

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division



Justification by Faith

Vol. 93, No. 4

October–December, 2017

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

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● U.S.A. AND CANADA

Contact: Telephone 1-540-366-9400 * Fax 1-540-366-2814 * Website: www.sdarm.org * E-mail: info@sdarm.org

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Foreword

Five hundred years ago, a monk named Martin Luther issued The Ninety-five Theses, and in doing so, heralded in the great protestant awakening and began a movement of reformation in the churches of his time. He challenged many long-held beliefs and practices and brought Christ, the Saviour, to the forefront of Christendom. Luther set in motion a movement which has led many to the study of the Scriptures. Many Christians today have various opinions and discussions on Christ and His life on earth. While many are discussing what the righteousness of Christ is, God is looking today for a people who will show the world His righteousness by the way they live their lives each day.

“It is not enough to argue in defense of the truth. The most telling evidence of its worth is seen in a godly life; and without this the most conclusive statements will be lacking in weight and prevailing power; for our strength lies in being connected with God by His Holy Spirit.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 20, 1888.

“Abundant provision has been made that all who desire to live a godly life may have grace and strength through Jesus our divine Redeemer. . . . The servants of God are to draw peace and strength from the Source of their strength, and in so doing they will find life full of happiness and peace. . . . The whole being must be consecrated to God, for our precious Saviour never shares a divided heart. Our inclinations and desires must be under the control of the Spirit of God, and then we shall be strengthened to fight the good fight of faith.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 92.

“[Christ] said by the mouth of the beloved disciple, ‘Behold, I come quickly,’ and John responds, ‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’ Jesus spoke these words as words of warning and encouragement to His people; and why should we not heed them? The Lord has said that it is the faithful who will be found watching and waiting for Him.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 258.

It is our earnest prayer to God that, as we study the lessons of this quarterly, we will follow the guidance of His Spirit and make the righteousness of Christ our own. As we surrender our lives fully to God’s leading, God will use us as His instruments to share the great message of Christ our living Saviour to those around us and thus hasten the coming of the Lord. May we all be led to a deeper experience, may we turn to the Lord wholeheartedly, confess our shortcomings, obtain the assurance of sins forgiven, and allow Him to cleanse us, so that His righteousness may become ours.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the headquarters restoration of the South American Southern Union

The SDARM Southern Union comprises the countries of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The headquarters is located in Argentina, a nation of nearly 41.5 million people; Paraguay has 6.8 million, and Uruguay 3.4 million—forming a combined total of close to 52 million souls.



The Republic of Argentina is the second largest country of South America and eighth largest in the world. The majority of Argentines (76.5%) are Roman Catholics, 11.3% are religiously indifferent, 9% Protestants (mostly in Pentecostal denominations), and less than 2% are of other religions.

The SDARM came to this country in 1927 when our brother Eugenio Laicovschi arrived and had the pleasure of meeting some believers from Bessarabia who had emigrated before him. With enthusiasm they formed a small group for worship. Their first conference was held in the city of San Nicolás in April 1930, when souls were baptized and the canvassing work was organized with some foreign colporteurs. In 1936, the first chapel was dedicated here.

Many years have since passed and today the structure that serves as the headquarters building in the capital city of Buenos Aires is seriously deteriorating. It urgently needs general restoration and expansion in order to provide a new administrative environment, a conference room for health and cooking classes, and better accommodations for the brethren who visit us. It is indeed appropriate for the work of God in these last days to be properly represented amid a population of this size. The economic conditions here have not been strong for several years, so we are appealing to our fellow brethren around the world to join hands with us in helping to finance this endeavor.

We hope that in reading our request, brethren and friends around the world will understand our great and urgent need and graciously respond to the plea. We thank you in advance for your kind generosity.

Your brethren from the South American Southern Union

Luther: The Man for His Time

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith” (Habbakuk 2:4).

“Zealous, ardent, and devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Holy Scriptures, Luther was the man for his time; through him God accomplished a great work for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 120.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 120–144; 197–205.

Sunday

October 1

1. LUTHER FINDS THE LIGHT

- a. **What parable illustrates the experience of Martin Luther when he found the Bible for the first time? Matthew 13:44–46.**

“While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. . . . He had heard portions of the Gospels and Epistles, which were read to the people at public worship, and he supposed that these were the entire Bible. Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God’s word. With mingled awe and wonder he turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 122.

- b. **As Luther studied the word more deeply, what effect did this have upon him? Psalm 119:130; Jeremiah 15:16.**

“He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

2. LIGHT PIERCES THE DARKNESS

- a. As Luther studied his Bible further, what conviction did he feel concerning his own life? Isaiah 6:5.
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“Angels of heaven were by [Luther’s] side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding. He had ever feared to offend God, but now the deep conviction of his condition as a sinner took hold upon him as never before.

“An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God led him at last to enter a cloister and devote himself to a monastic life.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 122, 123.

- b. As Luther sought to find pardon and peace through painful acts of penance, what was God trying to teach him? 1 Timothy 1:15.
-

“The pious Staupitz opened the word of God to Luther’s mind and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God’s law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. ‘Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer’s arms. Trust in Him, in the righteousness of His life, in the atonement of His death. . . . Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favor.’ ‘Love Him who first loved you’ (D’Aubigné, b. 2, ch. 4).”—*Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124.

- c. As he was climbing Pilate’s staircase on his knees, what central Bible truth became clear to Luther? Romans 1:17.
-

“By a recent decretal an indulgence had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees ‘Pilate’s staircase,’ said to have been descended by our Saviour on leaving the Roman judgment hall and to have been miraculously conveyed from Jerusalem to Rome. Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him: ‘The just shall live by faith’ (Romans 1:17). He sprang to his feet and hastened from the place in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 125.

3. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

- a. When in 1517 Luther published his ninety-five theses against the power of indulgences, how did he teach that our works cannot atone for sin? Galatians 2:16; Acts 20:21.
-

“Luther . . . set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner. The grace of Christ cannot be purchased; it is a free gift. He counseled the people not to buy indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer. He related his own painful experience in vainly seeking by humiliation and penance to secure salvation, and assured his hearers that it was by looking away from himself and believing in Christ that he found peace and joy.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 129.

- b. How alone are we saved from sin, and by whom? Romans 1:16; Ephesians 2:8–10.
-

“By [Luther’s] theses it was shown that the power to grant the pardon of sin, and to remit its penalty, had never been committed to the pope or to any other man. . . . It was also clearly shown that the gospel of Christ is the most valuable treasure of the church, and that the grace of God, therein revealed, is freely bestowed upon all who seek it by repentance and faith.” —*Ibid.*, p. 130.

- c. From whom do we obtain a saving faith in Jesus, and how may we increase it? Romans 10:9; Luke 17:5.
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“Faith that enables us to receive God’s gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being. It grows as exercised in appropriating the word of God. In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in contact with the word.”—*Education*, pp. 253, 254.

“Now, brethren, you have educated yourselves so much in doubts and questionings that you have to educate your souls in the line of faith. You have to talk faith, you have to live faith, you have to act faith, that you may have an increase of faith.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 78.

4. THE SCRIPTURES: THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

- a. What attitude held by Luther towards the authority of scripture became the vital principle of the Reformation? Colossians 2:8; Isaiah 8:20.

“[Luther] firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. These words struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 126.

- b. In an effort to counter the effect of Luther's teachings, in 1529 the German Emperor prepared a Decree that would end religious freedom and restore the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. What two principles contained in the Protest of the Princes of Germany against this decree constitute the essence of Protestantism? Acts 4:18–20; 5:28, 29; Matthew 15:8, 9.

“The principles contained in this celebrated Protest . . . constitute the very essence of Protestantism. Now this Protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of the church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the word of God above the visible church. In the first place, it rejects the civil power in divine things, and says with the prophets and apostles, ‘*We must obey God rather than man.*’ In presence of the crown of Charles the Fifth, it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes farther: it lays down the principle that all human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God’ (D’Aubigné, b. 13, ch. 6). The protesters had moreover affirmed their right to utter freely their convictions of truth. They would not only believe and obey, but teach what the word of God presents, and they denied the right of priest or magistrate to interfere. The Protest of Spire was a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. . . .

“Satan’s manner of working against God and His word has not changed; he is still as much opposed to the Scriptures being made the guide of life as in the sixteenth century. In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 203–205.

5. THE WORD BRINGS LIFE TO THE SOUL

- a. What does the Word of God do for those who hear or read it? Psalm 119:103, 104.

- b. How did Luther's teaching of the word of God affect those he taught? Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12.

"The word of God, by which Luther tested every doctrine and every claim, was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of the people. Everywhere there was awakening a desire for spiritual progress. Everywhere was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as had not been known for ages. The eyes of the people, so long directed to human rites and earthly mediators, were now turning in penitence and faith to Christ and Him crucified."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 133.

- c. What will happen as we study and obey the word of God? John 17:17.

"The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. . . . If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 100.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was Luther's reaction to finding a Bible for the first time?
2. What fallacy became clear to Luther as he climbed Pilate's staircase?
3. In what way alone can a sinner be saved?
4. How can we continue to uphold the essence of Protestantism today?
5. What role do the Scriptures have in transforming character?

The Sin Problem

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“The human family have all transgressed the law of God, and as transgressors of the law, man is hopelessly ruined; for he is the enemy of God, without strength to do any good thing.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 321.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 48–62.

Sunday

October 8

1. GOD’S PURPOSE FOR HUMANITY

- a. **In whose image were Adam and Eve created, and for what purpose? Genesis 1:26, 27, 31; Isaiah 43:7.**

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. ‘God created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase.”—*Education*, p. 15.

- b. **Though our first parents wore no artificial garments, what enshrouded them as a symbol of their purity? Psalm 104:1, 2. Compare Exodus 34:29.**

“The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

“The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 310, 311.

2. A TEST OF LOVE

- a. In what sense were our first parents free to fulfill their divine purpose? Deuteronomy 30:19.
-

“Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. . . .

“God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 48, 49.

- b. What test of loyalty was given to our first parents. Genesis 2:16, 17.
-

“When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden they had everything for their happiness which they could desire. But God chose, in His all-wise arrangements, to test their loyalty before they could be rendered eternally secure. They were to have His favor, and He was to converse with them and they with Him. Yet He did not place evil out of their reach. Satan was permitted to tempt them. If they endured the trial they were to be in perpetual favor with God and the heavenly angels.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 24.

- c. Describe how our first parents became disloyal to God. 2 Corinthians 11:3; Genesis 3:1–6.
-

“Satan represented to the holy pair that they would be gainers by breaking the law of God. Do we not today hear similar reasoning? Many talk of the narrowness of those who obey God’s commandments, while they themselves claim to have broader ideas and to enjoy greater liberty. What is this but an echo of the voice from Eden, ‘In the day ye eat thereof—transgress the divine requirement—‘ye shall be as gods’?”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.

3. SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

a. How is the act of sin defined in the Bible? 1 John 3:4.

“Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is ‘the transgression of the law;’ it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

b. What tragic consequence came upon humanity because of their sin? Genesis 3:19, 23; Romans 5:12.

“It was not the will of God that the sinless pair should know aught of evil. He had freely given them the good, and had withheld the evil. But, contrary to His command, they had eaten of the forbidden tree, and now they would continue to eat of it—they would have the knowledge of evil—all the days of their life. From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan’s temptations. Instead of the happy labor heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. They would be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally to death.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 59.

c. What additional consequence did the Fall have on the nature of every human being? Romans 3:12; 7:14, 18; 8:7.

“After their sin Adam and Eve . . . were told that their nature had become depraved by sin; they had lessened their strength to resist evil and had opened the way for Satan to gain more ready access to them. In their innocence they had yielded to temptation; and now, in a state of conscious guilt, they would have less power to maintain their integrity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 61.

“The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man’s experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist.”—*Education*, p. 29.

“Of himself he is incapable of sensing sin, incapable of appreciating and appropriating the divine nature. Were it brought within his reach there is nothing in it that his natural heart would desire it.”—*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 340.

4. FIG-LEAF GARMENTS

- a. After realizing their loss of innocence, and the light given to symbolize it, what did Adam and Eve do to try and cover their nakedness? Was their covering acceptable? Genesis 3:7, 8 (compare Revelation 3:17).

“When sin entered, [our first parents] severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 311.

- b. In what spiritual sense have sinners been making fig-leaf garments for themselves ever since the Fall? Romans 10:3.

“This is what the transgressors of God’s law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.”—*Ibid.*

- c. What deception leads us to think that we can make ourselves acceptable to God? Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 64:6.

“Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God. . . .

“The human family have all transgressed the law of God, and as transgressors of the law, man is hopelessly ruined; for he is the enemy of God, without strength to do any good thing. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Romans 8:7).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 320, 321.

5. THE WHOLE WORLD GUILTY BEFORE GOD

- a. How has all humanity failed to fulfill God's original purpose? Romans 3:23.
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- b. As the standard of righteousness, what purpose does the law of God serve? Romans 3:19, 20; Galatians 3:24.
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"The law stands firm, and justice sternly points the sinner to its holy precepts. It is not the province of the law to save the sinner, but to condemn, not to pardon, but to convict. It cannot be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. Then how is God's justice to be satisfied and His favor obtained? Not by works; 'for by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.' In his own strength the sinner cannot meet the demands of God."—*The Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1901.

- c. What question has been asked by sinners ever since the Fall, and what is the only answer? Job 9:2; 25:4–6; John 1:29.
-

"In every congregation there are souls who are unsatisfied. Every Sabbath they should hear something that will help them in the way of salvation and teach them how to become better Christians. The important thing for them to know is, How can a sinner be justified before God? Let the way of salvation be presented before them in simplicity. Lift up Jesus as the sinner's only hope."—*The Review and Herald*, October 7, 1909.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. For what purpose did God create human beings?
2. Why was it important to allow humanity freedom of choice to serve God?
3. What sinful condition are we all subject to apart from God?
4. How can I be guilty of making fig-leaf garments for myself?
5. In who only can I find hope for my sinful condition?

God's Plan to Save Us

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

“Through Christ, restoration as well as reconciliation is provided for man. The gulf that was made by sin has been spanned by the cross of Calvary.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 363.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63–79.

Sunday

October 15

1. THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION REVEALED

- a. **What promise of redemption did God give to Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16.**

“Adam and his companion were assured that notwithstanding their great sin, they were not to be abandoned to the control of Satan. The Son of God had offered to atone, with His own life, for their transgression. A period of probation would be granted them, and through repentance and faith in Christ they might again become the children of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 66.

- b. **What converting grace does the promise of redemption include, and why is it necessary? Galatians 3:14; John 3:5.**

“It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict where hitherto had been peace. The power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper. Whoever is seen to abhor sin instead of loving it, whoever resists and conquers those passions that have held sway within, displays the operation of a principle wholly from above.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 506.

2. ONLY ONE APPROVED PLAN

- a. What is the essential element in the plan of redemption, and what does it signify? Hebrews 9:22; Leviticus 17:11.
-

“Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. To many it has been a mystery why so many sacrificial offerings were required in the old dispensation, why so many bleeding victims were led to the altar. But the great truth that was to be kept before men, and imprinted upon mind and heart, was this, ‘Without shedding of blood is no remission’ (Hebrews 9:22). In every bleeding sacrifice was typified ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29).”—*Our High Calling*, p. 47.

- b. What shows that Cain did not wholeheartedly accept the divine plan? Genesis 4:3–5.
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“[Cain and Abel] knew that in these [sacrificial] offerings they were to express faith in the Saviour whom the offerings typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence on Him for pardon; and they knew that by thus conforming to the divine plan for their redemption, they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God. Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they were to show their faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice. Besides this, the first fruits of the earth were to be presented before the Lord as a thank offering.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.

- c. What did God tell Cain about the divine plan, and what did Cain’s response reveal about himself? Genesis 4:6–8.
-

“[Cain] thought that his own plans were best, and that the Lord would come to his terms. Cain in his offering did not acknowledge his dependence upon Christ. He thought that his father Adam had been treated harshly in being expelled from Eden. The idea of keeping that sin ever before the mind, and offering the blood of the slain lamb as a confession of entire dependence upon a power outside of himself, was torture to the high spirit of Cain.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 77, 78.

3. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS FRUSTRATES GOD'S PLAN

- a. What parable of Jesus illustrates the error of trusting in yourself for righteousness? Luke 18:9–14.
-

“The Pharisee goes up to the temple to worship, not because he feels that he is a sinner in need of pardon, but because he thinks himself righteous and hopes to win commendation. His worship he regards as an act of merit that will recommend him to God.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 150.

- b. How does this attitude frustrate God's grace, and why? Galatians 2:21.
-

“The Pharisee and the publican represent two great classes into which those who come to worship God are divided. Their first two representatives are found in the first two children that were born into the world. Cain thought himself righteous, and he came to God with a thank offering only. He made no confession of sin, and acknowledged no need of mercy. But Abel came with the blood that pointed to the Lamb of God. He came as a sinner, confessing himself lost; his only hope was the unmerited love of God. . . . The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 152.

- c. How is this general attitude displayed in nearly every false religion? Romans 10:2, 3.
-

“The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation. It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development—that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. The history of Cain shows what must be the results. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 73.

4. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE PLAN

- a. What shows that the plan of redemption originated with God and not with man? 1 John 4:19.
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- b. In what simple terms does the apostle Paul describe the gift of redemption? Ephesians 2:8.
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“The Lord saw our fallen condition; He saw our need of grace, and because He loved our souls, He has given us grace and peace. Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 347.

- c. What do the coats of skins provided by God to our first parents teach us about the promise of redemption? Genesis 3:21; Isaiah 61:10.
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“It is God’s glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 668.

“No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 311.

“Desponding soul, take courage, even though you have done wickedly. Do not think that *perhaps* God will pardon your transgressions and permit you to come into His presence. God has made the first advance. While you were in rebellion against Him, He went forth to seek you. With the tender heart of the shepherd He left the ninety and nine and went out into the wilderness to find that which was lost. The soul, bruised and wounded and ready to perish, He encircles in His arms of love and joyfully bears it to the fold of safety.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 188, 189.

5. THE EXTENT OF GOD'S LOVE

- a. How far does the reconciliation promised by God through Christ extend? John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:19.

“Only as we contemplate the great plan of redemption can we have a just appreciation of the character of God. The work of creation was a manifestation of His love; but the gift of God to save the guilty and ruined race, alone reveals the infinite depths of divine tenderness and compassion. ‘God *so loved* the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ While the law of God is maintained, and its justice vindicated, the sinner can be pardoned. The dearest gift that heaven itself had to bestow has been poured out that God ‘might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ By that gift men are uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin to become children of God. Says Paul: ‘Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 739.

- b. How did Jesus impressively illustrate the love and concern of God for every single person? Matthew 18:11–14.

“Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep.

“Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 479, 480.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What would have happened if there was no promise of redemption?
2. How was the plan of redemption illustrated in the offering of sacrifices?
3. How does self-righteousness frustrate the plan of redemption?
4. How does God make the first advance in restoring us to His favor?
5. How intimately does God know each of us?

Jesus Christ Our Only Hope

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Christ alone is exalted to be ‘a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ ‘Neither is there salvation in any other’ (Acts 5:31; 4:12).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 264.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 226–228.

Sunday

October 22

1. THE DIVINE SUBSTITUTE

a. What happened the same day Adam and Eve sinned? Genesis 3:21.

“To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God’s dear Son could expiate. And he marvelled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of utter desolation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

b. How does the prophet Isaiah explain this substitution? Isaiah 53:4, 5.

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

2. THE CONDITION OF ETERNAL LIFE

a. What is the condition of eternal life? Matthew 19:16, 17.

“The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

“Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life—the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. The Lord expects no less of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden—harmony with God’s law, which is holy, just, and good.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 391.

“As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God’s law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 370.

b. Can human beings present perfect obedience by themselves? Isaiah 64:6.

“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

3. PERFECT OBEDIENCE THROUGH CHRIST

- a. What assurance do we have through the merits of Christ? John 15:5; Philippians 4:13.
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“The world’s Redeemer, the only-begotten Son of God, by His perfect obedience to the law, by His life and character, redeemed that which was lost in the fall, and made it possible for man to obey that holy law if righteousness which Adam transgressed. Christ did not exchange His divinity for humanity, but combined humanity with divinity; and in humanity He lived the law in behalf of the human family. The sins of every one who will receive Christ were set to His account, and He has fully satisfied the justice of God.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 21.

“Because man fallen could not overcome Satan with his human strength, Christ came from the royal courts of heaven to help him with His human and divine strength combined. Christ knew that Adam in Eden with his superior advantages might have withstood the temptations of Satan and conquered him. He also knew that it was not possible for man out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the Fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. In order to bring hope to man, and save him from complete ruin, He humbled Himself to take man’s nature, that with His divine power combined with the human He might reach man where he is. He obtained for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that strength which it is impossible for them to gain for themselves, that in His name they might overcome the temptations of Satan.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1874.

- b. What was prophesied by Daniel in regard to the righteousness of Christ? Daniel 9:24.
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“In the prophecy of Daniel it was recorded of Christ that He shall ‘make reconciliation for iniquity, and . . . bring in everlasting righteousness’ (Daniel 9:24). Every soul may say: ‘By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness.’”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 396.

4. THE LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH

- a. Under what symbol did John the Baptist introduce Christ to the people? John 1:29.

“John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant, pleading with tears for the approval of the Father. As the glory of God encircled Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, John recognized the token which God had promised. He knew that it was the world’s Redeemer whom he had baptized. The Holy Spirit rested upon him, and with outstretched hand pointing to Jesus, he cried, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 112.

- b. What does the apostle Peter say about Jesus Christ? 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

“‘In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily’ (Colossians 2:9). Men need to understand that Deity suffered and sank under the agonies of Calvary. Yet Jesus Christ whom God gave for the ransom of the world purchased the church with His own blood. The Majesty of heaven was made to suffer at the hands of religious zealots, who claimed to be the most enlightened people upon the face of the earth.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 907.

“As the sinner looks upon the Saviour dying on Calvary, and realizes that the sufferer is divine, he asks why this great sacrifice was made, and the cross points to the holy law of God which has been transgressed. The death of Christ is an unanswerable argument to the immutability and righteousness of the law. In prophesying of Christ, Isaiah says, ‘He will magnify the law, and make it honourable’ (Isaiah 42:21). The law has no power to pardon the evildoer. Its office is to point out his defects, that he may realize his need of One who is mighty to save, his need of One who will become his substitute, his surety, his righteousness. Jesus meets the need of the sinner; for He has taken upon Him the sins of the transgressor. ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:5). The Lord could have cut off the sinner, and utterly destroyed him; but the costlier plan was chosen. In His great love He provides hope for the hopeless, giving His only-begotten Son to bear the sins of the world.”—*The Bible Echo*, March 15, 1893.

5. THE DIVINE CHALLENGE

- a. What unanswerable question did Christ put to His enemies? John 8:46.

“In His life on earth, Christ developed a perfect character, He rendered perfect obedience to His Father’s commandments. In coming to the world in human form, in becoming subject to the law, in revealing to men that He bore their sickness, their sorrow, their guilt, He did not become a sinner. Before the Pharisees He could say, ‘Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ (John 8:46). Not one stain of sin was found upon Him. He stood before the world the spotless Lamb of God.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 29, 1898.

- b. How can we be saved? John 3:16–18.

“How, then, are we to be saved? ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,’ so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live. ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God’ (Psalm 40:8).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 175, 176.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain Isaiah 53:4, 5.
2. How does the Bible clarify human righteousness?
3. How can we present perfect obedience to the law of God?
4. What does the death of Christ on Calvary prove?
5. What challenge did Christ direct to His enemies?

First Sabbath Offering Literature for Mission Fields

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penetrating former communist, atheistic, and Islamic countries and can be shared on a one-to-one basis. The servant of the Lord has said: “Let the publications containing Bible truth be scattered like the leaves of autumn” (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 323). “Our publications should go everywhere. Let them be issued in many languages. The third angel’s message is to be given through this medium and through the living teacher. You who believe the truth for this time, wake up. It is your duty now to bring in all the means possible to help those who understand the truth to proclaim it” (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 62).

“Publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel” (Jeremiah 31:7). God’s people, the remnant of Israel, are to publish the good news of salvation. While we have an ample supply of Bibles, books, and pamphlets for evangelism in many countries, still there are vast multitudes around the world that do not have the same privilege. It is our duty and honor to support the distribution of literature to various regions of the world. The Bible has been translated into many languages and dialects, yet essential books such as *Steps to Christ*, and *The Great Controversy* are not available to millions. How about if we share the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* with those who are searching for the present truth today?

Consider the Pacific islands and the African countries where the reform message has not yet entered. Let us remember the promise in Ecclesiastes 11:1, “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” We must spread the Word of God before it is too late. We may not see the results immediately, but it will not be long before we can witness the great harvest when the latter rain comes in fullness. Let us be wise stewards who store treasure in heaven—not on this earth.

We are very thankful for all that our brethren and friends everywhere have done in the past—but the need is greater now than ever before. So let us be generous in this work!

The General Conference Publishing Department

Justification by Faith

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

“The light given me of God places this important subject above any question in my mind. Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 20.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 389–398.

Sunday

October 29

1. THE CONDITIONS OF JUSTIFICATION

- a. **On what condition only can the sinner be justified? Acts 16:31; Galatians 3:11.**

“When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ’s righteousness. The sinner can be justified only through faith in the atonement made through God’s dear Son, who became a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty world. No one can be justified by any works of his own. He can be delivered from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation of the law, from the penalty of transgression, only by virtue of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 389.

- b. **Faith is the condition upon which God forgives and justifies the sinner. How does it operate? Matthew 15:22–28; Mark 9:20–24.**

“Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ’s perfect obedience instead of the sinner’s transgression and defection.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 366, 367.

2. AN EXAMPLE OF JUSTIFICATION—ABRAHAM

- a. How was righteousness imputed to Abraham? What merit do works have in procuring justification? Genesis 15:1, 5, 6.
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“Let the subject be made distinct and plain that it is not possible to effect anything in our standing before God or in the gift of God to us through creature merit. Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth. If any man can merit salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned as wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace, received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy. And all this controversy is ended, as soon as the matter is settled that the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him. The light given me of God places this important subject above any question in my mind. Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 19, 20.

- b. Based on the experience of Abraham, how is righteousness imputed to the sinner? Romans 4:1–8.
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“Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner’s account. Christ’s righteousness is accepted in place of man’s failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light. He can say with rejoicing, ‘Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life’ (Titus 3:5–7).”— *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 367.

3. THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD

- a. What happened on the way when the Lord was going to Jairus' home? Mark 5:22–27.
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“As [the Great Physician] was passing, [a poor woman diseased with an issue of blood] reached forward and succeeded in barely touching the border of His garment. But in that moment she knew that she was healed. In that one touch was concentrated the faith of her life and instantly her pain and feebleness gave place to the vigor of perfect health. . . .

“The Saviour could distinguish the touch of faith from the casual contact of the careless throng. Such trust should not be passed without comment. He would speak to the humble woman words of comfort that would be to her a wellspring of joy—words that would be a blessing to His followers to the close of time. . . .

“He gave no opportunity for superstition to claim healing virtue for the mere act of touching His garments. It was not through the outward contact with Him, but through the faith which took hold on His divine power, that the cure was wrought.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 343–347.

- b. What made the difference between the casual touches of the common people within the multitude and the touch of the sick woman on His garment? Mark 5:28–34.
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“The wondering crowd that pressed close about Jesus realized no accession of vital power from the contact. But when the poor, suffering woman, who for twelve years had been an invalid, in her great need put forth her hand and touched the hem of His garment, she felt the healing virtue. Hers was the touch of faith, and Christ recognized that touch. He knew that virtue had gone out from Him. . . . The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. This faith works by love and purifies the soul. It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God's commandments; for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 334.

4. THE HEALING OF A CHRONIC PARALYTIC

- a. What kind of response did the paralytic make to the command of the Lord? What can we learn from his example? John 5:1–9.

“From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’ The sick man might have said, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.’ But, no, he believed Christ’s word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he *willed* to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 50.

- b. What example of the man restored to health should be followed by us? Mark 11:24.

“In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You *will* to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it.

“Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, ‘I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.’ . . .

“There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we *have* received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit’ (Romans 8:1).”—*Ibid.*, p. 51.

5. EXERCISING FAITH

- a. In order to receive faith, where must we look? For what purpose is it given? Hebrews 12:2; John 6:29.

“While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. ‘Him that cometh to Me,’ says Christ, ‘I will in no wise cast out’ (John 6:37). But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 431.

- b. How does Paul explain faith? What further explanation is given by the Spirit of Prophecy? Hebrews 11:1–3.

“Faith is not the ground of our salvation, but it is the great blessing—the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the feet that run, the hand that grasps. It is the means, not the end. If Christ gave His life to save sinners, why shall I not take that blessing? My faith grasps it, and thus my faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. Thus resting and believing, I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1073.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is necessary to be justified?
2. How may it be shown that justification is not obtained by works?
3. What lesson may we learn from the experience of the woman among the people crowding around Jesus?
4. What enabled the sick man to receive the blessing and will also enable us to receive blessings?
5. How may we receive and benefit from faith?

The Faith That Justifies

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (James 2:21–23).

“The faith that justifies always produces first true repentance, and then good works, which are the fruit of that faith.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 52.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 377–382.

Sunday

November 5

1. A DANGEROUS IDEA EXPOSED

- a. What imbalanced view in the presentation of faith and works did the servant of the Lord seek to correct?

“I was attending a meeting, and a large congregation were present. In my dream you were presenting the subject of faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ by faith. You repeated several times that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions. The matter was presented in that light that I knew minds would be confused, and would not receive the correct impression in reference to faith and works, and I decided to write to you. You state this matter too strongly. There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. I know your meaning, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds. While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 377.

- b. What light may we receive from the Scripture regarding the conditions for eternal life? Matthew 19:16, 17, 20, 21.
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2. THE INEFFICACY OF A CASUAL FAITH

- a. How does Paul explain that the casual faith of God's professed followers is not enough? Romans 10:2, 3. What kind of faith do they need? Verse 10.

"The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. To believe that He will save others, but will not save you is not genuine faith."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 391.

"Imputation of the righteousness of Christ comes through justifying faith, and this is the justification for which Paul so earnestly contends."—*Ibid.*, p. 397.

- b. What shows whether we have only casual faith or a justifying faith? James 2:18.

"While [the believer] is justified because of the merit of Christ, he is not free to work unrighteousness. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. Where faith is, good works appear. The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed. Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, they love the children of God, and meekness and truth guide their footsteps. The expression of the countenance reveals their experience, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love. Christ is the great depository of justifying righteousness and sanctifying grace."—*Ibid.*, p. 398.

"There are many who have a legal, casual faith. They have nominally accepted Christ as the Saviour of the world, but they have no evidence in their hearts that he is their personal Saviour, that he has forgiven their sins, that they have a living connection with God, the source of all light. You cannot teach others of Jesus and His righteousness, you cannot portray His matchless love, and the fullness of His grace, you cannot picture Him as the Christian's all in all, as the comforter and guide of man, unless your own heart is filled with His love. You will not be able to present God as a God of compassion and love unless you can say, 'I have tasted and know that the Lord is good.'"—*The Signs of the Times*, September 2, 1889.

3. THE FAITH THAT JUSTIFIES

- a. **When is a sinner justified by faith? In what condition should the soul be kept? Acts 16:30, 31.**
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“You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 49.

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.”—*SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1070.

- b. **How does the apostle Paul describe the faith that makes justification possible? Galatians 5:6.**
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“Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

- c. **What will this faith do for the one who possesses it? Matthew 21:21.**
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“When the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 391, 392.

4. AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH THAT JUSTIFIES

- a. What proves that Abraham possessed not only a casual faith but a justifying faith? James 2:21–23.
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“The apostle James saw that dangers would arise in presenting the subject of justification by faith, and he labored to show that genuine faith cannot exist without corresponding works. The experience of Abraham is presented. ‘Seest thou,’ he says, ‘how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?’ Thus genuine faith does a genuine work in the believer. Faith and obedience bring a solid, valuable experience.

“There is a belief that is not a saving faith. The Word declares that the devils believe and tremble. The so-called faith that does not work by love and purify the soul will not justify any man. . . . Abraham believed God. How do we know that he believed? His works testified to the character of his faith, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 936.

- b. What clear instruction did Jesus often repeat, even to those that had revealed that they have been justified by faith? John 5:14.
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“The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. This faith works by love and purifies the soul. It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God’s commandments; for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 334.

“As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained.”—*Ibid.*, p. 397.

5. ILLUSTRATIONS OF TRUE FAITH

- a. What was the merchantman ready to sacrifice in order to obtain the true pearl? What is represented by the true pearl? Matthew 13:45, 46.

“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. It is without a flaw. In Christ are ‘hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Colossians 2:3).” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 115.

- b. Why don’t many find this great pearl, the righteousness of Christ? Revelation 3:17.

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

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. While we are not saved by our works, what will be seen in the life of one who is justified by faith?
2. What shows the difference between real faith and a nominal faith?
3. What will genuine faith do for its possessor?
4. What important relationship exists between faith and works?
5. What is a great danger for those who seem to be Christians?

The Call to Repentance

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

“Calling and justification are not one and the same thing. Calling is the drawing of the sinner to Christ, and it is a work wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the heart, convicting of sin, and inviting to repentance.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 390.

Suggested Readings: *The Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1895; July 29, 1913.

Sunday

November 12

1. GODLY SORROW FOR SIN

- a. What are we called to do in order that our sins may be forgiven by God? Acts 3:19.

- b. What will always accompany true repentance, and how will it affect the heart and life? 2 Corinthians 7:9, 10.

“Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

“We often sorrow because our evil deeds bring unpleasant consequences to ourselves; but this is not repentance. Real sorrow for sin is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals the ingratitude of the heart that has slighted and grieved the Saviour and brings us in contrition to the foot of the cross. By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh; and as we look upon Him whom we have pierced, we mourn for the sins that have brought anguish upon Him. Such mourning will lead to the renunciation of sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300.

2. THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

- a. How does David's prayer illustrate the nature of true repentance? Psalm 51:1-4, 10-13.
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"David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness—to be restored to harmony and communion with God."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 25.

- b. What does the Bible teach about the source of true repentance? Romans 2:4.
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"We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.

"Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts."—*Ibid.*, p. 26.

- c. How can we obtain this kind of repentance? Matthew 11:28; Acts 5:31.
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"The living oracles do not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Men must come to Christ because they see him as their Saviour, their only helper, that they may be enabled to repent; for if they could repent without coming to Christ, they could also be saved without Christ. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ that leads to genuine repentance. . . . Repentance is as much the gift of Christ as is forgiveness, and it cannot be found in the heart where Jesus has not been at work. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience, than we can be pardoned without Christ. Christ draws the sinner by the exhibition of His love upon the cross, and this softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition and repentance in the soul."—*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

3. THE CONDITIONS FOR FORGIVENESS

- a. **What are the conditions of obtaining forgiveness established in the word of God? Proverbs 28:13; James 5:16.**
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“The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 37.

- b. **When we have offended our brother or sister, whom have we also offended? What should teach us our duty toward our brother or sister? Matthew 25:40; 1 Peter 4:8.**
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“Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **To whom are we to confess our sins? How must confession of sin be made? Psalm 32:5; Matthew 5:23, 24.**
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“True confession is always of a specific character and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty.”—*Ibid.*, p. 38.

“Sin of a private character is to be confessed to Christ, the only mediator between God and man. For ‘if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous’ (1 John 2:1). Every sin is an offense against God and is to be confessed to Him through Christ. Every open sin should be as openly confessed.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 216.

4. DANGER OF SELF-JUSTIFICATION

- a. When the Lord asked Adam and Eve concerning their sin, how did their response imply that it was not really their fault? Genesis 3:12, 13.

“After Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion. ‘The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.’ The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat’ (Genesis 3:12, 13). Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 40.

- b. What is a common temptation for a person found in transgression, and why does this attitude render such a confession ineffectual? Job 9:20; Luke 16:15.

“The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable to God. True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy.”—*Ibid.*

- c. How specifically did Paul acknowledge his sin? What humble attitude did he take after his conversion? Acts 26:10, 11.

“The examples in God’s word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification. Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says, [Acts 26:10, 11 quoted]. He does not hesitate to declare that ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief’ (1 Timothy 1:15).”—*Ibid.*, p. 41.

5. ALL OR NOTHING

- a. What does God ask us to give Him, and what does this involve? Proverbs 23:26; Luke 14:33.

“God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 366.

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

- b. Why was the prayer of the publican for mercy heard? Luke 18:13, 14.

“The prayer of the publican was heard because it showed dependence reaching forth to lay hold upon Omnipotence. Self to the publican appeared nothing but shame. Thus it must be seen by all who seek God. By faith—faith that renounces all self-trust—the needy suppliant is to lay hold upon infinite power.

“No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 159.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What two things does true repentance include?
2. How is repentance a gift we receive rather than something we must do?
3. What must we do in order to obtain the forgiveness for our sins?
4. What shows that a truly repentant person will make no excuse for sin?
5. What must we be willing to give up in order to receive justification?

Forgiveness

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

“Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin and feel our need of pardon.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 38.

Suggested Readings: *The Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1895; July 29, 1913.

Sunday

November 19

1. THROUGH CHRIST

- a. **What does God offer us through the redemption Jesus Christ accomplished, and for what aim? Colossians 1:14; Acts 26:17, 18.**

“Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. . . . He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. . . .

“The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

“The object of the Great Teacher is the restoration of the image of God in the soul.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 436.

- b. **What part does Christ have today in the forgiveness of sinners? Hebrews 4:15; 1 Timothy 2:5.**

“[Christ] qualified Himself to be, not only the representative of the race, but their Advocate, so that every soul if he will may say, I have a Friend at court.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 393.

2. GOD'S FORGIVENESS IS OUR JUSTIFICATION

- a. What shows that justification and forgiveness are one and the same thing? Romans 3:24, 25.
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"Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: 'This is My child, I reprove him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy—eternal life—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.' Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God.

"The sinner may err, but he is not cast off without mercy. His only hope, however, is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Father's prerogative to forgive our transgressions and sins, because Christ has taken upon Himself our guilt and reprovied us, imputing to us His own righteousness. His sacrifice satisfies fully the demands of justice."—*Faith and Works*, pp. 103, 104.

- b. What life changing consequences are in store for those who God forgives? Romans 8:28–30.
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"The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him' (1 Corinthians 2:9). As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God Himself is 'the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus' (Romans 3:26). And 'whom He justified, them He also glorified' (Romans 8:30). Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 162, 163.

3. ACCEPTING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

- a. In the parable of the prodigal son, what can we learn of the forgiving love of God toward us? Luke 15:20–23.
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“In the parable there is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, ‘I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins’ (Isaiah 44:22). ‘I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more’ (Jeremiah 31:34). ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon’ (Isaiah 55:7). ‘In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found’ (Jeremiah 50:20).

“What assurance here, of God’s willingness to receive the repenting sinner!”—*Ibid.*, pp. 204, 205.

“Christ came to this world to prove the falsity of this [Satanic] statement [that there is no forgiveness with God], to show that God is love, that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Follow the Saviour from the manger to the cross, mark His life of unselfish ministry, His agony in the garden, and His death on the cross; and know that with God there is plenteous forgiveness. He abhors sin, but with a love that passes knowledge He loves the sinner.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 19, 1911.

- b. What must be really believed in order to be overcomers? Mark 2:5.
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“Here is where thousands fail; they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God’s promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul. None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon them the white robes of righteousness; He bids them live and not die.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 52, 53.

4. HUMAN FORGIVENESS AND DIVINE FORGIVENESS

- a. When a sinner is forgiven, what must he also do? What is the measure of forgiveness? Luke 11:4; Matthew 6:15.
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“Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not a partaker of God’s pardoning grace. . . . It is true that he may once have received forgiveness; but his unmerciful spirit shows that he now rejects God’s pardoning love. He has separated himself from God and is in the same condition as before he was forgiven. He has denied his repentance, and his sins are upon him as if he had not repented.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 251.

“[Luke 11:4 quoted.] He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God we are to pardon all who have done evil to us.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 113, 114.

- b. To what extent should we forgive those who have offended us? Luke 17:3, 4.
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- c. How did Jesus forgive even those who were responsible for His death? Luke 23:34.
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“Jesus was earning the right to become the advocate of men in the Father’s presence.

“That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 745.

5. THE ABUNDANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

- a. What shows that God's forgiveness also recovers us from a sinful life? 1 John 1:9 (last part).

"God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me' (Psalm 51:10). And again he says, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12)." — *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 114.

- b. How do we know that God's forgiving grace not only justifies the penitent sinners but also renews them for a life of obedience? Titus 3:3-8.

"[Paul] bids Titus to instruct the church that while they should trust to the merits of Christ for salvation, divine grace, dwelling in their hearts, will lead to the faithful performance of all the duties of life." — *The Sanctified Life*, p. 87.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why can we only obtain forgiveness of sin through Jesus? Why was it necessary for him to partake of our fallen human nature?
2. How can we encourage those who are erring and discouraged?
3. What should we remember when we are tempted to believe that we cannot come back to God after we have sinned?
4. How should we treat those who have offended us? What happens to us if we refuse to forgive others?
5. What will take place in the heart of those who receive God's forgiveness?

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Nepal

Nepal is a multiethnic nation in southern Asia with a population of 26.4 million. Nepali is the official language, and Kathmandu is the nation's capital and the largest city. Modern Nepal is a secular parliamentary republic.

Though secular, conversion is banned in Nepal, where the population is composed mostly of Hindus and Buddhists. However, there are always doors kept open by the mighty Lord for His people to do His work.

It has been a few years since the message of Reformation entered into Nepal. The truth has taken root deeply in this country. While this is so, we know too well that the archenemy does not keep silent. He goes about as a roaring lion to deceive the very elect.

There are several interested souls in this country coming out from other Advent circles. We have studied with them church history—the sad events that took place during World War I. This work, by the grace of God, has yielded a sure result. There are three groups of souls here, and they are diligently studying the present truth while doing evangelism in this country—but indeed it is very difficult in a nation where conversion is banned.

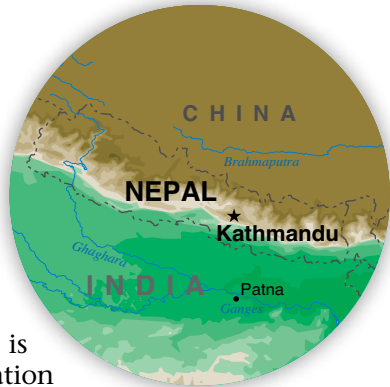
“If there was ever a time when sacrifices should be made, it is now. Those who have money should understand that now is the time to use it for God. Let not means be absorbed in multiplying facilities where the work is already established. Do not add building to building where many interests are now centered. Use the means to establish centers in new fields. Thus you may bring in souls who will act their part in producing.

“Think of our missions in foreign countries. Some of them are struggling to gain even a foothold; they are destitute of even the most meager facilities. Instead of adding to facilities already abundant, build up the work in these destitute fields.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450.

It is our sincere appeal to all our beloved brethren and friends far and near to help in procuring a piece of land, and further, building a church in Nepal for the newly formed group.

May God bless all those who would wholeheartedly lend their supportive hands towards this mission. Amen.

Your sisters and brothers from Nepal



Born of God

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (1 John 5:18).

“Those who know not what it is to have an experience in the things of God, who know not what it is to be justified by faith, who have not the witness of the Spirit that they are accepted of Jesus Christ, are in need of being born again.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 124.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 167–177.

Sunday

November 26

1. THE INVITATION

a. What invitation does Jesus give to all? Matthew 11:28–30.

“It is a mistake to think that you must come to repentance before you can come to Jesus. Come to Christ just as you are, and contemplate His love until your hard heart is broken.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901.

b. What was Nicodemus impressed to do and why? John 3:1, 2

“Nicodemus had heard the preaching of John the Baptist concerning repentance and baptism, and pointing the people to One who should baptize with the Holy Spirit. He himself had felt that there was a lack of spirituality among the Jews, that, to a great degree, they were controlled by bigotry and worldly ambition. He had hoped for a better state of things at the Messiah’s coming. Yet the heart-searching message of the Baptist had failed to work in him conviction of sin. He was a strict Pharisee and prided himself on his good works. He was widely esteemed for his benevolence and his liberality in sustaining the temple service, and he felt secure of the favor of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

2. YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

- a. According to Jesus, what must a person be before they can see the kingdom of heaven and why? John 3:3.
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“[Nicodemus] was startled at the thought of a kingdom too pure for him to see in his present state.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

“No man can of himself understand his errors. ‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?’ (Jeremiah 17:9). The lips may express a poverty of soul that the heart does not acknowledge. While speaking to God of poverty of spirit, the heart may be swelling with the conceit of its own superior humility and exalted righteousness. In one way only can a true knowledge of self be obtained. We must behold Christ. It is ignorance of Him that makes men so uplifted in their own righteousness. When we contemplate His purity and excellence, we shall see our own weakness and poverty and defects as they really are. We shall see ourselves lost and hopeless, clad in garments of self-righteousness, like every other sinner. We shall see that if we are ever saved, it will not be through our own goodness, but through God’s infinite grace.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 159.

- b. How did Jesus explain this truth further to Nicodemus, and what did He mean by it? John 3:4–6.
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“Jesus continued: ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ By nature, the heart is evil, and ‘who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one’ (Job 14:4). No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ ‘Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies’ (Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19). The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

3. TURNING AROUND

- a. What essential blessing does the gospel also include, and why? Galatians 3:14; Acts 3:26.
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- b. Why is it impossible of ourselves to turn from a sinful life? Romans 8:7.
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“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Job 14:4; Romans 8:7). Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.

“The Saviour said, ‘Except a man be born from above,’ unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, ‘he cannot see the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3, margin).”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

- c. While we cannot of ourselves change our sinful heart, what can we do? Joshua 24:15.
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“What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 47.

4. HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?

- a. Who changes our heart and how? John 3:7, 8; 12:32.

“The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God—a patient, protracted process.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

“The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God’s dear Son.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 27.

- b. To be “born again” is to receive a new heart—new desires, purposes, and motives. What must we feed upon to be born again? 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2.

“When truth becomes an abiding principle in the life, the soul is ‘born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever’ (1 Peter 1:23). This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the Word of God. When by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 520.

- c. What light does God use to change our heart? 2 Corinthians 4:6.
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5. BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

- a. What must we realize for ourselves about Jesus in order to be changed? John 3:14, 15; 1:29.

“Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 26, 27.

- b. When we surrender ourselves to Christ, what will take place? Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

“As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require. God Himself is ‘the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus’ (Romans 3:26). And ‘whom He justified, them He also glorified’ (Romans 8:30).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 163.

- c. When we are born again, in what alone will we glory? Galatians 6:14.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What essential experience will Christ give all who come to Him?
2. What must you realize about yourself if you are to be born again?
3. Why do we find it so hard to do the right thing?
4. What must you feed upon if you are to experience the new birth?
5. What does God promise to do when we surrender all to Christ?

Sanctification

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:14–16).

“The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous work. Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him by putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 15, 1906.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 557–567.

Sunday

December 3

1. HIS PEOPLE MUST BE HOLY

- a. What characteristic of God pervades heaven and must be in all who would enter His presence? 1 Peter 1:14–16.

“The righteousness of God is absolute. This righteousness characterizes all His works, all His laws. As God is, so must His people be. The life of Christ is to be revealed in the lives of His followers. In all His public and private acts, in every word and deed, practical godliness was seen, and this godliness is to be seen in the lives of His disciples.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 198.

“[God] cannot endure the presence of sin. It is the thing that His soul hates. . . . Holiness is the foundation of God’s throne; sin is the opposite of holiness; sin crucified the Son of God. If men could see how hateful sin is, they would not tolerate it, nor educate themselves in it. They would reform in life and character. Secret faults would be overcome. If you are to be saints in heaven, you must first be saints upon the earth.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 145.

- b. What has been the purpose of God for man from the beginning? What do the Scriptures tell of the will of God for us? Ephesians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.
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2. IMPUTED AND IMPARTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. **What sanctification is not the work of a moment but a progressive work? What steps are enumerated in order to reach this goal? Hebrews 6:1; Philippians 3:13, 14; 2 Peter 1:5–10.**

“The Scriptures plainly show that the work of sanctification is progressive. When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to ‘go unto perfection;’ to grow up ‘unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’ (Hebrews 6:1; Ephesians 4:13). Says the apostle Paul: ‘This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus’ (Philippians 3:13, 14). And Peter sets before us the steps by which Bible sanctification is to be attained: ‘Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance.’”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 470.

“The way in which we are to work out our own salvation is plainly specified in the first chapter of Second Peter. Constantly we are to add grace to grace, and as we do this, God will work for us upon the plan of multiplication.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 15, 1906.

- b. **What is done for us by the death of Christ, and what will be the daily experience of those in whom Christ dwells? Romans 5:10.**

“Justification means the saving of a soul from perdition, that he may obtain sanctification, and through sanctification, the life of heaven. Justification means that the conscience, purged from dead works, is placed where it can receive the blessings of sanctification.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 908.

“Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without. He who is righteous within is not hard-hearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory. The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895.

3. THE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION

- a. While we have Christ's righteousness imputed to us, how thoroughly is the work of sanctification to be carried out, and for what purpose? 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
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"Our sanctification is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is the fulfillment of the covenant God has made with those who bind themselves up with Him, to stand with Him, His Son, and His Spirit in holy fellowship. Have you been born again? Have you become a new being in Christ Jesus? Then cooperate with the three great powers of heaven who are working in your behalf."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 908.

"Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the truth, the believer becomes fitted for the courts of heaven; for Christ works within us, and His righteousness is upon us. Without this no soul will be entitled to heaven. We would not enjoy heaven unless qualified for its holy atmosphere by the influence of the Spirit and the righteousness of Christ."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 395.

- b. How is this accomplished? What part does the sinner have in it? Titus 3:5.
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"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 Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

"But though Christ is everything, we are to inspire every man to unwearied diligence. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. For the power and grace with which we can do this comes from God, and all the while we are to trust in Him, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Never leave the impression on the mind that there is little or nothing to do on the part of man; but rather teach man to cooperate with God, that he may be successful in overcoming."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 381.

4. BIBLE SANCTIFICATION

- a. **What is Bible sanctification? What does it imply? 1 Thessalonians 3:13.**

“By the word and the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law. And since the law of God is ‘holy, and just, and good’ (Romans 7:12), a transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy. Christ is a perfect example of such a character. He says: ‘I have kept My Father’s commandments.’ ‘I do always those things that please Him’ (John 15:10; 8:29). The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 469.

“The sanctification set forth in the Scriptures embraces the entire being—spirit, soul, and body.”—*Ibid.*, p. 473.

- b. **What will be the experience of the truly converted believer? What has such a believer done when he or she responds to the call for repentance? 1 Corinthians 15:57.**

“The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ’s help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims: ‘Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 15:57).”—*Ibid.*, pp. 469, 470.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 555, 556.

“None are living Christians unless they have a daily experience in the things of God and daily practice self-denial, cheerfully bearing the cross and following Christ. Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 505.

5. THE PROOF OF SANCTIFICATION

- a. What is the experience of the heart in which the work of sanctification is accomplished? What will be a special joy to such ones? Psalm 119:14–16.

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

- b. What is the evidence of this sanctification? How does the repentant sinner know the way? 1 John 2:3–6.

“Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without. He who is righteous within is not hardhearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be holy?
2. Differentiate between imputed and imparted righteousness.
3. How is the work of sanctification accomplished?
4. What results from true sanctification?
5. What is evidence that the soul is sanctified?

Righteousness for Today

“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 John 3:7).

“Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 312.

Suggested Reading: *Faith and Works*, pp. 91–94.

Sunday

December 10

1. WHY WE ALL NEED RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. **What is righteousness, and to whom will it be freely given? Matthew 5:6.**

“Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:16). It is conformity to the law of God, for ‘all Thy commandments are righteousness’ (Psalm 119:172), and ‘love is the fulfilling of the law’ (Romans 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.

“Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 18.

- b. **Where are we to look in order to find righteousness? Isaiah 45:22–25.**
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“In looking to ourselves for righteousness, by which to find acceptance with God, we look to the wrong place, ‘for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23). We are to look to Jesus; for ‘we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory’ (2 Corinthians 3:18). You are to find your completeness by beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 108.

2. CHRIST TO BE OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. How can we make the righteousness of Christ our own? Romans 3:24–26.

“The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1071.

“Christ looks at the spirit, and when He sees us carrying our burden with faith, His perfect holiness atones for our shortcomings. When we do our best, He becomes our righteousness.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 102.

- b. Why is grace so important in accepting the righteousness of Christ? Why are works not the emphasis in justification? Romans 4:3–5.

“Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature and finally driven from the soul temple. It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with Him in the work of salvation. Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ’s perfect obedience instead of the sinner’s transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his Substitute and Surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 100, 101.

“The best efforts that man in his own strength can make are valueless to meet the holy and just law that he has transgressed; but through faith in Christ he may claim the righteousness of the Son of God as all-sufficient. . . . Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE SEEN IN THE FAMILY

- a. What is it necessary before we can be a blessing in our homes? John 1:12.
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“In the home those who have received Christ are to show what grace has done for them. ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name’ (John 1:12). A conscious authority pervades the true believer in Christ, that makes its influence felt throughout the home. This is favorable for the perfection of the characters of all in the home.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 36.

- b. What attitude should we have to those around us at home? Colossians 3:12, 13.
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“From every Christian home a holy light should shine forth. Love should be revealed in action. It should flow out in all home intercourse, showing itself in thoughtful kindness, in gentle, unselfish courtesy.”—*Ibid.*, p. 37.

“Mutual kindness and forbearance will make home a Paradise and attract holy angels into the family circle.”—*Ibid.*, p. 422.

“Cultivate sympathy for others. Let cheerfulness, kindness, and love pervade the home. This will increase a love for religious exercises, and duties large and small will be performed with a light heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 433.

- c. What is the aim for each of us as a member of the family? Matthew 5:14–16.
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“The first work of Christians is to be united in the family. Then the work is to extend to their neighbors nigh and afar off. Those who have received light are to let the light shine forth in clear rays. Their words, fragrant with the love of Christ, are to be a savor of life unto life.

“The more closely the members of a family are united in their work in the home, the more uplifting and helpful will be the influence that father and mother and sons and daughters will exert outside the home.”—*Ibid.*, p. 37.

4. BEING CHRISTLIKE AT CHURCH

- a. What attitude should we have toward others? Philippians 2:3. How does this attitude also affect our reliance upon Christ?

“It is not because we are righteous, but because we are dependent, faulty, erring, and helpless ourselves, that we must rely upon Christ’s righteousness, and not upon our own.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 23.

- b. What special regard should we have for one another in the faith? Romans 12:10.

“As the members of a true family care for one another, ministering to the sick, supporting the weak, teaching the ignorant, training the inexperienced, so is ‘the household of faith’ (Galatians 6:10) to care for its needy and helpless ones. Upon no consideration are these to be passed by.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 201.

“We must obtain that measure of the grace of Christ that will enable us to dwell together in love and unity in this life, else we can never dwell together in the life to come.”—*This Day With God*, p. 372.

“The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 179.

- c. What is the evidence that we as church members have accepted Christ and are being sanctified? Ezekiel 20:12. What happens when we fail to make the righteousness of Christ our own?

“No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. . . .

“As the Jews departed from God and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

5. BEING A TRUE MISSIONARY TO THE WORLD

- a. How can we truly reflect Christ and His righteousness to those around us? John 15:4, 5.

“By our words and deeds we may reveal the power of the truth to transform the character. We may each reveal that we depend on Christ’s righteousness, not upon our own manufactured righteousness. We may abide in Christ as the branch abides in the vine, having such a living connection with Him that it is a pleasure to work as He worked, to be a help and blessing to our brethren. We can work the works of Christ, doing those things that are pleasing in His sight.”—*The Ellen White 1888 Materials*, pp. 137, 138.

- b. Which attribute of God should we seek to emulate in our dealings with others? Psalms 119:88; 69:16.

“We should be self-forgetful, ever looking out for opportunities, even in little things, to show gratitude for the favors we have received of others, and watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love. These thoughtful courtesies that, commencing in our families, extend outside the family circle help make up the sum of life’s happiness; and the neglect of these little things makes up the sum of life’s bitterness and sorrow. . . .

“It is impossible to be in union with Christ and yet be unkind to others and forgetful of their rights.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 428.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where are we to look for our acceptance with God?
2. How does Jesus pardon the sinner? How complete is this pardon?
3. Where are we to begin our work as Christians, and what does this involve?
4. If we fail to live in love and unity with our brethren here, what hope do we have for our future life? How should we treat one another?
5. How can we show the love of God toward others? If we are unkind to others, what does this reveal?

Complete in Christ

“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:10).

“Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.”—*Education*, p. 257.

Suggested Reading: *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, pp. 27–37.

Sunday

December 17

1. CALLED TO BE PERFECT

- a. What has Jesus called us to be here in this world? Matthew 5:48.

“God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48). This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

- b. In whose image are our lives to be perfectly conformed? Romans 8:29.

“The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours.”—*Ibid.*

2. COMPLETE IN JESUS NOW

- a. **What encouraging declaration is made after we have experienced forgiveness of sin and the new birth? Colossians 2:10.**
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“Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God’s Word. In amazement he hears the message, ‘Ye are complete in Him.’ Now all is at rest in his soul. No longer must he strive to find some worthiness in himself, some meritorious deed by which to gain the favor of God.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 107, 108.

- b. **Having been justified by faith, in what condition are we to continue to stand? Colossians 4:12 (last part).**
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“The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom. Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ ‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him’ (Colossians 2:9, 10).”—*Our High Calling*, p. 152.

- c. **As our Mediator, what does Jesus never cease to do for those that abide in Him by faith? Hebrews 7:25 (last part).**
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“Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 107.

3. ACCEPTABLE OBEDIENCE TODAY

- a. What essential truth must we understand in our efforts to please God? Philippians 2:12, 13.
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“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation, is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 364.

- b. Whose efforts and religious service failed to find acceptance with God, and why? Luke 18:11, 12.
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- c. How alone are our good works made acceptable to God? Hebrews 7:25.
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“The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God’s right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ’s propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned.”—*Ibid.*, p. 344.

4. BEING PERFECT TODAY

- a. **Abiding in Christ, with full assurance of our acceptance with God, what are we to do now? Hebrews 6:1.**

“We can never see our Lord in peace, unless our souls are spotless. We must bear the perfect image of Christ. Every thought must be brought into subjection to the will of Christ. As expressed by the great apostle, we must come ‘unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:13). We shall never attain to this condition without earnest effort. We must strive daily against outward evil and inward sin, if we would reach the perfection of Christian character.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 148.

- b. **In our best efforts as believers to obey God, wherein lies our sufficiency to do so? 2 Corinthians 3:5.**

“Christ is our pattern, the perfect and holy example that has been given us to follow. We can never equal the pattern; but we may imitate and resemble it according to our ability.”—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 369.

“When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man’s best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 382.

“Jesus loves His children, even if they err. . . . He keeps His eye upon them, and when they do their best, calling upon God for his help, be assured the service will be accepted, although imperfect.”—*Ibid.*, bk. 3, pp. 195, 196.

- c. **As we go on to perfection, what does the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our heart? What will this lead us to do? Romans 5:5; 1 John 3:18.**

“The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 551.

“Where faith is, good works appear. The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed. Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, they love the children of God, and meekness and truth guide their footsteps.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 398.

5. OUR ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

- a. How complete is the forgiveness of sins offered to the repenting sinner? 1 John 1:9.

“Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven. Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ. When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities. We may claim sanctification. We may enjoy the favor of God. We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. . . . The Lord shows, to the repenting, believing one, that Christ accepts the surrender of the soul, to be molded and fashioned after His own likeness.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 32, 33.

- b. What assurance do we have of God’s ability to save us from the power of sin today? Jude 24; Philippians 1:6.

“When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 420.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how “be ye therefore perfect” is both a command and a promise.
2. Why is Jesus’s mediation so important for us today?
3. What is needed for all our works to be acceptable to God today?
4. What does being perfect today mean for believers on a practical level?
5. How can we have perfect assurance of our salvation today?

The Third Angel's Message in Verity

"In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:5).

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"—*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

Suggested Reading: *The Faith I Live By*, pp. 209–215.

Sunday

December 24

1. BASIC TRUTHS RESTORED

- a. **What is the hope of the gospel, and how does this relate to the threefold message of Revelation 14:6–12? Revelation 14:6; Colossians 1:23, 26–28.**

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

- b. **What important doctrine was restored following the Second Advent Movement? What did these people become? Isaiah 56:1, 2; 58:12.**

"The Lord has sent us messages for this time to establish Christianity upon an eternal basis, and all who believe present truth must stand, not in their own wisdom, but in God; and raise up the foundation of many generations. These will be registered in the books of heaven as repairers of the breach, the restorers of paths to dwell in. We are to maintain the truth because it is truth, in the face of the bitterest opposition. God is at work upon human minds; it is not man alone that is working. The great illuminating power is from Christ; the brightness of His example is to be kept before the people in every discourse."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1152.

2. UNITY OF FAITH

- a. What gifts enable the sincere Advent believers to discern the special truths for these times? 1 Corinthians 12:28.
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“God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 29, 30.

- b. How does church unity affect our witness for the truth? John 13:35.
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“It is the unity in the church that enables it to exert a conscious influence upon unbelievers and worldlings.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 153.

“Our unity and love for one another are the credentials by which we testify to the world that God has sent His Son to save sinners.”—*This Day With God*, p. 120.

- c. What would have been possible if the believers had in full faith accepted the gift of the righteousness of Christ? Ephesians 4:13.
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“It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said he would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ’s own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves, we are changed day by day from our own ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 28, 1891.

3. THE JUDGMENT

- a. **What great scene was shown to the prophet Daniel, and when did it begin? How is the ministry of Christ associated with it? Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14; 1 John 2:1; Daniel 8:14.**
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“[Daniel 7:13, 14 quoted.] The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

- b. **If we have accepted Christ’s imputed righteousness and lived by the power of His imparted righteousness, how should we stand in this judgment? Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37.**
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“All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. . . .

“Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. . . . Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 483, 486.

4. THE BLOTTING OUT OF SIN

- a. What is revealed of the condition and character of those who have been sanctified during this sealing time? Revelation 14:1–5.

“The spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb’s book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 475.

- b. What wonderful transaction takes place in the heavenly sanctuary during the judgment of the righteous dead and then the righteous living? Acts 3:19.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God.”—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

- c. In what spiritual condition must we be when Jesus comes? Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 3:14.

“‘Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless’ (2 Peter 3:14). This is the standard for which every Christian must strive, not in his own natural ability, but through the grace given him of Jesus Christ. Let us wrestle for the mastery over every sin, and be able to check every impatient, fretful expression.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 235.

“Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 623.

5. THE RIGHTEOUS OVERCOMERS

- a. What solemn warning is given to guard God's people from the deceptions of the last-day churches? What responsibility rests on those with this knowledge? Revelation 14:9–11; Ezekiel 33:2–4.

“The third angel’s message is to be regarded as of the highest importance. It is a life and death question. The impression made by this message will be proportionate to the earnestness and solemnity with which it is proclaimed.”—*SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 980.

- b. What is said of those who are overcomers and are thus prepared to meet Jesus at His second coming? Revelation 14:12.

“God’s denominated people—those who on this earth have witnessed to their loyalty. Who are they? Those who have kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ; those who have owned the Crucified One as their Saviour.”—*Ibid.*, p. 981.

“It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what sense are we to be “repairers of the breach”?
2. Why is it so important to have unity in the church? How can we do this?
3. To have our sins blotted out, what condition must we be?
4. How can we reach the standard of character which God requires?
5. Why is it not enough to believe about Christ? What does this mean?

First Sabbath Offerings



OCTOBER 7

for the headquarters restoration
of the South American Southern
Union in Argentina
(See p. 4.)

NOVEMBER 4

Literature for
Mission Fields
(See p. 25.)



DECEMBER 2

for a chapel in Nepal
(See p. 46.)

