city of God. It is narrow, and the gate by which we enter is strait; but along it we are to lead men and women and children, teaching them that, in order to be saved, they must have a new heart and a new spirit. The old, hereditary traits of character must be overcome. The natural desires of the soul must be changed. All deception, all falsifying, all evilspeaking, must be put away. The new life, which makes men and women Christ like, is to be lived.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 23.

2. Would a new birth coming from the same parents have any positive result? Even if it were possible, what could be expected from such a new birth?

JOHN 3:4, 6, FIRST PART *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? That which is born of the flesh is flesh.*

“By nature the heart is evil, and ‘who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ Job 14:4. No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ ‘Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.’ Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

3. What are the regenerating agents of a true new birth and new life? Do you desire this experience in your life?

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

“It is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this bad habit or that bad habit, and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart....

“The Scriptures are the great agency in this transformation of character. Christ prayed, ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth’ (John 17:17). 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.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 21.

4. What does the Holy Spirit do to bring a new creature into existence? How does one know if that experience has occurred in his life?

JOHN 3:6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

EZEKIEL 11:19, 20 *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: ²⁰That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

“Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 57.

“The converting power of God must be upon our hearts. We must study the life of Christ, and imitate the divine Pattern. We must dwell upon the perfec-

tion of His character, and be changed into His image. No one will enter the kingdom of God unless his will is brought into captivity to the will of Christ.”
—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 22.

INVISIBLE WORK AND VISIBLE EFFECTS

5. Are we surprised by the message of the new birth presented by Jesus? Whom will one receive to be transformed and become a child of God?

JOHN 3:7; 1:12 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again....^{1:12}But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

“When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

6. Is it possible to analyze how the new birth takes place? Like the movement of the wind, what can be noticed when this new birth occurs?

JOHN 3:8 *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

“While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts.”
—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 57, 58.

CHANGES THAT OCCUR WHEN ONE IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT

7. What great changes happen in a person’s nature and life when he is born of God and becomes His child?

1 JOHN 3:9; 5:4, 18 *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God....^{5:4}For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith....¹⁸We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

“In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 59.

“In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then ‘the righteousness of the law’ will ‘be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ Romans 8:4. And the language of the soul will be: ‘O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.’ Psalm 119:97.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 468.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“So is the experience of every one who is born of the Spirit. The mind is an invisible agent of God to produce tangible results. Its influence is powerful, and governs the actions of men. If purified from all evil, it is the motive power of good. The regenerating Spirit of God, taking possession of the mind, transforms the life; wicked thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced, love, peace, and humility take the place of anger, envy, and strife. That power which no human eye can see, has created a new being in the image of God.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 128, 129.

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20

Sabbath, November 14, 2015

Biblical Baptism

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

INSTRUCTION, REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

- 1. From whom did John the Baptist receive the commission to baptize people? What was required before he would baptize someone in the Jordan River?**

JOHN 1:33 *And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

MARK 1:4, 5 *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*

“It was the purpose of John to startle and arouse the people, and cause them to tremble because of their great wickedness. In simplicity and plainness he pointed out the errors and crimes of men. A power attended his words, and, reluctant as the people were to hear the denunciation of their unholy lives, yet they could not resist his words. He flattered none; neither would he receive flattery of any. The people, as if with common consent, came to him repenting, and confessing their sins, and were baptized of him in Jordan.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 48.

2. What was encompassed in the mission that Jesus gave to His disciples and thus also to His church of all time? As in the mission of John the Baptist, what precedes baptism?

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

“The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ’s kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28.

“The preparation for baptism is a matter that needs to be carefully considered. The new converts to the truth should be faithfully instructed in the plain ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ The Word of the Lord is to be read and explained to them point by point.” —*Evangelism*, p. 308.

FAITH, DEATH OF THE OLD MAN, AND NEW LIFE

3. What is part of making a covenant with God? How does the experience of the Ethiopian eunuch show that belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a prerequisite to baptism?

MARK 16:15, 16 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

ACTS 8:36-38 *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? ³⁷And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*

“Repentance and faith are everywhere required as the condition of receiving baptism.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 238, 239.

“The steps in conversion, plainly marked out, are repentance, faith in Christ as the world’s Redeemer, faith in His death, burial, and resurrection, shown by baptism, and His ascension on high to plead in the sinner’s behalf.” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 79.

“Repentance, faith, and baptism are the requisite steps in conversion.... As Christians submit to the solemn rite of baptism, He registers the vow that they make to be true to Him. This vow is their oath of allegiance.” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 145.

4. What does a person experience before baptism? Just as Christ rose from death, what happens to a believer who is baptized into His death?

ROMANS 6:3-6, 11 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: ⁶Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.... ¹¹Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

COLOSSIANS 2:12 *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

“Those who have risen with Christ to walk in newness of life are the elect of God. They are holy unto the Lord, and are acknowledged by Him as His beloved. As such, they are under solemn covenant to distinguish themselves by showing humility of mind. They are to clothe themselves in garments of righteousness. They are separate from the world, from its spirit, its practices, and they are to reveal that they are learning of Him.... If they realize that they have died with Christ, if they keep their baptismal vow, the world will have no power to draw them aside to deny Christ. If they live the life of Christ in this world, they are partakers of the divine nature.” –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 133.

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION AND REBAPTISM

5. How many kinds of baptism do the Scriptures present? How was this ordinance understood in apostolic times?

EPHESIANS 4:4, 5 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*

ROMANS 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

MATTHEW 3:16 *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.*

“My mind was very much exercised on the subject of baptism. Young as I was, I could see but one mode of baptism authorized by the Scriptures, and that was immersion. Some of my Methodist sisters tried in vain to convince me that sprinkling was Bible baptism. The Methodist minister consented to immerse the candidates if they conscientiously preferred that method, although he intimated that sprinkling would be equally acceptable with God.” —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 25.

6. What example of rebaptism is shown in the book of Acts? How does this example apply to individuals coming from other organizations into a fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ and His truth?

ACTS 19:1-5 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ²He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? ³And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. ⁴Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

“There is still another lesson for us in the experience of those Jewish converts. When they received baptism at the hand of John they did not fully comprehend the mission of Jesus as the Sin Bearer. They were holding serious errors. But with clearer light, they gladly accepted Christ as their Redeemer, and with this step of advance came a change in their obligations. As they received a purer faith, there was a corresponding change in their life. In token of this change, and as an acknowledgment of their faith in Christ, they were rebaptized in the name of Jesus.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 285.

BAPTISM AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

7. What great gift is connected with baptism when it follows faith, repentance, and conversion?

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

MATTHEW 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

ACTS 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

“I entreat the church members in every city that they lay hold upon the Lord with determined effort for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Be assured that Satan is not asleep. Every obstacle possible he will place in the way of those who would advance in this work. Too often these obstacles are regarded as insurmountable. Let everyone now be soundly and truly converted, and then lay hold of the work intelligently and with faith.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 548.

“We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” –*Evangelism*, p. 558.

“One reason that there are not more conversions now is because you yourselves need to be converted. Just as soon as you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you will see of the salvation of God.” –*Peter’s Counsel to Parents*, p. 34.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Matthew 3:5, 6, 11

“All who enter upon the new life should understand, prior to their baptism, that the Lord requires the undivided affections.... The practicing of the truth is essential. The bearing of fruit testifies to the character of the tree. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts. There is need of a thorough conversion to the truth.” –*Evangelism*, p. 308.

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21

Sabbath, November 21, 2015

The Church of the Lord

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

BUILDING ON THE LIVING ROCK

1. Who presented the plan for establishment of the church? How stable is it?

MATTHEW 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

“Human power and human might did not establish the church of God, and neither can they destroy it. Not on the rock of human strength, but on Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was the church founded, ‘and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ Matthew 16:18. The presence of God gives stability to His cause. ‘Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man,’ is the word

that comes to us. Psalm 146:3. 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.' Isaiah 30:15. God's glorious work, founded on the eternal principles of right, will never come to nought. It will go on from strength to strength, 'not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' Zechariah 4:6." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 595, 596.

2. Upon what firm foundation is the Christian church built? What confidence is expressed in the holy Scriptures concerning the church being truly built on a solid foundation?

1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

EPHESIANS 2:20-22 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²²In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

ISAIAH 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

"Peter was not the rock upon which the church was founded. The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail.

"Centuries before the Saviour's advent Moses had pointed to the Rock of Israel's salvation. The psalmist had sung of 'the Rock of my strength.' Isaiah had written, 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.' Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 62:7; Isaiah 28:16. Peter himself, writing by inspiration, applies this prophecy to Jesus. He says, 'If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.' 1 Peter 2:3-5, R.V." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413.

THE FIRST STEP IN ORGANIZATION

3. What was the first step Jesus took in laying the foundation of His church? What purpose did He have in its organization?

MARK 3:13, 14 *And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. ¹⁴And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,*

MATTHEW 10:1; 5:14 *And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. ^{5:14}Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

"The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to be His representative on earth.... The Saviour

led His disciples to the retreat He loved, and in their minds the sacred experiences of that day were forever linked with the beauty of mountain and vale and sea.

“Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as His witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, and was second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world. As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stand as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles were to stand as representatives of the gospel church.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 291.

LIKE A BODY

4. With what illustration did the apostle show the diversity and unity of God’s church? What attitude does every member need to have so the church as a body may grow and work in harmony for the advancement of the heavenly kingdom?

ROMANS 12:4, 5 *For as we have many members in one body... ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12 *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

EPHESIANS 4:16 *From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

“As all the different members of the human system unite to form the entire body, and each performs its office in obedience to the intelligence that governs the whole, so the members of the church of Christ should be united in one symmetrical body, subject to the sanctified intelligence of the whole.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 16.

“The Jewish tabernacle was a type of the Christian church.... The church on earth, composed of those who are faithful and loyal to God, is the ‘true tabernacle,’ whereof the Redeemer is the minister. God, and not man, pitched this tabernacle on a high, elevated platform.

“This tabernacle is Christ’s body, and from north, south, east, and west He gathers those who shall help to compose it.... A holy tabernacle is built up of those who receive Christ as their personal Saviour.... Christ is the minister of the true tabernacle, the high priest of all who believe in Him as a personal Saviour.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 931.

ENGAGED IN A GREAT WAR

5. What terrible enmity and war will the church face, especially in the last days? Therefore, what is required of every member?

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

1 TIMOTHY 3:15 *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

1 PETER 5:8, 9 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world’s insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: ‘Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters. Let all who will come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 41.

A SPECIAL LOVE

6. How strong is Jesus’ love for His church? Therefore, how deeply do its members love the church?

EPHESIANS 5:25-27 *Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

JOHN 15:12, 13 *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

EPHESIANS 4:15 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

“Trust to God’s guardianship. His church is to be taught. Enfeebled and defective though it is, it is the object of His supreme regard.” —*Selected Messages, book 2, p. 396.*

“The church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard.... The Lord has a people, a chosen people, His church, to be His own, His own fortress, which He holds in a sin-stricken, revolted world.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 284.

“The church is God’s fortress. His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

7. Considering the current world conditions and the prayer of the Saviour, what relationship is critically necessary among church members for the accomplishment of His plan?

JOHN 17:11, 20, 21 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are....* ²⁰*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;* ²¹*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

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

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Psalm 118:22, 23

“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.’ 1 Corinthians 3:11. ‘Upon this rock,’ said Jesus, ‘I will build My church.’ In the presence of God, and all the heavenly intelligences, in the presence of the unseen army of hell, Christ founded His church upon the living Rock. That Rock is Himself—His own body, for us broken and bruised. Against the church built upon this foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413.

“The church of Christ was organized for missionary purposes.... By it the members are inspired with zeal to deny self, to put forth self-sacrificing efforts to send the truth to the regions beyond. It has a salutary influence upon unbelievers; for as the workers labor under divine supervision, worldlings are led to see the greatness of the resources that God has provided for those who serve Him.... The church is to work actively, as an organized body, to spread abroad the influence of the cross of Christ.” –*Gospel Workers*, p. 464.

“When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd’s voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shep-

herd. The people of God will draw together, and present to the enemy a united front.... The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 401.

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Sabbath, November 28, 2015

The Feet Washing

“When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet.... Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

JESUS SERVES HIS DISCIPLES

- 1. According to the blessing spoken by Jesus, how important is the purification of one’s heart? In harmony with this blessing, what did Jesus do for His disciples right before facing His final suffering and death?**

MATTHEW 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

JOHN 13:3-5 *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; ⁴He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ⁵After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

“In the estimation of God a pure heart is more precious than the gold of Ophir. A pure heart is the temple where God dwells, the sanctuary where Christ takes up His abode. A pure heart is above everything that is cheap or low; it is a shining light, a treasure house from which come uplifting, sanctified words. It is a place where the imagery of God is recognized, and where the highest delight is to behold His image. It is a heart that finds its whole and only pleasure and satisfaction in God, and whose thoughts and intents and purposes are alive with godliness. Such a heart is a sacred place; it is a repository of all virtue.”—*My Life Today*, p. 263.

REFUSAL NOT JUSTIFIABLE

- 2. Was every disciple in agreement with Jesus’ performing such a service of humility for him? How did Jesus answer Peter’s objection?**

JOHN 13:6, 7 *Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? ⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

“As the disciples watched Christ’s action, they were greatly moved. When Peter’s turn came, he exclaimed with astonishment, ‘Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?’ Christ’s condescension broke his heart. He was filled with shame to think that one of the disciples was not performing this service. ‘What I do,’ Christ said, ‘thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.’ Peter could not bear to see his Lord, whom he believed to be the Son of God, acting the part of a servant. His whole soul rose up against this humiliation. He did not realize that for this Christ came into the world. With great emphasis he exclaimed, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 645, 646.

3. How did Peter change his mind when he understood the consequence of refusing this service? If it was a detriment for him to refuse the feet washing, what can be said about this ordinance today?

JOHN 13:8, 9 *Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. ⁹Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*

“Solemnly Christ said to Peter, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.’ The service which Peter refused was the type of a higher cleansing. Christ had come to wash the heart from the stain of sin. In refusing to allow Christ to wash his feet, Peter was refusing the higher cleansing included in the lower. He was really rejecting his Lord. It is not humiliating to the Master to allow Him to work for our purification. The truest humility is to receive with thankful heart any provision made in our behalf, and with earnestness do service for Christ....

“At the words, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me,’ Peter surrendered his pride and self-will. He could not endure the thought of separation from Christ; that would have been death to him. ‘Not my feet only,’ he said, ‘but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

PURIFICATION OF HEART

4. How did the Saviour’s words show that the feet washing represents the cleansing of one’s heart and mind? What does the Lord urge every follower to do so he will have a pure heart and mind?

JOHN 13:10, 11 *Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. ¹¹For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17, 18 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

“When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, ‘Ye are clean.’ Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable. Except Judas, each was ready to concede to another the highest place. Now with subdued and grateful hearts they could receive Christ’s words.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

INSTITUTED AS AN ORDINANCE

5. Was the feet washing confined to the Master’s loving service? With what words did He establish the feet washing as an ordinance for the Christian church?

JOHN 13:12-14 *So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.*

“Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

“Reconciliation one with another is the work for which the ordinance of feet washing was instituted.... Whenever it is celebrated, Christ is present by His Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit that brings conviction to hearts.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 298.

6. What did Jesus mean when He said that He had given an example for His disciples to follow? What will every sincere believer want to do after reading Jesus’ words that He wanted His example of service to be carried out by His followers?

JOHN 13:15, 16 *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*

“He who washed the feet of Judas longs to wash every heart from the stain of sin.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

“So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His

royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 644, 645.

"There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmisings and bitterness of spirit. The ordinance preceding the Lord's Supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

PROMISES FOR THOSE WHO KNOW AND DO

7. What will happen if we allow the Master to cleanse and purify our hearts and then cooperate with Him for the spiritual cleansing of others?

JOHN 13:17 *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

PSALM 15:1, 2; 24:3-5 *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? ²He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.... ^{24:3}Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. ⁵He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

"The celebration of these ordinances is the fulfilling of the command, 'If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet....' What a place is this for hushing controversies, for forgiving those who have done us any injury. This is the time, if one has anything against his brother, to make it right, to settle every difficulty. Let there be mutual forgiveness. Let no strange flame be brought to the altar. Let no malice, no hatred, be cherished by those who meet round the communion table.

"Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 157.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

"These words mean more than bodily cleanliness. Christ is still speaking of the higher cleansing as illustrated by the lower. He who came from the bath was clean, but the sandaled feet soon became dusty, and again needed to be washed. So Peter and his brethren had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Christ acknowledged them as His. But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

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The Lord's Supper

“In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover, Christ left for His church a memorial of His great sacrifice for man. ‘This do,’ He said, ‘in remembrance of Me.’ This was the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. The one was to close forever; the other, which He had just established, was to take its place, and to continue through all time as the memorial of His death.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 273, 274.

JESUS' GREAT DESIRE

1. What did Jesus say to His disciples the night that He was betrayed, when they were together for the last Passover meal?

LUKE 22:14, 15 *And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, ¹⁵With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.*

“Christ knew that the time had come for Him to depart out of the world, and go to His Father. And having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end. He was now in the shadow of the cross, and the pain was torturing His heart. He knew that He would be deserted in the hour of His betrayal. He knew that by the most humiliating process to which criminals were subjected He would be put to death. He knew the ingratitude and cruelty of those He had come to save. He knew how great the sacrifice that He must make, and for how many it would be in vain. Knowing all that was before Him, He might naturally have been overwhelmed with the thought of His own humiliation and suffering. But He looked upon the twelve, who had been with Him as His own, and who, after His shame and sorrow and painful usage were over, would be left to struggle in the world. His thoughts of what He Himself must suffer were ever connected with His disciples. He did not think of Himself. His care for them was uppermost in His mind.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 643.

THE SYMBOL OF HIS BODY

2. After He washed their feet, what did Jesus give to His disciples? What did the blessed piece of bread that He gave them represent?

MATTHEW 26:26 *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*

“Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present

Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 652.

3. What other explanation did He give, signifying what would soon take place? What did His words imply for the future, when they would again celebrate the ordinance?

LUKE 22:19 *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23, 24 *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

“Here our Saviour instituted the Lord’s supper, to be often celebrated, to keep fresh in the memory of his followers the solemn scenes of His betrayal and crucifixion for the sins of the world. He would have His followers realize their continual dependence upon His blood for salvation. The broken bread was a symbol of Christ’s broken body, given for the salvation of the world. The wine was a symbol of His blood, shed for the cleansing of the sins of all those who should come unto Him for pardon, and receive Him as their Saviour.” —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 203.

THE SYMBOL OF HIS BLOOD

4. After giving thanks, what did He give to the disciples? What did the wine in the cup that He gave them represent?

MATTHEW 26:27, 28, FIRST PART *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸For this is my blood....*

“In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer.... As we receive the bread and wine symbolizing Christ’s broken body and spilled blood, we in imagination join in the scene of Communion in the upper chamber. We seem to be passing through the garden consecrated by the agony of Him who bore the sins of the world. We witness the struggle by which our reconciliation with God was obtained. Christ is set forth crucified among us.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 300.

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT

5. For what purpose was Jesus’ blood to be shed? Being an ordinance of the new covenant, who is invited to partake of it?

MATTHEW 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

EXODUS 12:43 *And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof.*

“By eating the bread and drinking the wine, we show that we believe this. We show that we repent of our sins, and that we receive Christ as our Saviour.” —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 98.

“The ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 91.

REMEMBERING HIS SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE

6. Celebrating the Lord’s Supper, who would be the center of their thoughts every time they drank the fruit of the vine? How many of the disciples drank of it?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:25, 26 *After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.*

MARK 14:23 *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.*

“Both of these important events [death and resurrection of Jesus] have their memorials. By partaking of the Lord’s supper, the broken bread and the fruit of the vine, we show forth the Lord’s death until He comes. The scenes of His sufferings and death are thus brought fresh to our minds. The resurrection of Christ is commemorated by our being buried with Him by baptism, and raised out of the watery grave, in likeness of His resurrection, to live in newness of life.” —*Early Writings*, p. 217.

LORD’S SUPPER AND UNITY

7. What does it mean to partake of the cup of blessing and the broken bread? What did the apostle Paul mean when he said that, “being many,” we “are one bread, and one body” by partaking “of that one bread”?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16, 17 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ¹⁷For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

“Christ is leading out a people, and bringing them into the unity of the faith, that they may be one, as He is one with the Father....

“God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.... They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and another having faith and views entirely opposite; each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without

regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases, without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 324, 446, 447.

KEEPING THE SAVIOUR'S SACRIFICE VIVIDLY IN MIND

8. For how long will the Lord's Supper be observed? What privilege will those who now share the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus enjoy one day?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:26 *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*

LUKE 22:16, 18 *For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God....¹⁸For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*

"As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages....

"The Communion service points to Christ's second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples... In their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of their Lord's return. Unspeakably precious to them was the thought, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' 1 Corinthians 11:26." –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 659.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Looking upon the crucified Redeemer, we more fully comprehend the magnitude and meaning of the sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven. The plan of salvation is glorified before us, and the thought of Calvary awakens living and sacred emotions in our hearts. Praise to God and the Lamb will be in our hearts and on our lips; for pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the soul that keeps fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary." –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 300.

What covenant would be sealed with the shedding of Jesus' blood?

"The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6. p. 91. (Compare with the 1946 compilation, *Evangelism*, p. 273.)

Matthew 26:29 "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

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The Spirit of Prophecy

“The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church, and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given ... should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 308.

PROMISE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

1. What is one of the great promises that the Lord made to Israel centuries before the Christian era?

ISAIAH 44:3 *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.*

EZEKIEL 39:29 *Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.*

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

“Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

2. What did the Lord declare through another prophet? To what time does this prophecy refer?

JOEL 2:28-30 *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.*

³⁰*And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.*

“The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, ‘Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ 1 John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ Isaiah 8:20.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

THE TIME OF FULFILLMENT

3. When did the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit referred to in the above verse take place? How does the reference to the book of Joel in Acts look forward to the time of the end?

ACTS 2:16-18 *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

“In immediate connection with the scenes of the great day of God, the Lord by the prophet Joel has promised a special manifestation of His Spirit. Joel 2:28. This prophecy received a partial fulfillment in the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost; but it will reach its full accomplishment in the manifestation of divine grace which will attend the closing work of the gospel.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. ix.

4. In his sermon during Pentecost, how did the apostle Peter confirm that this promise was not limited to the apostolic time but extended to the last days?

ACTS 2:38, 39 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

“After the wonderful manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Peter exhorted the people to repentance and baptism in the name of Christ, for the remission of their sins; and he said: ‘Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.’ Acts 2:38, 39.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. ix.

“In harmony with the word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. viii.

THE REMNANT PEOPLE AND THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

5. What spiritual gift was prophesied to support the remnant people in the last days?

REVELATION 12:17; 19:10 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ....^{19:10} And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

“‘And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’ This prophecy points out clearly that the remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the Spirit of prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations.”
—*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 33.

PURPOSE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

6. What is the Lord’s purpose in sending His prophets and prophecy to His people? What appeal is made regarding the light and word of prophecy?

2 PETER 1:19 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.*

“The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study, are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the Word that they have neglected to follow. The Word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the Testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 663, 664.

BLESSINGS FOR THOSE WHO TRUST THE PROPHETS’ MESSAGES

7. What happens when the gift of prophecy is not available or not accepted? How will those who trust the Lord’s prophets and accept His messages be blessed?

PROVERBS 29:18 *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

2 CHRONICLES 20:20 *And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

“The apostle cautioned the Thessalonians not to despise the gift of prophecy, and in the words, ‘Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove

all things; hold fast that which is good,' he enjoined a careful discrimination in distinguishing the false from the true. He besought them to 'abstain from all appearance of evil;' and closed his letter with the prayer that God would sanctify them wholly, that in 'Spirit and soul and body' they might 'be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you,' he added, 'who also will do it.' 1 Thessalonians 5:19-24." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 263, 264.

"We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the Testimonies to the church, and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 298.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"We are living in the last days, in a time when we may expect much from the Lord. These words [Joel 2:28] should bring us to the throne of grace to claim great things of Him. Here the promise is given that on the men and women and on our sons and daughters the Holy Spirit is to come; and 'whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' This brings to view a wonderful work to be done, for which we need the converting power of God in our hearts every day. It is our privilege to experience this. Heaven is full of blessings, and it is our privilege to claim the rich promises of God for our individual selves. We need to seek the Lord day and night that we may know just what steps to take and just what we ought to do." —*My Life Today*, p. 62.

"During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God." —*The Great Controversy*, p. viii.

* * *

The Temple of God

“Our bodies are Christ’s purchased property, and we are not at liberty to do with them as we please. Man has done this. He has treated his body as if its laws had no penalty.... Because man has sinned against his body, and has corrupted his ways, God is dishonored.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 18.

“When men take any course which needlessly expends their vitality or beclouds their intellect, they sin against God; they do not glorify Him in their body and spirit, which are His.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 8.

THE BODY—TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. As what does the word of the Lord describe the body? On that basis, what should we do with our body, soul, and spirit?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19, 20 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*

ROMANS 14:7, 8 *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.*

“We are not our own. We have been purchased with a dear price, even the sufferings and death of the Son of God. If we could understand this, and fully realize it, we would feel a great responsibility resting upon us to keep ourselves in the very best condition of health, that we might render to God perfect service. But when we take any course which expends our vitality, decreases our strength, or beclouds the intellect we sin against God. In pursuing this course we are not glorifying Him in our bodies and spirits which are His, but are committing a great wrong in His sight.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 354.

THE FOOD OF EDEN AND IN THE WILDERNESS

2. What food did the Lord provide for Adam and Eve in Eden? What did He give His people to eat on the way to Canaan?

GENESIS 1:29 *And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*

EXODUS 16:4, 35 *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.... ³⁵And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.*

“In choosing man’s food in Eden, the Lord showed what was the best diet; in the choice made for Israel, He taught the same lesson....

“When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, it was His purpose to establish them in the land of Canaan a pure, happy, healthy people. Let us look at the means by which He would accomplish this. He subjected them to a course of discipline, which, had it been cheerfully followed, would have resulted in good, both to themselves and to their posterity. He removed flesh food from them in a great measure. He had granted them flesh in answer to their clamors, just before reaching Sinai, but it was furnished for only one day. God might have provided flesh as easily as manna, but a restriction was placed upon the people for their good. It was His purpose to supply them with food better suited to their wants than the feverish diet to which many of them had been accustomed in Egypt. The perverted appetite was to be brought into a more healthy state, that they might enjoy the food originally provided for man—the fruits of the earth, which God gave to Adam and Eve in Eden.” – *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 374, 377, 378.

FOOD IN THE NEW EARTH

3. What will grow in the new earth to provide food and health for the children of the King? Keeping both the past and the future in mind, what should God’s people do today to preserve their health in the best possible way?

ISAIAH 65:21 *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.*

EZEKIEL 47:12 *And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

“There the Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. [Isaiah 65:21, 22 quoted.]” – *Education*, p. 303.

“Will the people who are preparing to become holy, pure, and refined, that they may be introduced into the society of heavenly angels, continue to take the life of God’s creatures and subsist on their flesh and enjoy it as a luxury? From what the Lord has shown me, this order of things will be changed, and God’s peculiar people will exercise temperance in all things.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 63.

“Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods, tea and coffee, and rich and unhealthful food preparations, and who are determined to make a covenant with God by sacrifice, will not continue to indulge their appetite for food that they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people.” – *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 36.

4. Since our bodies are the temples of God, what should characterize our outward appearance and our lives for the honor of the divine Creator?

1 TIMOTHY 2:9, 10 *In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; ¹⁰But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*

1 PETER 3:2-4 *While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. ³Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; ⁴But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

“Dress as Christians should dress—simply, plainly adorn yourselves as becometh women professing godliness, with good works.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 421.

“The lesson applies to believers in every age. ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ Matthew 7:20. The inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit is priceless. In the life of the true Christian the outward adorning is always in harmony with the inward peace and holiness. ‘If any man will come after Me,’ Christ said, ‘let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’ Matthew 16:24. Self-denial and sacrifice will mark the Christian’s life. Evidence that the taste is converted will be seen in the dress of all who walk in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 523.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEMPERANCE

5. What balance should we maintain, regardless of society’s ideas and practices? What should be our goal in eating, drinking, dressing, speaking, and everything that we do?

2 PETER 1:6 *And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;*

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.*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31-33 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. ³²Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: ³³Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

“The strength of the temptation to indulge appetite can be measured only by the inexpressible anguish of our Redeemer in that long fast in the wilderness. He knew that the indulgence of perverted appetite would so deaden man’s perceptions that sacred things could not be discerned. Adam fell by the indulgence of appetite; Christ overcame by the denial of appetite. And our only hope of regaining Eden is through firm self-control. If the power of indulged appetite was so strong upon the race, that, in order to break its hold

the divine Son of God, in man's behalf, had to endure a fast of nearly six weeks, what a work is before the Christian! Yet, however great the struggle, he may overcome. By the help of that divine power which withstood the fiercest temptations that Satan could invent, he, too, may be entirely successful in his warfare with evil, and at last may wear the victor's crown in the kingdom of God."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 167.

KEEPING BODY AND MIND HOLY

6. During His ministry, Jesus cleansed the temple twice, even though it would soon be destroyed. Now the temple of God on the earth is one's body. What should we do to keep our bodies clean?

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23, 24 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

"This is true sanctification. It is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing, be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies—not an offering corrupted by wrong habits but—a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 165.

HEALTH AND BLESSING

7. If we wish the Lord's blessing, what will be our purpose in life? What will be the result now if we joyfully follow the heavenly light and obey the Master's voice?

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

EXODUS 15:26 *And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

PROVERBS 4:18, 22 *But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.... ²²For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*

"God desired to make of His people Israel a praise and a glory. Every spiritual advantage was given them. God withheld from them nothing favorable to

the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself.”
–*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 288.

“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.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Revelation 22:2; 1 Peter 4:2; Romans 14:7, 8.

“Let our sisters dress plainly, as many do, having the dress of good, durable material, appropriate for this age, and let not the dress question fill the mind.... They should clothe themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. Give to the world a living illustration of the inward adorning of the grace of God.” –*Child Guidance*, p. 414. .

“Adam and Eve fell through intemperate appetite. Christ came and withstood the fiercest temptation of Satan, and, in behalf of the race, overcame appetite, showing that man may overcome. As Adam fell through appetite, and lost blissful Eden, the children of Adam may, through Christ, overcome appetite, and through temperance in all things regain Eden.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 70.

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*Read the Missionary Appeal
for The Sabbath Watchman on page 64*

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Sabbath, December 26, 2015

The Christian and Government

“In the name of the Lord we are to go forward, unfurling His banner, advocating His word. When the authorities command us not to do this work; when they forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, then it will be necessary for us to say as did the apostles: ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ Acts 4:19, 20.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 395.

ORIGIN AND FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

- 1. What is written about the origin and existence of governments? As long as they remain within their God-given limits, what is their purpose?**

ROMANS 13:1, 3, 4 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God....³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: ‘For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

“Who, then, is to be regarded as the Ruler of the nations? The Lord God Omnipotent. All kings, all rulers, all nations, are His, under His rule and government.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1081.

“Rulers are God’s servants, and they are to serve their time as His apprentices. It is for their good that they faithfully follow the plain ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ keeping the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. They are to exercise their powers without partiality and without hypocrisy, refusing to be bought or sold, scorning all bribes, and standing in moral independence and dignity before God. They are not to connive at one act of dishonesty or injustice. They are not to do a base, unjust action themselves, nor to sustain others in acts of oppression. Wise rulers will not permit the people to be oppressed because of the envy and jealousy of those who disregard the law of God.... All need to keep eternity in view, and not to act in such a way that God cannot ratify their judgment in the courts of heaven.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1081.

2. When it promotes good and punishes evil, what is our duty toward every governmental authority? When it carries out its legitimate mandate, is there any reason to question its authority?

1 PETER 2:13-15 *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; ¹⁴Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. ¹⁵For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

“I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. ‘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.’ He who has God’s law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God’s people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 361.

NOT ALL LAWS AND ORDINANCES ARE GOOD AND JUST

3. Can it be said that all laws and ordinances are right and just, for the express purpose of holding back evil and promoting good? What are some recorded examples of governmental abuses and irregularities?

EXODUS 1:8-10, 15, 16 *Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. ⁹And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: ¹⁰Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.... ¹⁵And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrews midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: ¹⁶And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrews women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.*

1 SAMUEL 22:11, 16 *Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.... ¹⁶And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.*

“Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. They can appreciate no other. Worldly policy and public opinion comprise the principle of action that governs them and leads them to practice the form of right doing. But God’s people cannot be governed by these motives. The words and commands of God, written in the soul, are spirit and life, and there is power in them to bring into subjection and enforce obedience.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 361.

4. What principle is the Christian to follow when there is a conflict between God's law and Caesar's requirements? In time of war, can a Christian take up weapons and kill his fellow human beings if the government requires it?

MATTHEW 22:15-17, 21 *Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. ¹⁶And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. ¹⁷Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? They say unto him, Caesar's.... ²¹Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*

EXODUS 20:13 *Thou shalt not kill.*

“The Saviour’s words, ‘Render ... unto God the things that are God’s’ (Matthew 22:21), were a severe rebuke to the intriguing Jews. Had they faithfully fulfilled their obligations to God, they would not have become a broken nation, subject to a foreign power. No Roman ensign would have waved over Jerusalem, no Roman sentinel would have stood at her gates, no Roman governor would have ruled within her walls. The Jewish nation was then paying the penalty of its apostasy from God.

“When the Pharisees heard Christ’s answer, ‘they marveled, and left Him, and went their way.’ Matthew 22:22. He had rebuked their hypocrisy and presumption, and in doing this He had stated a great principle, a principle that clearly defines the limits of man’s duty to the civil government and his duty to God.” –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 602, 603.

5. For example, did the servants of King Saul carry out his unjust and iniquitous order? What firm position did Daniel's three friends take when they were ordered to worship the image made by the Babylonian king?

1 SAMUEL 22:17 *And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.*

DANIEL 3:15-18 *Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. ¹⁷If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

“Teach the people to conform in all things to the laws of their state when they can do so without conflicting with the law of God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 238.

“The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good laws. Those who love God’s commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 361, 362.

6. Following the same principle of fidelity to God, what did the disciples reply when the Jewish authorities commanded them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus?

ACTS 4:18; 5:28, 29 *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye....* ^{5:28}*Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.* ²⁹*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

“This principle we in our day are firmly to maintain. The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God’s witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His word. We are to receive this word as supreme authority. We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God’s word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is not to be set aside for a ‘Thus saith the church’ or a ‘Thus saith the state.’ The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 68, 69.

ENDURANCE AND CROWN OF LIFE

7. What great sacrifice did God’s people make to remain faithful to the end? What promise is made to all who endure opposition, persecution, or even death for the Lord’s sake?

REVELATION 12:11; 2:10 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death....* ^{2:10}*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

“All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

“The kingdom of Christ.... Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29. In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 77.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Matthew 2:16; 5:21, 22; 10:17, 18, 22.

“David’s power had been given him by God, but to be exercised only in harmony with the divine law. When he commanded that which was contrary to God’s law, it became sin to obey. ‘The powers that be are ordained of God’ (Romans 13:1), but we are not to obey them contrary to God’s law. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, sets forth the principle by which we should be governed. He says, ‘Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.’ 1 Corinthians 11:1.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 719.

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MISSIONARY APPEAL
FOR *THE SABBATH WATCHMAN*

To be read on Sabbath, December 26, 2015

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, January 2, 2016*

A Call to Support the Publishing Work

The publications sent forth from our printing houses are to prepare a people to meet God. Throughout the world they are to do the same work that was done by John the Baptist for the Jewish nation. By startling messages of warning, God's prophet awakened men from worldly dreaming. Through him God called backsliding Israel to repentance. By his presentation of truth he exposed popular delusions. In contrast with the false theories of his time, truth in his teaching stood forth as an eternal certainty. "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," was John's message. Matthew 3:2. This same message, through the publications from our printing houses, is to be given to the world today.

The prophecy that John's mission fulfilled outlines our work: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Verse 3. As John prepared the way for the first, so we are to prepare the way for the second advent of the Saviour. Our publishing institutions are to exalt the claims of God's downtrodden law. Standing before the world as reformers, they are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all His commandments. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the old waste places, raising up the foundations of many generations. They are to stand as repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. Through their testimony the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a witness, a constant reminder of God, to attract notice and arouse investigation that shall direct the minds of men to their Creator.

Let it never be forgotten that these institutions are to cooperate with the ministry of the delegates of heaven. They are among the agencies represented by the angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice,

Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” Revelation 14:6, 7.

From them is to go forth the terrible denunciation: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Verse 8.

They are represented by the third angel that followed, “saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” Verses 9, 10.

And in a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory.

Solemn is the responsibility that rests upon our houses of publication. Those who conduct these institutions, those who edit the periodicals and prepare the books, standing as they do in the light of God’s purpose, and called to give warning to the world, are held by God accountable for the souls of their fellow men. To them, as well as to the ministers of the word, applies the message given by God to His prophet of old: “Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Ezekiel 33:7, 8.

Never did this message apply with greater force than it applies today....

To every human being in the wide world who will give heed, we are to make plain the principles at stake in the great controversy—principles upon which hangs the eternal destiny of the soul. To the people far and near we are to bring home the question: “Are you following the great apostate in disobedience to God’s law, or are you following the Son of God, who declared, ‘I have kept My Father’s commandments’?”

This is the work before us; for this our publishing institutions were established; it is this work that God expects at their hands....

Do not encourage criticism and complaining. Let no murmurs or complaints come from your lips; remember that angels hear these words. All must be led to see that these institutions are of God’s appointment. Those who disparage them in order to serve their own interests must render an account to God. He designs that everything connected with His work shall be treated as sacred....

God wants us to do much more praying and much less talking.

Brethren and sisters, the Lord will be pleased if you will take hold heartily to sustain the publishing institution with your prayers and your means. Pray every morning and evening that it may receive God's richest blessings. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 139-142, 182, 183.

—*Ellen G. White*

The offerings gathered this coming Sabbath will help to publish *The Sabbath Watchman*. In addition to your prayers and donations, your suggestions, spiritual articles, news items, and personal experiences are also solicited. God bless us all in His service.

—*Larry Watts*
General Conference
Publishing Department Leader

