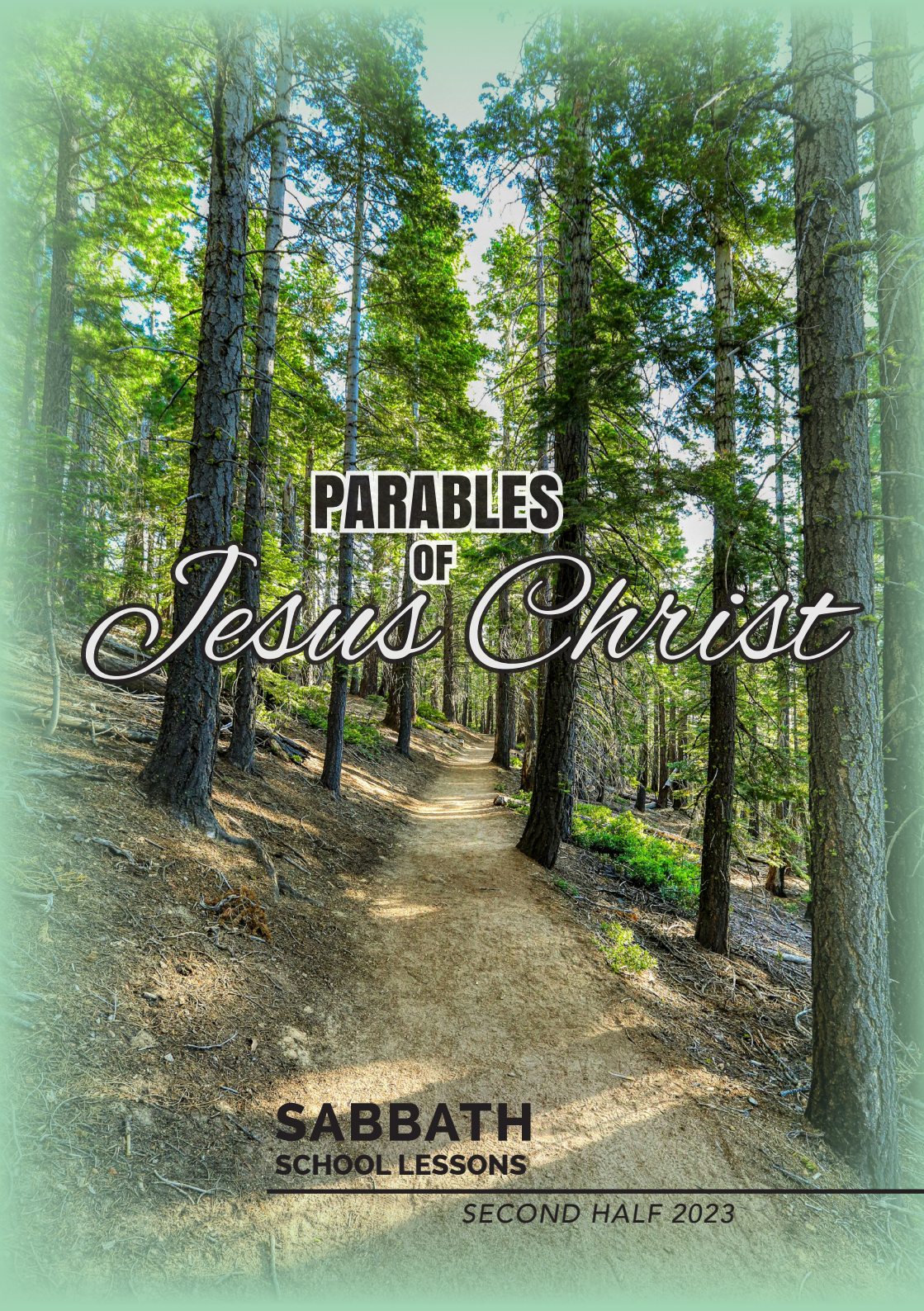


A dirt path winds through a forest of tall evergreen trees. The path is made of dry leaves and dirt, and the trees are tall and thin with green needles. The sun is shining through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the path.

PARABLES **OF** *Jesus Christ*

SABBATH
SCHOOL LESSONS

SECOND HALF 2023

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Second Half 2023
Parables of Jesus Christ

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SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

PARABLES
OF
Jesus Christ

SECOND HALF 2023

General Conference
International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church,
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INTRODUCTION

"The earth is now marred and defiled by sin.... In the days of Christ,... the sinfulness of humanity had cast a pall over the fair face of creation." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 18.

The apostle Paul, who had received his education from the rabbis and, after his conversion, understood the teaching of divine revelation, received knowledge from the book of nature and wrote in his epistle to the Romans 1:19, 20: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

"So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar.

"The Scripture says, 'All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables;... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.' Matthew 13:34, 35. Natural things were the medium for the spiritual; the things of nature and the life experience of His hearers were connected with the truths of the written word. Leading thus from the natural to the spiritual kingdom, Christ's parables are links in the chain of truth that unites man with God, and earth with heaven.

"In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 17.

"Again God dwelt on earth; human hearts became conscious of His presence; the world was encompassed with His love. Heaven came down to men. In Christ their hearts acknowledged Him who opened to them the science of eternity." –*Education*, p. 82.

Jesus was admired and recognized as the Great Teacher, even among His enemies, as recorded in John 7:46. "The officers answered, Never man spake like this Man."

Likewise, the evangelist Matthew wrote: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." "When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him." Matthew 7:28; 8:1.

In this half year, we will study a number of Jesus' parables. They contain deep teachings to put into action and share with those around us in preparation for the coming of the eternal kingdom that we wish to inherit when the Saviour returns in glory.

"Whoever will prayerfully study the Bible, desiring to know the truth, that he may obey it, will receive divine enlightenment. He will understand the Scriptures. 'If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.' John 7:17." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 459.

Let us pray for divine guidance, wisdom, and blessing as we study these Sabbath School Lessons.

– *Brothers and sisters of the General Conference
and the Ministerial Department*

Special Sabbath School Offering for
MALAWI
God bless your generous contribution!

LESSON 1

Sabbath, July 1, 2023

The Purpose of Parables



"I will open My mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old." Psalm 78:2.

"'All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables;... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.' Matthew 13:34, 35. Natural things were the medium for the spiritual; the things of nature and the life experience of His hearers were connected with the truths of the written word. Leading thus from the natural to the spiritual kingdom, Christ's parables are links in the chain of truth that unites man with God, and earth with heaven."
—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 17.

PURPOSE

SUNDAY

1. Why did Jesus speak to the people in parables? What does the Bible student who searches them receive?

bles? ¹¹He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. ¹²For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

[L] Matthew 13:10-12. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in para-

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

"We should study the Saviour's parables where He spoke them, in the fields and groves, under the open sky, among the grass and flowers. As we come close to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our hearts of His peace and love." *—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 25.*

MONDAY

2. What does one need to understand His parables? Otherwise, what will be the result?

 **1 Corinthians 2:14.** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

 **Matthew 13:14, 15.** And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear,

and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: ¹⁵For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

 **John 16:13, 14.** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ¹⁴He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

"But the mass of mankind despise the truths of God's word and prefer fables. 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11: 'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.'" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 300.

TUESDAY

3. Why are those who study the parables blessed? For what purpose should they be studied?

 **Matthew 13:16, 17.** But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷For verily I say

unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

 **1 Peter 1:12.** Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

"While the angels hold the four winds, we are to work with all our capabilities. We must bear our message without any delay. We must give evidence to the heavenly universe, and to men in this degenerate age, that

our religion is a faith and a power of which Christ is the Author and His word the divine oracle. Human souls are hanging in the balance. They will either be subjects for the kingdom of God or slaves to the despotism of Satan." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 21.

FEELINGS AROUSED BY THE PARABLES

WEDNESDAY

4. What does one sense when he understands the parables? What will follow this?

 **Romans 10:10-12.** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¹²For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

"All are to have the privilege of laying hold of the hope set before them in the gospel, and how can they hear without a preacher? The human family is in need of a moral renovation, a preparation of character, that they may stand in God's presence. There are souls ready to perish because of the theoretical errors which are prevailing, and which are calculated to counterwork the gospel message. Who will now fully consecrate themselves to become laborers together with God?" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 21.

THURSDAY

5. What benefits are obtained? Personally, what do you want to receive?

 **Matthew 13:51, 52, 45.** Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. ⁵²Then said he unto them,

Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old....
⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.

 **Proverbs 23:23.** Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

"In different nations there were earnest and thoughtful men who had sought in literature and science and the religions of the heathen world for that which they could receive as the soul's treasure. Among the Jews there

were those who were seeking for that which they had not. Dissatisfied with a formal religion, they longed for that which was spiritual and uplifting. "Christ's chosen disciples belonged to the latter class, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch to the former. They had been longing and praying for light from heaven; and when Christ was revealed to them, they received Him with gladness." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 116.

FRIDAY

6. What does the Creator want from those who accept Him? List and explain these things.

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.

 **Luke 15:17, 18.** And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired

 **1 Corinthians 6:11.** 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.

"'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.

SABBATH

7. To what does the Lord invite all who study the parables? What is His great goal?

 **Psalms 95:6-8.** O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. ⁷For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

"What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying

the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216.



For Additional Study

"But no man can impart that which he himself has not received. In the work of God, humanity can originate nothing. No man can by his own effort make himself a light bearer for God. It was the golden oil emptied by the heavenly messengers into the golden tubes, to be conducted from the golden bowl into the lamps of the sanctuary, that produced a continuous bright and shining light. It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 418.

LESSON 2

Sabbath, July 8, 2023

Wheat and Tares



"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." Matthew 13:24, 25.

"The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth. The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. 'The enemy that sowed them is the devil.' Neither God nor His angels ever sowed a seed that would produce a tare. The tares are always sown by Satan, the enemy of God and man." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 70.

THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL

SUNDAY

1. What question has been asked throughout all time? Why did Christ come to this earth?

[L] Matthew 13:27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good

seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

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

[L] 1 John 3:8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

"'He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man.... The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 70.

MONDAY

2. What is the enemy's favorite field for sowing tares?

What is the result of his evil planting?

☐ **Matthew 13:25.** But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

☐ **Romans 2:19-24.** And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, ²⁰An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the

form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. ²¹Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? ²²Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? ²³Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? ²⁴For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

☐ **Matthew 23:13.** But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

"In the East, men sometimes took revenge upon an enemy by strewing his newly sown fields with the seeds of some noxious weed that, while growing, closely resembled wheat. Springing up with the wheat, it injured the crop and brought trouble and loss to the owner of the field. So it is from enmity to Christ that Satan scatters his evil seed among the good grain of the kingdom. The fruit of his sowing he attributes to the Son of God. By bringing into the church those who bear Christ's name while they deny His character, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 71.

TUESDAY

3. What is Satan's purpose in sowing tares? Whom does he use as tares?

☐ **2 Timothy 3:5.** Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

☐ **Titus 1:16.** They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

"Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God's goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe.

"The world has no right to doubt the truth of Christianity because there are unworthy members in the church, nor should Christians become disheartened because of these false brethren. How was it with the early church? Ananias and Sapphira joined themselves to the disciples. Simon Magus was baptized. Demas, who forsook Paul, had been counted a believer. Judas Iscariot was numbered with the apostles.

"The Redeemer does not want to lose one soul; His experience with Judas is recorded to show His long patience with perverse human nature; and He bids us bear with it as He has borne. He has said that false brethren will be found in the church till the close of time." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 72.

DESIRES OF FAITHFUL BELIEVERS

WEDNESDAY

4. What do many faithful believers want to do when they see tares in the church? What instruction did Jesus give concerning this?

 **Matthew 13:28, 29.** He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

"Christ's servants are grieved as they see true and false believers mingled in the church. They long to do something to cleanse the church. Like the servants of the householder, they are ready to uproot the tares. But Christ says to them, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.'

"As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast.... Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil, He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the

misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 71, 72.

HUMAN VS. DIVINE ACTION

JUEVES

5. How should open sin be dealt with? But what limit has God placed on man because of the tares and open sin?

 **1 Timothy 5:24, 25.** Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. ²⁵Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

“Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 71.

FRIDAY

6. What will secular Christianity do at the end of time? What will keep one from being a tare?

 **John 16:2, 4; 15:4, 7.** They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.... ⁴But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.... ^{15:4}Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide

in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.... ⁷If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

"Notwithstanding Christ's warning, men have sought to uproot the tares. To punish those who were supposed to be evildoers, the church has had recourse to the civil power. Those who differed from the established doctrines have been imprisoned, put to torture and to death, at the instigation of men who claimed to be acting under the sanction of Christ. But it is the spirit of Satan, not the Spirit of Christ, that inspires such acts. This is Satan's own method of bringing the world under his dominion. God has been misrepresented through the church by this way of dealing with those supposed to be heretics." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 74.

THE DIFFERENCE

SÁBADO

7. When will the difference between the tares and the wheat become evident? What should one do every day to be faithful?

 **Matthew 13:40-42; 26:41.** As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. ⁴¹The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴²And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.... ^{26:41}Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

"The tares closely resembled the wheat while the blades were green; but when the field was white for the harvest, the worthless weeds bore no likeness to the wheat that bowed under the weight of its full, ripe heads. Sinners who make a pretension of piety mingle for a time with the true followers of Christ, and the semblance of Christianity is calculated to deceive many; but in the harvest of the world there will be no likeness between good and evil. Then those who have joined the church, but who have not joined Christ, will be manifest." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 74.



For Additional Study

"The Saviour does not point forward to a time when all the tares become wheat. The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. Then the tares are bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner of God. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' Then 'the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 75.

LESSON 3

Sabbath, July 15, 2023

The Sower



"And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Matthew 13:3.

"By the parable of the sower, Christ illustrates the things of the kingdom of heaven, and the work of the great Husbandman for His people. Like a sower in the field, He came to scatter the heavenly grain of truth. And His parable teaching itself was the seed with which the most precious truths of His grace were sown. Because of its simplicity the parable of the sower has not been valued as it should be. From the natural seed cast into the soil, Christ desires to lead our minds to the gospel seed, the sowing of which results in bringing man back to his loyalty to God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 33.

SOWING TO REAP

DOMINGO

1. Who is the Sower, and to what are God's people called?

[1] 2 Corinthians 8:9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

[1] Hebrews 13:12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

[1] Genesis 12:1, 4. Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.... ⁴So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

"'The sower went forth to sow' (R.V.). In the East the state of affairs was so unsettled, and there was so great danger from violence that the people dwelt chiefly in walled towns, and the husbandmen went forth daily to their

labor outside the walls. So Christ, the heavenly Sower, went forth to sow. He left His home of security and peace, left the glory that He had with the Father before the world was, left His position upon the throne of the universe. He went forth, a suffering, tempted man; went forth in solitude, to sow in tears, to water with His blood, the seed of life for a world lost.”
—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 36.

MONDAY

2. What is the seed? Into what kinds of soil can it fall?

 **Mark 4:14.** The sower soweth the word.

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

 **Mark 4:4-8.** And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. ⁵And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: ⁶But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. ⁸And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

“In the days of Christ the rabbis put a forced, mystical construction upon many portions of Scripture. Because the plain teaching of God’s word condemned their practices, they tried to destroy its force. The same thing is done today. The word of God is made to appear mysterious and obscure in order to excuse transgression of His law. Christ rebuked these practices in His day. He taught that the word of God was to be understood by all. He pointed to the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority, and we should do the same. The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the end of all controversy and the foundation of all faith.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 39.

TUESDAY

3. What results are obtained from such sowing? What kind of soil are we?

 **Jeremiah 4:3.** For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

[] Mark 4:15-20. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. ¹⁶And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; ¹⁷And have no root in themselves,

and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. ¹⁸And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, ¹⁹And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. ²⁰And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

"That with which the parable of the sower chiefly deals is the effect produced on the growth of the seed by the soil into which it is cast. By this parable Christ was virtually saying to His hearers, It is not safe for you to stand as critics of My work, or to indulge disappointment because it does not meet your ideas. The question of greatest importance to you is, How do you treat My message? Upon your reception or rejection of it your eternal destiny depends." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 43.

WEDNESDAY

4. Why did Christ not find the fruit that He desired in the Jewish people as a nation? Why was it rejected?

[] Isaiah 5:2. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

[] Acts 28:25-28. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, ²⁶Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ²⁷For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. ²⁸Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

"But Israel knew not the time of her visitation. The jealousy and distrust of the Jewish leaders had ripened into open hatred, and the hearts of the people were turned away from Jesus.

"The Sanhedrin had rejected Christ's message and was bent upon His death; therefore Jesus departed from Jerusalem, from the priests, the temple, the religious leaders, the people who had been instructed in the law, and turned to another class to proclaim His message, and to gather out those who should carry the gospel to all nations." –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 231, 232.

"As the birds are ready to catch up the seed from the wayside, so Satan is ready to catch away the seeds of divine truth from the soul. He fears that the word of God may awaken the careless, and take effect upon the hardened heart. Satan and his angels are in the assemblies where the gospel is preached. While angels of heaven endeavor to impress hearts with the word of God, the enemy is on the alert to make the word of no effect. With an earnestness equaled only by his malice, he tries to thwart the work of the Spirit of God. While Christ is drawing the soul by His love, Satan tries to turn away the attention of the one who is moved to seek the Saviour. He engages the mind with worldly schemes. He excites criticism, or insinuates doubt and unbelief." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 44.

GREAT NEED

THURSDAY

5. What experience do believers need to have? Why is self-examination so important?

[1] 2 Corinthians 13:5. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not

your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

[1] Job 34:32. That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

[1] Matthew 16:24, 25. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

"Love for souls for whom Christ died means crucifixion of self. He who is a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost. The Christian is ever to realize that he has consecrated himself to God, and that in character he is to reveal Christ to the world. The self-sacrifice, the sympathy, the love, manifested in the life of Christ are to reappear in the life of the worker for God." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 417.

DOING THE CREATOR'S WILL

VIERNES

6. What does the Sower call His people to do? What obstacles can impede the progress of the gospel message?

Matthew 9:37. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.

John 4:35, 36. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

“‘He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.’ Matthew 13:37. Christ had come, not as a king, but as a sower; not for the overthrow of kingdoms, but for the scattering of seed; not to point His followers to earthly triumphs and national greatness, but to a harvest to be gathered after patient toil and through losses and disappointments.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 35.

SABBATH

7. To what is every person called? What should each one do?

³⁶And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Matthew 20:4-7. And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. ⁵Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. ⁶And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? ⁷They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

Isaiah 6:8. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Mark 4:27. And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

John 4:38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

“‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’... No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour’s words have pictured. But all this He had accepted for them. Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven’s priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 416.



For Additional Study

“At the very outset of the Christian life every believer should be taught its foundation principles. He should be taught that he is not merely to be saved by Christ’s sacrifice, but that he is to make the life of Christ his life and the character of Christ his character. Let all be taught that they are to bear burdens and to deny natural inclination. Let them learn the blessedness of working for Christ, following Him in self-denial, and enduring hardness as good soldiers. Let them learn to trust His love and to cast on Him their cares. Let them taste the joy of winning souls for Him. In their love and interest for the lost, they will lose sight of self. The pleasures of the world will lose their power to attract and its burdens to dishearten. The plowshare of truth will do its work. It will break up the fallow ground. It will not merely cut off the tops of the thorns, but will take them out by the roots.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 57.

LESSON 4

Sabbath, July 22, 2023

The Lamp



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

"We are sustained every moment by God's care, and upheld by His power. He spreads our tables with food. He gives us peaceful and refreshing sleep. Weekly He brings to us the Sabbath, that we may rest from our temporal labors, and worship Him in His own house. He has given us His word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In its sacred pages we find the counsels of wisdom; and as oft as we lift our hearts to Him in penitence and faith, He grants us the blessings of His grace." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 18.

WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW

SUNDAY

1. What happened as a result of sin in this world? What two ways did the parable depict how to detect darkness?

[1] Isaiah 60:2. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

[1] Matthew 6:23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

"'No man can serve two masters.' We cannot serve God with a divided heart. Bible religion is not one influence among many others; its influence is to be supreme, pervading and controlling every other. It is not to be like a dash of color brushed here and there upon the canvas, but it is to pervade the whole life, as if the canvas were dipped into the color, until every thread of the fabric were dyed a deep, unfading hue." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312.

MONDAY

2. What is necessary to eradicate darkness, and how is divine light perceived?

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

📖 **Matthew 6:22.** The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

“‘If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.’ Purity and steadfastness of purpose are the conditions of receiving light from God. He who desires to know the truth must be willing to accept all that it reveals. He can make no compromise with error. To be wavering and half-hearted in allegiance to truth is to choose the darkness of error and satanic delusion.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312.

TUESDAY

3. What characteristics are present in those who receive the divine light of revelation? How is it provided, and for what purpose?

follow. ¹²Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

📖 **Zechariah 4:12-14.** And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? ¹³And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. ¹⁴Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

📖 **1 Peter 1:10-12.** Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should

“Concerning the two witnesses the prophet declares further: ‘These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.’ ‘Thy word,’ said the psalmist, ‘is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.’ Revelation 11:4; Psalm 119:105. The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are wit-

nesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 267.

WEDNESDAY

4. Who is the Light of the world? Who were called to be light bearers in the Old and New Testaments?

[1] John 8:12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

[1] Romans 3:1-3. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is

there of circumcision? ²Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. ³For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

[1] Revelation 1:13, 20. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.... ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

“In like manner, when God was about to open to the beloved John the history of the church for future ages, He gave him an assurance of the Saviour’s interest and care for His people by revealing to him ‘One like unto the Son of man,’ walking among the candlesticks, which symbolized the seven churches.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 752.

SEEKING THE OIL OF HIS SPIRIT

THURSDAY

5. What task was assigned to the people and to the priestly ministry? Where in the sanctuary did they serve?

[1] Exodus 27:20, 21. And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. ²¹In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Numbers 8:1, 2. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, ²Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.

Psalm 18:28. For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

"Everything connected with institutional service should bear the signature of Heaven. A sense of the sacredness of God's institutions should be encouraged and cultivated. The workers are to humble their hearts before the Lord, acknowledging His sovereignty. All are to live in accordance with principles of self-denial. As the true, self-sacrificing laborer, with his spiritual lamp trimmed and burning, strives unselfishly to advance the interests of the institution in which he is working, he will have a precious experience, and will be able to say, 'The Lord indeed is in this place.' He will feel that he is highly privileged in being permitted to give to the Lord's institution his ability, his service, and his unwearying vigilance." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 176.

WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO

FRIDAY

6. When one has lost coins in his house, what three things should he do? What will be the result of such actions?

Luke 15:8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

Matthew 12:43-45. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. ⁴⁴Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. ⁴⁵Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

"There were many in Christ's day, as there are today, over whom the control of Satan for the time seemed broken; through the grace of God they were set free from the evil spirits that had held dominion over the soul. They rejoiced in the love of God; but, like the stony-ground hearers of the parable, they did not abide in His love. They did not surrender themselves to God daily, that Christ might dwell in the heart; and when the evil spirit returned, with 'seven other spirits more wicked than himself,' they were wholly dominated by the power of evil." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 323.

SABBATH

7. What divine endowment will permeate the Christian's actions? What will be the result of his endeavors?

 **Psalm 119:9.** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

 **Jeremiah 33:8, 9.** And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby

they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.⁹ And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

 **Philippians 2:15.** That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

"How little do we enter into sympathy with Christ on that which should be the strongest bond of union between us and Him—compassion for depraved, guilty, suffering souls, dead in trespasses and sins! The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin. Many think that they are representing the justice of God while they wholly fail of representing His tenderness and His great love. Often the ones whom they meet with sternness and severity are under the stress of temptation. Satan is wrestling with these souls, and harsh, unsympathetic words discourage them and cause them to fall a prey to the tempter's power." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 163.



For Additional Study

"The Bible is the most ancient and the most comprehensive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and throughout the ages a divine hand has preserved its purity. It lights up the far-distant past, where human research in vain seeks to penetrate. In God's word only do we behold the power that laid the foundations of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only do we find an authentic account of the origin of nations. Here only is given a history of our race unsullied by human pride or prejudice." —*Education*, p. 173.

"Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the moon when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. But when we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

LESSON 5

Sabbath, July 29, 2023

Leaven



"Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matthew 13:33.

"... From all our institutions literature containing the science of Satan is excluded. We are brought into connection with the world, not that we may be leavened with the world's falsehood, but that as God's agencies we may leaven the world with His truth." –Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 168.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE LEAVEN OF WICKEDNESS AND THAT OF TRUTH

SUNDAY

1 .Yeast is a unicellular, inactive fungus. With whom did the leaven of sin begin? Where was he cast?

[L] 1 John 3:8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that

he might destroy the works of the devil.

[L] Revelation 12:3, 4, 9. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. ⁴And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.... ⁹And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

"The very first effort of Satan to overthrow God's law—undertaken among the sinless inhabitants of heaven—seemed for a time to be crowned with

success. A vast number of the angels were seduced; but Satan's apparent triumph resulted in defeat and loss, separation from God, and banishment from heaven." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 331.

MONDAY

2. Where was the leaven of sin established? What was the result?

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

 **Romans 5:12.** 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.

"When the conflict was renewed upon the earth, Satan again won a seeming advantage. By transgression, man became his captive, and man's kingdom also was betrayed into the hands of the archrebel. Now the way seemed open for Satan to establish an independent kingdom, and to defy the authority of God and His Son. But the plan of salvation made it possible for man again to be brought into harmony with God, and to render obedience to His law, and for both man and the earth to be finally redeemed from the power of the wicked one." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 331.

TUESDAY

3. Just as fermentation takes place easily in grapes in the presence of water and fructose, resulting in alcohol, what did sin produce in this world? List the results.

 **Job 12:25.** They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

 **Romans 3:11, 12, 23.** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.... ²³For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

"In this great throng all classes of society were represented. There were the poor, the illiterate, the ragged beggar, the robber with the seal of guilt upon his face, the maimed, the dissipated, the merchant and the man of leisure, high and low, rich and poor, all crowding upon one another for a place to stand and hear the words of Christ. As these cultured men gazed upon the strange assembly, they asked themselves, Is the kingdom of God composed of such material as this? Again the Saviour replied by a parable." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 95.

WEDNESDAY

4. What does fermented wine do to new wineskins? What did Jesus urge His hearers to do?

[] **Job 32:19.** Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

“Among the Jews leaven was sometimes used as an emblem of sin. At the time of the Passover the people were directed to remove all the leaven from their houses as they were to put away sin from their hearts. Christ warned His disciples, ‘Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.’ Luke 12:1. And the apostle Paul speaks of the ‘leaven of malice and wickedness.’ 1 Corinthians 5:8.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 95.

[] **Proverbs 20:1.** Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

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

DESIRE FOR SALVATION

THURSDAY

5. What great desire is aroused in the human heart through Heaven’s work? What lies ahead of the carnal person?

[] **Jeremiah 2:22; 13:23.** For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God. ^{13:23}Can the Ethiopian change

his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

[] **Ezekiel 36:25-27.** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. ²⁶A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

“As the leaven, when mingled with the meal, works from within outward, so 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 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.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 97.

THE LEAVEN OF TRUTH

FRIDAY

6. In contrast to the fermentation that takes place in grapes, what acts as leaven in dough that contains grain? How does the leaven of truth operate in the soul?

 **Philippians 1:6.** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath

begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

 **Acts 1:8.** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

 **Matthew 13:33.** Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

“None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of this power. In all who will submit themselves to the Holy Spirit a new principle of life is to be implanted; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 96.

SABBATH

7. In the process of fermentation, leaven is activated through water in an energy source, such as flour in bread. What conditions are needed for this to work? What process takes place in three measures of flour, and how does this apply in a spiritual sense?

 **Mark 9:23.** Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

 **1 Thessalonians 5:23.** 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.

“The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently,

steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 98.



For additional study

“Often the question arises, Why, then, are there so many, claiming to believe God’s word, in whom there is not seen a reformation in words, in spirit, and in character? Why are there so many who cannot bear opposition to their purposes and plans, who manifest an unholy temper, and whose words are harsh, overbearing, and passionate? There is seen in their lives the same love of self, the same selfish indulgence, the same temper and hasty speech, that is seen in the life of the worldling. There is the same sensitive pride, the same yielding to natural inclination, the same perversity of character, as if the truth were wholly unknown to them. The reason is that they are not converted. They have not hidden the leaven of truth in the heart. It has not had opportunity to do its work. Their natural and cultivated tendencies to evil have not been submitted to its transforming power. Their lives reveal the absence of the grace of Christ, an unbelief in His power to transform the character.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 99.

LESSON 6

Sabbath, August 5, 2023

Wine and Wineskins



"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles." Mark 2:22.

"When God's people are one in the unity of the Spirit, all of Phariseeism, all of self-righteousness, which was the sin of the Jewish nation, will be expelled from all hearts. The mold of Christ will be upon each individual member of His body, and His people will be new bottles into which He can pour His new wine, and the new wine will not break the bottles. God will make known the mystery which hath been hidden for ages. He will make known what are the 'riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Colossians 1:27."

—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 386.

NEW AND OLD WINE

SUNDAY

1. What does wine represent in the Old and New Testaments? What is the difference between new and old wine?

Mark 2:22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Isaiah 55:1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Matthew 26:27-29. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹But 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.

"Nor could the principles of Christ's teaching be united with the forms of Pharisaism. Christ was not to close up the breach that had been made by the teachings of John. He would make more distinct the separation between the old and the new. Jesus further illustrated this fact, saying, 'No man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.'

"'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' said Jesus; 'for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' By perverting the Scriptures, the priests and lawyers blinded the minds of those who would otherwise have received a knowledge of Christ's kingdom, and that inward, divine life which is essential to true holiness." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 278, 614.

MONDAY

2. What do wineskins represent? What kind of wineskins are we—old or new—to be depositories of what wine, old or new?

 **Matthew 9:17.** Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

 **Luke 5:38.** But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

"The skin bottles which were used as vessels to contain the new wine, after a time became dry and brittle, and were then worthless to serve the same purpose again. In this familiar illustration Jesus presented the condition of the Jewish leaders. Priests and scribes and rulers were fixed in a rut of ceremonies and traditions. Their hearts had become contracted, like the dried-up wine skins to which He had compared them. While they remained satisfied with a legal religion, it was impossible for them to become the depositories of the living truth of heaven. They thought their own righteousness all-sufficient, and did not desire that a new element should be brought into their religion. The good will of God to men they did not accept as something apart from themselves. They connected it with their own merit because of their good works. The faith that works by love and purifies the soul could find no place for union with the religion of the Pharisees, made up of ceremonies and the injunctions of men. The effort to unite the teachings of Jesus with the established religion would be vain." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 278.

TUESDAY

3. To what wine were the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and many other people accustomed? In what skins was the new wine preserved, and why did the old skins burst when new wine was put in them?

[1] Matthew 16:6, 12. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.... ¹²Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

[1] Mark 8:15. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

"The Pharisees thought themselves too wise to need instruction, too righteous to need salvation, too highly honored to need the honor that comes from Christ. The Saviour turned away from them to find others who would receive the message of heaven. In the untutored fishermen, in the publican at the market place, in the woman of Samaria, in the common people who heard Him gladly, He found His new bottles for the new wine. The instrumentalities to be used in the gospel work are those souls who gladly receive the light which God sends them. These are His agencies for imparting the knowledge of truth to the world. If through the grace of Christ His people will become new bottles, He will fill them with new wine." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 279.

OLD WINE GENERATES ILL FEELINGS

WEDNESDAY

4. Spiritually speaking, what effects does old wine produce, and what feelings accompany it? How was this demonstrated in the event of the Babylonian King Belshazzar's feast?

the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. ³Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

[1] Daniel 5:1-3. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his Lords, and drank wine before the thousand. ²Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring

[1] 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷If any man defile the temple of

God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

[L] Daniel 5:5, 26-28, 30. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the

part of the hand that wrote.... ²⁶This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. ²⁷TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. ²⁸PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.... ³⁰In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

"This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 388.

BABYLON PRODUCES SPIRITUALLY OLD WINE

THURSDAY

5. Who were slain for refusing to drink the spiritual wine of Babylon? What is the meaning behind the third of the seven last plagues, in which water becomes blood?

[L] Revelation 6:9, 10; 18:6; 16:4-6. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord,

holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?... ^{18:6}Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.... ^{16:4}And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. ⁵And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. ⁶For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

"From India, from Africa, from China, from the islands of the sea, from the downtrodden millions of so-called Christian lands, the cry of human woe is ascending to God. That cry will not long be unanswered. God will cleanse the earth from its moral corruption, not by a sea of water as in Noah's day, but by a sea of fire that cannot be quenched by any human devising." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 179.

JESUS' MIRACLE AT THE WEDDING

FRIDAY

6. At a wedding of believers, Jesus turned water into wine. How many jars were there, what capacity did they have, and what were they normally used for?

unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. ⁹When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom.

 **John 2:6-9.** And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. ⁷Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he saith

 **Hebrews 9:22.** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

 **1 John 1:7.** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

“The gift of Christ to the marriage feast was a symbol. The water represented baptism into His death; the wine, the shedding of His blood for the sins of the world. The water to fill the jars was brought by human hands, but the word of Christ alone could impart to it life-giving virtue. So with the rites which point to the Saviour’s death. It is only by the power of Christ, working through faith, that they have efficacy to nourish the soul.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 148.

SABBATH

7. What will one who despises the blood of the Lamb receive? What is Jesus’ invitation to His faithful followers? List the blessings that come from following Him.

 **Hebrews 10:29.** Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

 **John 6:56.** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

 **Ephesians 4:13, 14.** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about

with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

 **Acts 4:20.** For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.



For Additional Study

"How can they be so blinded by Satan as to dishonor God to His face, and defile their souls by sinning knowingly? Says the apostle, 'We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.' Will these sinners—shall I call them hypocrites?—in Zion inquire, In what manner am I a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men? Answer for yourselves, By my abuse of the light and privileges and mercies God has given me, by unseemly actions which corrupt and defile the soul. Professing to know God, do I put Him out of my thoughts, and substitute an idol? Do I lead other minds to regard sin lightly by my example? Am I a spectacle to the world of moral looseness? Am I a spectacle to angels in indecent actions and moral defilement of the body?... '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.'" —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 447.

LESSON 7

Sabbath, August 12, 2023

Two Debtors



"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." Luke 7:41-43.

"The pardon granted by this king represents a divine forgiveness of all sin. Christ is represented by the king, who, moved with compassion, forgave the debt of his servant. Man was under the condemnation of the broken law. He could not save himself, and for this reason Christ came to this world, clothed His divinity with humanity, and gave His life, the just for the unjust. He gave Himself for our sins, and to every soul He freely offers the blood-bought pardon." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 242.

THE DIVINE VS. THE FALLEN NATURE

SUNDAY

1. What two attributes of God's kingdom are part of His nature? How did the parable of the two debtors depict them?

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

Luke 13:6-9. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. ⁷Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? ⁸And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: ⁹And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

1 John 4:8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

"The Lord Jesus said, 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.' There never was a time when there was greater need for the exercise of mercy than today. The poor are all around us, the distressed, the afflicted, the sorrowing, and those who are ready to perish." —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 15.

MONDAY

2. What other parable showed the Lord's great mercy? Sin is a debt that no human being can pay for, or cleanse. What do people tend to do when they are confronted with this fact?

 **Matthew 18:23-27.** Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto

a certain king, which would take account of his servants. ²⁴And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. ²⁷Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

"He had nothing to pay, and according to the custom, the king ordered him to be sold, with all that he had, that payment might be made. But the terrified man fell at his feet and besought him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 243.

TUESDAY

3. If ten thousand talents today is equivalent to 100 million Euros, and the debtor said that he would pay them back, what questions in the Psalms and the writings of Micah make one tremble at the enormity of such a debt?

 **Psalms 116:12.** What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

 **Micah 6:6, 7.** Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? ⁷Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

 **Psalms 49:8.** (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.)

“He [Christ] was to come as one of the human family, and to stand as a man before heaven and earth. He had come to take man’s place, to pledge Himself in man’s behalf, to pay the debt that sinners owed. He was to live a pure life on the earth, and show that Satan had told a falsehood when he claimed that the human family belonged to him forever, and that God could not take men out of his hands.” –*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 127.

WEDNESDAY

4. What had to be paid to settle the sinner’s account? What did the divine sacrifice for mankind demonstrate?

[1] Romans 6:23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

[1] Romans 5:8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

“The pardon granted by this king represents a divine forgiveness of all sin. Christ is represented by the king, who, moved with compassion, forgave the debt of his servant. Man was under the condemnation of the broken law. He could not save himself, and for this reason Christ came to this world, clothed His divinity with humanity, and gave His life, the just for the unjust. He gave Himself for our sins, and to every soul He freely offers the blood-bought pardon. ‘With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.’ Psalm 130:7.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 244.

CONTRASTING FEELINGS

THURSDAY

5. What part of the Lord’s prayer is often forgotten? How do one’s actions demonstrate what is lacking? Make a list, and comment on it.

[1] Matthew 6:12; 18:28-30. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ^{18:28}But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. ²⁹And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. ³⁰And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

"Here is the ground upon which we should exercise compassion toward our fellow sinners. 'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' 1 John 4:11. 'Freely ye have received,' Christ says, 'freely give.' Matthew 10:8." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 245.

FRIDAY

6. What new thoughts does conversion give the sinner? How did the apostle Paul and the patriarch Abraham express the attitude that pleases God?

[1] 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁴Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort

them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

[1] Genesis 18:25, 32. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?... ³²And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

"But the great lesson of the parable lies in the contrast between God's compassion and man's hardheartedness, in the fact that God's forgiving mercy is to be the measure of our own. 'Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 251.

PREACHING WITH ACTIONS

SABBATH

7. How does the faithful believer act? What is seen in his actions and witness?

[1] Matthew 5:16; 24:14. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven....

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

[1] 1 Peter 2:12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

"Our life must be hid with Christ in God. We must know Christ personally. Then only can we rightly represent Him to the world. Let the prayer constantly ascend, 'Lord, teach me how to do as Jesus would do, were He in my place.' Wherever we are, we must let our light shine forth to the glory of God in good works. This is the great, important interest of our life."
—*Gospel Workers*, p. 373.



For Additional Study

"But the teaching of this parable should not be misapplied. God's forgiveness toward us lessens in no wise our duty to obey Him. So the spirit of forgiveness toward our fellow men does not lessen the claim of just obligation. In the prayer which Christ taught His disciples He said, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Matthew 6:12. By this He did not mean that in order to be forgiven our sins we must not require our just dues from our debtors. If they cannot pay, even though this may be the result of unwise management, they are not to be cast into prison, oppressed, or even treated harshly; but the parable does not teach us to encourage indolence. The word of God declares that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. 2 Thessalonians 3:10. The Lord does not require the hard-working man to support others in idleness. With many there is a waste of time, a lack of effort, which brings to poverty and want. If these faults are not corrected by those who indulge them, all that might be done in their behalf would be like putting treasure into a bag with holes. Yet there is an unavoidable poverty, and we are to manifest tenderness and compassion toward those who are unfortunate. We should treat others just as we ourselves, in like circumstances, would wish to be treated." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 247.

LESSON 8

Sabbath, August 19, 2023

The Strong Man



"Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." Matthew 12:29.

"Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 321.

TWO POWERS IN CONFLICT

SUNDAY

1. What question did Jesus ask in this parable? Of whom in the book of judges does this question remind us—whom the Philistines wanted to bind so that they could dominate over the Israelites?

[1] Matthew 12:29. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

[1] Judges 16:11. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

[1] Matthew 26:41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

"Three times Samson had the clearest evidence that the Philistines had leagued with his charmer to destroy him; but when her purpose failed, she treated the matter as a jest, and he blindly banished fear.

“Day by day Delilah urged him, until ‘his soul was vexed unto death;’ yet a subtle power kept him by her side. Overcome at last, Samson made known the secret: ‘There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.’” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 565, 566.

MONDAY

2. What miracle of Christ caused the Pharisees to question the source of His power? What was prophesied in Genesis concerning Him whom neither man nor demon could control, which was why He was victorious in death?

[1] Matthew 12:22, 24. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw....
²⁴But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

[1] Genesis 3:15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

“Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power....

“The Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke this warning did not themselves believe the charge they brought against Him. There was not one of those dignitaries but had felt drawn toward the Saviour. They had heard the Spirit’s voice in their own hearts declaring Him to be the Anointed of Israel, and urging them to confess themselves His disciples. In the light of His presence they had realized their unholiness, and had longed for a righteousness which they could not create. But after their rejection of Him it would be too humiliating to receive Him as the Messiah. Having set their feet in the path of unbelief, they were too proud to confess their error. And in order to avoid acknowledging the truth, they tried with desperate violence to dispute the Saviour’s teaching. The evidence of His power and mercy exasperated them. They could not prevent the Saviour from working miracles, they could not silence His teaching; but they did everything in their power to misrepresent Him and to falsify His words. Still the convicting Spirit of God followed them, and they had to build up many barriers in order to withstand His power. The mightiest agency that can be brought to bear upon the human heart was striving with them, but they would not yield.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 322.

TUESDAY

3. At the beginning of time on earth, who became powerful? What did the psalmist write about such people, who were strong in wickedness?

[1] Genesis 10:8-12. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. ¹⁰And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, ¹²And Resen between

Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

[1] Psalm 73:2-9. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. ³For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. ⁵They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. ⁶Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. ⁷Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. ⁸They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. ⁹They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

KINGDOM OF DARKNESS VS. GOD'S KINGDOM

WEDNESDAY

4. What did Jesus say about the kingdom of evil? How has it always threatened the faithful believers?

[1] Matthew 12:25, 26. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: ²⁶And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

[1] Acts 23:6-9. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. ⁷And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. ⁸For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. ⁹And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

"A deputation of Pharisees had been joined by representatives from the rich and lordly Sadducees, the party of the priests, the skeptics and aristocracy of the nation. The two sects had been at bitter enmity. The Sadducees courted the favor of the ruling power in order to maintain their own position and authority. The Pharisees, on the other hand, fostered the popular hatred against the Romans, longing for the time when they could throw off the yoke of the conqueror. But Pharisee and Sadducee now united against Christ. Like seeks like; and evil, wherever it exists, leagues with evil for the destruction of the good." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 405.

SATAN AND HIS KINGDOM DEFEATED

THURSDAY

5. What divine power resists the strong and frees those who are enslaved? What will Christ, anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit, do with the originator of the rebellion a thousand years before destroying him and his followers?

 **Matthew 12:28.** But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

 **Mark 1:34.** And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

 **Revelation 20:1, 2.** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

"When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

TRIUMPH OF THE FAITHFUL BELIEVERS

FRIDAY

6. What attitude does Christ want His children to have so that they will be victorious? What powerful weapon is given to the faithful believers to overcome evil?

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

 **James 4:7.** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

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

"Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

SABBATH

7. About what grave weaknesses did the Lord warn His people, and how can such things be overcome? What will result if one ignores His warning?

 **Matthew 22:29.** Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

 **Ephesians 6:10, 11.** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agen-

cy of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 322.



For Additional Study

"We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

LESSON 9

Sabbath, August 26, 2023

The Mustard Seed



"It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it." Mark 4:31, 32.

"The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. So it is with the kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world." —Christ's Object Lessons, p. 77.

PLANTING WITH WONDERFUL RESULTS

SUNDAY

1. What characterizes God's kingdom? Although it is very tiny, what does the seed possess for growth?

grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: ³²Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

[L] Matthew 13:31, 32. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a

[L] Luke 13:19. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

"As Jesus spoke this parable, the mustard plant could be seen far and near, lifting itself above the grass and grain, and waving its branches lightly in the air. Birds flitted from twig to twig, and sang amid the leafy foliage.

Yet the seed from which sprang this giant plant was among the least of all seeds. At first it sent up a tender shoot, but it was of strong vitality, and grew and flourished until it reached its present great size." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 77.

MONDAY

2. According to the parable, how is the mustard tree a blessing to everything around it? How did the psalmist tell about this in relation to the protective shadow of the most High?

 **Mark 4:32.** But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater

"And in this last generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfillment. The little seed will become a tree. The last message of warning and mercy is to go to 'every nation and kindred and tongue' (Revelation 14:6-14), 'to take out of them a people for His name.' Acts 15:14; Revelation 18:1. And the earth shall be lightened with His glory." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 79.

than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

 **Psalms 91:1, 4, 7.** He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.... ⁴He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.... ⁷A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

TUESDAY

3. As Jerubbaal, who was despised, from whom did the people seek support and protection?

 **Judges 9:16, 17.** Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; ¹⁷... For my father fought for you, and adventured his

life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian.

 **Jeremiah 16:11.** Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law.

 **Judges 9:15.** And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

"After the death of Gideon 'the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel.' Forgetful of all that they owed to Gideon, their judge and deliverer, the people of Israel accepted his baseborn son Abimelech as their king, who, to sustain his power, murdered all but one of Gideon's lawful children. When men cast off the fear of God, they are not long in departing from honor and integrity." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 556.

THE MUSTARD SEED AND FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

WEDNESDAY

4. To what fruit of the Spirit is the mustard seed compared, and how does it germinate in the heart? What will happen to it in the last time?

📖 **Luke 17:6.** And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,

"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." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 77.

ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

📖 **Romans 10:17.** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

📖 **Luke 18:8.** I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

THURSDAY

5. What counsel is given to those who live at the end of the Laodicean church period? With faith and love becoming scarcer than gold, what process will God put His end-time people through?

📖 **Revelation 3:18, 17.** I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see....
¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that

thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

1 Peter 1:6, 7. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: ⁷That the trial

of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

“Oh, what can I say to open blind eyes, to enlighten the spiritual understanding! Sin must be crucified. A complete moral renovation must be wrought by the Holy Spirit. We must have the love of God, with living, abiding faith. This is the gold tried in the fire. We can obtain it only of Christ. Every sincere and earnest seeker will become a partaker of the divine nature. His soul will be filled with intense longing to know the fullness of that love which passes knowledge;...” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 105.

THE VALUE OF TREES IS IN THEIR FRUIT

FRIDAY

6. Why is patience especially necessary at the end of time? What is this fruit related to?

James 5:7, 8. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. ⁸Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Hebrews 10:36. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

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

“This is a distinct separating message, a message that is to give no uncertain sound. It is to lead the people away from the broken cisterns that contain no water, to the unfailing Fountain of the water of life.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 150.

SABBATH

7. In whom will the fruit of the Spirit be manifested? Where did Jesus see Zacchaeus, and why was he there?

Revelation 2:7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

☞ Luke 19:4-5, 9. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. ⁵And 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. ⁹And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

“Those who experience the work of true conversion in their hearts will reveal the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. Oh, that those who have so little spiritual life would realize that eternal life can be granted only to those who become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust!” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 155.



For Additional Study

“So the kingdom of Christ in its beginning seemed humble and insignificant. Compared with earthly kingdoms it appeared to be the least of all. By the rulers of this world Christ’s claim to be a king was ridiculed. Yet in the mighty truths committed to His followers the kingdom of the gospel possessed a divine life. And how rapid was its growth, how widespread its influence! When Christ spoke this parable, there were only a few Galilean peasants to represent the new kingdom.

“Their poverty, the fewness of their numbers, were urged over and over again as a reason why men should not connect themselves with these simple-minded fishermen who followed Jesus. But the mustard seed was to grow and spread forth its branches throughout the world.”

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 77.



MISSIONARY REPORT FROM SURINAME

To be read on Sabbath, August 26, 2023

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, September 2, 2023

The church of Suriname greets the brethren around the world with the divine invitation of Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Suriname, formerly known as Dutch Guiana as part of the Netherlands until 1975, when it gained its independence, is a country in South America. It borders the Atlantic Ocean to the north, French Guiana to the east, Guyana to the west, and Brazil to the south.

The capital city is Paramaribo, and its territory covers 163,820 square kilometers (101,793 square miles). The population is approximately 800,000; and although it is the smallest and least populated country in South America, it encompasses a wide variety of nationalities, cultures, languages, and dialects, while its official language is Dutch, which presents a great challenge to evangelistic outreach.

The country is made up of Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, and Protestant communities. Due to a large number of ethnic groups, there is no majority or dominant religion. According to the most recent data, 48.4 percent of the population belongs to the Christian faith, including Catholics and Protestant groups such as Moravians, Evangelicals, Methodists, and Lutherans, among others. Hindus number 22.3 percent and Muslims 13.9 percent, while the remaining 15.4 percent is composed of people who hold to indigenous religions and those who say that they do not belong to any religious faith.

In fulfillment of the mission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to every nation, tribe, people, and language, and trusting in His promise that He would be with His people until the end of the world, the message of the Reform Movement reached Suriname for the first time through Sister Johana M. Vlijter, who rests in the grave until the resurrection, and Brother Ernest Huur, who currently resides in Holland and is an active church member. Subsequently and officially, the work of the Reform Movement began in 1999, when Brother Gabriel Porras, from Colombia,

arrived in the country as the first missionary sent by the General Conference under the Foreign Missions Program. In 2000, the church was first registered under the name "Stichting Internationale Zending Van Zevende Dags Adventisten Reformatiebeweging, Suriname Veld."

Since that time, the gospel has been proclaimed through canvassing, visits and Bible studies in homes, special programs for children, and Bible studies presented to other religious denominations that provided opportunities for the church to share the message. This is how a group of interested people arose who began to keep the Sabbath, resulting in the baptism of some of them, making it possible to organize a group.

In 2007, Brother Boris Acevedo came from Venezuela with his family, the work continued to advance, and new believers were baptized and added to the church. In 2009, a piece of property was purchased and construction of a church building and housing for the missionaries was begun with the support of the General Conference and the Dutch Field.

In 2014, Brother Edison Henriquez arrived with his wife and children from Venezuela; they continued to work together with the six members of the church. However, as written in Revelation 12:17, "... 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." The Spirit of prophecy says that prosperity contributes to the entry into the church of multitudes who merely profess religion. In 2015 and 2016, the church suffered a rebellion; five of the six members who made up the church group showed their true interests; and since their names were in the church records and that granted them authority over the properties, they took over and gave them to the nominal Adventist Church. Only one member remained faithful, and it was a very difficult time for the church, the missionary, and his family. Legal cases were opened before the state courts to obtain justice, while the rebels and the Adventist Church attacked continuously, since their purpose was for the Reform Movement to cease to exist here in Suriname. It was very hard to go through such things, to resist the rebellion, and to overcome the loss of property; however, in March 2021, by decision of the judge, the first record of the church was recovered and the rebels were suspended from the records.

The above situation had made it necessary to move forward and apply for a new registration in 2018 with the help of Elder George Gowie from Jamaica, under the name of "International Missionary and Health Society." This allowed the organization to continue to work legally in the country and to protect the donations and assets that that were acquired afterward.

In December 2019, by court order, the old property was vacated; but miraculously God provided a new facility with housing and a chapel in a very good location. Although it was rented, it provided better facilities and opportunities for the preaching of the gospel. God strengthened the faith of the faithful, the missionary work continued, and new souls heard and embraced the message with joy and gladness and joined the church through baptism. Now there are both an organized church and an organized field. Today we can say to the brethren around the world that in Suriname there is a spiritual family.

With the collaboration of the new members and support of the North American/Caribbean Division, a new piece of land has been obtained in the country's capital, and it is necessary and urgent to construct a church and housing facility. That is why through this report we turn to all of our brethren around the world to request your support in generous offerings. Your freewill donations will be used for the construction of the house of worship. The Lord bless and multiply your generosity. Jesus will return soon. He asks us to dedicate everything to Him that He has given to us. The Lord has done great things and will do many more as we trust Him and do His will. In the final lines of this report, we express our gratitude to the brethren of the General Conference for their continual encouragement, the brethren of the North American/Caribbean Division, and all who pray for the work in this country. We ask, again, for your prayers and support.

May the Lord help us to continue with the mission that He has given us of being the light of the world and a living reflection of Jesus. All honor and glory be to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!

—Elder Edison Henriquez Moreno
Suriname Field President

LESSON 10

Sabbath, September 2, 2023

Hidden Treasure



"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Matthew 13:44.

"In ancient times it was customary for men to hide their treasures in the earth. Thefts and robberies were frequent. And whenever there was a change in the ruling power, those who had large possessions were liable to be put under heavy tribute. Moreover the country was in constant danger of invasion by marauding armies. As a consequence, the rich endeavored to preserve their wealth by concealing it, and the earth was looked upon as a safe hiding place. But often the place of concealment was forgotten; death might claim the owner, imprisonment or exile might separate him from his treasure, and the wealth he had taken such pains to preserve was left for the fortunate finder. In Christ's day it was not uncommon to discover in neglected land old coins and ornaments of gold and silver." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 103.

SEEKING HIDDEN TREASURE

SUNDAY

- 1. Who was the forerunner of the invitation to the Gentile world to receive physical and spiritual treasures? Who came to share these wonderful things with seekers for truth?**

[1] Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-3. That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.... ^{45:1}Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; ²I will go before thee, and make the

crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: ³And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Revelation 3:18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Colossians 2:3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

"In the Scriptures thousands of gems of truth lie hidden from the surface seeker. The mine of truth is never exhausted. The more you search the Scriptures with humble hearts, the greater will be your interest, and the more you will feel like exclaiming with Paul: 'O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!' Romans 11:33." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 266.

MONDAY

2. What did Jesus do with His riches? What was He willing to do to save lost sinners?

has been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

2 Corinthians 8:9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Exodus 19:5. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.

Isaiah 43:3, 4. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. ⁴Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou

1 Peter 1:18, 19. 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; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

"The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden 'the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.' Romans 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's

nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam, He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 48.

TUESDAY

3. What call from God did John the Baptist give? What is the Lord's purpose for His faithful children?

[] Matthew 3:1, 2. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in

the wilderness of Judaea, ²and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[] Colossians 1:13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

[] Revelation 5:10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

"Thus the plan of redemption is laid open to us, so that every soul may see the steps he is to take in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be saved in God's appointed way." –*Steps to Christ*, p. 107.

WEDNESDAY

4. Where did the man in Jesus' parable find hidden treasure?

[] Matthew 13:44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

[] Isaiah 33:6. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

[] Deuteronomy 29:29. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

"A man hires land to cultivate, and as the oxen plow the soil, buried treasure is unearthed. As the man discovers this treasure, he sees that a fortune is within his reach. Restoring the gold to its hiding place, he returns to his home and sells all that he has, in order to purchase the field containing the

treasure. His family and his neighbors think that he is acting like a madman. Looking on the field, they see no value in the neglected soil. But the man knows what he is doing; and when he has a title to the field, he searches every part of it to find the treasure that he has secured.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 103.

THE TREASURE SEEKER’S NEEDS

THURSDAY

5. What great yearning did the man in the parable experience when he discovered the treasure? What does the divine treasure encompass?

 **Proverbs 23:23.** Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

 **2 Timothy 3:15-17.** And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

“The Bible unfolds truth with a simplicity and a perfect adaptation to the needs and longings of the human heart, that has astonished and charmed the most highly cultivated minds, while it enables the humblest and uncultured to discern the way of salvation.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 107.

FRIDAY

6. Just as one of the characteristics of nobility is wealth-acquired treasures—what valuable Biblical treasure is accessible to all who seek and find it? What did the man in the parable do to acquire the hidden treasure?

 **Acts 17:11.** These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

 **Luke 10:21.** In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Philippians 3:8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered

the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

"And yet these simply stated truths lay hold upon subjects so elevated, so far-reaching, so infinitely beyond the power of human comprehension, that we can accept them only because God has declared them. Thus the plan of redemption is laid open to us, so that every soul may see the steps he is to take in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be saved in God's appointed way; yet beneath these truths, so easily understood, lie mysteries that are the hiding of His glory—mysteries that overpower the mind in its research, yet inspire the sincere seeker for truth with reverence and faith. The more he searches the Bible, the deeper is his conviction that it is the word of the living God, and human reason bows before the majesty of divine revelation." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 107.

TREASURES IN THE SANCTUARY

SABBATH

7. What treasures were part of the sanctuary, and what gifts did the wise men present to the young Child Jesus? How valuable are the treasures offered to God in worship?

Exodus 30:1, 3, 7. And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it....³And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about....⁷And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.

Matthew 2:11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Revelation 8:3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

"Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the 'seven lamps of fire' and the 'golden altar' represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, 'the temple of God was opened' (Revelation 11:19), and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld 'the ark of His testament' (Revelation 11:19), represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God." —*Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 54.



For Additional Study

"This parable illustrates the value of the heavenly treasure, and the effort that should be made to secure it. The finder of the treasure in the field was ready to part with all that he had, ready to put forth untiring labor, in order to secure the hidden riches. So the finder of heavenly treasure will count no labor too great and no sacrifice too dear, in order to gain the treasures of truth.

"In the parable the field containing the treasure represents the Holy Scriptures. And the gospel is the treasure. The earth itself is not so interlaced with golden veins and filled with precious things as is the word of God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 104.

LESSON 11

Sabbath, September 9, 2023

The Pearl of Great Price



"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matthew 13:45, 46.

"The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with Christians in seeking the pearl of great price. Those who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions.... The only ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom." –Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 19.

JESUS IS THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

SUNDAY

1 Every pearl is formed in reaction to an irritant that enters between the oyster's mantle and shell. How did the apostle Paul present Jesus Christ and the purpose for which He took human nature upon Himself? As the pearl of great price, how can one receive Jesus' nature in God's kingdom?

2 Corinthians 5:21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Hebrews 2:14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

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

“Christ Himself is the pearl of great price. In Him is gathered all the glory of the Father, the fullness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in His character. Every page of the Holy Scriptures shines with His light. The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 115.

MONDAY

2. How will the seeker for truth receive Jesus Christ? With what combined nature did He go to heaven at the end of His earthly ministry?

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

 **Hebrews 1:3.** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

 **1 Corinthians 1:30.** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

“It is without a flaw. In Christ are ‘hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Colossians 2:3. He is ‘made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.’ 1 Corinthians 1:30. All that can satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul, for this world and for the world to come, is found in Christ. Our Redeemer is the pearl so precious that in comparison all things else may be accounted loss.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 115.

TUESDAY

3. According to the parable, to whom is Jesus Christ the pearl of great price? What is unique about merchants?

 **Matthew 13:45.** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.

 **Acts 8:27-31.** And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, ²⁸Was returning, and

sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. ²⁹Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. ³⁰And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou

what thou readest? ³¹And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

"But not all were found indifferent to the gift of heaven. The merchantman in the parable represents a class who were sincerely desiring truth. In different nations there were earnest and thoughtful men who had sought in literature and science and the religions of the heathen world for that which they could receive as the soul's treasure. Among the Jews there were those who were seeking for that which they had not. Dissatisfied with a formal religion, they longed for that which was spiritual and uplifting.

"Christ's chosen disciples belonged to the latter class, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch to the former. They had been longing and praying for light from heaven; and when Christ was revealed to them, they received Him with gladness." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 116.

WEDNESDAY

4. What did the merchant in the parable do? From what did Christ say the treasure must be protected, referring to unbelievers and how they disrespect the pearl of great price?

[] **Matthew 13:46.** Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

[] **Daniel 12:10.** Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

[] **Matthew 7:6.** Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

"In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the pearl of great price." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 116.

THE MERCHANT'S FEELINGS

THURSDAY

5. How did Christ feel when humanity fell into the depths of sin? How does the Christian value the pearl of great price?

 **Luke 19:9, 10.** And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to

this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

 **John 4:25.** The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

 **Psalm 73:25.** Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

"The parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls has a double significance: it applies not only to men as seeking the kingdom of heaven, but to Christ as seeking His lost inheritance. Christ, the heavenly merchantman seeking goodly pearls, saw in lost humanity the pearl of great price. In man, defiled and ruined by sin, He saw the possibilities of redemption.... He collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to buy the pearl. And Jesus, having found it, resets it in His own diadem. 'For they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land.' Zechariah 9:16. 'They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.' Malachi 3:17." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 118.

WORKING FOR SALVATION

FRIDAY

6. How does God work in the human soul? What does He want man to do for the formation of his character, and for what purpose?

 **Philippians 2:13.** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

 **Romans 12:1, 2.** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

 **1 Thessalonians 5:23.** 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.

"We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the pearl of great price." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 116.

SABBATH

7. Just as the pearl of great price has its own brilliance, what does the Lord want from His faithful children? Of what material are the gates made that Christ will open for the redeemed to enter the New Jerusalem?

Philippians 2:14, 15. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Revelation 22:14; 21:21. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.... ^{21:21}And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

"Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam in his innocence. Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: 'Your conflict is ended.' 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"
—*The Great Controversy*, p. 646.



For Additional Study

"We are to seek for the pearl of great price, but not in worldly marts or in worldly ways. The price we are required to pay is not gold or silver, for this belongs to God. Abandon the idea that temporal or spiritual advantages will win for you salvation. God calls for your willing obedience. He asks you to give up your sins. 'To him that overcometh,' Christ declares, 'will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.' Revelation 3:21." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 117.

LESSON 12

Sabbath, September 16, 2023

House on the rock



"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:4, 5.

"Upon this living stone, Jews and Gentiles alike may build. This is the only foundation upon which we may securely build. It is broad enough for all, and strong enough to sustain the weight and burden of the whole world. And by connection with Christ, the living stone, all who build upon this foundation become living stones. Many persons are by their own endeavors hewn, polished, and beautified; but they cannot become 'living stones,' because they are not connected with Christ. Without this connection, no man can be saved. Without the life of Christ in us, we cannot withstand the storms of temptation." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 599.

BUILT ON THE ROCK

SUNDAY

- 1. What invitation does this parable offer to everyone? What house does Heaven want him to build?**
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 **Matthew 7:24, 25.** Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"Our eternal safety depends upon our building upon the sure foundation. Multitudes are today building upon foundations that have not been tested. When the rain falls, and the tempest rages, and the floods come, their

house will fall, because it is not founded upon the eternal Rock, the chief cornerstone Christ Jesus.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 599.

MONDAY

2. Why is it necessary to build a house that is able to withstand adversity? Who wants to be part of God’s believing family?

 **Proverbs 31:16, 21.** She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a

vineyard.... ²¹She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

 **Luke 19:5; 24:29.** 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.... ^{24:29}But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

“Parents, teachers, students, remember that you are building for eternity. See that your foundation is sure; then build firmly, and with persistent effort, but in gentleness, meekness, love. So shall your house stand unshaken, not only when the storms of temptation come, but when the overwhelming flood of God’s wrath shall sweep over the world.” –*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 63.

BUILDING A STRONG HOUSE–CHARACTER FOR ETERNITY

TUESDAY

3. If one wants the divine Guest to stay with him, what will he do, and what house will he build? Who wants to assist with that building?

 **Psalms 15:2-5; 127:1, 2.** He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. ³He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach

against his neighbour. ⁴In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. ⁵He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.... ^{127:1}Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. ²It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

“Seventh-day Adventist parents should more fully realize their responsibilities as character builders. God places before them the privilege of strengthening His cause through the consecration and labors of their children. He desires to see gathered out from the homes of our people a large company of youth who, because of the godly influences of their homes, have surrendered their hearts to Him, and go forth to give Him the highest service of their lives. Directed and trained by the godly instruction of the home, the influence of the morning and evening worship, the consistent example of parents who love and fear God, they have learned to submit to God as their Teacher and are prepared to render Him acceptable service as loyal sons and daughters.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 131.

WEDNESDAY

4. What will result if one does not heed the Master's words? Who understood those words and triumphed in life's storms?

[1] Matthew 7:26, 27. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his

house upon the sand: ²⁷And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

[1] Genesis 49:22-24. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: ²³The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: ²⁴But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel).

“You who are resting your hope on self are building on the sand. But it is not yet too late to escape the impending ruin. Before the tempest breaks, flee to the sure foundation. ‘Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.’ ‘Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.’ ‘Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.’ Isaiah 45:22; 41:10.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 152.

NEED FOR PROTECTION

THURSDAY

5. About what storms did Jesus warn His hearers, and how do the warnings apply to God's children today? What right does the Creator have to His creation?

 **John 16:33.** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye

might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

 **John 17:3.** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

 **Deuteronomy 32:18.** Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

"The great principles of the law, of the very nature of God, are embodied in the words of Christ on the mount. Whoever builds upon them is building upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' 1 Corinthians 3:11." –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 148.

NEED FOR GRACE—GOD AND MEN'S ACTIONS

FRIDAY

6. What should one who needs His grace do without fail?

 **1 Peter 2:6-8.** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone,

elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ⁷Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, ⁸And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

"'There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.' Acts 4:12. Christ, the Word, the revelation of God, the manifestation of His character, His law, His love, His life, is the only foundation upon which we can build a character that will endure." –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 148.

SABBATH

7. According to this parable, what does a foolish man do? Upon whom alone is it safe to build one's character?

Deuteronomy 32:37. And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted...?

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

1 Corinthians 10:1-4. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

"Their ideas of Christ and the plan of salvation are vague, dreary, and confused. If they had, like David, set the Lord ever before them,... their feet would be upon solid rock. Behold Jesus crucified for you. Behold Him grieved with your sins; and when you pray, repent, and earnestly desire to see Him as your sin-pardoning Redeemer, ready to bless you, and to hear your acknowledgment of Him. Keep close to His side." —*Our High Calling*, p. 30.



For Additional Study

"Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted.... His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.... Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works, in words of truth and deeds of holiness." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

LESSON 13

Sabbath, September 23, 2023

Two Sons



"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not." Matthew 21:28-30.

"In this parable the father represents God; the vineyard, the church. By the two sons are represented two classes of people. The son who refused to obey the command, saying, 'I will not,' represented those who were living in open transgression, who made no profession of piety, who openly refused to come under the yoke of restraint and obedience which the law of God imposes. But many of these afterward repented and obeyed the call of God. When the gospel came to them in the message of John the Baptist, 'Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' they repented, and confessed their sins. Matthew 3:2." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 275.

UNDERSTANDING THE SONS' CHARACTERS

SUNDAY

1. In Jesus' parable, whom did the two sons represent in terms of behavior and obedience? Of whom is the second son's reply a reminder?

Exodus 19:8. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

"The priests and elders of Israel spent their lives in religious ceremonies, which they regarded as too sacred to be connected with secular business. Therefore, their lives were supposed to be wholly religious. But they performed their ceremonies to be seen by men that they might be thought by the world to be pious and devoted. While professing to obey they refused to render obedience to God. They were not doers of the truth which they professed to teach." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 278.

MONDAY

2. Similarly, what two other children differed in their response to God's command? What made them especially different from each other?

[[Génesis 4:1-2, 5, 8. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. ²And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.... ⁵But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.... ⁸And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

"Cain hated and killed his brother, not for any wrong that Abel had done, but 'because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.' 1 John 3:12. So in all ages the wicked have hated those who were better than themselves. Abel's life of obedience and unswerving faith was to Cain a perpetual reproof. 'Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' John 3:20." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 74.

TUESDAY

3. What characterized Abraham's first two sons? Unlike the sons of Adam, who had the same two parents, what made Abraham's sons different?

[[Genesis 21:3, 9-13. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.... ⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰Wherefore she said unto Abraham,

Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. ¹¹And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight be-

cause of his son. ¹²And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. ¹³And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

"Separated from his father, and embittered by the strife and contention of a home destitute of the love and fear of God, Ishmael was driven to choose the wild, marauding life of the desert chief, 'his hand' 'against every man, and every man's hand against him.' Genesis 16:12. In his latter days he repented of his evil ways and returned to his father's God, but the stamp of character given to his posterity remained. The powerful nation descended from him were a turbulent, heathen people, who were ever an annoyance and affliction to the descendants of Isaac." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 174.

WEDNESDAY

4. If Ishmael gave rise to the Arab nations, who were Isaac's descendants?

Genesis 25:27; 32:28; 49:28.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain

man, dwelling in tents. ^{32:28}And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. ^{49:28}All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

"The sons of Jacob were not all righteous. They were affected in some degree with idolatry." —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 125.

"He [Jacob] reaped a second harvest, as the evils of his own character were seen to crop out in his sons—all but too true a picture of the retributions of human life." —*Education*, p. 147.

MIXED FEELINGS

THURSDAY

5. To what mountains were the twelve tribes of Israel led when they entered Canaan? On which of the two mountains did the tribes that descended from the sons of Jacob's two concubines stand? Who of his sons lost his birthright and stood on that mountain as well?

[] Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:12, 13. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the

land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.... ^{27:12}These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: ¹³And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

[] Genesis 35:22. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve..

FRIDAY

6. In Jesus' parable, whom did the two sons represent? How was the proclamation that the older would serve the younger fulfilled in this parable?

[] Matthew 21:29, 30, 32; 8:11, 12. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. ³⁰And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.... ³²For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye

had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.... ^{8:11}And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[] Romans 11:20, 24. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear.... ²⁴For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

“In the company before Christ there were scribes and Pharisees, priests and rulers, and after giving the parable of the two sons, Christ addressed to His hearers the question, ‘Whether of them twain did the will of his father?’ Forgetting themselves, the Pharisees answered, ‘The first.’ This they said without realizing that they were pronouncing sentence against themselves. Then there fell from Christ’s lips the denunciation, ‘Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.’” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 276.

CARRYING OUT THE DIVINE WILL

SABBATH

7. Like Cain, what did the descendants of the disobedient son ultimately do with the Messiah when He came to His vineyard?

 **Matthew 7:21.** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

 **John 8:39, 40.** They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

“The eternal God has drawn the line of distinction between the saint and the sinner, between converted and unconverted. The two classes do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of a rainbow, but are as distinct as midday and midnight. God’s people cannot with safety enter into intimate associations with those who know the truth, but do not practice it. The patriarch Jacob, when speaking of certain deeds of his sons, which he contemplated with horror, exclaimed, ‘O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor, be not thou united.’ He felt that his own honor would be compromised if he associated with sinners in their doings. He lifted the danger signal, warning us to shun wrong associations, lest we become tainted with evil. And the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, utters a similar warning, ‘Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 390.



For Additional Study

"The children of Adam present the earliest example of the two different courses pursued by men with regard to the claims of God. Abel saw Christ figured in the sacrificial offerings. Cain was an unbeliever in regard to the necessity of sacrifices; he refused to discern that Christ was typified by the slain lamb; the blood of beasts appeared to him without virtue. The gospel was preached to Cain as well as to his brother; but it was to him a savor of death unto death, because he would not recognize, in the blood of the sacrificial lamb, Jesus Christ the only provision made for man's salvation." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 231.

LESSON 14

Sabbath, September 30, 2023

The Wedding Supper

"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." Revelation 3:20.

"The publicans and harlots were ignorant, but these learned men knew the way of truth. Yet they refused to walk in the path which leads to the Paradise of God. The truth that should have been to them a savor of life unto life became a savor of death unto death. Open sinners who loathed themselves had received baptism at the hands of John; but these teachers were hypocrites. Their own stubborn hearts were the obstacle to their receiving the truth. They resisted the conviction of the Spirit of God. They refused obedience to God's commandments." —Christ's Object Lessons, p. 277.



DINNER INVITATION

SUNDAY

- 1. When a certain man made a great supper, how did his invited guests respond? Of what religious period was this similar, and what spiritual principles were visible?**

[L] Luke 14:16-20. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: ¹⁷And sent his servant at supper time to say to

them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. ¹⁸And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. ¹⁹And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. ²⁰And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

[L] Revelation 3:16, 17. So then because thou art lukewarm, and nei-

ther cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art

wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Matthew 22:14. For many are called, but few are chosen.

“Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god”
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

MONDAY

2. What was the benefactor's reaction to the rudeness of the invitees, and to whom was his invitation then extended? Who set the example of this in His work of seeking and saving the lost?

Luke 14:21-23. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed,

and the halt, and the blind. ²²And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. ²³And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Matthew 9:35, 36. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

“In the parable, the giver of the feast learned how his invitation had been treated, and ‘being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.’ The host turned from those who despised his bounty, and invited a class who were not full, who were not in possession of houses and lands. He invited those who were poor and hungry, and who would appreciate the bounties provided. ‘The publicans and the harlots,’ Christ said, ‘go into the kingdom of God before you.’ Matthew 21:31. However wretched may be the specimens of humanity that men spurn and turn aside from, they are not too low, too wretched, for the notice and love of God. Christ longs to have care-worn, weary, oppressed human beings come to Him. He longs to give them the light and joy and peace

that are to be found nowhere else. The veriest sinners are the objects of His deep, earnest pity and love. He sends His Holy Spirit to yearn over them with tenderness, seeking to draw them to Himself." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 225.

TUESDAY

3. What conclusion did the man reach because of his invited guests' contempt of him and his offer? What did Jesus say about those who despised the great invitation as well as those who attended the wonderful event on short notice?

 **Luke 14:24.** For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

 **Matthew 8:11, 12.** And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"Every time you refuse to listen to the message of mercy, you strengthen yourself in unbelief. Every time you fail to open the door of your heart to Christ, you become more and more unwilling to listen to the voice of Him that speaketh. You diminish your chance of responding to the last appeal of mercy. Let it not be written of you, as of ancient Israel, 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' Hosea 4:17. Let not Christ weep over you as He wept over Jerusalem, saying, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.' Luke 13:34, 35" –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 237.

THE LAST SUPPER

WEDNESDAY

4. What did Jesus want to celebrate with His disciples? With what question were two of His closest disciples sent to a faithful Jew who was preparing for the Passover? What might be the reason why the man's name was not recorded?

 **Luke 22:7-11.** Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the pass-over must be killed. ⁸And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. ⁹And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? ¹⁰And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house

where he entereth in. ¹¹And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

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.

“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” Revelation 3:20; John 6:35. As we need food to sustain our physical strength, so do we need Christ, the Bread from heaven, to sustain spiritual life and impart strength to work the works of God. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigor, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ, submitting to Him and depending wholly upon Him.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 18, 19.

THURSDAY

5. What did Jesus know that the disciples did not understand? How did He signal that it would be His last supper?

John 13:1, 2, 7. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. ²And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.... ⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

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.

“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.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 643.

THE CENTER OF WORSHIP

FRIDAY

6. Ever since the patriarchal time and the exodus from Egypt, what feast was the center of Israel’s worship. How did John the Baptist present the Lamb of God? Even though they ate the paschal lamb from year to year, who rejected Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross for sinners?

 **Isaiah 53:6, 7.** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

 **John 1:29, 10, 11.** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. ^{1:10, 11}He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. ¹¹He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

SABBATH

7. Why was the Passover commemoration instituted, and what blessings did the participants receive by partaking of it? In light of the parable of the great supper, what was the significance of the Lord’s Supper, which He introduced to commemorate His sacrifice in fulfillment of the Passover service?

 **1 Corinthians 11:23, 24; 10:16, 17; 11:27-30.** 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: ²⁴And 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.... ^{10:16}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....^{11:27}Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that

bread, and drink of that cup.²⁹For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.³⁰For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

"None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to His children. All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, 'Ye are not all clean.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.



For Additional Study

"In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

LESSON 15

Sabbath, October 7, 2023

The Mote and Beam



"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Matthew 7:3.

"Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 128.

JUDGING OTHERS

SUNDAY

- 1. What was the fatal result of sin, and what weakness immediately appeared in the first couple? What prevented them from seeing reality?**

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

Genesis 3:12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Matthew 7:1, 2. Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

"Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator, all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. He did not realize that the same Infinite Power who had from the dust of the earth created him, a living, beautiful form, and had in love given him a companion, could supply her place. He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her. After all, he reasoned, might not the words of the wise serpent be true? Eve was before him, as beautiful and apparently as innocent as before this act of disobedience. She expressed greater love for him than before. No sign of death appeared in her, and he decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 56.

MONDAY

2. What beams block a person's vision? List them, and tell why they are so dangerous.

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

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

Luke 16:13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

"But by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life." —*Education*, p. 15.

TUESDAY

3. According to Jesus, what disciple had a beam that made him vulnerable to the great adversary's attacks? Why is it important to remove a beam that blocks one's own vision before attempting to remove a speck that seems to be in another person's eye?

 **Luke 22:31-34; 6:42.** And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: ³²But I have

prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. ³³And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. ³⁴And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.... ^{6:42}Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

"The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 128.

RESTORING LIVES

WEDNESDAY

4. What ability did Jesus have so He could redeem the sinful race, and how did He accomplish His mission? To what does He call the repentant sinner?

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

 **John 8:3-11.** And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but

what sayest thou? ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience,

went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

THURSDAY

5. What did God give so that His people would have clear spiritual vision to be able to build His church? Who else felt the need for the Saviour to remove beams and motes so that sinners could see?

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

 **1 John 3:4.** Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

 **1 Timothy 1:15.** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

“During the long hours when Saul was shut in with God alone, he recalled many of the passages of Scripture referring to the first advent of Christ. Carefully he traced down the prophecies, with a memory sharpened by the conviction that had taken possession of his mind. As he reflected on the meaning of these prophecies he was astonished at his former blindness of understanding and at the blindness of the Jews in general, which had led to the rejection of Jesus as the promised Messiah. To his enlightened vision all now seemed plain. He knew that his former prejudice and unbelief had clouded his spiritual perception and had prevented him from discerning in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of prophecy.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 119.

WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO

FRIDAY

6. What mistake should everyone be careful not to make? What questions did Jesus ask in the parable concerning the work that must be done for those around us as well as for ourselves?

[L] Luke 18:11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

"The Saviour said, 'Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.' On what ground do you call Me good? God is the one good. If you recognize Me as such, you must receive Me as His Son and representative." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 390.

SABBATH

7. According to the apostle Paul, what should one do so that he is not a stumbling block to souls who start on the Christian path? What should be done by all who understand and live in the light of Heaven?

[L] Matthew 7:3-5. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? ⁵Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

[L] Galatians 6:3-5. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. ⁴But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵For every man shall bear his own burden.

[L] Galatians 6:1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

[L] Romans 14:1; 15:1, 3. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.... ^{15:1}We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.... ³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

“‘We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.’ Romans 15:1. No soul who believes in Christ, though his faith may be weak, and his steps wavering as those of a little child, is to be lightly esteemed. By all that has given us advantage over another, be it education and refinement, nobility of character, Christian training, religious experience, we are in debt to those less favored; and, so far as lies in our power, we are to minister unto them. If we are strong, we are to stay up the hands of the weak.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 440.



For Additional Study

“So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 414.

LESSON 16

Sabbath, October 14, 2023

The Pharisee And the Publican



"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Luke 18:10, 11.

"Why is it that many seem to think that a responsible position exalts the man? Why do they become so self-sufficient when they are so utterly dependent upon the atoning Sacrifice? Why is there with some so great a want of tenderness, so little heart work? It is because those who are self-sufficient have not fallen upon the Rock and been broken. This is why there is so little trust in God, so little earnest, contrite repentance, so great a lack of fervent prayer. Well may the questions be put by every instructor: 'Have I received the Holy Ghost since I believed? Have I received Christ as my personal Saviour?' Let these questions be solemnly answered." —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 111.

DANGERS ON THE CHRISTIAN PATH

SUNDAY

1. Where does sin lead? How alone is it possible to find the way back to the Father?

Isaiah 53:6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Proverbs 14:12. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Romans 2:17-21. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,¹⁸ And knowest his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;¹⁹ And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,²⁰ An instruc-

tor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. ²¹Thou therefore which teachest another,

teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

“And the Saviour was speaking also to the Pharisees. He did not relinquish the hope that they would perceive the force of His words. Many had been deeply convicted, and as they should hear the truth under the dictation of the Holy Spirit, not a few would become believers in Christ.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 369.

MONDAY

2. What parable did Jesus give for those who trust in themselves? What did He mean when He said, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”?

[L] Luke 18:9, 10. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to

pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

[L] Matthew 5:20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[L] Romans 2:21-24. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? ²²Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? ²³Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? ²⁴For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

“The truth of God’s free grace had been almost lost sight of by the Jews. The rabbis taught that God’s favor must be earned. The reward of the righteous they hoped to gain by their own works. Thus their worship was prompted by a grasping, mercenary spirit. From this spirit even the disciples of Christ were not wholly free, and the Saviour sought every opportunity of showing them their error.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 390.

TUESDAY

3. How were the two different men presented in the parable? Which one was justified, and why?

[L] Luke 18:10-14. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed

thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

“Mark you, it was the self-righteous Pharisee who was not in a position of humility and reverence before God; but standing in his haughty self-sufficiency, he told the Lord all his good deeds. ‘The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself’ (Luke 18:11); and his prayer reached no higher than himself. ‘And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’ Luke 18:13, 14.” —*Selected Messages, book 2, p. 313.*

WEDNESDAY

4. What did the Pharisees glorify and believe in? Where do good works come from?

[L] Romans 4:2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

[L] Acts 23:8. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither

angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

[L] Hebrews 6:1-3. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ²Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³And this will we do, if God permit.

"By their good works, Christ's followers are to bring glory, not to themselves, but to Him through whose grace and power they have wrought. It is through the Holy Spirit that every good work is accomplished, and the Spirit is given to glorify, not the receiver, but the Giver. When the light of Christ is shining in the soul, the lips will be filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. Your prayers, your performance of duty, your benevolence, your self-denial, will not be the theme of your thought or conversation. Jesus will be magnified, self will be hidden, and Christ will appear as all in all." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 80.

FEELINGS THAT LEAD TO SALVATION

THURSDAY

5. What feelings did the publican express, which must also be the spirit of the faithful convert?

 **Micah 6:6-8.** Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will

the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

 **Psalm 51:17.** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

"A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposing sacrifice, proclaim that the doer of these things regards himself as righteous, and as entitled to heaven; but it is all a deception. Our own works can never purchase salvation." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 280.

A NEW CREATION THROUGH DIVINE ACTION

FRIDAY

6. Like the publican, what should the Christian do? What should he remember?

 **Matthew 11:28.** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

 **Ephesians 4:22-24.** That ye put off concerning the former conversation

the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

[1] Romans 8:13, 14. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

“Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God’s favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love. Christ places the salvation of man, not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness. Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is through action that character is built. ‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’ Romans 8:14. Not those whose hearts are touched by the Spirit, not those who now and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 149.

SABBATH

7. What does the Eternal One do for the repentant sinner? Where does divine love guide the soul who longs for salvation?

also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

[1] Romans 2:4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God lea-
deth thee to repentance?

[1] Isaiah 57:15. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him

[1] Acts 2:47. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

“How sad it is that so many of them apparently place unlimited confidence in men who present theories tending to uproot our past experiences and to remove the old landmarks! Those who can so easily be led by a false spirit show that they have been following the wrong captain for some time—so long that they do not discern that they are departing from the faith, or that they are not building upon the true foundation. We need to urge all to put on their spiritual eyeglasses, to have their eyes anointed that they may see clearly and discern the true pillars of the faith. Then they

will know that 'the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.' 2 Timothy 2:19. We need to revive the old evidences of the faith once delivered to the saints." –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 25.



For Additional Study

"Imputation of the righteousness of Christ comes through justifying faith, and is the justification for which Paul so earnestly contends." –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 397.

LESSON 17

Sabbath, October 21, 2023

Unfaithful Husbandmen



"When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" Matthew 21:40.

"Even fruitful branches may display too much foliage and appear what they really are not. The followers of Christ may be doing some work for the Master and yet not be doing half what they might do. He then prunes them, because worldliness, self-indulgence, and pride are cropping out in their lives. Husbandmen clip off the surplus tendrils of the vines that are grasping the rubbish of earth, thus making them more fruitful. These hindering causes must be removed and the defective overgrowth cut away, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 354.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS PEOPLE

SUNDAY

1. What parable did Jesus give that showed God's desires for His people? To whom did the vineyard belong, and what was the purpose of the hedge around it?

[1] Matthew 21:33. Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and

digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

[1] Isaiah 5:7. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.

[1] Deuteronomy 5:29. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

"In the parable the householder represented God, the vineyard the Jewish nation, and the hedge the divine law which was their protection. The tower was a symbol of the temple. The lord of the vineyard had done everything needful for its prosperity. 'What could have been done more to my vineyard,' he says, 'that I have not done in it.' Isaiah 5:4. Thus was represented God's unwearied care for Israel. And as the husbandmen were to return to the Lord a due proportion of the fruits of the vineyard, so God's people were to honor Him by a life corresponding to their sacred privileges." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 596.

MONDAY

2. Why was the vineyard planted? What function did the tower have in the vineyard?

 **Micah 4:6-8.** In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; ⁷And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. ⁸And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

 **Isaiah 16:10.** And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.

 **Isaiah 56:7.** Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

"Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 286.

TUESDAY

3. What did Israel do with the wine—the spiritual teachings? Who were sent to gather the fruits of the vineyard, and what did the husbandmen do to them?

 **Isaiah 1:22.** Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water.

 **Jeremiah 7:23, 24.** But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk

ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. ²⁴But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

 **Matthew 21:34-36.** And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. ³⁵And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

“But as the husbandmen had killed the servants whom the master sent to them for fruit, so the Jews had put to death the prophets whom God sent to call them to repentance. Messenger after messenger had been slain.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 596.

WEDNESDAY

4. Finally, whom did the Father especially send, and how did the husbandmen accept Him? Therefore, what punishment would they receive?

 **Matthew 21:37-41.** But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. ³⁸But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. ³⁹And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. ⁴⁰When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? ⁴¹They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

"They determined that they would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They rejected the Light of the world, and thenceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight. The doom foretold came upon the Jewish nation. Their own fierce passions, uncontrolled, wrought their ruin. In their blind rage they destroyed one another. Their rebellious, stubborn pride brought upon them the wrath of their Roman conquerors. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple laid in ruins, and its site plowed like a field. The children of Judah perished by the most horrible forms of death. Millions were sold, to serve as bondmen in heathen lands. "As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 295, 296.

THE MESSIAH'S FEELINGS FOR HIS PEOPLE

THURSDAY

5. What feelings did God's Son express when He saw Israel's future? Why did the Jewish leaders fail to grasp the parable's terrible conclusion?

 **Matthew 23:37, 38; 21:43-45.** ○
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that
killest the prophets, and stonest
them which are sent unto thee,

how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! ³⁸Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. ^{21:43}Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. ⁴⁴And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. ⁴⁵And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

"The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 294.

BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

FRIDAY

6. What were the new plants in the vineyard called? What would Jesus' faithful followers be willing to do?

[L] Acts 11:25, 26. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: ²⁶And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year

they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

[L] Philippians 1:29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

[L] Matthew 5:16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

“If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not.... Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.’ Romans 11:17-21.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 306.

SABBATH

7. What was the Father’s plan for His Son? In turn, what would the Son do for His faithful followers?

[L] Matthew 21:42. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders

rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

[L] Revelation 5:6, 10. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.... ¹⁰And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

“Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God. Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds

done in the body. Then they meted out to the wicked the portion which they must suffer, according to their works; and it was written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints. Satan's punishment was to be far greater than that of those whom he had deceived. His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear no comparison with it. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to live and suffer on much longer." –*Early Writings*, p. 290.

**For Additional Study**

"Are they less guilty than was the Jewish church?"

–*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 303.

Please read the Missionary Report from
SPAIN on page 111

LESSON 18

Sabbath, October 28, 2023

The Good Samaritan

"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Luke 10:27.

"It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 384.



TRUE WEALTH

SUNDAY

1. What feelings of great love does the Creator generate in the human heart? What is His nature?

Psalm 73:25-27. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. ²⁶My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. ²⁷For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.

John 3:16, 17. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believ-

vet in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

⁹In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ¹⁰Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:8-10. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

"When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within, when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 384.

MONDAY

2. What common question did a lawyer ask Jesus? After He replied, what counter-question did the man ask?

Luke 10:25-29. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ²⁶He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readeest thou? ²⁷And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. ²⁸And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. ²⁹But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

"Among the Jews the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' caused endless dispute. They had no doubt as to the heathen and the Samaritans. These were strangers and enemies. But where should the distinction be made among the people of their own nation and among the different classes of society? Whom should the priest, the rabbi, the elder, regard as neighbor? They spent their lives in a round of ceremonies to make themselves pure. Contact with the ignorant and careless multitude, they taught, would cause defilement that would require wearisome effort to remove. Were they to regard the 'unclean' as neighbors?" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 376.

TUESDAY

3. How did the former Pharisee, Paul, present the meaning of love for one's neighbor, as seen in the second table of the Ten Commandments? How is love seen in action?

[L] Romans 13:8-10. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. ⁹For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou

"In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and I saw the ten commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six." —*Early Writings*, p. 32.

WEDNESDAY

4. According to the fifth commandment, who are the very closest "neighbors" to everyone? However, how did the Jewish leaders interpret this commandment? How were injuries and difficulties arising between neighbors to be resolved?

[L] Ephesians 6:2, 3. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁰Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

[L] Matthew 22:37-40. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

[L] 1 John 4:20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

commandment with promise;) ³That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

[L] Matthew 15:4-6. For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. ⁵But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; ⁶And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

 **Exodus 21:35.** And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide.

"This question Christ answered in the parable of the good Samaritan. He showed that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is every one who is the property of God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 376.

CONFLICTING FEELINGS

THURSDAY

5. In the parable, what two types of individuals from the very highest profession failed to show love for their neighbor? But who took on the responsibility to meet the needs of the severely wounded man?

 **Luke 10:30-33.** And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. ³³But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.

"In journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, the traveler had to pass through a portion of the wilderness of Judea. The road led down a wild, rocky ravine, which was infested with robbers, and was often the scene of violence. It was here that the traveler was attacked, stripped of all that was valuable, and left half dead by the wayside. As he lay thus, a priest came that way; he saw the man lying wounded and bruised, weltering in his own blood; but he left him without rendering any assistance. He 'passed by on the other side.' Then a Levite appeared. Curious to know what had happened, he stopped and looked at the sufferer. He was convicted of what he ought to do, but it was not an agreeable duty. He wished that he had not come that way so that he would not have seen the wounded man. He persuaded himself that the case was no concern of his, and he too 'passed by on the other side.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 379.

LOVING THE NEEDY

FRIDAY

6. What did the Samaritan do for his neighbor? What did Jesus ask the doctor of the law after He finished telling the parable?

 **Luke 10:34-37.** And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring

"In giving this lesson, Christ presented the principles of the law in a direct, forcible way, showing His hearers that they had neglected to carry out these principles. His words were so definite and pointed that the listeners could find no opportunity to cavil. The lawyer found in the lesson nothing that he could criticize. His prejudice in regard to Christ was removed. But he had not overcome his national dislike sufficiently to give credit to the Samaritan by name. When Christ asked, 'Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?' he answered, 'He that showed mercy on him.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 380.

SABBATH

7. Who is the greatest example of a Good Samaritan? What are all true Christians called to be?

 **Matthew 9:35, 36.** And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sick-

in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. ³⁶Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? ³⁷And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

ness and every disease among the people. ³⁶But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

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

 **Matthew 25:32, 34-40.** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.... ³⁴Then shall

the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw

we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"Many will allow a brother or a neighbor to struggle unaided under adverse circumstances. Because they profess to be Christians, he may be led to think that in their cold selfishness they are representing Christ. Because the Lord's professed servants are not in cooperation with Him, the love of God, which should flow forth from them, is in great degree cut off from their fellow men. And a large revenue of praise and thanksgiving from human hearts and human lips is prevented from flowing back to God. He is robbed of the glory due to His holy name. He is robbed of the souls for whom Christ died, souls whom He longs to bring into His kingdom to dwell in His presence through endless ages." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 383.



For Additional Study

"There are those who would think it lowering to their dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. Others neglect the poor from a different motive. They are working, as they believe, in the cause of Christ, seeking to build up some worthy enterprise. They feel that they are doing a great work, and they cannot stop to notice the wants of the needy and distressed. In advancing their supposedly great work they may even oppress the poor. They may place them in hard and trying circumstances, deprive them of their rights, or neglect their needs. Yet they feel that all this is justifiable because they are, as they think, advancing the cause of Christ." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 382.



MISSIONARY REPORT FROM SPAIN

To be read on Sabbath, October 28, 2023

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, November 4, 2023

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

"Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you:..." Romans 15:24. In his yearning to spread the gospel to the limits of the civilized world of his day, the apostle Paul cherished the desire to visit Spain, an aspiration that was confirmed when he said, "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." Romans 15:28. At that time, Spain was experiencing the "genius status" as some of the greatest men in the Roman Empire were Spaniards, including Lucano, the epic poet; Marcial, the master of epigrams; Quintilian, the master of oratory; and, above all, Seneca the Stoic philosopher, who was the tutor and later the prime minister of Nero, the Roman emperor.

Paul's missionary vision was broad, for he envisioned new and extensive fields of service and made all of his trips and plans with the burning desire in mind of establishing the Christian faith. For this reason, he wanted to travel to Spain to "raise the banner of the cross."

The awakening of the Protestant Reformation in Spain (16th century)—"to revive in its simplicity and purity the ancient spirit of our ancestors and the primitive church." The desire was to revive the gospel that was preached by Paul. But keeping high the banner of the cross would require sacrifice, for there were many Spanish believers who were burned at the stake during the Inquisition. Men and women persevered in preaching the freedom of the gospel and circulating treaties, pamphlets, and Bibles in the main ports of the Mediterranean, in the passes of the Pyrenees, and in the cities of Seville, Valladolid, Castilla, Logroño, Navarra, Toledo, Tarragona, Valencia, Zaragoza, and many more.

Many in Spain who were closely identified with the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century sacrificed their lives and died as martyrs, but they did not shed their blood in vain. They offered to God sacrifices of sweet fragrance. They left behind a testimony in favor of the truth that was not entirely lost.

The spiritual banner that was raised in Spain still stands, for we are inspired by the unwavering testimony of those who defended it. But we have yet to raise a physical monument. The inspired writing says: "In many fields very little has been done to establish memorials for God. This is wrong." —Letter 128, 1902.

Abraham had the custom of building an altar to offer sacrifices to God wherever he raised his tent. "When his tent was removed, the altar remained. In fol-

lowing years, there were those among the roving Canaanites who received instruction from Abraham; and whenever one of these came to that altar, he knew who had been there before him; and when he had pitched his tent, he repaired the altar, and there worshiped the living God." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 127.

We, the brothers and sisters of the Spanish Field, cannot escape our responsibility. "There must be erected simple and neat churches which will give character to the important truths that we are advocating." –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 405. We started the construction of a church in Parets del Vallés, Barcelona, on the property that functions as the headquarters of the Spanish Field, which currently has a small room in which about 15 people can worship. At that time, it was prepared with great care; but now it does not meet the current needs or reflect what the church of God should be. The construction of a church building is imperative for the Spanish Field, for it will allow services of praise to be conducted and expand the outreach.

To make this challenging project possible, we heed the inspired counsel that says, "The only means which God has ordained to advance His cause is to bless men with property.... In turn He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion ... in thank offerings, in freewill offerings,..." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 150.

"The liberality of the Jews in the construction of the tabernacle and the erection of the temple illustrates a spirit of benevolence which has not been equaled by Christians of any later date....

"His people had small possessions and no flattering prospect of adding to them; but an object was before them, to build a tabernacle for God. The Lord had spoken and they must obey His voice. They withheld nothing. All gave with a willing hand, not a certain amount of their increase, but a large portion of their actual possessions. They devoted it gladly and heartily to the Lord. They pleased Him by so doing." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 77, 78.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, we pray in the name of Jesus that you will bring your most generous offerings for the construction of this house of worship. May the Jews' spirit of liberality in building the tabernacle be reflected in each gift, for "there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Proverbs 11:24. We thank you sincerely for your generosity. God bless you.

–Elder Wesley Alves Gomes
Spanish Field President

Special Sabbath School Offering

SPAIN

God bless the generous donation for His kingdom!

LESSON 19

Sabbath, November 4, 2023

The Prodigal Son



"And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." Luke 15:11, 12.

"The youth acknowledges no obligation to his father, and expresses no gratitude; yet he claims the privilege of a child in sharing his father's goods. The inheritance that would fall to him at his father's death he desires to receive now. He is bent on present enjoyment, and cares not for the future." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 199.

SUNDAY

1. Since when have there been prodigal sons and daughters? What two evils does God see multiplying in the earth?

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

[1] Isaiah 1:2, 3. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. ³The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

[1] Jeremiah 2:13. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

"What a picture here of the sinner's state! Although surrounded with the blessings of His love, there is nothing that the sinner, bent on self-indulgence and sinful pleasure, desires so much as separation from God. Like the ungrateful son, he claims the good things of God as his by right. He takes them as a matter of course, and makes no return of gratitude, renders no service of love. As Cain went out from the presence of the Lord to seek his home; as the prodigal wandered into the 'far country,' so do sinners seek happiness in forgetfulness of God. Romans 1:28. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 200.

MONDAY

2. What did the younger brother waste? What did he do while he was away from his father?

[1] Luke 15:11-13. And he said, A certain man had two sons: ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. ¹³And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

"Having obtained his patrimony, he goes into 'a far country,' away from his father's home. With money in plenty, and liberty to do as he likes, he flatters himself that the desire of his heart is reached. There is no one to say, Do not do this, for it will be an injury to yourself; or, Do this, because it is right. Evil companions help him to plunge ever deeper into sin, and he wastes his 'substance with riotous living.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 199.

TUESDAY

3. What was the result of the prodigal son's doings? What does Satan do to the believer who leaves his heavenly Father?

in want. ¹⁵And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

[1] Luke 15:14-16. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be

[1] 2 Peter 2:18, 19. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped

from them who live in error. ¹⁹While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

 **Proverbs 1:10.** My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

"This younger son had become weary of the restraint of his father's house. He thought that his liberty was restricted. His father's love and care for him were misinterpreted, and he determined to follow the dictates of his own inclination." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 198.

"HE CAME TO HIMSELF"

WEDNESDAY

4. Seeing the huge contrast between having and not having, what thought came to the mind of the prodigal son in the parable? What was his father's reaction when he saw his son nearing home?

 **Luke 15:17-24.** 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. ²⁰And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. ²¹And 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. ²²But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: ²³And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

"The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness 'came to himself.' The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father.' Miserable as he was,

the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So, it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 202.

FEELINGS OF THE OLDEST SON

THURSDAY

5. How did the older brother react to his brother's return? What do Christians need to know and understand?

[L] Luke 15:25-28. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe

and sound. ²⁸And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

[L] Galatians 6:1, 3. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted....³For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

[L] James 5:20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

"Thus far in the Saviour's parable there is no discordant note to jar the harmony of the scene of joy; but now Christ introduces another element. When the prodigal came home, the elder son 'was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in.' This elder brother has not been sharing in his father's anxiety and watching for the one that was lost. He shares not, therefore, in the father's joy at the wanderer's return. The sounds of rejoicing kindle no gladness in his heart. He inquires of a servant the reason of the festivity, and the answer excites his jealousy. He will not go in to welcome his lost brother. The favor shown the prodigal he regards as an insult to himself." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 207.

FRIDAY

6. How did the elder brother find fault with his father's delight in his brother's return? What did he feel and claim about his own life and actions? What did Christ say about Jewish traditions as opposed to the love that comes from the heart?

 **Luke 15:29-31.** And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: ³⁰But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. ³¹And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

 **Matthew 15:8.** This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

"When the father comes out to remonstrate with him, the pride and malignity of his nature are revealed. He dwells upon his own life in his father's house as a round of unrequited service, and then places in mean contrast the favor shown to the son just returned. He makes it plain that his own service has been that of a servant rather than a son. When he should have found an abiding joy in his father's presence, his mind has rested upon the profit to accrue from his circumspect life. His words show that it is for this he has foregone the pleasures of sin. Now if this brother is to share in the father's gifts, the elder son counts that he himself has been wronged. He grudges his brother the favor shown him. He plainly shows that had he been in the father's place, he would not have received the prodigal. He does not even acknowledge him as a brother, but coldly speaks of him as 'thy son.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 207.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SALVATION

SABBATH

7. What two classes of people did the two brothers in the parable represent? What command did Jesus give to His first disciples as well as to faithful Adventists at the end of time?

 **Luke 15:32.** It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

 **Matthew 10:5-7.** These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded

them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: ⁶But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

 **Isaiah 58:1, 12.** Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.... ¹²And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

"By the elder son were represented the unrepenting Jews of Christ's day, and also the Pharisees in every age, who look with contempt upon those whom they regard as publicans and sinners. Because they themselves have not gone to great excesses in vice, they are filled with self-righteousness. Christ met these cavilers on their own ground. Like the elder son in the parable, they had enjoyed special privileges from God. They claimed to be sons in God's house, but they had the spirit of the hireling. They were working, not from love, but from hope of reward. In their eyes, God was an exacting taskmaster. They saw Christ inviting publicans and sinners to receive freely the gift of His grace—the gift which the rabbis hoped to secure only by toil and penance—and they were offended. The prodigal's return, which filled the Father's heart with joy, only stirred them to jealousy." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 209.



For Additional Study

"This is the service that God has chosen, 'to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke,... and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.' Isaiah 58:6, 7. When you see yourselves as sinners saved only by the love of your heavenly Father, you will have tender pity for others who are suffering in sin. You will no longer meet misery and repentance with jealousy and censure. When the ice of selfishness is melted from your hearts, you will be in sympathy with God, and will share His joy in the saving of the lost." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 210.

LESSON 20

Sabbath, November 11, 2023

The Lost Sheep



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

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

RESCUING THE LOST SHEEP

SUNDAY

1. How did the sheep get lost? How does the great adversary ensnare human beings so that they will be destroyed for all eternity?

 **Isaiah 53:6.** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

 **Revelation 12:9.** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

 **Genesis 3:4-6.** And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: ⁵For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. ⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it

was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

“God’s government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Lucifer had concluded that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also all the worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great. By disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood, he had gained an advantage. All his acts were so clothed with mystery that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, it could not be made to appear the evil thing it was; his disaffection would not be seen to be rebellion. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 41.

MONDAY

2. What happened when man believed Satan instead of God? Why did Jesus come to the one and only lost world?

 **Isaiah 5:20.** Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

 **Romans 1:25.** Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

 **1 Timothy 4:1, 2.** Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

“But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God’s seeking after us. ‘There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way.’ Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 189.

TUESDAY

3. Into what high, dangerous places did the sheep stray? How far did idolatry spread?

[1] Ezekiel 34:6. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

[1] Deuteronomy 12:2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree.

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9. Among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, He sees men and women who are praying for light and knowledge. Their souls are unsatisfied; long have they fed on ashes. See Isaiah 44:20. The enemy of all righteousness has turned them aside, and they grope as blind men. But they are honest in heart and desire to learn a better way. Although in the depths of heathenism, with no knowledge of the written law of God nor of His Son Jesus, they have revealed in manifold ways the working of a divine power on mind and character.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 376.

WEDNESDAY

4. What king did God call to reform the religious services that the people practiced? How far did idolatry extend?

[1] Isaiah 44:16, 17, 19. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: ¹⁷And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.... ¹⁹And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

[1] 2 Kings 18:1, 3, 4. Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.... ³And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. ⁴He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the bra-

sen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

[L] Ezekiel 8:3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16. And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.... ⁶He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.... ⁹And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. ¹⁰So

I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.... ¹²Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.... ¹⁴Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.... ¹⁶And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

THE FEELINGS OF TRUE SHEPHERDS

THURSDAY

5. Seeing such horrible things, what did Ezekiel and Matthew describe as God's great longing and searching love for the lost? What similar spirit will prevail in the ministry of God's faithful church now?

[L] Ezekiel 34:11. For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

[L] Matthew 9:35, 36. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

[L] Proverbs 27:23. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

"With what unwearied love did Christ minister to Israel during the period of added probation. Upon the cross He prayed, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' Luke 23:24. After His ascension the gospel was preached first at Jerusalem. There the Holy Spirit was poured out. There the first gospel church revealed the power of the risen Saviour. There Stephen—"his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15)—bore his testimony and laid down his life." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 218.

CHRIST'S MINISTRY FOR HIS CHURCH

FRIDAY

6. What did Jesus say about His efforts to find the lost sheep? What was the primary mission of His first disciples despite the constant persecution of the evil adversary?

[L] Luke 15:3, 4. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave

the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

[L] Matthew 10:5, 6. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

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

"The wide-spreading tablelands on the east of Jordan afforded abundant pasturage for flocks, and through the gorges and over the wooded hills had wandered many a lost sheep, to be searched for and brought back by the shepherd's care. In the company about Jesus there were shepherds, and also men who had money invested in flocks and herds, and all could appreciate His illustration: 'What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 186.

SABBATH

7. Besides the Jewish people, whom else did He see as lost? How great is the shepherd's joy at finding and saving a lost sheep?

[L] John 10:16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Luke 15:5-7. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he cometh home, he calleth together his

friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. ⁷I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

"These souls whom you despise, said Jesus, are the property of God. By creation and by redemption they are His, and they are of value in His sight. As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, 'As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.' Ezekiel 34:12." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 187.



For Additional Study

"With what relief he hears in the distance its first faint cry. Following the sound, he climbs the steepest heights, he goes to the very edge of the precipice, at the risk of his own life. Thus he searches, while the cry, growing fainter, tells him that his sheep is ready to die. At last his effort is rewarded; the lost is found. Then he does not scold it because it has caused him so much trouble. He does not drive it with a whip. He does not even try to lead it home. In his joy he takes the trembling creature upon his shoulders; if it is bruised and wounded, he gathers it in his arms, pressing it close to his bosom, that the warmth of his own heart may give it life. With gratitude that his search has not been in vain, he bears it back to the fold." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 188.

LESSON 21

Sabbath, November 18, 2023

The Lost Coin

"Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Isaiah 43:4.

"The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God's sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 194.



PATH TO PERDITION

SUNDAY

1. Although the first human being was made in God's image as the crown of creation, what happened to him? How did the prophet Isaiah describe mankind's terrible state?

[B] Psalm 8:4-6. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? ⁵For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. ⁶Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

[B] Romans 5:12. 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.

 **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.

“This is true home missionary work, and it is as helpful to those who do it as to those for whom it is done. By our faithful interest for the home circle we are fitting ourselves to work for the members of the Lord’s family, with whom, if loyal to Christ, we shall live through eternal ages. For our brethren and sisters in Christ we are to show the same interest that as members of one family we have for one another.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 196.

MONDAY

2. Why did the Pharisees despise the tax collectors? Who made it possible for the prodigal publicans to return to the eternal Father?

 **2 Peter 2:20, 22.** For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning....

²²But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

 **Luke 18:11; 19:5, 9.** The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ^{19:5}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.... ⁹And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

“Among the publicans there was a confederacy, so that they could oppress the people, and sustain one another in their fraudulent practices. In their extortion they were but carrying out what had become an almost universal custom. Even the priests and rabbis who despised them were guilty of enriching themselves by dishonest practices under cover of their sacred calling. But no sooner did Zacchaeus yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit than he cast aside every practice contrary to integrity.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 555.

TUESDAY

3. How do the lost sheep feel? What does Jesus, the Good Shepherd, do when He finds the sheep that have strayed away from His flock?

[B] Ezekiel 34:6, 11. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.... ¹¹ For thus saith

the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

[B] Romans 3:23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

[B] Ephesians 2:1, 2. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

"The lost sheep knows that it is lost. It has left the shepherd and the flock, and it cannot recover itself. It represents those who realize that they are separated from God and who are in a cloud of perplexity, in humiliation, and sorely tempted." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 193.

WEDNESDAY

4. In the parable of the lost coin, why was the woman, not the householder, the one doing the searching? If the coin was received as a dowry, how would that compare to the gift that the church has been given?

[B] Luke 15:8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

[B] Ephesians 5:23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

[B] Genesis 30:20. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.

"The wife's marriage portion usually consisted of pieces of money, which she carefully preserved as her most cherished possession, to be transmitted to her own daughters. The loss of one of these pieces would be re-

garded as a serious calamity, and its recovery would cause great rejoicing, in which the neighboring women would readily share.

"The lost coin represents those who are lost in trespasses and sins, but who have no sense of their condition. They are estranged from God, but they know it not. Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and unconcerned. In this parable Christ teaches that even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for that they may be brought back to God.

"The sheep wandered away from the fold; it was lost in the wilderness or upon the mountains. The piece of silver was lost in the house. It was close at hand, yet it could be recovered only by diligent search." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 193, 194.

PROTECTION AND SALVATION

THURSDAY

5. What atmosphere permeates a home when the children are in danger? When she was left alone without her husband, what miracle was performed for the family of one of the sons of the prophets when the wife and her children carefully followed the prophet Elisha's instructions in her time of need? What did the oil symbolize?

[L] 2 Kings 4:1, 5-7. Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.... ⁵So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured the vessels to her; and she poured out. ⁶And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. ⁷Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

"Such is the grace of God, such the love wherewith He hath loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, enemies in our minds by wicked works, serving divers lusts and pleasures, the slaves of debased appetites and passion, servants of sin and Satan. What depth of love is manifested in Christ, as He becomes the propitiation for our sins. Through the ministration of the Holy Spirit souls are led to find forgiveness of sins." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 297.

ELIMINATING OBSTACLES THAT LEAD TO PERDITION

FRIDAY

6. From what slavery does the spiritual oil free the repentant sinner? To find the lost coin, what three things did the woman do?

[L] 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 woman in the parable searches diligently for her lost coin. She lights the candle and sweeps the house. She removes everything that might obstruct her search. Though only one piece is lost, she will not cease her efforts until that piece is found. So in the family if one member is lost to God every means should be used for his recovery. On the part of all the others let there be diligent, careful self-examination. Let the life-practice be investigated. See if there is not some mistake, some error in management, by which that soul is confirmed in impenitence." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 194.

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.

[L] Romans 6:18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

[L] Luke 15:8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

SABBATH

7. What rubbish should be swept out of every church and home? What should the woman or church do when the lost coin is found?

[L] James 3:3, 5, 6. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.... ⁵Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how

great a matter a little fire kindleth! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

[L] Psalm 119:9. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

[L] Luke 15:9, 10. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. ¹⁰Like-

wise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

"Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord to them is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister's character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God's messengers, and reverence for their message. And many are taught to regard lightly God's word itself.

"Thus in the homes of professed Christians many youth are educated to be infidels. And the parents question why their children are so little interested in the gospel, and so ready to doubt the truth of the Bible. They wonder that it is so difficult to reach them with moral and religious influences." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 45, 46.



For Additional Study

"If there is in the family one child who is unconscious of his sinful state, parents should not rest. Let the candle be lighted. Search the word of God, and by its light let everything in the home be diligently examined, to see why this child is lost. Let parents search their own hearts, examine their habits and practices. Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we are answerable to Him for our management of His property." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 194.

LESSON 22

Sabbath, November 25, 2023

Workers in the Vineyard



"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." Matthew 20:1.

"But Peter's question, 'What shall we have therefore?' had revealed a spirit that uncorrected would unfit the disciples to be messengers for Christ; for it was the spirit of a hireling. While they had been attracted by the love of Jesus, the disciples were not wholly free from Pharisaism. They still worked with the thought of meriting a reward in proportion to their labor. They cherished a spirit of self-exaltation and self-complacency, and made comparisons among themselves. When one of them failed in any particular, the others indulged feelings of superiority." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 396.

GREAT HARVEST AND FEW LABORERS

SUNDAY

1. In the parable of the laborers, at what time of day did the householder call for people to work in his vineyard? What was so significant about the question that he asked at the eleventh hour, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

 **Matthew 9:37, 38; 20:1-3, 5-7.**

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; ³⁸Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.... ^{20:1}For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. ²And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing

idle in the marketplace,... ⁵Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. ⁶And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? ⁷They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He

saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

2 Timothy 4:2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

“Lest the disciples should lose sight of the principles of the gospel, Christ related to them a parable illustrating the manner in which God deals with His servants, and the spirit in which He desires them to labor for Him. ‘The kingdom of heaven,’ He said, ‘is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.’ It was the custom for men seeking employment to wait in the market places, and thither the employers went to find servants. The man in the parable is represented as going out at different hours to engage workmen. Those who are hired at the earliest hours agree to work for a stated sum; those hired later leave their wages to the discretion of the householder.”
—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 396.

MONDAY

2. Why did those who were hired first not understand the grace that was granted to those who were hired last? Applying this spiritually, let each student in the Sabbath school class ask himself how he behaves—like the laborers who were hired first or like those who began working last.

Matthew 20:3-5, 8. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, ⁴And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.. ⁵Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.... ⁸So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

Romans 4:3, 4. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. ⁴Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

“In the parable the first laborers agreed to work for a stipulated sum, and they received the amount specified, nothing more. Those later hired believed the master’s promise, ‘Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.’ They

showed their confidence in him by asking no question in regard to wages. They trusted to his justice and equity. They were rewarded, not according to the amount of their labor, but according to the generosity of his purpose.... "Thus it is with the sinner who, knowing his unworthiness, has entered the Master's vineyard at the eleventh hour. His time of service seems so short, he feels that he is undeserving of reward; but he is filled with joy that God has accepted him at all. He works with a humble, trusting spirit, thankful for the privilege of being a co-worker with Christ. This spirit God delights to honor." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 397.

MIXED FEELINGS

TUESDAY

3. What did the first day laborers think of this, and what did they say? What divine counsel applied at the time of Jesus and is also applicable today?

 **Matthew 20:10-12.** But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. ¹¹And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, ¹²Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

 **Philippians 2:14.** Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

"The first laborers of the parable represent those who, because of their services, claim preference above others. They take up their work in a self-gratulatory spirit, and do not bring into it self-denial and sacrifice. They may have professed to serve God all their lives; they may have been foremost in enduring hardship, privation, and trial, and they therefore think themselves entitled to a large reward. They think more of the reward than of the privilege of being servants of Christ. In their view their labors and sacrifices entitle them to receive honor above others, and because this claim is not recognized, they are offended. Did they bring into their work a loving, trusting spirit, they would continue to be first; but their querulous, complaining disposition is un-Christlike, and proves them to be untrustworthy. It reveals their desire for self-advancement, their distrust of God, and their jealous, grudging spirit toward their brethren. The Lord's goodness and liberality is to them only an occasion of murmuring. Thus they show that there is no connection between their souls and God. They do not know the joy of co-operation with the Master Worker." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 399.

WEDNESDAY

4. What did the householder recognize that those who were hired first did not see? Unlike the former, how did the latter react to what they received?

 **Matthew 20:9.** And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

 **Romans 11:5, 6.** Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

“Not the amount of labor performed or its visible results but the spirit in which the work is done makes it of value with God. Those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were thankful for an opportunity to work. Their hearts were full of gratitude to the one who had accepted them; and when at the close of the day the householder paid them for a full day’s work, they were greatly surprised. They knew they had not earned such wages. And the kindness expressed in the countenance of their employer filled them with joy. They never forgot the goodness of the householder or the generous compensation they had received.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 397.

DIVINE PRINCIPLES VS. HUMAN TENDENCIES

THURSDAY

5. In missionary outreach, what does God desire from His people? What did the parable teach concerning the principle of love that God exercises?

 **Matthew 19:16, 17; 20:15.** And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? ¹⁷And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.... ^{20:15}Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

 **Romans 4:2.** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

"All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.' Jeremiah 9:23, 24. The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 401.

FRIDAY

6. Why were all of the laborers called to work in the Lord's vineyard? At the end of time, how will the Lord reward both the sowers and the reapers?

[1] John 4:36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

"The Jews had been first called into the Lord's vineyard, and because of this they were proud and self-righteous. Their long years of service they regarded as entitling them to receive a larger reward than others. Nothing was more exasperating to them than an intimation that the Gentiles were to be admitted to equal privileges with themselves in the things of God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 400.

SABBATH

7. What woman turned from the traditions of Judaism to the principles of true Christianity by asking Jesus for crumbs from Heaven? Why did the householder in the parable go out at different times and in different places to gather the harvest?

[1] Mark 10:29-31; 20:16. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, ³⁰But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. ³¹But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.... ^{20:16}So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

[1] Matthew 15:25-27. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. ²⁶But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. ²⁷And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

[1] Luke 13:29, 30. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and

from the north, and from the south,
and shall sit down in the kingdom of
God. ³⁰And, behold, there are last
which shall be first, and there are first
which shall be last.

"Jesus longed to unfold the deep mysteries of the truth which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, and 'partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.' Ephesians 3:6. This truth the disciples were slow to learn, and the divine Teacher gave them lesson upon lesson. In rewarding the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar, He had already given evidence that He did not share the intolerance of the Jews. But the Samaritans had some knowledge of God; and the centurion had shown kindness to Israel. Now Jesus brought the disciples in contact with a heathen, whom they regarded as having no reason above any of her people, to expect favor from Him. He would give an example of how such a one should be treated. The disciples had thought that He dispensed too freely the gifts of His grace. He would show that His love was not to be circumscribed to race or nation." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 402.



For additional study

"Christ warned the disciples who had been first called to follow Him, lest the same evil should be cherished among them. He saw that the weakness, the curse of the church, would be a spirit of self-righteousness. Men would think they could do something toward earning a place in the kingdom of heaven. They would imagine that when they had made certain advancement, the Lord would come in to help them. Thus there would be an abundance of self and little of Jesus. Many who had made a little advancement would be puffed up and think themselves superior to others. They would be eager for flattery, jealous if not thought most important. Against this danger Christ seeks to guard His disciples." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 400.

LESSON 23

Sabbath, December 2, 2023

Ten Virgins



"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Matthew 25:1, 5.

"In many parts of the East, wedding festivities are held in the evening. The bridegroom goes forth to meet his bride and bring her to his home. By torchlight the bridal party proceed from her father's house to his own, where a feast is provided for the invited guests. In the scene upon which Christ looks, a company are awaiting the appearance of the bridal party, intending to join the procession.

"Lingering near the bride's house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. At midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. They see the procession moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The ten maidens seize their lamps and begin to trim them, in haste to go forth. But five have neglected to fill their flasks with oil. They did not anticipate so long a delay, and they have not prepared for the emergency." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 405.

SYMBOLIZED BY A WOMAN

SUNDAY

1. What symbol in the Scriptures represents the church? What does it mean for the woman to be clothed with the sun, to stand on the moon, and to be crowned with twelve stars?

📖 Ephesians 5:23, 25. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body...
²⁵Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

[L] Revelation 12:1, 5. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars....

⁵And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth."
—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415.

MONDAY

2. What prophetic churches did the apostle John present in the book of Revelation? How does what the king wrote in The Song of Solomon apply to God's church today?

[L] Isaiah 4:1. And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

[L] Revelation 1:4, 11. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him

which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.... ¹¹Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

[L] Song of Solomon 6:8, 9. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. ⁹My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

"The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth's history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God's service. All apparently wait for Christ's appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall. "At the final day, many will claim admission to Christ's kingdom, saying, 'We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.' 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have

cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?’ But the answer is, ‘I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me.’ Luke 13:26; Matthew 7:22; Luke 13:27.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 412.

THE CHURCH SYMBOLIZED BY THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

TUESDAY

3. What did the ten virgins have in common? List the mistakes made by the five foolish virgins, as presented in parable.

 **Matthew 25:1, 5, 2-4.** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.... ⁵While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ... ²And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ⁴But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man’s heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 411.

WEDNESDAY

4. What time was it when the bridegroom’s arrival was heard? In what state were the virgins before he came?

 **Matthew 25:5-7.** While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ⁷Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

 **Luke 18:8.** I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

"It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him,' and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 412.

BENEVOLENT FEELINGS OF THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH

THURSDAY

5. Why is the oil of the Spirit so important for the church in its final phase? What will be the result of the gospel's proclamation?

he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. ¹⁵See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

[1] Song of Solomon 6:10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

[1] Ephesians 5:13-15. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. ¹⁴Wherefore

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

"So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414.

FATE DETERMINED BY PRIOR ACTIONS

FRIDAY

6. According to the parable, what cannot be shared? What three things are listed in *Christ's Object Lessons* below that cannot be shared?

[1] Matthew 25:8, 9. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. ⁹But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

 **Philippians 1:29.** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

"This is the class that in time of peril are found crying, Peace and safety. They lull their hearts into security, and dream not of danger. When startled from their lethargy, they discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency. The grace of God has been freely offered to every soul. The message of the gospel has been heralded, 'Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Revelation 22:17. But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working. 'Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.' Ezekiel 14:20." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 411.

SABBATH

7. What will determine whether one receives salvation or damnation for all eternity? Therefore, what is every hearer urged to do?

 **Matthew 25:10-13.** And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹²But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you I know you not. ¹³Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

"'Behold,' says the Scripture, 'the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.' Isaiah 60:2.

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415.



For additional study

"In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.

"It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 419.

LESSON 24

Sabbath, December 9, 2023

Talents, Part 1



"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Matthew 25:14, 15.

"It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless. Learning, talents, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner be won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them the channel for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.

CALLED TO BE STEWARDS

SUNDAY

1. Who provides every person with gifts and talents to be used in stewardship? What did the apostle Paul say should be done with the best gifts?

1 Matthew 25:14, 15. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travel-

ling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.¹⁵ And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

1 Corinthians 12:4, 30, 31. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit....³⁰ Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?³¹ But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

"Before He left His disciples, Christ 'breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' John 20:22. Again He said, 'Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you.' Luke 24:49. But not until after the ascension was the gift received in its fullness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working was the outpouring of the Spirit received. Then in a special sense the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ. 'When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' Ephesians 4:8. 'Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ,' the Spirit 'dividing to every man severally as He will.' Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:11. The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327.

MONDAY

2. In the Old Testament Hebrew weight system, one talent equals 34 kilograms (74 pounds) of silver. How does God's gift of grace become a talent? How diverse were the gifts in the parable and in reality?

[1] Revelation 16:21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heav-

"The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.

TUESDAY

3. According to the Master's words of life in the holy Scriptures, what special gifts of the Spirit become talents? How can one's mental capabilities be turned into a talent?

en, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

[1] Ephesians 2:8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

[1] Matthew 25:15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

[1] Romans 12:2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

1 Corinthians 2:16. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

"God requires the training of the mental faculties. He designs that His servants shall possess more intelligence and clearer discernment than the worldling, and He is displeased with those who are too careless or too indolent to become efficient, well-informed workers. The Lord bids us love Him with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and with all the mind. This lays upon us the obligation of developing the intellect to its fullest capacity, that with all the mind we may know and love our Creator. "If placed under the control of His Spirit, the more thoroughly the intellect is cultivated, the more effectively it can be used in the service of God. The uneducated man who is consecrated to God and who longs to bless others can be, and is, used by the Lord in His service. But those who, with the same spirit of consecration, have had the benefit of a thorough education, can do a much more extensive work for Christ. They stand on vantage ground." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333.

WEDNESDAY

4. Why is speech—the second special gift—so important? How is it turned into a talent?

Matthew 12:37. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

James 3:9, 10. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

"The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer's love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good. "The culture and right use of the voice are greatly neglected, even by persons of intelligence and Christian activity. There are many who read or speak in so low or so rapid a manner that they cannot be readily understood. Some have a thick, indistinct utterance; others speak in a high key, in sharp, shrill tones, that are painful to the hearers. Texts, hymns, and the reports and other papers presented before public assemblies are sometimes read in such a way that they are not understood and often so that their force and impressiveness are destroyed." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 335.

BLESSINGS FROM CHRIST

THURSDAY

5. The third special gift is sacred influence. What are Christians called to do? Therefore, what did Christ do with Simon Peter, and what does He want to do with each of His children today?

 **1 Corinthians 10:31, 32.** 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.

 **Matthew 5:16; 16:17, 18.** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. ^{16:17}And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸And 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.

"This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed.

"Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 339, 340.

SOWING FOR ETERNITY

FRIDAY

6. What fourth special gift should never be buried or ignored? No matter whether one is rich or poor, what will happen if he has been given a talent and does not use it?

 **Ephesians 5:15, 16.** See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, ¹⁶Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

 **Matthew 25:18, 24-27.** But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.... ²⁴Then he which had received

the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: ²⁵And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. ²⁶His Lord answered and said

unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: ²⁷Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

"Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.

"The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342.

SABBATH

7. What divine gift must be cared for as a fifth talent by exercising faithful stewardship over it? What will be the fate of one who does not do this?

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

[[1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

"All should have an intelligent knowledge of the human frame that they may keep their bodies in the condition necessary to do the work of the Lord. The physical life is to be carefully preserved and developed that through humanity the divine nature may be revealed in its fullness. The relation of the physical organism to the spiritual life is one of the most important branches of education. It should receive careful attention in the home and in the school. All need to become acquainted with their physical structure and the laws that control natural life. He who remains in willing

ignorance of the laws of his physical being and who violates them through ignorance is sinning against God. All should place themselves in the best possible relation to life and health. Our habits should be brought under the control of a mind that is itself under the control of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 348.



For additional study

“There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. If we realize our helplessness and our need of divine power, we shall not trust to ourselves. We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 341.

LESSON 25

Sabbath, December 16, 2023

Talents, Part 2



"Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captive captive, and gave gifts unto men." Ephesians 4:8.

"Talents used are talents multiplied. Success is not the result of chance or of destiny; it is the outworking of God's own providence, the reward of faith and discretion, of virtue and persevering effort. The Lord desires us to use every gift we have; and if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use. He does not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications we lack; but while we use that which we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty. By every wholehearted, earnest sacrifice for the Master's service our powers will increase. While we yield ourselves as instruments for the Holy Spirit's working, the grace of God works in us to deny old inclinations, to overcome powerful propensities, and to form new habits." —Christ's Object Lessons, p. 353.

STRENGTH AND MONEY FOR GOD'S WORK

SUNDAY

1. What should be the purpose of every faithful Christian? Why is the sixth talent—physical and spiritual strength—important?

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.

Deuteronomy 6:5. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Isaiah 40:31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

"There is need of businessmen who will weave the grand principles of truth into all their transactions. And their talents should be perfected by most thorough study and training. If men in any line of work need to improve their opportunities to become wise and efficient, it is those who are using their ability in building up the kingdom of God in our world. Of Daniel we learn that in all his business transactions, when subjected to the closest scrutiny, not one fault or error could be found. He was a sample of what every businessman may be. His history shows what may be accomplished by one who consecrates the strength of brain and bone and muscle, of heart and life, to the service of God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 350.

MONDAY

2. What happens when an entire talent given by the Eternal One is not used? What three fatal errors caused Samson, one of the strongest men in the world, to lose his strength?

[L] Matthew 25:28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

[L] Judges 16:4, 5, 17. And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.... ¹⁷That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

"But God will not accept the greatest talents or the most splendid service unless self is laid upon the altar, a living, consuming sacrifice. The root must be holy, else there can be no fruit acceptable to God.

"The Lord made Daniel and Joseph shrewd managers. He could work through them because they did not live to please their own inclination but to please God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 350.

TUESDAY

3. In another of Jesus' parables, what did a man entrust to his servants before travelling "into a far country"? What is important for God's children to do?

[L] Matthew 25:14. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

[L] Deuteronomy 8:18. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

"Money has great value, because it can do great good. In the hands of God's children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked. It is a defense for the oppressed, and a means of help to the sick. But money is of no more value than sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life, in blessing others, and advancing the cause of Christ." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 351.

WEDNESDAY

4. What can happen to this divine gift? What frequently prevents the development of the seventh talent?

[L] 1 Timothy 6:10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

[L] James 5:1-6. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your mis-

eries that shall come upon you. ²Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. ⁴Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. ⁵Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. ⁶Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

"The more means we expend in display and self-indulgence, the less we can have to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Every penny used unnecessarily deprives the spender of a precious opportunity of doing good. It is robbing God of the honor and glory which should flow back to Him through the improvement of His entrusted talents." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 352.

KIND FEELINGS OF BLESSING

THURSDAY

5. Who gives people a spirit of kindness for their own blessing as well as for that of their fellowmen?

"Kindly affections, generous impulses, and a quick apprehension of spiritual things are precious talents, and lay their possessor under a weighty responsibility. All are to be used in God's service." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 352.

 **James 1:17.** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

 **2 Corinthians 5:17.** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

CALLED TO BE FAITHFUL STEWARDS

FRIDAY

6. What does God want to do with His children? According to the apostle Paul, what does the Master want Christians to do?

 **Acts 9:5, 6.** And 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.

 **1 Corinthians 4:2.** Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

"But here many err. Satisfied with the possession of these qualities, they fail to bring them into active service for others. They flatter themselves that if they had opportunity, if circumstances were favorable, they would do a great and good work. But they are awaiting the opportunity." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 352.

SABBATH

7. How did the faithful servants manage the talents that were entrusted to them? What happened when they were called to give an account of their stewardship?

 **Matthew 25:16, 17, 19-23.** Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. ¹⁷And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.... ¹⁹After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. ²⁰And so he that had received

five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. ²¹His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. ²²He also that

had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. ²³His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

"But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to cooperate with One who knows no failure.

"We should not talk of our own weakness and inability. This is a manifest distrust of God, a denial of His word." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 363.



For Additional Study

"Many who profess to be Christians neglect the claims of God, and yet they do not feel that in this there is any wrong. They know that the blasphemer, the murderer, the adulterer, deserves punishment; but as for them, they enjoy the services of religion. They love to hear the gospel preached, and therefore they think themselves Christians. Though they have spent their lives in caring for themselves, they will be as much surprised as was the unfaithful servant in the parable to hear the sentence, 'Take the talent from him.' Like the Jews, they mistake the enjoyment of their blessings for the use they should make of them.

"Many who excuse themselves from Christian effort plead their inability for the work. But did God make them so incapable? No, never. This inability has been produced by their own inactivity and perpetuated by their deliberate choice. Already, in their own characters, they are realizing the result of the sentence, 'Take the talent from him.' The continual misuse of their talents will effectually quench for them the Holy Spirit, which is the only light. The sentence, 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness,' sets Heaven's seal to the choice which they themselves have made for eternity." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 365.

LECCIÓN 26

Sabbath, December 23, 2023

The Rich Man and Lazarus



"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."
Luke 16:10.

"By unfaithfulness in even the smallest duties, man robs his Maker of the service which is His due. This unfaithfulness reacts upon himself. He fails of gaining the grace, the power, the force of character, which may be received through an unreserved surrender to God. Living apart from Christ he is subject to Satan's temptations, and he makes mistakes in his work for the Master. Because he is not guided by right principles in little things, he fails to obey God in the great matters which he regards as his special work. The defects cherished in dealing with life's minor details pass into more important affairs. He acts on the principles to which he has accustomed himself. Thus actions repeated form habits, habits form character, and by the character our destiny for time and for eternity is decided." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 356.

SOWING AND REAPING

SUNDAY

1. Many times, what do we do with the gifts God has given us? What did "the rich man" in the parable not take into account?

 **Luke 16:19.** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

 **Mark 14:7.** For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good.

"The rich man did not belong to the class represented by the unjust judge, who openly declared his disregard for God and man. He claimed to be a

son of Abraham. He did not treat the beggar with violence or require him to go away because the sight of him was disagreeable. If the poor, loathsome specimen of humanity could be comforted by beholding him as he entered his gates, the rich man was willing that he should remain. But he was selfishly indifferent to the needs of his suffering brother.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 261.

MONDAY

2. What basic right was denied to Lazarus in the first part of the parable? Whom did the rich man defraud, as is true of anyone who acts as he did?

[L] Luke 16:20, 21. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

[L] Proverbs 19:17. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

“There were then no hospitals in which the sick might be cared for. The suffering and needy were brought to the notice of those to whom the Lord had entrusted wealth, that they might receive help and sympathy. Thus it was with the beggar and the rich man. Lazarus was in great need of help; for he was without friends, home, money, or food. Yet he was allowed to remain in this condition day after day, while the wealthy nobleman had every want supplied. The one who was abundantly able to relieve the sufferings of his fellow creature, lived to himself, as many live today.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 261.

TUESDAY

3. What happens to both the rich and the poor in this world of pilgrimage? As for death as a dark place—for the Greeks, “Hades,” and for the Hebrews, “Sheol”—what change of condition did Jesus present in the parable as occurring for the rich man and for Lazarus?

[L] Ecclesiastes 9:5, first part. For the living know that they shall die:...

[L] Luke 16:22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.

"The time came when a change took place in the condition of the two men. The poor man had suffered day by day, but he had patiently and quietly endured. In the course of time he died and was buried. There was no one to mourn for him; but by his patience in suffering he had witnessed for Christ, he had endured the test of his faith, and at his death he is represented as being carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

"Lazarus represents the suffering poor who believe in Christ. When the trumpet sounds and all that are in the graves hear Christ's voice and come forth, they will receive their reward; for their faith in God was not a mere theory, but a reality.

"The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.'" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 262, 263.

WEDNESDAY

4. In that the rich man was far from his father Abraham, while the poor man was close to him, what was Jesus denoting? In what doctrinal place did the Jewish people think they were secure?

 **Luke 16:23.** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

 **John 13:23-25; 8:33, 37.** Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. ²⁵He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?... ^{8:33}They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?... ³⁷I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

"The Lord had made the Jews the depositaries of sacred truth. He had appointed them stewards of His grace. He had given them every spiritual and temporal advantage, and He called upon them to impart these blessings. Special instruction had been given them in regard to their treatment of their brethren who had fallen into decay, of the stranger within their gates, and of the poor among them. They were not to seek to gain everything for their own advantage, but were to remember those in need and share with them. And God promised to bless them in accordance with their deeds

of love and mercy. But like the rich man, they put forth no helping hand to relieve the temporal or spiritual necessities of suffering humanity. Filled with pride, they regarded themselves as the chosen and favored people of God; yet they did not serve or worship God. They put their dependence in the fact that they were children of Abraham. "We be Abraham's seed," they said proudly. John 8:33. When the crisis came, it was revealed that they had divorced themselves from God, and had placed their trust in Abraham, as if he were God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 267.

MIXED FEELINGS

THURSDAY

5. Influenced by Greek philosophy, what did many apostate Jewish leaders in Christ's day believe? In contrast, in Jesus' parable, what did poor Lazarus believe?

cees.... ¹¹How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? ¹²Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

 **Matthew 3:7; 16:6, 11, 12.** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ^{16,6}Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Saddu-

 **Acts 23:8, 6.** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.... ⁶But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

"Christ longed to let light shine into the darkened minds of the Jewish people. He said to them, 'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham.' John 8:39, 40." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 268.

SHARING BELIEF

FRIDAY

6. In line with Greek philosophy in Homer's Iliad and also of the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead but in "Hades," what did the rich man do in Jesus' parable? Requesting drops of water when he would need full pitchers of it, what false belief was the rich man depicted as clinging to?

[L] Luke 16:24-26. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I

am tormented in this flame. ²⁵But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. ²⁶And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

[L] Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

"In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions. He held up before His hearers a mirror wherein they might see themselves in their true relation to God. He used the prevailing opinion to convey the idea He wished to make prominent to all—that no man is valued for his possessions, for all he has belongs to him only as lent by the Lord. A misuse of these gifts will place him below the poorest and most afflicted man who loves God and trusts in Him." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 263.

SABBATH

7. What else did the rich man request of Abraham? Where was he told that the answers to such requests could be found?

[L] Luke 16:27-29. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: ²⁸For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of

receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

torment. ²⁹Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

[L] John 12:47, 48. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸He that rejecteth me, and

[L] Luke 16:30, 31. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

"When the rich man solicited additional evidence for his brothers, he was plainly told that should this evidence be given, they would not be persuaded. His request cast a reflection on God. It was as if the rich man had said, If you had more thoroughly warned me, I should not now be here. Abraham in his answer to this request is represented as saying, Your brothers have been sufficiently warned. Light has been given them, but they would not see; truth has been presented to them, but they would not hear. "'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' These words were proved true in the history of the Jewish nation. Christ's last and crowning miracle was the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, after he had been dead four days. The Jews were given this wonderful evidence of the Saviour's divinity, but they rejected it. Lazarus rose from the dead and bore his testimony before them, but they hardened their hearts against all evidence, and even sought to take his life." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 264, 265.



For Additional Study

"When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. During his lifetime he took no delight in God, nor found pleasure in His service. His character is not in harmony with God, and he could not be happy in the heavenly family." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 270.

Please read the Missionary Report from
NORMAN COLLEGE, USA on page 165

LESSON 27

Sabbath, December 30, 2023

The Net



"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." Matthew 13:47.

"The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the sower and the seed, the shepherd and the sheep—with these Christ illustrated immortal truth. He drew illustrations also from the events of life, facts of experience familiar to the hearers—the heaven, the hid treasure, the pearl, the fishing net, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the houses on the rock and the sand. In His lessons there was something to interest every mind, to appeal to every heart. Thus the daily task, instead of being a mere round of toil, bereft of higher thoughts, was brightened and uplifted by constant reminders of the spiritual and the unseen." —*Child Guidance*, p. 51.

CALLED TO BE FISHERS OF MEN

SUNDAY

1. To what did the prophet Isaiah compare the world and its inhabitants? From the experience of fishermen, when is the best time for fishing?

Isaiah 57:20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

Revelation 17:15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

"Night was the only favorable time for fishing with nets in the clear waters of the lake. After toiling all night without success, it seemed hopeless to cast the net by day; but Jesus had given the command, and love for their Master moved the disciples to obey. Simon and his brother together let down the net. As they attempted to draw it in, so great was the quantity of fish enclosed that it began to break." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 246.

MONDAY

2. What in life can be compared to silt and sludge? Why is the work of evangelism supremely important?

📖 **James 3:16.** For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

📖 **Colossians 2:8.** Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

"Both the parable of the tares and that of the net plainly teach that there is no time when all the wicked will turn to God. The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 123.

TUESDAY

3. What did Jesus often do on the shores of the sea of Galilee? Still today, what is He inviting His disciples to do?

📖 **Matthew 4:12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23.** Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; ¹³And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.... ¹⁵The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; ¹⁶The people which sat in darkness saw great

light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.... ¹⁸And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. ¹⁹And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.... ²¹And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.... ²³And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

"When the gospel net is cast, let there be a watching by the net, with tears and earnest prayer. Let the workers determine not to become discouraged; and not to let go the net until it is drawn ashore, with the fruit of their labor." —*Prayer*, p. 41.

WEDNESDAY

4. What did Christ make clear when He called His disciples? According to the parable of the net, what will be accomplished?

 **Luke 5:10, 11.** And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. ¹¹And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

 **Matthew 13:47.** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.

"Many souls are being rescued, wrenched from Satan's hand, by faithful workers. Someone must have a burden of soul to find those who have been lost to Christ. The rescue of one soul over whom Satan has triumphed causes joy among the heavenly angels. There are those who have destroyed in themselves the moral image of God. The gospel net must gather in these poor outcasts. Angels of God will cooperate with those who are engaged in this work, who make every effort to save perishing souls, to give them opportunities which many have never had. There is no other way of reaching them but in Christ's way. He ever worked to relieve suffering and teach righteousness. Only thus can sinners be raised from the depths of degradation." —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 249.

RESCUE PLAN

THURSDAY

5. Besides the net, what else is used in the fishing operation? What is its purpose?

 **Matthew 13:2, 48.** And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.... ⁴⁸Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

"The casting of the net is the preaching of the gospel. This gathers both good and evil into the church. When the mission of the gospel is completed, the judgment will accomplish the work of separation. Christ saw how the existence of false brethren in the church would cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of. The world would revile the gospel because of the inconsistent lives of false professors. Even Christians would be caused

to stumble as they saw that many who bore Christ's name were not controlled by His Spirit. Because these sinners were in the church, men would be in danger of thinking that God excused their sins. Therefore Christ lifts the veil from the future and bids all to behold that it is character, not position, which decides man's destiny." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 122.

FRIDAY

6. In the process of separation, what is the church's responsibility? What results is God looking for?

[] Romans 14:1; 15:1. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.... ^{15:1}We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

[] Galatians 6:1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

"Both the parable of the tares and that of the net plainly teach that there is no time when all the wicked will turn to God. The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 123.

SABBATH

7. At the end of the conflict of the centuries, what strange work will be accomplished by the God of love and mercy? According to this parable, what will happen at the end of the world?

and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

[] Matthew 13:49, 50. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

[] Revelation 11:18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come,

"Again, these parables teach that there is to be no probation after the judgment. When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed.

"God does not desire the destruction of any. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?' Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 123.



For Additional Study

"Peter exclaimed, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man;' yet he clung to the feet of Jesus, feeling that he could not be parted from Him. The Saviour answered, 'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.' It was after Isaiah had beheld the holiness of God and his own unworthiness that he was entrusted with the divine message. It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and dependence upon divine power that he received the call to his work for Christ." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 246.



MISSIONARY REPORT FROM NORMAN COLLEGE, U.S.A.

To be read on Sabbath, December 30, 2023

The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, January 6, 2024

"And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.... And left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life." 2 Kings 7:5-7.

Greetings from the United States of America, the land of the birthplace of Adventism and the home of the brave, those who will be the first to stand up for the commandments of God against the Sunday law.

This country gained its independence officially on July 4, 1776. It grew from thirteen colonies to become a nation of fifty states, populated by 332 million people and covering a land mass of 3.8 million square miles (9.8 million square kilometers). Since the opening of the sixth seal and the beginning of the sixth church period of Philadelphia, the United States has been a prophetic hotspot. The Dark Day of 1780, the falling of the stars of 1833, and the second great awakening of 1844 all occurred in this land. It was the birthplace of Ellen G. White, James White, Joseph Bates, Uriah Smith, Stephen Haskell, and many other Adventist pioneers.

The Reform Movement in America began during World War I under the leadership of Dr. J.H. Miller and his co-workers. Eventually, Elder Otto Welp, the first President of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, moved from Germany to the United States and helped to build up the work. Today, the Reform Movement has twelve ministers, twelve ordained church elders, and twelve Bible workers serving over 500 baptized members in forty churches and groups spread in thirty of the fifty states within the United States. Every week, new Macedonian calls are received. The nation is divided into four fields making up the American Union—the legally registered, nonprofit, religious organization first incorporated in 1927 after World War I.

By God's grace, Norman College, a former Baptist university campus and conference center located in Norman Park, Georgia, was miraculously obtained by the American Union after submitting its bid at auction on June 30, 2021, and closing on the property on July 27, 2021. On the campus are five chapels, an auditorium for 900 people, a cafeteria for 350 people, a gymnasium with a 500-person seating capacity, fifty private hotel rooms, thirty-five classrooms, nine offices, a maintenance building, a parsonage, an apartment,

and ample green spaces, all on 10.9 acres of land. Each building came completely furnished and equipped with the operating supplies necessary to begin. It was reminiscent of the Syrian camp inherited by the Israelites in Elisha's day. Like the repentant lepers of old, the brethren in America have witnessed the Lord's blessing upon His people of the last days.

After the acquisition of the College, the delegates to the American Union gathered and voted to update the Union's constitution and bylaws to establish the former Norman College as the new headquarters of the American Union. As the remodeling, updating, and painting projects continue, the college is already a center for training Bible workers, hosting conferences, recording videos, and operating Orion Christian Academy, an online school. Soon, Norman College Academy, a brick-and-mortar middle school, will open its doors. After that, Shiloh Missionary School will begin and, eventually, Norman College will reopen as a hybrid educational facility, offering online and face-to-face courses in religion (chaplaincy), education, languages, and nursing. Distance learning will be accessible via Internet to anyone around the world who wishes to gain a private, accredited Christian education at a Reform Movement institution.

At this moment, your assistance is needed to install fiber-optic Internet cables and solar panels. Fiber optics will increase efficient and dependable communication within the United States and around the world. Solar panels will reduce electric utility bills and lower maintenance costs. A new science and medical laboratory is also needed. Your donations will make a great difference in building up Norman College, Shiloh Missionary School, and Norman College Academy. Now is the time to invest in the future and share in the enterprise to educate for eternity. You can invest in Norman College for the glory of God.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Sister Ellen G. White wrote to all Adventist believers worldwide to invest in the Southern work in America. Norman Park, Georgia, is in the heart of the old South of the United States.

Brothers and sisters, now is the time to make haste to do something. Will you now give of your means to advance the work in the South? If you have in your possession houses and lands that you do not need, will you sell them, and invest the means thus obtained in more firmly establishing the various lines of work that have been begun in the Southern field?—See *Letter 72*, 1902, pp. 3, 4, 8.

Throughout her lifetime, the Lord's servant gave to build up the work in the United States. She told of borrowing in order to give and shared how it was an investment in the treasury of heaven: "We are establishing missions and building meetinghouses in America. I have had some property I could not sell, and as I could not sell, I hired money and tried to invest it where it was most needed in the cause. Already we have placed thirty thousand dollars in the treasury of heaven."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, 310.

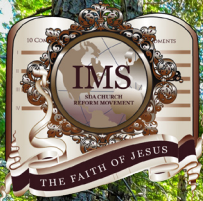
Today, the Lord appeals to each of you around the world to help the work in America to grow so as to reach each corner of this huge land and be a blessing to the world. Electric panels, fiber optics, working hands, funds, books, medical equipment, gifts-in-kind, and prayers are all needed. God will bless your investment. Who knows? Perhaps you or a loved one may enroll in one of the institutions at Norman College in the near future. Come to the United States, and see Norman College for yourself. A conference is held every year at the end of December. Thank you in advance for your gifts and offerings. God bless you all.

—Elder Idel Suárez, Jr.

American Union President | Ministerial Research Institute Leader

—Margie Seely

American Union Secretary | General Conference Education Leader



PARABLES OF *Jesus Christ*

"Whoever will prayerfully study the Bible, desiring to know the truth, that he may obey it, will receive divine enlightenment. He will understand the Scriptures. 'If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.' John 7:17."

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 459.



SABBATH
SCHOOL LESSONS

SECOND HALF 2023