



Indescribable Love Bible Study Guide

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Table of Contents

01 - What is Love? 3

**02 - God’s Love Revealed by His Provisions
..... 18**

03 - God’s Love in Seeking the Lost 31

**04 - God’s Love Revealed in the Refining of
Our Characters 46**

05 - God’s Love Revealed by Grace 57

**06 - God’s Love Revealed by His Justice
and Mercy70**

07 - The Mystery of Godliness 81

08 - The Drawing Love of God 91

09 - Looking to the Cross 102

10 - Christ’s Gift of Love 115

11 - Christ’s Promise of Peace 128

12 - Our Value in Christ 140

13 - Abiding in God’s Love 151

14 - Our Love for God 165

**15 - Obtaining the Power of God’s
Love 180**

16 - Christ’s Example of How to Love .. 192

17 - Love in Practice 203

18 - Love Our Enemies 216

19 - The Effect of Love 230



Lesson 1

What is Love?

(1) WHAT IS THE ONLY TRUE AND TRUSTWORTHY DEFINITION OF LOVE AND WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE GIFT OF HIS SON?

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:8; 2 Corinthians 13:11

What is the Bible interpretation of God? “God is love.” By giving Christ to our world, God manifested His love for mankind. “God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Yes, “everlasting life.” This is the love which is the fulfilling of the law. Only he whose heart is filled with compassion

for fallen man, who loves to a purpose, showing his love by the performance of Christlike deeds, will be able to endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. He only who loves his fellowmen to a purpose can know God. He who loves not those for whom the Father has done so much know not God. This is the reason there is so little genuine vitality in our churches. Theology is valueless unless it is saturated with the love of Christ. {LHU 134}

(2) WHEN WE COME TO KNOW GOD AND HIS PERFECT LOVE, WHAT IS CAST OUT OF OUR MINDS CONCERNING HIM?

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7

That God is love is a revelation, for men could never have discovered the fact for themselves. The revelation is of supreme importance to man's welfare. That God is a spirit (John 4:24) is important, but it tells nothing about the possibility of our enjoying happy relations with such a being. That "God is light" (1 John 1:5) is intellectually satisfying, but the thought of an all-pure, all-seeing God may bring fear rather than comfort, for in the light of what we are, what good can such a God find in us? But when we learn that God is love, fear is replaced by trust, and we confidently place ourselves in the hands of our heavenly Father, knowing that He careth for us (1 Peter 5:7). {7BC 664}

(3) HOW LONG WILL GOD’S STEADFAST LOVE AND MERCY FOR US ENDURE?

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you. (Jeremiah 31:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 100:5; 118:1; 103:17

That God is love also implies that there is no time when He has not been or will not be love. His nature never changes; love has been His dominant quality in the past and will continue to be in the future. We may prove that for ourselves, for as Charles Wesley says, when speaking of his relationship to God: “Through all eternity to prove Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love.” {7BC 665}

(4) IN LOVE, GOD CREATED US IN HIS IMAGE WITH INTELLIGENCE AND THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE. BECAUSE OF THIS WHAT DOES HE ASK US TO DO TOGETHER WITH HIM?

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 41:21; Genesis 1:26, 27

The statement that God is love is of infinite value in understanding the plan of salvation. Only Love would give free will to His creatures and run the risk of incurring the suffering that sin has brought to the Godhead and the angels

as well as to fallen men. Only Love would be interested in gaining the cheerful voluntary service of those who were free to go their own way. And when sin came, only Love could have the patience and the will to devise a plan that would enable the universe to come to a full understanding of the basic facts in the great controversy between good and evil, and thus ensure against any further uprising of self-seeking and hate.

In the warfare against sin, God, being truly love, can use only truth and love, whereas Satan employs cunning lies and cruel force. Only Love could inspire the plan that would permit the Son first to redeem the human race from the guilt and power of sin by His earthly life, death, and resurrection, and then to become the Head of a new and sinless race (cf. on v. 9). By His very nature God was impelled to devise and carry out this amazing plan (John 3:16). {7BC 664-665}

(5) BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE, WHAT IS THE GREATEST AND MOST FUNDAMENTAL ELE- MENT OF OUR CHRISTIAN EX- PERIENCE?

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:6; 1 Corinthians 13:8

When it is realized that of all qualities of character, love is the one that inspiration uses to describe the very nature of God, it is easy to see why the apostle should say that above all gifts of the Spirit, this is the greatest (see 1 John 4:7, 8, 16). As a manner of life, love is more effective,

more victorious, more satisfying, than the possession and exercise of the various gifts of the Spirit enumerated in ch. 12 (see 1 Cor. 12:31). Love for God and our fellow men is the highest expression of harmony with God (see Matt. 22:37–40; 8T 139). Love lived out in the life of the believer is the great test of the sincerity of one's Christianity (see Isa. 58:6–8; Matt. 25:34–40; 6T 273–280).

To be a Christian is to be like Christ, who “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Christians, then, are those who, in the spirit of Jesus, go about doing good to all who need their help. They do it with no self-interest, but because the love of God in their hearts makes it impossible for them to do anything else (see 6T 268; 3T 524).

Love is the super excellent way, because its practical expression is the test that is to decide the eternal destiny of all men. Those whose religion is one of mere outward compliance with forms and observances will discover that such is not acceptable to God (see 5T 612).

Self-denying love, producing unity among the believers, will convince the world that God did send His Son into the world to save mankind. This is God's chosen method for His people to bear testimony to the truth of the gospel (see John 17:21, 23). Such love, which shows no desire to exalt, justify, or gratify self, but is dedicated to selfless ministry to the needy, is an argument that unconverted men cannot gainsay. They see in it something incomprehensible to their philosophy of life. Their hearts are touched, and their intelligence responds to the evidence of the power of godliness in the lives of converted men. Thus love

is demonstrated to be the greatest way of preaching the gospel and advancing the kingdom of God. {6BC 785-786}

(6) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE LEVEL OF PRIORITY AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOVE?

But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (Colossians 3:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 3:12, 13; 1 John 4:7-9

Love to God and love to our neighbor constitute the whole duty of man. Without brotherly kindness we cannot exhibit the grace of love to God or to our fellow men.

Christ offers a love that passeth knowledge. This love is not something kept apart from our life, but it takes hold of the entire being. The heaven to which the Christian is climbing will be attained only by those who have this crowning grace. This is the new affection which pervades the soul. The old is left behind. Love is the great controlling power. When love leads, all the faculties of mind and spirit are enlisted. Love to God and love to man will give the clear title to heaven. {OHC 73-74}

(7) THOUGH PROPHECIES, TONGUES, AND KNOWLEDGE MAY CEASE, WHAT CAN WE COUNT ON THAT WILL NEVER FAIL?

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. (1 Corinthians 13:8 NKJV)

Genuine love does not fall off like a leaf or a flower (see James 1:11; 1 Peter 1:24). When a flower has given its fragrance and beauty during the hours of sunshine, it has served its purpose, and the cold winds and frosts cause it to wither and fall off the plant. Not so with love. In days of stress and strain, as well as when all is bright and fair, love ever remains the same, shedding its fragrance of trust and hope and faith all around. This must be so, for love is the very foundation of law, and the law of God is eternal (see Ps. 119:160; Matt. 5:17, 18; Luke 16:17).

Every believer is enjoined to cultivate this fruit of the Spirit, and every believer may be assured that there can be no experience of life for which love does not make provision; love can be relied on at all times to solve all problems. {6BC 783}

(8) BECAUSE GOD'S CHARACTER IS LOVE, WHAT ARE FOUR OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS GOVERNMENT?

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face. (Psalms 89:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 45:6, 7; 85:13; Hebrews 1:8, 9

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined to-

gether; the one cannot exist without the other. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalm 85:10).

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God’s justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan’s charges were refuted.

[NP] The grace of Christ and the law of God are inseparable. In Jesus mercy and truth are met together. {AG 74}

(9) SINCE GOD IS LOVE AND HIS GOVERNMENT IS BASED ON LOVE, HOW DOES THIS TEXT EQUATE LOVE AND HIS LAW?

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 13:8, 9; Matthew 22:37-40; James 2:8

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: “Thy law is the truth:” “all Thy commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares: “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author. {GC 467}

(10) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE AMAZING LOVE CHRIST LAVISHED UPON US AT THE CROSS?

*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
(John 15:13 NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 10:11, 15; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 5:2

Love. in Greek. agapaō, whose wealth of meaning the English word “love” inadequately reflects. Our word “love” means so many different things, and conveys so many diverse ideas, that the true meaning of agapē is obscured by this translation. The Greeks had three words to convey the ideas we seek to express by our one word “love”: agapan, philein, and eran.

Philein in general describes affectionate, sentimental love based on the emotions and feelings. Insofar as it is based on the feelings it is subject to change as the feelings change. Eran denotes passionate, sensual “love,” love that operates essentially on the physical plane. Certain forms of infatuation may be classed under this variety of “love.” Eran is not used in the New Testament (NT). In the NT agapan, when contrasted with philein, describes love from the standpoint of respect and esteem. It adds principle to feeling in such a way that principle controls the feelings. It brings into play the higher powers of the mind and intelligence. Whereas philein tends to make us “love” only those who “love” us, agapan extends love even to those who do not love us. Agapan is selfless, whereas eran is purely selfish, and even philein may, at times, be marred by selfishness.

The noun form, agapē, is confined almost exclusively to the Bible. The agapē of the New Testament is love in its highest and truest form, the love than which there is no greater—love that impels a man to sacrifice himself for others (John 15:13). It implies reverence for God and respect for one's fellow men. It is a divine principle of thought and action that modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. {5BC 340}

(11) WHEN THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEEMING LOVE OF GOD AND THE SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE OF CHRIST IS REVEALED THROUGH THE GOSPEL, WHOSE INTEREST IS AROUSED?

To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 1:11; 1 Corinthians 4:9

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little

world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19-20}

(12) ONCE WE DRINK OF CHRIST, THE "LIVING WATER" AND EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE, WHAT TWO THINGS WILL HAPPEN?

but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 7:37, 38

"Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38); for the word of God is "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams of Lebanon" (Song of Solomon 4:15). The heart that has once tasted the love of Christ, cries out continually for a deeper draft, and as you impart you will receive in richer and more abundant measure. Every revelation of God to the soul increases the capacity to know and to love. The continual cry of the heart is, "More of

Thee,” and ever the Spirit’s answer is, “Much more.” Romans 5:9,10. For our God delights to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20.

To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should “all the fullness dwell,” and “in Him ye are made full.” Colossians 1:19, R.V.; 2:10, R.V. {MB 20-21}

(13) WHAT DID CHRIST ASK THE FATHER TO PUT WITHIN US SO WE MAY EXPERIENCE ALL DIMENSIONS OF THE FATHER’S LOVE AND THE CHANGE OF CHARACTER THAT IT BRINGS?

And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:25

O what an assurance is this, that the love of God may abide in the hearts of all who believe in Him! O what salvation is provided; for He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. In wonder we exclaim, How can these things be? But Jesus will be satisfied with nothing less than this.

Those who are partakers of His sufferings here, of His humiliation, enduring

for His name's sake, are to have the love of God bestowed upon them as it was upon the Son. One who knows, has said, "The Father himself loveth you." One who has had an experimental knowledge of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that love, has declared unto us this amazing fact.

This love is ours through faith in the Son of God, therefore a connection with Christ means everything to us. We are to be one with Him as He is one with the Father, and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine. We are to be attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the Vine. Christ is our glorified Head, and the divine love flowing from the heart of God, rests in Christ, and is communicated to those who have been united to Him. This divine love entering the soul inspires it with gratitude, frees it from its spiritual feebleness, from pride, vanity, and selfishness, and from all that would deform the Christian character. {FE 177}

(14) HOW IS THE LOVE OF GOD RECEIVED IN THE HEART AND THEN SHARED WITH OTHERS?

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 2 Timothy 1:7

The soul is fed by the streams of pure love that flow from the heart of Christ, as a wellspring that never fails. O, how is the heart quickened, how are its motives ennobled, its affections deepened, by this

communion! Under the education and discipline of the Holy Spirit, the children of God love one another, truly, sincerely, affectedly—"without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And this because the heart is in love with Jesus. Our affection for one another springs from our common relation to God. {Letter 63, 1896}

The love of our heavenly Father in the gift of His only-begotten Son to the world, is enough to inspire every soul, to melt every hard, loveless heart into contrition and tenderness; and yet shall heavenly intelligences see in those for whom Christ died, insensibility to His love, hardness of heart, and no response of gratitude and affection to the Giver of all good things? Shall affairs of minor importance absorb the whole power of the being, and the love of God meet no return? Shall the Sun of Righteousness shine in vain? In view of what God has done, could His claims be less upon you? Have we hearts that can be touched, that can be impressed with divine love? Are we willing to be chosen vessels? Has not God His eye upon us, and has He not bidden us to send forth His message of light?

We need an increase of faith. We must wait, we must watch, we must pray, we must work, pleading that the Holy Ghost may be poured out upon us abundantly, that we may be lights in the world. {FE 198}

I now understand that the only True Definition and Source of love is God and His love is everlasting.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am amazed and thankful that God loves me so much He has given me the

freedom of choice and my choice is to love Him back with all my heart!

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that it is impossible to be a Christian and not let God's love fill me and flow forth to others. I surrender my self to Him that He may live in me and touch the lives of others through me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I accept the fact and blessing that God and His law is love. I choose to love Him with all my heart and love others more then self by the power of the Holy Spirit working within me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I now realize that God's government is based on righteousness, justice, mercy, and truth. Along with all the angels, I am looking forward to the day corrupted earthly governments all come to an end and God's government reigns supreme throughout the entire universe.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful Christ asked the Father to put within us His love. My sincere prayer is that I may receive within my heart all the dimensions of the Father's love and the change of character it brings.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 2

God's Love Revealed by His Provisions

(1) FROM WHOM DOES EVERY BLESSING WE EXPERIENCE COME, INCLUDING THE ULTIMATE GIFT--JESUS CHRIST?

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ecclesiastes 5:19; Psalm 103:2; John 3:16

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33}

It is through the gift of Christ that we receive every blessing. Through that

gift there comes to us day by day the unfailing flow of Jehovah's goodness. Every flower, with its delicate tints and its fragrance, is given for our enjoyment through that one Gift. The sun and the moon were made by Him. There is not a star which beautifies the heavens that He did not make. Every drop of rain that falls, every ray of light shed upon our unthankful world, testifies to the love of God in Christ. Everything is supplied to us through the one unspeakable Gift, God's only-begotten Son. He was nailed to the cross that all these bounties might flow to God's workmanship. {MH 424}

(2) WHAT DOES GOD RICHLY BESTOW UPON US BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE?

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (Ephesians 2:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 51:1; 86:5, 15

God is not only merciful; He is rich in mercy to all who call upon Him, not because they are worthy of it, but because it is God's good pleasure to bestow mercy (Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3).

God's love is something more than compassion; it leads to beneficent action and is unchanging. God loved us "while we were yet sinners" (see on Rom. 5:8), and will never cease to love us. It was this love that motivated His work of salvation (John 3:16). Love is a prime attribute of His character (1 John 4:8), finding its highest expression in the person of Christ. God has mercy upon us because we are sinners, and He loves us because we are His creatures. His great

work for man was not merely an act of benevolence or charitable condescension; it was an act of affection, of love. {6BC 1007}

(3) WHERE CAN WE LOOK TO SEE THE GLORY, PERFECT WORKS, AND LOVING CARE OF OUR CREATOR THE GREAT MASTER ARTIST?

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalms 19:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 8:3, 4; Isaiah 40: 21-26

How wonderfully, with what marvelous beauty, has everything in nature been fashioned. Everywhere we see the perfect works of the great Master-artist. The heavens declare his glory; and the earth, which was formed for the happiness of man, speaks to us of his matchless love. Its surface is not a monotonous plain; but grand old mountains rise to diversify the landscape. There are sparkling streams and fertile valleys, beautiful lakes, broad rivers, and the boundless ocean. God sends the dew and the rain to refresh the thirsty earth. The breezes, that promote health by purifying and cooling the atmosphere, are controlled by his wisdom. He has placed the sun in the heavens to mark the periods of day and night, and by its genial beams to give light and warmth to the earth, causing vegetation to flourish.

I call your attention to these blessings from the bounteous hand of God. Let the fresh glories of each new morning awaken praise in your hearts for these tokens of his loving care. But while our kind heavenly Father has given us so

many things to promote our happiness, he has given us also blessings in disguise. He understands the necessities of fallen man; and while he has given us advantages on the one hand, on the other there are inconveniences which are designed to stimulate us to use the ability he has given us. These develop patient industry, perseverance, and courage. {RH, April 21, 1885}

(4) WHAT ARE FIVE OF THE MANY BENEFITS WE ARE REMINDED NOT TO FORGET THAT GOD, IN HIS LOVE, FREELY PROVIDES?

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalms 103:2-5 NKJV)

The power of God is manifested in the beating of the heart, in the action of the lungs, and in the living currents that circulate through the thousand different channels of the body. We are indebted to Him for every moment of existence, and for all the comforts of life. The powers and abilities that elevate man above the lower creation, are the endowment of the Creator.

We are indebted to Him for the food we eat, the water we drink, the clothes we wear, the air we breathe. Without His special providence, the air would be filled with pestilence and poison. He is a bountiful benefactor and preserver. The sun which shines upon the earth, and glorifies all nature, the weird, sol-

emn radiance of the moon, the glories of the firmament, spangled with brilliant stars, the showers that refresh the land, and cause vegetation to flourish, the precious things of nature in all their varied richness, the lofty trees, the shrubs and plants, the waving grain, the blue sky, the green earth, the changes of day and night, the renewing seasons, all speak to man of his Creator's love.

He has linked us to Himself by all these tokens in heaven and in earth. He watches over us with more tenderness than does a mother over an afflicted child.

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.”

{RH, September 18, 1888}

(5) BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE FOR US, FOR WHAT FIVE SPECIFIC TASKS DID GOD ANOINT AND SEND JESUS TO EARTH?

“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKEN-HEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED; (Luke 4:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6,7; 11:2-5; 50:4; 42:7; Matthew 11:5

This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing.

Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love. {SC 11}

The Son of God came to the world as a restorer. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Every word He uttered was spirit and life. He spoke with authority, conscious of His power to bless humanity, and deliver the captives bound by Satan; conscious also that by His presence He could bring to the world fullness of joy. He longed to help every oppressed and suffering member of the human family, and show that it was His prerogative to bless, not to condemn. {LHU 37}

(6) WHAT CAN GOD'S CHILDREN EXPECT, AND DEPEND UPON, FROM GOD'S HAND AND IS A TESTIMONY OF HIS LOVE?

*The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
And You give them their food in due
season. You open Your hand And satisfy
the desire of every living thing.
(Psalms 145:15-16 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Psalm 104:27; 136:25; Genesis 1:30

“God is love” is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of liv-

ing green -- all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. {SC 10}

The blessings of salvation, temporal as well as spiritual, are for all mankind. There are many who complain of God because the world is so full of want and suffering; but God never meant that this misery should exist. He never meant that one man should have an abundance of the luxuries of life, while the children of others cry for bread. The Lord is a God of benevolence. He has made ample provision for the wants of all, and through His representatives, to whom He has entrusted His goods, He designs that the needs of all His creatures shall be supplied. {6T 273}

(7) BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE AND PROMISES TO PROTECT AND PROVIDE, WHAT TWO THINGS HAS THE LORD TOLD US TO DO CONCERNING OUR FUTURE?

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:33-34 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Kings 3:11-13; Psalm 34:10

We are incapable of looking into the future, which often causes us disquietude and unhappiness. But one of the greatest evidences we have of the loving-kindness of God is His concealment of the events of the morrow. Our ignorance of tomorrow makes us more vigilant and earnest

today. We cannot see what is before us. Our best-laid plans sometimes seem to be unwise and faulty. We think, “If we only knew the future!” But God would have His children trust in Him and be ready to go where He shall lead them.

We know not the precise time when our Lord shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven, but He has told us that our only safety is in a constant readiness--a position of watching and waiting. Whether we have one year before us, or five, or ten, we are to be faithful to our trust today. We are to perform each day's duties as faithfully as though that day were to be our last. {TMK 358}

(8) WHAT TWO TRAITS OF HIS CHARACTER DOES GOD FAITHFULLY RENEW EACH MORNING THAT PREVENTS OUR DESTRUCTION?

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Malachi 3:6; Psalm 86:15; Luke 1:50

Have any of us duly considered how much we have to be thankful for? Do we remember that the mercies of the Lord are new every morning, and that His faithfulness faileth not? Do we acknowledge our dependence upon Him, and express gratitude for all his favors? On the contrary, we too often forget that “every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” How often those who are in health forget the wonderful mercies that are con-

tinued to them day by day, year after year. They render no tribute of praise to God for all his benefits. But when sickness comes, God is remembered. The strong desire for recovery leads to earnest prayer; and this is right. God is our refuge in sickness as in health. But many do not leave their cases with him; they encourage weakness and disease by worrying about themselves. If they would cease repining, and rise above depression and gloom, their recovery would be more sure. They should remember with gratitude how long they enjoyed the blessing of health; and should this precious boon be restored to them, they should not forget that they are under renewed obligations to their Creator.

When the ten lepers were healed, only one returned to find Jesus and give him glory. Let us not be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God. {BEcho, Jan 1, 1888}

(9) WHAT ARE TEN THINGS IN PAUL'S ALL INCLUSIVE LIST THAT CANNOT SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD?

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 4:31

Live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are

secure; that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” Proverbs 18:10. {MB 119}

Paul lists ten items that cannot separate us from the love of God. The tenth is broad enough to include anything that may have been omitted. All the terms are perhaps to be taken in their most general sense. Their very indefiniteness serves to emphasize Paul’s point that there is nothing that one can think of in all the created universe that can put a distance between a Christian and his loving Saviour. {6BC 580}

(10) ALONG WITH THE ULTIMATE GIFT OF HIS SON, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM WITH CONFIDENCE IF WE ASK ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL?

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 84:11; 1 Corinthians 2:12

Through the merits of Christ we have access to the throne of Infinite Power... “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32. The Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son, and we also may partake of its fullness. Jesus says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Luke 11:13. “If ye shall ask anything in My

name, I will do it.” “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” John 14:14, 16:24. {GC 477}

(11) WHAT AMAZING PRIVILEGE DESCRIBED IN THIS VERSE HAS GOD BESTOWED ON THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO KNOW AND ACCEPT HIM?

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Hosea 1:10; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 21:7

The price paid for our redemption, the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us, should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ. As the inspired apostle John beheld the height, the depth, the breadth of the Father’s love toward the perishing race, he was filled with adoration and reverence; and, failing to find suitable language in which to express the greatness and tenderness of this love, he called upon the world to behold it. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1.

What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. By assuming human nature, Christ elevates humanity. Fallen men are placed where, through connection

with Christ, they may indeed become worthy of the name “sons of God.” Such love is without a parallel. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! Theme for the most profound meditation! The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God.

The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother’s yearning sympathy for her wayward child. {SC 15}

I am so very grateful to the Lord for my countless blessings that all come from His hand as a testimony of His great love for me!

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for faith and wisdom that I can seek first His kingdom and then depend on Him to provide my needs.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I now have a better appreciation for the love of God revealed in the heavens as well as on earth.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful that Jesus came to this earth to heal us and set me free from my bondage to sin and the effects that destroy me. I want to be a vessel that He can use to carry forward His work

until the day of His coming.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

I am overwhelmed with His love as I realize the amazing mercy, compassion and faithfulness of the Lord towards me that is renewed every morning and that nothing can separate me from His love.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

As I behold the great manner of love demonstrated by God in calling me His child. I pray for His Spirit to live within me that I may bring glory to His Name.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

[illegible]



Lesson 3

God's Love in Seeking the Lost

(1) BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE AND SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, WHAT CAN WE AFFECTIONATELY CALL HIM?

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:16, 17 Galatians 4:6; Matthew 6:9

The infinite God, said Jesus, makes it your privilege to approach Him by the name of Father. Understand all that this implies. No earthly parents ever pleaded so earnestly with an erring child as He who made you pleads with the transgressor. No human, loving interest ever followed the impenitent with such tender invitations.

God dwells in every abode; He hears every word that is spoken, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every soul, regards the treatment that is given to fa-

ther, mother, sister, friend, and neighbor. He cares for our necessities, and His love and mercy and grace are continually flowing to satisfy our need.

But if you call God your Father you acknowledge yourselves His children, to be guided by His wisdom and to be obedient in all things, knowing that His love is changeless. You will accept His plan for your life. As children of God, you will hold His honor, His character, His family, His work, as the objects of your highest interest. It will be your joy to recognize and honor your relation to your Father and to every member of His family. You will rejoice to do any act, however humble, that will tend to His glory or to the well-being of your kindred. {MB 104-106}

(2) WHAT FOUR THINGS DOES GOD THE FATHER JOYFULLY DO WHEN A SINNER TURNS TO HIS LOVE AND AWAY FROM REBELLION?

The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Numbers 14:8; Psalm 149:4; Isaiah 62:4, 5

We must bear in mind the great joy manifested by the Shepherd at the recovery of the lost. He calls upon His neighbors: “Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost.” And all heaven echoes the note of joy. The Father Himself joys over the rescued one with singing. What a holy ecstasy of

joy is expressed in this parable! That joy it is your privilege to share. {6T 124}

(3) WHO LOVINGLY DOES THE SEEKING WHEN A REBELLIOUS SINNER, LIKE A STRAY LAMB, IS LOST?

‘For thus says the Lord GOD: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out....” I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick...’ (Ezekiel 34:11, 16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 40:11; Luke 19:10; John 10:16

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.

It was taught by the Jews that before God’s love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. “This man receiveth sinners.” According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep,

Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Rom. 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.

When the straying sheep is at last brought home, the shepherd's gratitude finds expression in melodious songs of rejoicing. He calls upon his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." So when a wanderer is found by the great Shepherd of the sheep, heaven and earth unite in thanksgiving and rejoicing. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." {COL 188}

(4) WHAT WORD IN THIS VERSE DESCRIBES THE INTENSITY OF THE INVITATION GIVEN BY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER TO THE SINNER TO RETURN HOME?

Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:20

We are living in a time when the last message of mercy, the last invitation, is sounding to the children of men. The command, "Go out into the highways and hedges," is reaching its final fulfillment. To every soul Christ's invitation will be given. The messengers

are saying, “Come; for all things are now ready.” Heavenly angels are still working in co-operation with human agencies. The Holy Spirit is presenting every inducement to constrain you to come. Christ is watching for some sign that will betoken the removing of the bolts and the opening of the door of your heart for His entrance. Angels are waiting to bear the tidings to heaven that another lost sinner has been found. The hosts of heaven are waiting, ready to strike their harps and to sing a song of rejoicing that another soul has accepted the invitation to the gospel feast. {COL 237}

(5) AS REPRESENTED IN THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, HOW DOES GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WELCOME HOME HIS EARTHLY WAYWARD CHILDREN?

“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. (Luke 15:20 NKJV)”

Related Texts: Psalm 103:10-13; 86:5, 15

The father of the prodigal son is the type that Christ chooses as a representation of God. This father longs to see and receive once more the son who has left him. He waits and watches for him, yearning to see him, hoping that he will come. When He sees a stranger approaching, poor and clothed with rags, He goes out to meet him, if perchance it may be His son. And He feeds and clothes him as if he were indeed his son. By and by He has His reward, for His son comes home, on his lips the beseeching confession, “Father, I have

sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” And the father says to the servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry” (Luke 15:21-23).

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” (Isa. 44:22). “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34). Heaven is waiting and yearning for the return of the prodigals who have wandered far from the fold. Many of those who have strayed away may be brought back by the loving service of God’s children.

Think of the Father subjecting Himself to sorrow, sparing not His own Son, but freely delivering Him up for us all....O that we had a better understanding of His love! {HP 10}

(6) WHAT IS THE FATHER’S MOTIVATION IN DRAWING US, HIS “PRODIGAL” CHILDREN, HOME?

... “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you. (Jeremiah 31:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:44; Hosea 11:4

Little did the thoughtless youth, as he went out from his father’s gate, dream of the ache and longing left in that father’s heart. When he danced and feasted with

his wild companions, little did he think of the shadow that had fallen on his home. And now as with weary and painful steps he pursues the homeward way, he knows not that One is watching for his return. But while he is yet “a great way off” the Father discerns his form. Love is of quick sight. Not even the degradation of the years of sin can conceal the son from the Father’s eyes. He “had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck” in a long, clinging, tender embrace.

The Father will permit no contemptuous eye to mock at his son’s misery and tatters. He takes from his own shoulders the broad, rich mantle, and wraps it around the son’s wasted form, and the youth sobs out his repentance, saying, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” The father holds him close to his side, and brings him home. No opportunity is given him to ask a servant’s place. He is a son, who shall be honored with the best the house affords, and whom the waiting men and women shall respect and serve.

The father said to his servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” {COL 203-204}

(7) HOW DOES ALL HEAVEN REACT TO THE NEWS OF A PRODIGAL CHILD’S RETURN HOME?

Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10 NKJV)

His father saw him. Jesus implies that the Father was looking for His son to return, even expecting him. The Father seems to have known the boy's character and disposition well enough to realize—even when bestowing upon the youth his share of the family fortune and when bidding him farewell—that he lacked those essential traits of character that would enable him to make a success of his venture. Apparently He reasoned that sooner or later the boy would come to himself. He recognized His son, even in his tattered garments, and at a distance.

In vs. 20–24 Jesus unfolds to His hearers the character of the father, even as in vs. 11–19 He dwells upon that of the younger son. He might have waited for the boy to come up to where He stood. Instead, He made evident the eagerness and joy of His own heart by going forth to meet him. Fell on his neck. That is, in an embrace. The son had not yet spoken, but his return in so sorry a state spoke more eloquently than any words he may have contrived to say. Nor is there any record of what the Father may have said to his son, but His orders to the servants, together with his own manifestation of fatherly love, were likewise more eloquent than words could possibly have been. {5BC 820}

(8) WHAT SYMBOLS ARE USED IN THIS TEXT TO DESCRIBE THE REMOVAL OF OUR SIN AND GOD REPLACING IT WITH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I

*will clothe you with rich robes.” (Zech-
ariah 3:4 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Luke 15:22; Isaiah 64:6;
Revelation 4:4

Your heavenly Father will take from you the garments defiled by sin. In the beautiful parabolic prophecy of Zechariah, the high priest Joshua, standing clothed in filthy garments before the angel of the Lord, represents the sinner. And the word is spoken by the Lord, “Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” Zech. 3:4, 5.

Even so God will clothe you with “the garments of salvation,” and cover you with “the robe of righteousness.” Isa. 61:10. “Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” Psalm 68:13.

He will bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love. (Song of Sol. 2:4) “If thou wilt walk in My ways,” He declares, “I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by”--even among the holy angels that surround His throne. (Zech. 3:7.) {COL 206}

**(9) WITH WHAT THREE TRAITS
OF HIS CHARACTER DOES THE
FATHER CONTINUE TO DRAW US
HOME?**

*Or do you despise the riches of His
goodness, forbearance, and longsuffer-*

ing, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 2:4-6; Psalm 103:8-14; Exodus 34:6

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

Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Rom. 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul... {COL 202}

(10) IN HIS AMAZING LOVE, WHAT GREAT PRIVILEGE DOES GOD THE FATHER ALLOW US TO BE CALLED?

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 3:19; Hosea 1:10; John 1:12, 13

All the intelligences in earth and heaven are called upon to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Every sinner may look and live.

Do not survey that scene of Calvary with careless, thoughtless mind. Can it be that angels shall look down upon us, the recipients of God's love, and see us cold, indifferent, unimpressible, when heaven in amazement beholds the stupendous work of redemption to save a fallen world, and desires to look into the mystery of Calvary's love and woe? Angels in wonder and amazement look upon those for whom so great salvation has been provided, and marvel that the love of God does not awaken them, and lead them to pour forth melodious strains of gratitude and adoration.

But the result which all heaven looks to behold is not seen among those who profess to be followers of Christ. How readily do we speak in endearing words of our friends and relatives, and yet how slow we are to speak of Him whose love has no parallel, set forth in Christ crucified among you. {FE 197}

(11) WHAT MUST WE BE CAREFUL NOT TO DO WHEN THE LOVE OF THE FATHER, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, COMPELS US TO COME HOME?

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 63:10; Acts 7:51; 1 Thessalonians 5:19

But “see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.” Heb. 12:25. Jesus said, “None of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.” They had rejected the invitation, and none of them were to be invited again. In rejecting Christ, the Jews were hardening their hearts, and giving themselves into the power of Satan so that it would be impossible for them to accept His grace. So it is now. If the love of God is not appreciated and does not become an abiding principle to soften and subdue the soul, we are utterly lost. The Lord can give no greater manifestation of His love than He has given. If the love of Jesus does not subdue the heart, there are no means by which we can be reached.

Every time you refuse to listen to the message of mercy, you strengthen yourself in unbelief. Every time you fail to open the door of your heart to Christ, you become more and more unwilling to listen to the voice of Him that speaketh. You diminish your chance of responding to the last appeal of mercy. Let it not be written of you, as of ancient Israel, “Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.” Hosea 4:17. Let not Christ weep over you as He wept over Jerusalem, saying, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Luke 13:34, 35. {COL 236-237}

(12) WHAT OCCURS IN HEAVEN WHEN EVEN ONE SINNER REPENTS?

I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sin-

ner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 15:32; Matthew 18:13, 14

It is the work of the angels to come close to the tried, the suffering, the tempted. They labor untiringly in behalf of those for whom Christ died. When sinners are led to give themselves to the Saviour, angels bear the tidings heavenward, and there is great rejoicing among the heavenly host. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15:7.

A report is borne to heaven of every successful effort on our part to dispel the darkness and to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ. As the deed is recounted before the Father, joy thrills through all the heavenly host. {AA 153}

(13) WITH INCOMPREHENSIBLE LOVE THE FATHER HAS FORGIVEN AND REDEEMED US, WHAT IS HIS INVITATION AND OUR PART TO DO?

I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you." (Isaiah 44:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 1:18; 43:25; Psalm 103:12-14

Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? And now, your life plans thwarted and your hopes dead,

do you sit alone and desolate? That voice which has long been speaking to your heart, but to which you would not listen, comes to you distinct and clear, “Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.” Micah 2:10.

Return to your Father’s house. He invites you, saying, “Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.” “Come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Isaiah 44:22; 55:3.

Do not listen to the enemy’s suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of the Saviour, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Make the prayer of David your own: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Psalm 51:7. {PK 319-320}

It is my privilege to be able to approach the Creator God of the universe by the name of Abba Father and accept His plan for my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My heart is touched as I learn of the parable of the prodigal son and the loving father represented by God my Father. How, while the son was yet in rebellion, the Father continued to seek Him as He does you and I.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to turn from my rebellion and I am so thankful that there is no taunting or the pointing out of my evil way. He forgives my iniquity and remembers my sin no more according to Scripture.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is so awesome that all of heaven rejoices over a sinner who comes home to the love of the Father. I am amazed that they have done this for me!

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am forever grateful that when I fall back into sin the Father does not give up on me but rather seeks me out and draws me back to Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my heartfelt prayer that I do not grieve His Holy Spirit and turn my back on the One who has done so much for me. I want to live my life that I may bring glory to His name and continue to be call His child.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Lesson 4

God's Love Revealed in the Refining of Our Characters

(1) WHAT ARE FOUR TRAITS OF GOD'S CHARACTER WHICH HE LONGS TO IMPART INTO US, AND ARE PROMISES OF HIS LOVE WE CAN CLAIM?

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, (Exodus 34:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Exodus 34:7; Micah 7:19; Hosea 14:4-7

Commit the keeping of your soul to Him as unto a faithful Creator. His mercies are sure, His covenant is everlasting. Happy is the man whose hope is in the Lord his God, who keepeth truth forever. Let your mind grasp the promises and hold to them. If you cannot call to mind readily the rich assurance contained in the precious promises, listen to them from the lips of Another. What fullness, what love

and assurance are found in these words from the lips of God Himself, proclaiming His love, His pity and interest in the children of His care...

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

(2) IN HIS PRAYER TO THE FATHER, HOW DID JESUS DESCRIBE GOD'S LOVE FOR US?

I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:1; 1 John 4:9; Ephesians 1:6

Here is the announcement of that wonderful truth, so full of encouragement and comfort, that God loves us as He loves His Son. This is what Jesus said in His last prayer for His disciples, Thou "hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:23.

The very first step in approaching God is to know and believe the love that He has to us (1 John 4:16); for it is through the drawing of His love that we are led to come to Him. {MB 104}

It seems almost too good to believe that the Father can and does love any member of the human family as He loves His Son. But we have the assurance that He does, and this assurance should bring joy to every heart, awakening the highest reverence and calling forth unspeakable gratitude. God's love is not uncertain and unreal, but a living reality. {HP 58}

(3) AS ANY GOOD FATHER WHO LOVES HIS CHILDREN, WHAT MUST THE LORD AT TIMES DO TO ENNOBLE AND PERFECT OUR CHARACTERS?

For whom the lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. (Hebrews 12:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 5:7-12; Deuteronomy 8:5

Patient, persistent discipline is an expression of solicitous affection. Experiences designed to ennoble and perfect character constitute the best evidence that the Lord loves us. Whether it be a child, or an adult Christian, discipline is essential to character.

God administers whatever discipline may be required for the formation of character, or permits experiences that will accomplish this objective. However, the statement is not to be pressed too literally, as if God personally or directly authorized or ordered the suffering and sorrow that attend some of the disciplinary experiences of life. {7BC 483}

(4) BECAUSE GOD LOVES US, AND WHEN IT CAN WORK FOR OUR GOOD, WHAT DOES HE OF-

TEN DO WITH WHAT THE DEVIL INTENDS TO BE A CURSE?

Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. (Deuteronomy 23:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Numbers 24:9-11; Romans 8:31, 32; 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18

The Lord can bring victory out of that which may seem to us discomfiture and defeat. We are in danger of forgetting God, of looking at the things which are seen, instead of beholding by the eye of faith the things which are unseen. When misfortune or calamity comes, we are ready to charge God with neglect or cruelty. If He sees fit to cut off our usefulness in some line, we mourn, not stopping to think that thus God may be working for our good. We need to learn that chastisement is a part of His great plan and that under the rod of affliction the Christian may sometimes do more for the Master than when engaged in active service. {AA 481}

Paul points out in his enlargement upon this thought (Heb. 12:5–11) that we gave reverence to our earthly fathers when they disciplined us. Perhaps as children we dimly perceived that they were doing it because they loved us. The children of God should believe that all things are under the control of a heavenly Father who delights in them and who will work circumstances for their good if they submit cheerfully to the discipline and learn the lessons it was intended to teach. {3BC 956}

(5) WHOM DOES THE LORD REBUKE AND CHASTEN?

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 3:12; 2 Samuel 7:14; Hebrews 12:5-11

Jesus said: “The Father Himself loveth you.” If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered.” It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. He does not become perplexed by the multiplicity of our grievances nor overpowered by the weight of our burdens.

His watchcare extends to every household and encircles every individual; He is concerned in all our business and our sorrows. He marks every tear; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out His purposes of love toward us, “that we might be partakers of His holiness” and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence. {5T 742}

Let the tempted and tried souls remember that when chastisement comes upon them, it is the Lord who would save them from death. Let the souls to whom reproof comes, remember that “as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3:19). {TDG 21}

(6) WHAT IS OUR PART TO DO WHEN THE LORD REBUKES AND CHASTENS US?

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Revelation 3:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 3:19; Psalm 51:3; Luke 19:8

The Lord says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” ... Christ lifts up the contrite heart and refines the mourning soul until it becomes His abode.

But when tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob! We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance. To Jacob the divine touch at break of day revealed the One with whom he had been contending--the Angel of the covenant; and, weeping and helpless, he fell upon the breast of Infinite Love, to receive the blessing for which his soul longed. We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him. {MB 11}

The aim of all true remedial discipline is to bring conviction to the erring one and to encourage to a new course of action. Chasten is the word *paideuō*, “to train children,” “to punish,” particularly as a parent punishes a child for the purpose of reforming and training him. Chastening comes to the Christian when Christ’s rebuke is disregarded. Neither His rebuke nor His chastening is an expression of anger—as when a man loses his temper—but of vigorous love whose purpose is to bring sinners to repentance. {7BC 763}

(7) ALONG WITH HIS REBUKE AND CHASTENING, WHAT DOES

GOD PROMISE TO HIS PEOPLE ABOUT HIS LOVING KINDNESS?

Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. (Psalms 89:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 89:24-34; 103:17; Lamentations 3:20-33

His word is pledged. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but His kindness shall not depart from His people, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed. His voice is heard, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3). “With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee” (Isa. 54:8).

How amazing is this love, that God condescends to remove all cause for doubt and questioning from human fears and weakness and takes hold of the trembling hand reached up to Him in faith; and He helps us to trust Him by multiplied assurances and securities. He has made us a binding agreement upon condition of our obedience, and He comes to meet us in our own understanding of things.

We think that a pledge or promise from our fellow men, if recorded, still needs a guarantee. Jesus has met all these peculiar fears, and He has confirmed His promise with an oath: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: . . .” What more could our Lord do to strengthen our faith in His promises? {TMK 262}

Let your mind dwell upon the goodness of God, upon the great love wherewith He

has loved us, as evidenced in the work of redemption. If He did not love us and consider us of value, then this great sacrifice would not have been made. He is beneficent in mercy and in grace. Let your heart and mind be at rest like a tired child in the arms of its mother. His everlasting arms are beneath you. {2MCP 513}

(8) WHAT ARE THE AFFLICTIONS THAT AT TIMES GOD ALLOWS, WORKING FOR US?

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:18, 28; 1 Peter 1:6, 7

If Paul, troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, could call his trials light afflictions, of what has the Christian of today to complain? How trifling are our trials in comparison with Paul's many afflictions! They are not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory awaiting the overcomer. They are God's workmen, ordained for the perfection of character. However great the deprivation and suffering of the Christian, however dark and inscrutable may seem the way of providence, he is to rejoice in the Lord, knowing that all is working for his good. {LHU 248}

(9) WHAT GIFT, CRITICAL TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT,

DOES THE LORD GIVE TO ALL WHO WILL ACCEPT IT?

Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 2:4; Acts 3:26; 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25, 26

The sinner is represented as a lost sheep, and a lost sheep never returns to the fold unless he is sought after and brought back to the fold by the shepherd. No man of himself can repent, and make himself worthy of the blessing of justification. The Lord Jesus is constantly seeking to impress the sinner's mind and attract him to behold Himself, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. We cannot take a step toward spiritual life save as Jesus draws and strengthens the soul, and leads us to experience that repentance which needeth not to be repented of.

When before the high priests and Sadducees, Peter clearly presented the fact that repentance is the gift of God. Speaking of Christ, he said, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). Repentance is no less the gift of God than are pardon and justification, and it cannot be experienced except as it is given to the soul by Christ. If we are drawn to Christ, it is through His power and virtue. The grace of contrition comes through Him, and from Him comes justification. {1SM 390-391}

With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you still give place to

doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can be more dishonoring to God than these ideas. Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such thoughts of our heavenly Father. Our whole spiritual life will catch a tone of hopelessness from such conceptions of God. They discourage all effort to seek God or to serve Him. We must not think of God only as a judge ready to pronounce sentence against us. He hates sin; but from love to sinners He gave Himself, in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. {5T 632}

**(10) BECAUSE GOD IS KIND,
LOVING, AND MERCIFUL,
WHAT HAS HE DONE FOR EV-
ERY REPENTANT SINNER?**

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:4-5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 2:4-9

In the same way every human being can come to Christ. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:5. Do you feel that because you are a sinner you cannot hope to receive blessing from God? Remember that Christ came into the world to save sinners. We have nothing to recommend

us to God; the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utterly helpless condition, which makes His redeeming power a necessity. Renouncing all self-dependence, we may look to the cross of Calvary and say: "In my hand no price I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling."
{MH 65}

I am thankful God loves me so much that, as a good Father, He loves me enough to rebuke and discipline me for my good.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so grateful for God's mercy, long-suffering, and abundant goodness and that He desires to impart these life-saving traits into my character.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize He doesn't cause evil to happen but I am glad He is able to work it out for my good and ultimately for the perfecting of my character.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that when God chastens me I should accept the gift of repentance that comes with it so that He can live within and I may reflect His character.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful that God's loving kindness never fails and because He loves me so much He will freely give me all things that will bring glory to His name.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 5

God's Love Revealed by Grace

(1) BY WHAT NAME DOES THE APOSTLE REFER TO THE AMAZING MINISTRY WHICH GOD IS MANIFESTING HIS GREAT LOVE TO SAVE OUR GUILTY AND RUINED RACE?

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, (2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 1:23

Says the apostle: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 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.” {5T 739}

(2) IN AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE ACT OF LOVE, WHAT GREAT GIFT WAS GIVEN THAT EVERY BELIEVER MAY BE SAVED?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:9, 10, 14; Romans 5:10; 8:32; John 6:40, 47

This message is for the world, for “whosoever” means that any and all who comply with the condition may share the blessing. All who look unto Jesus, believing in Him as their personal Saviour, shall “not perish, but have everlasting life.” Every provision has been made that we may have the everlasting reward. {FW 105}

The revelation of God’s love to men centers in the cross. Its full significance tongue cannot utter; pen cannot portray; the mind of man cannot comprehend. Looking upon the cross of Calvary we can only say: “God so loved the world, that He

gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ ascended on high, is the science of salvation that we are to learn and to teach. {8T 287}

(3) BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, FOR WHAT SPECIFIC PURPOSE DID GOD NOT SEND HIS SON?

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 8:16; Luke 9:56; Matthew 18:11

God might have sent His Son into the world to condemn the world. But amazing grace! Christ came to save, not to destroy. The apostles never touched this theme without their hearts glowing with the inspiration of the matchless love of the Saviour. {1MCP 249}

God willed that all men should be saved, and by the great gift of His Son provided for their salvation. But the will of God must be confirmed by the will of each individual man in order that it may become effective for him. Salvation is only for those who believe and receive Christ (see on John 1:12; 3:16). {5BC 930}

(4) WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE CONDEMNATION OF THOSE WHO ARE LOST?

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men

loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 3:18

John hastens to explain that those who do not believe in the Son are “condemned already,” simply because they refuse to believe. God’s purpose in sending His Son into the world is to save the world. If, because of the coming of the Saviour, some men incur condemnation, God cannot be blamed. Condemnation results, not from the coming of the true Light, from men deliberately turning from the Light because of a preference for darkness. {DA 62}

(5) HOW DID GOD MANIFEST HIS GREAT LOVE TOWARD US TO PREVENT OUR DESERVED DESTRUCTION?

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. (1 John 4:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10

When Adam’s sin plunged the race into hopeless misery, God might have cut Himself loose from fallen beings. He might have treated them as sinners deserve to be treated. He might have commanded the angels of heaven to pour out upon our world the vials of His wrath. He might have removed this dark blot from His universe. But He did not do this. Instead of banishing them from His presence, He came still nearer to the fallen race. He gave His Son to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

The gift of God to man is beyond all computation. Nothing was withheld. God would not permit it to be said that He could have done more or revealed to humanity a greater measure of love. In the gift of Christ He gave all heaven. {AG 63}

(6) BECAUSE OF GOD’S GREAT LOVE FOR US, FOR WHAT PURPOSE DID HE SEND HIS SON TO EARTH?

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:9; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21

When, in consequence of transgression, Adam and Eve were cut off from all hope, when justice demanded the death of the sinner, Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” 1 John 4:10; Isaiah 53:6. {CT 268}

Men have only one Advocate, one Intercessor, who is able to pardon transgression. Shall not our hearts swell with gratitude to Him who gave Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins? Think deeply upon the love the Father has manifested in our behalf, the love that He has expressed for us. We cannot measure this love. Measurement there is none. We can only point to Calvary, to the Lamb slain from the foundation of

the world. It is an infinite sacrifice. Can we comprehend and measure infinity? (MS 128, 1897}

(7) WHAT DID GOD SEND CHRIST TO DO THAT DEMONSTRATED UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE OF THEIR MATCHLESS LOVE FOR US?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:13; 1 Peter 3:18

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them . He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting. Here is love--the contemplation of which should fill the soul

with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness. It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer. {CH 222}

(8) THOUGH, UNTIL HEAVEN, WE WILL NEVER FULLY COMPREHEND IT, WHAT SHOULD OUR PRAYER BE CONCERNING THE LORD'S LOVE FOR US?

may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:18-19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 1:18, 19

The contemplation of the love of God manifested in the gift of His Son for the salvation of fallen men will stir the heart and arouse the powers of the soul as nothing else will. The work of redemption is a marvelous work; it is a mystery in the universe of God. But how indifferent are the objects of such matchless grace!

If our senses had not been blunted by sin and by contemplation of the dark pictures that Satan is constantly presenting before us, a fervent and continuous flow of gratitude would go out from our hearts toward Him who daily loads us with benefits of which we are wholly undeserving. The everlasting song of the redeemed will be praise to Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood; and if we ever sing that song before the throne of God we must learn it here.” {TMK 168}

(9) THOUGH WE MAY FALL DEEP INTO INIQUITY AND DESPAIR AND ARE SO UNDESERVING, WHAT THREE THINGS DOES OUR GOD OF LOVE PROMISE?

“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from him. (Hosea 14:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 3:22; 33:6; Psalm 103:3, 4

All who enter the City of God will enter through the strait gate--by agonizing effort; for “there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.” Revelation 21:27. But none who have fallen need give up to despair. Aged men, once honored of God, may have defiled their souls, sacrificing virtue on the altar of lust; but if they repent, forsake sin, and turn to God, there is still hope for them.

He who declares, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” also gives the invitation, “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.” Revelation 2:10; Isaiah 55:7. God hates sin, but He loves the sinner. “I will heal their backsliding,” He declares; “I will love them freely.” Hosea 14:4. {PK 84}

(10) FOR WHAT REASON DID GOD BESTOW HIS RICH MERCY UPON US MAKING US ALIVE WITH CHRIST?

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved

us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (Ephesians 2:4-5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 55:7-9

God is not only merciful; He is rich in mercy to all who call upon Him, not because they are worthy of it, but because it is God's good pleasure to bestow mercy (Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3).

God's love is something more than compassion; it leads to beneficent action and is unchanging. God loved us "while we were yet sinners", and will never cease to love us. It was this love that motivated His work of salvation (John 3:16). Love is a prime attribute of His character (1 John 4:8), finding its highest expression in the person of Christ. God has mercy upon us because we are sinners, and He loves us because we are His creatures. His great work for man was not merely an act of benevolence or charitable condescension; it was an act of affection, of love. {6BC 1007}

Such is the grace of God, such the love wherewith He hath loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, enemies in our minds by wicked works, serving divers lusts and pleasures, the slaves of debased appetites and passion, servants of sin and Satan. What depth of love is manifested in Christ, as He becomes the propitiation for our sins. Through the ministration of the Holy Spirit souls are led to find forgiveness of sins. {TSB 108}

(11) THROUGH WHOM DID GOD REVEAL HIS CHARACTER OF LOVE TO THE WORLD?

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? (John 14:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:7; 12:44, 45; Hebrews 1:3

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan’s deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.

To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world’s dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings.” Mal. 4:2. {DA 22}

(12) WHICH CAME FIRST, GOD’S LOVE FOR US OR THE GIFT OF HIS SON TO SAVE US?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJV)

But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father’s heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! “God so loved the

world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.

Jesus said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, “My Father has so loved you that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your Substitute and Surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father; for by My sacrifice, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” {SC 13-14}

(13) THOUGH WERE DEAD IN SIN, WHAT TWO THINGS DID GOD, IN HIS GREAT LOVE AND MERCY, DO FOR US THROUGH CHRIST?

even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 2:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 5:6, 10; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, 21

The Lord of life and glory clothed His divinity with humanity to demonstrate to man that God through the gift

of Christ would connect us with Him. Without a connection with God no one can possibly be happy. Fallen man is to learn that our Heavenly Father cannot be satisfied until His love embraces the repentant sinner, transformed through the merits of the spotless Lamb of God.

The work of all the heavenly intelligences is to this end. Under the command of their General they are to work for the reclaiming of those who by transgression have separated themselves from their Heavenly Father. A plan has been devised whereby the wondrous grace and love of Christ shall stand revealed to the world. In the infinite price paid by the Son of God to ransom man, the love of God is revealed. This glorious plan of redemption is ample in its provisions to save the whole world. Sinful and fallen man may be made complete in Jesus through the forgiveness of sin and the imputed righteousness of Christ. {AG 99}

I am amazed at the Mystery of Godliness in Christ coming to earth in human flesh to reveal the love of the Father and to save us from destruction!

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am eternally grateful for the Gift of His Son that God so generously gave that I can have a future and a hope of a life in His presence that is free from pain, suffering and death.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my prayer that God will fill me with His Spirit that I do not love the darkness of sin in this world and choose the condemnation in the darkness rather than the love of His marvelous light.

Circle: Yes Undecided

*Thank you Father for your promise to
heal my back sliding, love me freely, and
turn your anger from me.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

I appreciate that the Godhead was moved with pity for our fallen race and gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption for me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

This day I give my heart, mind and soul to the Lord and pray that, by His grace and Spirit, I can live my life to His Glory. I desire to be a powerful witness to His love and goodness as revealed by the Mystery of Godliness reveal in the life and death of Christ for me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Lesson 6

God's Love Revealed by His Justice and Mercy

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST COME TO EARTH AND GIVE HIS LIFE TO HONOR, FULFILL, AND UPHOLD?

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:19; Romans 3:31; Isaiah 42:21; Galatians 4:4, 5

The infinite love of God has been manifested in the gift of His only-begotten Son to redeem a lost race. Christ came to the earth to reveal to men the character of His Father, and His life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. And yet Christ Himself declares, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.” Matthew 5:18. {PP 469}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set

aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19.

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762}

(2) WHAT IS "THE LORD A GOD OF" WHICH HE KEEPS IN PERFECT BALANCE WITH MERCY, AND ULTIMATELY REVEALED AT THE CROSS?

Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him. (Isaiah 30:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hosea 2:19; Matthew 23:23

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10.

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762}

(3) BY HIS GREAT LOVE AND DIVINE POWER, WHAT HAS GOD ALLOWED US TO BE PARTAKER'S OF THROUGH THE MERITS OF CHRIST AND HIM LIVING IN US?

as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:3-4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:25-27; Ephesians 4:23, 24; Colossians 3:10, 11

Having undertaken the work of man's redemption, the Father would spare

nothing, however dear, which was essential for the completion of His work. He would make opportunities for men; He would pour upon them His blessings; He would heap favor upon favor, gift upon gift, until the whole treasury of heaven was open to those whom He came to save. Having collected all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of His divine nature, God gave them all for the use of man. They were His free gift. What an ocean of love is circulating, like a divine atmosphere, around the world! What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of His Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven!

Our Redeemer determined on nothing less than that through His merits the love of God should be transfused through the soul that believes in Him. As our life, the vitality of God's love is to circulate through every part of our nature, that it may abide in us as it dwells in Christ Jesus. United with Christ by living faith, the Father loves us as the members of Christ's mystical body, of which Christ is the glorified head. {TMK 19}

(4) STIRRED WITH MERCY AND PITY FOR OUR FALLEN SOULS, WHAT IS THE GODHEAD NOT WILLING THAT ANY SINNER SHOULD DO?

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
(2 Peter 3:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 2:4

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting. Here is love--the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness. It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer. {CH 222}

(5) WHEN WE AS SINNERS COMPREHEND THE JUSTICE, MERCY, AND LOVE OF GOD IN LIGHT OF THE CROSS, LIKE PAUL WHAT WILL BE THE FOCUS OF OUR TESTIMONY?

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24

Jesus placed the cross in line with the light coming from heaven, for it is there that it shall catch the eye of man. The cross is in direct line with the shining of the divine countenances, so that by beholding the cross men may see and know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. In beholding God we behold the One who poured out His soul unto death. In beholding the cross the view is extended to God, and His hatred of sin is discerned. But while we behold in the cross God's hatred of sin, we also behold His love for sinners, which is stronger than death. To the world the cross is the incontrovertible argument that God is truth and light and love. {ST March 7, 1895}

(6) THOUGH THROUGH SIN WE WERE JUSTLY SEVERED FROM GOD, WHAT ACT OF MERCY WAS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE DEATH OF JESUS FOR THOSE WHO ACCEPT IT?

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:10-11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 1:21, 22; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19

Man through sin has been severed from the life of God. His soul is palsied through the machinations of Satan, the author of sin. 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.

But God will not be defeated by Satan. He sent His Son into the world, that through His taking the human form and nature, humanity and divinity combined in Him would elevate man in the scale of moral value with God. {1SM 340}

God's love for the world was not manifest because He sent His Son, but because He loved the world He sent His Son into the world that divinity clothed with humanity might touch humanity, while divinity lays hold of divinity. Though sin had produced a gulf between man and his God, a divine benevolence provided a plan to bridge that gulf. And what material did He use? A part of Himself. The brightness of the Father's glory came to a world all seared and marred with the curse, and in His own divine character, in His own divine body, bridged the gulf. . . . The windows of heaven were opened and the showers of heavenly grace in healing streams came to our benighted world. ... {OHC 12}

(7) AS THE YEARS OF ETERNITY ROLL BY AND WITH THEM COME AN EVEN DEEPER REVELATION OF GOD'S LOVE, JUSTICE AND MERCY, WHAT WILL BE OUR SONG OF PRAISE?

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 7:9-12; 4:9-11

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. {GC 678}

(8) AFTER THE FATHER CLEANS-ES AND COVERS OUR BACKSLID-ING, HOW FAR REMOVED ARE OUR TRANSGRESSIONS?

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalms 103:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Micah 7:18, 19; Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 50:20

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives

the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7–9. 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. {MB 114}

(9) WHEN WE AS SINNERS REALIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GOD’S LOVE DEMONSTRATED AT THE CROSS, LIKE PAUL, WHAT WILL WE EXCLAIM?

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 1:4, 5; Colossians 3:1-3

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

Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain.

Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Galatians 6:14. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness. {AA 209-210}

I now understand that Christ came to confirm God's law of love and not do away with it. The fact that Christ died to redeem us confirms its importance and eternal existence.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that God love is a perfect balance between justice and mercy and these are the foundation of His throne and government.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so thankful that God is not willing that any should perish and I look to the cross of Jesus and claim His precious blood to cover my sins.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am amazed that by choosing Christ and allowing His Spirit to fill me, I can have the privilege of having His divine nature lived out through me. I ask God for that privilege just now.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Lesson 7

The Mystery of Godliness

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST THE LIVING WORD DO AND IS THE MOST MARVELOUS THING THAT HAS EVER TAKEN PLACE?

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 1:3; 9:5; Galatians 4:4

When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God. God gave His Son to die for sinful human beings a death of ignominy and shame. He who was Commander in the heavenly courts laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothing His divinity with humanity, came to this world to stand at the head of the human race as

the pattern-man. He humbled Himself to suffer with the race, to be afflicted in all their afflictions.

The whole world was His, but so completely did He empty Himself that during His ministry He declared, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” [Heb. 2:14–18 quoted] {MS 76, 1903}

(2) WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE NAME “EMMANUEL” AS RELATED TO CHRIST AND HIS UNFATHOMABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH US?

“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which is translated, **“God with us.”** (Matthew 1:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16

In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem’s manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and

man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person. {ST, July 30, 1896}

(3) SENT BY THE FATHER, WHAT WAS CHRIST'S MISSION OF LOVE THAT WE MIGHT BE ADOPTED AS CHILDREN OF GOD?

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 3:13, 14; Matthew 5:17, 18; Romans 3:28

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 as to the immutability and righteousness of the law.

In prophesying of Christ, Isaiah says, "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isa. 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” (Isa. 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. And since He has poured out all heaven in that one rich gift, He will withhold from man no needed aid that he may take the cup of salvation, and become an heir of God, joint heir with Christ. {1SM 323}

(4) IN SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE, FROM WHAT DID CHRIST COME TO EARTH TO DELIVER US IN ORDER TO SECURE OUR COMPLETE RESTORATION?

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 2:14, 15

Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far from us. But instead of moving farther away from us, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain to perfection. By a death of shame and suffering He paid man’s ransom. What self-sacrificing love is this! From the highest excellency He came, His divinity clothed with humanity, descending step by step to the very depths of humiliation. No line can measure the depth of this love. Christ has shown us how much God can love and our Redeemer suffer in order to secure our complete

restoration. He desires His children to reveal His character, to exert His influence, that other minds may be drawn into harmony with His mind. {UL 191}

(5) WHAT AMAZING FACT DOES PAUL POINT OUT THAT MAKES THE ACT OF LOVE IN THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST AS A HUMAN UNFATHOMABLE?

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 44:6; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:28

The apostle exalted Christ before his brethren as the One by whom God had created all things and by whom He had wrought out their redemption. He declared that the hand that sustains the worlds in space, and holds in their orderly arrangements and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for them. “By Him were all things created,” Paul wrote, “that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight.” {AA 471}

(6) WHAT PHRASE DOES THE APOSTLE PAUL USE TO DESCRIBE WHAT IS, WITHOUT

CONTROVERSY, THE MOST INCREDIBLE ACT OF LOVE AS REVEALED IN THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST?

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 49:15, 16; Ephesians 6:19; Romans 16:25

The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries. Christ was one with the Father, yet ... He was willing to step down from the exaltation of one who was equal with God. {NP} That He might accomplish His purpose of love for the fallen race, He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one.

It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin.

Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

Those who claim that it was not possible for Christ to sin, cannot believe that He really took upon Himself human nature. But was not Christ actually tempted, not only by Satan in the wilderness, but all through His life, from childhood to manhood? {NP} Our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured. {FLB 91}

(7) BECAUSE OF CHRIST’S GREAT LOVE, AS DEMONSTRATED BY “THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS”, HOW CAN WE AS HIS CHURCH STAND BEFORE THE HOLY GOD?

that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 1:21, 22; Jude 24; 2 Peter 3:14

O Precious, loving, long-suffering, long-forbearing Jesus, how my soul adores Thee! That a poor, unworthy, sin-polluted soul can stand before the Holy God, complete in the righteousness of our Substitute and Surety! Wonder, O Heavens, and be astonished, O earth, that fallen man is the object of His infinite love and delight. He rejoices over them with celestial songs, and man defiled with

sin, having become cleansed through the righteousness of Christ, is presented to the Father free from every spot and stain of sin, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27). “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom. 8:33). {UL 92}

(8) WHAT ARE “THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY” THAT GOD WANTS US TO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE THAT WE MAY BE COMPLETE IN HIM?

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 9:23, 24; 2 Corinthians 4:6

The privileges, the blessings, of the child of God are represented by the apostle in the following language: “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). When we realize that our hope of glory is Christ, that we are complete in Him, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. {HP 65}

(9) WITH LOVE WE WILL SPEND ETERNITY TRYING TO COMPREHEND, WHAT DID CHRIST THE SON OF GOD COME TO THIS DARK PLANET AND ENDURE FOR US?

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniq-

uities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:6-12

The Son of God stooped to uplift the fallen. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” Isaiah 53:5. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He knew what it meant to be hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He was a stranger and a sojourner on the earth--in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women of today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,... full of grace and truth.” John 1:14. {AA 472}

That Christ the Creator would humble Himself and become a helpless babe in Bethlehem’s manger. The incarnation of Christ is certainly the mystery of all mysteries.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Along with all the universe I marvel at the fact Christ loved me enough to lay aside His royal robe and kingly crown and become flesh to dwell among us and ultimately give His life to save me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize now that Christ did not come to do away with God's love-based laws but rather to uphold and fulfill them. If this were not the case He would not have had to die for my sins.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

I confess and ask for forgiveness of my sins and claim the promise that, because of His amazing act of love, I can stand before the Father without fault or blemish.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

As the years of eternity roll by I look forward to sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning to grasp the amazing thing He has done and will forever praise His Holy Name.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

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Lesson 8

The Drawing Love of God

(1) BY WHAT RATIONAL METHOD DOES THE LORD APPEAL TO OUR AFFECTIONS AND LOVINGLY DRAW US TO HIMSELF?

I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. (Hosea 11:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:44; Jeremiah 31:3; John 12:32

A significant expression, showing that these bands are far different from those which men employ in taming wild animals. The lower animals must sometimes be broken into useful labor with a degree of violence; but God does not so draw men. He uses neither hard cords nor iron bands, but draws us by rational means, courting our intelligence

and appealing to our affections (see on Isa. 1:18). God draws us in a manner suitable to the dignity of our nature, as those made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). In working for souls we should ever follow this method of love (see 1 Cor. 9:19–23; 1 Thess. 2:7, 8; 3:12; Heb. 5:2). Christ drew us with the cords of a man when He became man, and lived and sacrificed Himself for our good (see John 12:32; Acts 10:38). One of the reasons the Son of God became man was to draw men with the cords of sympathy, by partaking of a common nature with them. {4BC 921}

Christ came to manifest the love of God to the world, to draw the hearts of all men to Himself.... The first step toward salvation is to respond to the drawing of the love of Christ.... It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself, and this is life eternal. {AG 99}

(2) FOR WHAT GIFT DID CHRIST PAY THE PENALTY AND PROVIDE PARDON AND GOD SO GRACIOUSLY OFFERS TO US?

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 5:12, 21; John 5:24; 17:2; 1 John 2:25

The ransom has been paid, and it is possible for all to come to God, and through a life of obedience to attain unto

everlasting life. Then how sad it is that men turn from the immortal inheritance, and live for the gratification of pride, for selfishness and display, and through submission to the rule of Satan, lose the blessing which they might have both in this life and in the life to come. They might enter into the palaces of heaven, and associate on terms of freedom and equality with Christ and heavenly angels, and with the princes of God; and yet, incredible as it may seem, they turn from heavenly attractions. The Creator of all worlds proposes to love those who believe in His only-begotten Son as their personal Saviour, even as He loves His Son. Even here and now His gracious favor is bestowed upon us to this marvelous extent. He has given to men the gift of the Light and Majesty of heaven, and with Him He has bestowed all the treasures of heaven. Much as He has promised us for the life to come, He also bestows princely gifts upon us in this life, and as subjects of His grace, He would have us enjoy everything that will ennoble, expand, and elevate our characters. It is His design to fit us for the heavenly courts above. {FE 234}

Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon. {1SM 340}

(3) WHAT DID CHRIST COME TO THIS EARTH TO PROVIDE ABUNDANTLY TO ALL WHO WILL ACCEPT IT?

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come

that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

(John 10:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Peter 1:11; Romans 5:5; Hebrews 6:17, 18

This life is what we must have, and we must have it more abundantly. God will breathe this life into every soul that dies to self and lives to Christ. But entire self-renunciation is required. Unless this takes place, we carry with us the evil that destroys our happiness. But when self is crucified, Christ lives in us, and the power of the Spirit attends our efforts.

I wish we could be what God would have us--all light in the Lord. We need to reach a higher standard, but we can never do this until self is laid on the altar, until we let the Holy Spirit control us, molding and fashioning us according to the divine similitude. {OHC 21}

He [the believer] may die, as Christ died, but the life of the Saviour is in him. His life is hid with Christ in God. "I am come that they might have life," Jesus said, "and that they might have it more abundantly." He carries on the great process by which believers are made one with Him in this present life, to be one with Him throughout all eternity. {Mar 301}

(4) LIKE A LOVING SHEPHERD, WHAT DOES THE LORD DO FOR EVERY SOUL AS IF THEY WERE THE ONLY ONE FOR WHICH HE DIED?

for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

(Luke 19:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 5:32; 15:4-7; Ezekiel 34:16; Matthew 10:6; 18:11

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 cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, "Follow Me," and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth.

"He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.... And the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice." The Eastern shepherd does not drive his sheep. He depends not upon force or fear; but going before, he calls them. They know his voice, and obey the call. So does the Saviour-Shepherd with His sheep. The Scripture says, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Through the prophet, Jesus declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." He compels none to follow Him. "I drew them," He says, "with cords of a man, with bands of love." Psalm 77:20; Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4. {DA 480}

(5) WHEN, IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST, WE SEE MERCY, TENDERNESS, COMPASSION, AND LOVE, WHOSE CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES ARE WE ALSO SEEING?

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? (John 14:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 12:45; 14:20; Colossians 1:15

In viewing the holiness and glory of the God of the universe, we are terrified, for we know that His justice will not permit Him to clear the guilty. But we need not remain in terror; for Christ came to the world to reveal the character of God, to make plain to us His paternal love toward His adopted children. We are not to estimate the character of God by the stupendous works of nature alone, but by the simple, lovely life of Jesus, who presented Jehovah as more merciful, more compassionate, more tender, than our earthly parents.

Jesus presented the Father as one to whom we could give our confidence and present our wants. When we are in terror of God, and overwhelmed with the thought of His glory and majesty, the Father points us to Christ as His representative. What you see revealed in Jesus, of tenderness, compassion, and love, is the reflection of the attributes of the Father. The cross of Calvary reveals to man the love of God. Christ represents the Sovereign of the universe as a God of love. By the mouth of the prophet He said, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). {HP 18}

(6) WHAT CAN WE HAVE, IF WE CHOOSE TO RECEIVE IT, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF

CHRIST'S GRACE AND THE SHEDDING OF HIS BLOOD?

*In Him we have redemption through
His blood, the forgiveness of sins, ac-
cording to the riches of His grace
(Ephesians 1:7 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Psalm 130:7, 8; Mat-
thew 26:28; Romans 3:24

The Lord of life and glory clothed
His divinity with humanity to demon-
strate to man that God through the gift
of Christ would connect us with Him.
Without a connection with God no one
can possibly be happy. Fallen man is to
learn that our Heavenly Father cannot
be satisfied until His love embraces the
repentant sinner, transformed through
the merits of the spotless Lamb of God.

The work of all the heavenly intelligenc-
es is to this end. Under the command of
their General they are to work for the
reclaiming of those who by transgres-
sion have separated themselves from
their Heavenly Father. A plan has been
devised whereby the wondrous grace
and love of Christ shall stand revealed
to the world. In the infinite price paid
by the Son of God to ransom man, the
love of God is revealed. This glorious
plan of redemption is ample in its pro-
visions to save the whole world. Sinful
and fallen man may be made complete
in Jesus through the forgiveness of
sin and the imputed righteousness of
Christ. {AG 99}

**(7) IF WE ACCEPT HIS WOUNDS
FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HIS
BRUISES FOR OUR INIQUITIES,
AND HIS CHASTISEMENT FOR
OUR PEACE, WHAT WILL HIS**

STRIPE OF SUFFERING BRING TO OUR SOUL?

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:4-12; 1 Peter 2:24, 25

Imagine, if possible, the nature and degree of Christ's sufferings. This suffering in humanity was to prevent the outpouring of the wrath of God upon the whole of those for whom Christ died. Yea, for the church this great sacrifice will be efficacious throughout eternity. Can we compute the amount of her transgression in figures? Impossible. Then who can approach unto a conception of what Christ has endured when standing in the place of surety for His church ...? [He was] the only One who could bear the strokes in behalf of the sinner and because of His innocence not be consumed.... In the sacrifice of God's only-begotten Son is demonstrated the awful glory of divine justice and holiness.

By pledging His own life Christ has made Himself responsible for every man and woman on the earth. He stands in the presence of God, saying, "Father, I take upon Myself the guilt of that soul. It means death to him if he is left to bear it. If he repents he shall be forgiven. My blood shall cleanse him from all sin. I gave My life for the sins of the world." {HP 42}

(8) WHAT IS OUR PART TO DO THAT WE MAY BE CLEANSED

FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND COVERED BY HIS ROBE?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 2:38; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 43:25, 26

It may seem to you that you are sinful and undone; but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled; for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us. {3SM 152}

What inexpressible love has the Saviour manifested toward the children of men! Not only does He take off the brand of sin, but He cleanses and purifies the soul, clothing it in the robe of His own righteousness, which is without spot, woven in the loom of heaven. He not only lifts the curse from the sinner, but brings him into oneness with Himself, reflecting upon him the bright beams of His righteousness. He is welcomed by the heavenly universe, accepted in the beloved Son of God. What glory can fallen man, through repentance and faith, bring back to God! {HP 51}

**(9) HOW DOES CHRIST CALL
EACH OF HIS “SHEEP” WHICH**

REVEALS HIS UNIQUE LOVE AND CONCERN FOR EACH?

To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (John 10:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 10:27, 28; Exodus 33:17; Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 139:17

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 cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, "Follow Me," and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth.

The Eastern shepherd does not drive his sheep. He depends not upon force or fear; but going before, he calls them. They know his voice, and obey the call. So does the Saviour-Shepherd with His sheep. The Scripture says, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Through the prophet, Jesus declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." He compels none to follow Him. "I drew them," He says, "with cords of a man, with bands of love." Ps. 77:20; Jer. 31:3; Hosea 11:4.

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads

the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him. {DA 480}

I am thankful that God draws me to Him in a loving, patient, kind and rational way and doesn't use Satan's method of force.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so grateful that, through God's gift of Christ, the ransom has been paid for my rescue. I accept this amazing immortal inheritance that He so graciously offers to all who will accept it.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose, by the grace of God, to turn away from pride selfishness and accept the blessings and princely gifts He offers in both this life and the life to come.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I hear Christ's loving call to me personally and choose to lay my life on the altar of self sacrifice. I ask and allow His will to be lived out through my life abundantly.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 9

Looking to the Cross

(1) HOW DOES SCRIPTURE DESCRIBE THE TREATMENT THAT JESUS ENDURED BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US?

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 2:23, 24; Acts 8:32, 33

In looking to Christ, we shall see that His love is without a parallel, that He has taken the place of the guilty sinner, and has imputed unto him His spotless righteousness. When the sinner sees his Saviour dying upon the cross under the curse of sin in his stead, beholding His pardoning love, love awakes in his heart. The sinner loves Christ, because Christ has first loved him, and love is the fulfilling of the law. The repenting

soul realizes that God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The Spirit of God works in the believer’s soul, enabling him to advance from one line of obedience to another, reaching on from strength to greater strength, from grace to grace in Jesus Christ. {1SM 374}

My Father loves you with a love so unbounded that He loves Me the more because I have given My life to redeem you. He loves you, and He loves Me more because I love you, and give My life for you. . . . Well did the disciples understand this love as they saw their Saviour enduring shame, reproach, doubt, and betrayal, as they saw His agony in the Garden, and His death on Calvary’s cross. This is a love the depth of which no sounding can ever fathom. As the disciples comprehended it, as their perception took hold of God’s divine compassion, they realized that there is a sense in which the sufferings of the Son were the sufferings of the Father. {TMK 69}

(2) IF WE DO NOT DWELL ON THE PERPLEXITIES OF LIFE AND INSTEAD LOOK TO JESUS AS OUR SAVIOUR, EXAMPLE, AND CHARACTER MODEL, WHAT WILL HE AUTHOR AND FINISH IN US?

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 45:22; Micah 7:7; Psalm 34:5, 6

As God's children, it is our privilege ever to look up, keeping the eye of faith fixed on Christ. As we constantly keep Him in view, the sunshine of His presence floods the chambers of the mind. The light of Christ in the soul-temple brings peace. The soul is stayed on God. All perplexities and anxieties are committed to Jesus. As we continue to behold Him, His image becomes engraved on the heart, and is revealed in the daily life. {FLB 248}

We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the Pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to Him; for He is all-wise. As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the Hope of Glory. {RH, 3/9/1905}

(3) WHAT DO WE RECEIVE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE AND IS THE GREATEST THEME ON WHICH OUR MINDS CAN DWELL?

O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption. (Psalms 130:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 111:9; Colossians 1:14

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Our only hope is perfect trust in the blood of Him who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come. Oh, we do not comprehend the value of the atonement! If we did, we would talk more about it. The gift of God in His beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of His law, and still save the transgressor. Why should man not study the theme of redemption? It is the greatest subject that can engage the human mind. If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their faith would be strengthened to appropriate the merits of His shed blood, and they would be cleansed and saved from sin. {ST, 12/30/1889}

(4) WHAT FOUR FOUNDATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS LOVE WERE DEMONSTRATED BY CHRIST AT THE CROSS WHEN HE UNSELFISHLY AND VOLUNTARILY LAID DOWN HIS LIFE AS OUR DIVINE SUBSTITUTE?

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face. (Psalms 89:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 45:6, 7; 97:2; 145:17; Deuteronomy 32:4

Voluntarily our divine Substitute bared His soul to the sword of justice, that we might not perish but have everlasting life. Said Christ, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17, 18). No man of earth or angel of heaven could have paid the penalty for sin. Jesus was the only one who could save rebellious man. In Him divinity and humanity were combined, and this was what gave efficiency to the offering on Calvary’s cross. At the cross mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. {1SM 322}

Demonstrations of unselfish love such as Jesus’ voluntary offering of Himself to redeem mankind became added reasons for the Father’s love. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth (Rev. 13:8). The resurrection of Jesus was as much a part of the eternal plan as the crucifixion. Jesus would pass under the dominion of death for but a brief period (Ps. 16:10; cf. Acts 2:31, 32) and then come forth glorified to be the resurrection and the life (John 11:25) and to be man’s intercessor (Heb. 7:25). As a result of His humiliation the Father would highly exalt Him and give Him a name above every name (Phil. 2:9). {5BC 1006}

(5) IF WE STRIVE TO COMPREHEND THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION AND THE CROSS, LIKE JOHN, WHAT WILL WE TAKE JOY IN PROCLAIMING TO THE WORLD?

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:35, 36; 1 Peter 1:19, 20

When the attention is fastened on the cross of Christ, the whole being is ennobled. The knowledge of the Saviour's love subdues the soul, and lifts the mind above the things of time and sense. Let us learn to estimate all temporal things in the light that shines from the cross. Let us strive to fathom the depths of humiliation to which our Saviour descended in order to make man the possessor of eternal riches. As we study the plan of redemption, the heart will feel the throb of the Saviour's love, and will be ravished by the charms of His character.

It is the love of Christ that makes our heaven. But when we seek to tell of this love, language fails us. We think of His life on earth, of His sacrifice for us; we think of His work in heaven as our advocate, of the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him; and we can but exclaim, "O the heights and depths of the love of Christ!" As we linger beneath the cross, we gain a faint conception of the love of God, and we say, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." But in our contemplation of Christ, we are only lingering round the edge of a love that is measureless. His love is like a vast ocean, without bottom or shore.

In all true disciples this love, like sacred fire, burns on the altar of the heart. It was on the earth that the love of God was revealed through Jesus. It is on the earth that His children are to let this

love shine out through blameless lives. Thus sinners will be led to the cross, to behold the Lamb of God. {LHU 248}

(6) WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE LOOK TO CHRIST AND BEHOLD HIS GLORY, HIS LOVELY CHARACTER, AND THE DIMENSIONS OF HIS MATCHLESS LOVE?

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:29; 12:2

Look to Christ, behold the attractive loveliness of His character, and by beholding you will become changed into His likeness. The mist that intervenes between Christ and the soul will be rolled back as we by faith look past the hellish shadow of Satan and see God's glory in His law, and the righteousness of Christ.

Satan is seeking to veil Jesus from our sight, to eclipse His light; for when we get even a glimpse of His glory, we are attracted to Him. Sin hides from our view the matchless charms of Jesus; prejudice, selfishness, self-righteousness, and passion blind our eyes, so that we do not discern the Saviour. Oh, if we would by faith draw nigh to God, He would reveal to us His glory, which is His character, and the praise of God would flow from human hearts and be sounded by human voices. Then we would forever cease to give glory to Satan by sinning against God and talking

doubt and unbelief. We should no longer stumble along, grumbling and mourning, and covering the altar of God with our tears. {MS 16, 1890}

(7) LIKE PAUL, ON WHAT TREMENDOUS THEME SHOULD OUR LIPS ENTHUSIASTICALLY SPEAK AND OUR MINDS CONSTANTLY DWELL?

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 3:17-19

What a theme for meditation is the sacrifice that Jesus made for lost sinners! “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}. How shall we estimate the blessings thus brought within our reach? Could Jesus have suffered more? Could He have purchased for us richer blessings? Should it not melt the hardest heart when we remember that for our sakes He left the happiness and glory of heaven and suffered poverty and shame, cruel affliction and a terrible death? Had He not by His death and resurrection opened for us the door of hope, we should have known nothing but the horrors of darkness and the miseries of despair. In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been rescued. We cannot measure how much deeper our afflictions would have been, how much greater our woes, had not Jesus encircled us with His human

arm of sympathy and love, and lifted us up. {5T 316}

(8) LIKE PAUL, UPON WHAT THEME CAN THOSE WHO ACCEPT SALVATION IN CHRIST ENTHUSIASTICALLY BOAST?

*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
(Galatians 6:14 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Romans 1:6; Jeremiah 9:23, 24; Philippians 3:3

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are coldhearted, and appear as if frozen, in the cause of God. Here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. Upon this theme it is sin to be calm and unimpassioned. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotion. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully comprehend. The length, the breadth, the height, the depth, of such amazing love we cannot fathom. The contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour's love should fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him

crucified.” We also may look toward Calvary and exclaim: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” {2T 212}

(9) WHAT WILL WE SPEND ETERNITY, ALONG WITH THE SAINTS, TRYING TO COMPREHEND?

may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:18-19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 103:11-13

It is the love of Christ that makes our heaven. But when we seek to tell of this love, language fails us. We think of His life on earth, of His sacrifice for us; we think of His work in heaven as our advocate, of the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him; and we can but exclaim, “O the heights and depths of the love of Christ!” As we linger beneath the cross, we gain a faint conception of the love of God, and we say, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” But in our contemplation of Christ, we are only lingering round the edge of a love that is measureless. His love is like a vast ocean, without bottom or shore.

In all true disciples this love, like sacred fire, burns on the altar of the heart. It was on the earth that the love of God was revealed through Jesus. It is on the earth that His children are to let this love

shine out through blameless lives. Thus sinners will be led to the cross, to behold the Lamb of God. {RH, 5/6/1902}

(10) WHAT WILL BE THE WORDS OF PRAISE THROUGHOUT ETERNITY FROM EVERY CREATURE OF THE UNIVERSE AS THEY TRY TO GRASP THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CROSS?

“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 4:9, 10

In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. The length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of redeeming love are but dimly comprehended. The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages, new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended, and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost. {AG 98}

(11) WHAT WILL THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS AND ALL THE REDEEMED CAST BEFORE THE

THRONE OF GOD AS THEY SING THEIR SONGS OF PRAISE?

the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: (Revelation 4:10 NKJV)

The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space--the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore--humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart, and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. As the nations of the saved look upon their Redeemer and behold the eternal glory of the Father shining in His countenance; as they behold His throne, which is from everlasting to everlasting, and know that His kingdom is to have no end, they break forth in rapturous song: "Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God, by His own most precious blood!" {AG 98}

As I grow in knowledge of the treatment that Christ endured both physically and mentally for me I see His love is without parallel as He took my place as the guilty sinner.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to look always to Christ keeping my eye of faith fixed on Him and trust Him to be the Author and Finisher of my faith in Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am amazed how the plan of redemption so clearly reveals both the justice and love of God. That He would send His Son to redeem a hopeless sinner like me at such a high price is truly an expression of incomprehensible love. In calvary I see the perfect balance of righteousness, justice, and mercy.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Like Paul, I choose to dwell on the marvelous theme of Christ crucified and tell the world of His tremendous love for them.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I look forward to spending eternity at the feet of Jesus ever searching and ever learning in effort to comprehend God's love.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I long for the day that I can cast my crown at the feet of Jesus in awe of His love.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 10

Christ's Gift of Love

(1) AS WE SEARCH SCRIPTURE FOR TRUTH AND LEARN OF CHRIST'S REDEEMING LOVE, LIKE THE DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 8:32; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 104:34

Truth in Christ and through Christ is measureless. The student of Scripture looks, as it were, into a fountain that deepens and broadens as he gazes into its depths. Not in this life shall we com-

prehend the mystery of God's love in giving His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The work of our Redeemer on this earth is and ever will be a subject that will put to the stretch our highest imagination. Man may tax every mental power in the endeavor to fathom this mystery, but his mind will become faint and weary. The most diligent searcher will see before him a boundless, shoreless sea.

The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained. Its height and breadth and depth pass our knowledge. We may task our imagination to the utmost, and then we shall see only dimly the outlines of a love that is unexplainable, that is as high as heaven, but that stooped to the earth to stamp the image of God on all mankind.

Yet it is possible for us to see all that we can bear of the divine compassion. This is unfolded to the humble, contrite soul. We shall understand God's compassion just in proportion as we appreciate His sacrifice for us. As we search the word of God in humility of heart, the grand theme of redemption will open to our research. It will increase in brightness as we behold it, and as we aspire to grasp it, its height and depth will ever increase. {COL 128-129}

(2) WHEN ALL HOPE WAS LOST, WHAT AMAZING THING DID CHRIST DO THAT REVEALED BOTH HIS AND THE FATHER'S GREAT LOVE FOR US?

“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. (John 10:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 10:15; Hebrews 2:9; Isaiah 53:7-12

When all hope was excluded from Adam and Eve in consequence of transgression and sin, when justice demanded the death of the sinner, Christ gave Himself to be a sacrifice for the sin of the world. The world was under condemnation. Christ became substitute and surety for man. {FE 283}

None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption; for only He who was in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it manifest. Nothing less than the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in behalf of fallen man could express the Father's love to lost humanity.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He gave Him not only to live among men, to bear their sins, and die their sacrifice. He gave Him to the fallen race. Christ was to identify Himself with the interests and needs of humanity. He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is “not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father's throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed--the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness. {SC 14}

**(3) AS WE EVEN ATTEMPT TO
COMPREHEND THE MASTER
ARTIST'S GIFTS IN NATURE**

AND HIS INDIVIDUAL CARE FOR EACH OF US, LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT WILL BE OUR RESPONSE?

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. (Psalms 139:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 139:1-5, 17; Isaiah 55:9

In the world to come Christ will lead the redeemed beside the river of life and will teach them wonderful lessons of truth. He will unfold to them the mysteries of nature. They will see that a master hand holds the world in position. They will behold the skill displayed by the great Artist in coloring the flowers of the field, and will learn of the purposes of the merciful Father, who dispenses every ray of light, and with the holy angels the redeemed will acknowledge in songs of grateful praise God's supreme love to an unthankful world. Then it will be understood that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {ML 361}

(4) WHAT DOES CHRIST DO TO PREPARE THE HEART OF EVERY CHILD OF GOD ON EARTH TO RECEIVE THE AMAZING GIFT OF SALVATION THAT HE OFFERS?

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." (John 12:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 2:17; John 6:44

Christ came to manifest the love of God to the world, to draw the hearts of all men to Himself. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up

from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). The first step toward salvation is to respond to the drawing of the love of Christ. {1SM 323}

(5) WHAT IS THE GIFT GOD GIVES US THROUGH CHRIST THAT, IF WE ACCEPT, ALLOWS HIM TO IMPART HIS PEACE AND FORGIVENESS AND LEAD IN OUR LIVES?

Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 11:18; Ezekiel 36:26-32

God sends message after message to men, entreating them to repentance, that He may forgive, and write pardon against their names. Shall there be no repentance? Shall His appeals be unheeded? Shall His overtures of mercy be ignored, and His love utterly rejected? Oh, then man will cut himself off from the medium through which he may gain life eternal; for God only pardons the penitent!

By the manifestation of His love, by the entreating of His Spirit, He woos men to repentance; for repentance is the gift of God, and whom He pardons He first makes penitent. The sweetest joy comes to man through his sincere repentance toward God for the transgression of His law, and through faith in Christ as the sinner’s Redeemer and Advocate.

It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the mani-

festation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself, and this is life eternal. {1SM 323}

(6) TO WHAT GRACIOUS INVITATION FROM CHRIST MUST WE FIRST RESPOND BEFORE WE EXPERIENCE TRUE REPENTANCE?

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
(Matthew 11:28 NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 8:32; John 6:37

Who is desirous of becoming truly repentant? What must he do?--He must come to Jesus, just as he is, without delay. He must believe that the word of Christ is true, and, believing the promise, ask, that he may receive.

When sincere desire prompts men to pray, they will not pray in vain. The Lord will fulfill His word, and will give the Holy Spirit to lead to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He will pray and watch, and put away his sins, making manifest his sincerity by the vigor of his endeavor to obey the commandments of God. With prayer he will mingle faith, and not only believe in but obey the precepts of the law. He will announce himself as on Christ's side of the question. He will renounce all habits and associations that tend to draw the heart from God. {1SM 393}

(7) THOUGH ONLY ONE OF MANY, WHAT GIFT WAS CHRIST'S GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE FOR FALL-

EN MAN WHO ARE SUFFERING THE CURSE OF SIN?

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (Ephesians 5:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 10:11, 15; Romans 5:6-9

The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. The world that God had made was blighted with the curse of sin and inhabited by beings doomed to misery and death. There appeared no escape for those who had transgressed the law. Angels ceased their songs of praise. Throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin that sin had wrought.

The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin--sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race. {PP 63}

(8) WHAT HAS JESUS PROMISED TO EVERY UNWORTHY REPENTANT SINNER THAT COMES TO HIM?

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. (John 6:37 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:39; 10:28, 29

But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is still the same mighty Redeemer. Then grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this--never. {MH 65}

...When the repenting sinner comes to Christ, conscious of his guilt and unworthiness, realizing that he is deserving of punishment, but relying on the mercy and love of Christ, he will not be turned away. The pardoning love of God is appropriated, and joyful gratitude springs up in his heart for the infinite compassion and love of his Saviour. That provision was made for him in the councils of heaven before the foundation of the world, that Christ should take upon Himself the penalty of man's transgression and impute to him His righteousness, overwhelms him with amazement. {OHC 78}

(9) THROUGH WHAT ACT OF TENDER COMPASSION DID CHRIST REVEAL HIS INEXPRESSIBLE, UNPARALLELED LOVE FOR EACH OF US?

*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
(1 John 3:16 NKJV)*

Related Texts: 1 John 4:9, 10; John 6:51, 57; 10:15

When the mind is drawn to the cross of Calvary, Christ by imperfect sight is discerned on the shameful cross. Why did He die? In consequence of sin. What is sin? The transgression of the law. Then the eyes are open to see the character of sin. The law is broken but cannot pardon the transgressor. It is our schoolmaster, condemning to punishment. Where is the remedy? The law drives us to Christ, who was hanged upon the cross that He might be able to impart His righteousness to fallen, sinful man and thus present men to His Father in His righteous character. {1SM 341.2}

Study day and night the character of Christ. It was His tender compassion, His inexpressible, unparalleled love for your soul, that led Him to endure all the shame, the revilings, the abuse, the misapprehensions of earth. Approach nearer Him, behold His hands and His feet, bruised and wounded for our transgressions. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Lose no time, let not another day pass into eternity, but just as you are, whatever your weakness, your unworthiness,

your neglect, delay not to come now.... The call of Jesus to come to Him, the presentation of a crown of glory that fadeth not away, the life, the eternal life that measures with the life of God, has not been of sufficient inducement to lead you to serve Him with your undivided affections. {TMK 56}

(10) FOR WHOM DID CHRIST BEAR THE OVERWHELMING, AGONIZING CURSE OF SIN?

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:29; 4:42; Isaiah 53:6

Man has not been made a sin-bearer, and he will never know the horror of the curse of sin which the Saviour bore. No sorrow can bear any comparison with the sorrow of Him whom the wrath of God fell with overwhelming force. Human nature can endure but a limited amount of test and trial. The finite can only endure the finite measure, and human nature succumbs; but the nature of Christ had a greater capacity for suffering; for the human existed in the divine nature, and created a capacity for suffering to endure that which resulted from the sins of a lost world.

The agony which Christ endured, broadens, deepens, and gives a more extended conception of the character of sin, and the character of the retribution which God will bring upon those who continue in sin. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ to the repenting, believing sinner (MS 35, 1895).

Our Lord says, Under conviction of sin, remember that I died for you. When op-

pressed and persecuted and afflicted for My sake and the gospel's, remember My love, so great that for you I gave My life. When your duties appear stern and severe, and your burdens too heavy to bear, remember that for your sake I endured the cross, despising the shame. When your heart shrinks from the trying ordeal, remember that your Redeemer liveth to make intercession for you. {DA 659}

(11) WHEN WE ARE IN WHAT TYPE OF CONDITION DOES THE LORD SO WILLINGLY DEMONSTRATE HIS UNMERITED GIFT OF GRACE TO US?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 2:4-7; 1 Timothy 1:16

Not because we first loved Him did Christ love us; but “while we were yet sinners” He died for us. He does not treat us according to our desert. Although our sins have merited condemnation, He does not condemn us. Year after year He has borne with our weakness and ignorance, with our ingratitude and waywardness. Notwithstanding our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His Holy Word, His hand is stretched out still.

Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow His grace upon us, not because we are worthy, but because we are so utterly unworthy. Our only claim to His mercy is our great need. {MH 161}

(12) WHEN THE AMAZING GIFT OF THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IS PREACHED, WHOSE ATTENTION DOES IT DRAW?

...those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

The plan of redemption, by which the merciful divine-human Redeemer rescued man from the thralldom of sin, is beyond the comprehension of men or of angels. It is indeed a mystery so surpassing, so grand, so sublime, that we can never hope fully to understand it.

Christ's sacrifice for fallen man has no parallel. It is the most exalted, sacred theme on which we can meditate. Every heart that is enlightened by the grace of God is constrained to bow with inexpressible gratitude and adoration before the Redeemer for His infinite sacrifice. {HP 14}

I am thankful that Christ, the only One who knew the height and depth of the love of God, became one of us to reveal His love to us.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so thankful that Christ, the Son of God, was touched with love and pity for me and was willing to pay the price of the broken law and take my guilt and shame upon Himself and redeem me from the depths of my misery.

Circle: Yes Undecided

As I gaze into the proverbial fountain of Christ's love it deepens and broadens as I gaze into its depths. I am beginning to

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

[illegible]



Lesson 11

Christ's Promise of Peace

(1) BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE OF HOPE DID CHRIST GIVE TO HIS FOLLOWERS THROUGHOUT THE AGES?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:28; 17:24; Matthew 25:34

The promise of Christ's second coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end," would bid them welcome to His presence in the heavenly kingdom.

Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and

honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25;34. {AA 33-34}

(2) WHOM HAS CHRIST PROMISED TO SEND TO BE OUR COMFORT AND CONTINUALLY ABIDE IN US UNTIL HIS RETURN?

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— (John 14:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:26; Acts 13:52; Romans 5:5

The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy.

None need abandon themselves to discouragement and despair. Satan may come to you with the cruel suggestion, “Yours is a hopeless case. You are irredeemable.” But there is hope for you in Christ. God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. Whatever difficulties we labor under, which weigh down soul and body, He waits to make us free. {MH 249}

(3) TO WHOM WILL BE GIVEN THE FULLEST MEASURE OF THE COMFORTER (HOLY SPIRIT)?

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (Acts 5:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 16:7-14

Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people “to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive. {DA 672}

There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. {8T 19}

(4) WHAT PRECIOUS GIFT DOES CHRIST PROMISE TO GIVE US IF WE WELCOME HIM AS AN ABIDING GUEST IN OUR LIFE?

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 16:33; Psalm 29:11; Galatian 5:22; Ephesians 2:16-18; Luke 1:79

When we receive Christ as an abiding guest in the soul, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Saviour's life on earth, though lived in the midst of conflict, was a life of peace. While angry enemies were constantly pursuing Him, He said, "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. No storm of human or satanic wrath could disturb the calm of that perfect communion with God. And He says to us, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest." John 14:27; Matthew 11:29. Bear with Me the yoke of service for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, and you will find the yoke easy and the burden light. {MB 15.2}

(5) FOLLOWING CHRIST'S EXAMPLE IN THIS VERSE, WHAT MUST WE REMEMBER ABOUT SELF SO THAT IT DOESN'T DESTROY OUR PEACE?

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (John 5:30 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:5; 14:10; 8:28

It is the love of self that destroys our peace. While self is all alive, we stand ready continually to guard it from mortification and insult; but when we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult.

“Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, R.V.

Happiness drawn from earthly sources is as changeable as varying circumstances can make it; but the peace of Christ is a constant and abiding peace. It does not depend upon any circumstances in life, on the amount of worldly goods or the number of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of living water, and happiness drawn from Him can never fail. {MB 16}

(6) TO WHOM DOES THE LORD GIVE THE PROMISE TO KEEP IN PERFECT PEACE?

You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 5:1; 3:17, 18; Isaiah 59:8

Men and women enjoying the religion (relationship) of Jesus Christ will not be uneasy, restless, discontented, changeable; the peace of Christ in the heart will give solidity to character.

You must not let anything rob your soul of peace, of restfulness, of the assurance that you are accepted just now. Appropriate every promise; all are yours on condition of your complying with the Lord's prescribed terms. Entire surrender of your ways, which seem so very wise, and taking Christ's ways, is the secret of perfect rest in His love. The soul consecrated to the service of Christ has a peace that the world cannot give or take away. {ML 176}

(7) WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT IF WE DWELL ON HEAVENLY THINGS AND CHOOSE TO ALLOW CHRIST TO DWELL IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH?

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (Ephesians 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 57:15; Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 2:20

Remember, in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. If Christ is abiding in our hearts by faith, we shall, by beholding the manner of His life, seek to be like Jesus--pure, peaceable, and undefiled. We shall reveal Christ in our character. We will not only receive and absorb light but will also diffuse it. We

will have more clear and distinct views of what Jesus is to us. The symmetry, loveliness, and benevolence that were in the life of Jesus Christ will be shining forth in our lives. {TMK 178.5}

...When Jesus is abiding in the heart by faith, the lessons which Christ has given us will be practiced. We will have such exalted views of Jesus Christ that self will be abased. Our affections will center in Jesus, our thoughts will be strongly drawn heavenward. Christ will increase, I will decrease.

The mind must be trained to dwell upon heavenly things. Humility will come as the result of discerning the loveliness of Jesus Christ. Dwelling upon Christ's excellencies of character, we shall see the offensive character of sin and will by faith grasp the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We will cultivate the virtues that dwell in Jesus, that we may reflect to others a representation of His character. When we look at the cross of Calvary, we will not exalt self, but keep constantly in view our unworthiness and how much our salvation cost heaven; we will discern Christ's matchless love. {TDG 261}

(8) IF WE, BY CONVICTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, SEEK TO COMPREHEND THE UNFATHOMABLE DIMENSIONS AND TO KNOW OF CHRIST'S LOVE, WITH WHAT WILL WE BE FILLED?

may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:18-19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:38, 39; Ephesians 2:4-7

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. {1MCP 251}

(9) WHAT DOES CHRIST PROMISE IF WE SEEK HIM--THE BREAD OF LIFE AND THE LIVING WATER?

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:48-51; Revelation 22:17

No human agent can supply that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. But Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” Revelation 3:20; John 6:35.

As we need food to sustain our physical strength, so do we need Christ, the Bread from heaven, to sustain spiritual life and impart strength to work the works of God. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigor, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ, submitting to Him and depending wholly upon Him.

As the weary traveler seeks the spring in the desert and, finding it, quenches his burning thirst, so will the Christian thirst for and obtain the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain. {MB 18-19}

(10) WHAT PROMISE DOES CHRIST OFFER TO THE WEARY AND HEAVY BURDENED IF THEY WILL COME TO HIM?

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
(Matthew 11:28 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Matthew 11:29, 30

Jesus invites the weary and care-laden sons and daughters of Adam to come to Him, and lay on Him their heavy burdens. But many who hear this invitation, while sighing for rest, yet press on the rugged path, hugging their bur-

dens close to their heart. Jesus loves them, and longs to bear their burdens and themselves also in His strong arms. He would remove the fears and uncertainties that rob them of peace and rest; but they must first come to Him, and tell Him the secret woes of their heart. He invites the confidence of His people as the proof of their love for Him. The gift of the humble, trusting heart is more precious to Him than all the wealth that riches can bestow. If they would only come to Him in the simplicity and confidence with which a child would come to His parents, the divine touch of His hands would relieve them of their burdens.

Jesus, our compassionate Saviour, is the way, the truth, and the life. Why will we not accept His gracious offer of mercy, believe His words of promise, and not make the way of life so hard?... The ways of Christ are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. If we have made rough paths for our feet, and taken heavy burdens of care in laying up for ourselves treasures upon the earth, let us now change, and follow the path Jesus has prepared for us. {ST 3-17-1887}

(11) WHAT DOES CHRIST PROMISE TO THOSE WHO SURRENDER THEIR SOULS TO HIS KEEPING?

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD
forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is
everlasting strength. (Isaiah 26:3-4
NKJV)*

Related Texts: John 14:27; 16:33;
Psalm 85:7, 8

Heaven is to begin on this earth. {NP} Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Isaiah 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory—character—of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.

As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. {FLB 367}

I am thankful for the promise that Christ will one day soon come to welcome us home to inherit the kingdom He is preparing for those who choose to be there.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so grateful that Christ sent the Comforter to abide with me and lead me to the city of God. I pray, by the grace of

*Christ, that I may be faithful that I may
one day enter in.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my decision to accept the promised blessing that brings all other blessings in its train and live my life wholly consecrated to God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I desire the peace that Christ promises me and choose to surrender self--the destroyer of all peace and consecrate myself to the service of Christ which brings the peace that the world cannot give or take away.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Lesson 12

Our Value in Christ

(1) SINCE CHRIST SO LOVINGLY BOUGHT US BACK AT SO HIGH A PRICE, WITH WHAT SHOULD WE DESIRE TO BRING HIM GLORY?

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 7:23; 10:31

This is where human beings stand today. Christ has bought us with His life, and we belong to Him. All our powers, physical, mental, and spiritual, belong to Him; and to withhold from Him that which is His own is robbery. {HP 42}

The Lord would have us value our souls according to the estimate--as far as we can comprehend it--that Christ has placed upon them.... Jesus died that He might redeem man from eternal ruin.

Then we are to hold ourselves as property purchased. “Ye are not your own.” “Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). All our powers of mind and soul and body are the Lord’s. Our time belongs to Him. We are to place ourselves in the very best possible condition to do His service, keeping constantly in connection with Christ, and considering daily the costly sacrifice made for us that we should be made the righteousness of God in Him. {HP 60}

(2) WHAT TWO SYMBOLISMS IN THIS VERSE ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THE LORD’S LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FOLLOWERS?

*For as a young man marries a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you; And as
the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
So shall your God rejoice over you.
(Isaiah 62:5 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Jeremiah 3:14; Romans 7:4; Revelation 19:7-9; 2 Corinthians 11:2

In the Bible the sacred and enduring character of the relation that exists between Christ and His church is represented by the union of marriage. The Lord has joined His people to Himself by a solemn covenant, He promising to be their God, and they pledging themselves to be His and His alone. He declares: “I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.” Hosea 2:19. And, again: “I am married unto you.” Jeremiah 3:14. And Paul employs the same figure in the New Testament

when he says: “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:2. {GC 381}

(3) IF WE ALLOW JESUS CHRIST AS LORD OF OUR LIFE, WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE PROMISE WE WILL BECOME THROUGH “HIM WHO LOVED US”?

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Romans 8:37 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 4:4; Jude 24

Our ransom has been paid by our Saviour. No one need be enslaved by Satan. Christ stands before us as our all-powerful helper. “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:17, 18).

Those who are adopted into the family of God are transformed by His Spirit. Self-indulgence and supreme love for self are changed for self-denial and supreme love for God. No man inherits holiness as a birthright, nor can he, by any methods that he can devise, become loyal to God. “Without me,” Christ says, “ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Human righteousness is as “filthy rags.” But with God all things are possible. In the strength of the Redeemer, weak, erring man can become more than conqueror over the evil that besets him. {1SM 309-310}

(4) WHO ARE CONSIDERED TO TRULY BE ABRAHAM'S SEED WHICH IS SPIRITUAL "ISRAEL"?

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 3:28; 3:16

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. Galatians 3:6-9.

The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham, but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not true children of his. Only those who are spiritually in harmony with him are reckoned as true descent. {TDG 183}

(5) WHAT BEAUTIFUL THREE PART REDEMPTIVE CLAIM HAS THE LORD MADE ON THOSE CHOOSING TO BECOME SPIRITUAL ISRAEL?

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. (Isaiah 43:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 3:6; Psalm 102:18; Isaiah 44:22

Of Christ's relation to His people, there is a beautiful illustration in the laws given to Israel. When through poverty a Hebrew had been forced to part with his patrimony, and to sell himself as a bond-servant, the duty of redeeming him and his inheritance fell to the one who was nearest of kin. See Lev. 25:25, 47-49; Ruth 2:20. So the work of redeeming us and our inheritance, lost through sin, fell upon Him who is "near of kin" unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our kinsman. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. "Fear not," He says, "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." "Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Isaiah 43:1, 4.

Christ loves the heavenly beings that surround His throne; but what shall account for the great love wherewith He has loved us? We cannot understand it, but we can know it true in our own experience. And if we do hold the relation of kinship to Him, with what tenderness should we regard those who are brethren and sisters of our Lord! Should we not be quick to recognize the claims of our divine relationship? Adopted into the family of God, should we not honor our Father and our kindred? {DA 327}

(6) IF WE, WITH TRUE REPENTANCE, CONFESS OUR SINS, WHAT CAN WE HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE CHRIST WILL DO?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13

Many allow their minds to dwell upon their unworthiness as though this was a virtue. It is a hindrance to their coming to Jesus in full assurance of faith. They should feel their unworthiness, and because of this--because of their sinfulness-- should feel the necessity of coming to the Saviour, who is their worthiness and who will be their righteousness if they repent and humble themselves. Their unworthiness is a self-evident fact. Jesus Christ's worthiness is a sure thing. Then let every doubting soul take hope and courage, because he has One who is worthy to be his Saviour. His only hope of salvation is to lay hold by faith of a worthiness which he has not but which will be supplied by Jesus Christ our righteousness. {MS 21, Sept. 9, 1889}

(7) WHEN WE AS SINNERS REALIZE THAT OUR HOPE OF GLORY IS IN CHRIST AND DIE TO SELF, LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL, WHAT WILL WE PROCLAIM?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:24; 6:14; Romans 6:4-6

Christ, the precious Saviour, is to be the Christian's all in all. Every holy

thought, every pure desire, every god-like purpose, is from Him who is the light, the truth, and the way. Christ is to live in His representatives by the Spirit of truth.... Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).... Under the mighty impulse of His love He took our place in the universe and invited the Ruler of all things to treat Him as a representative of the human family. He identified Himself with our interests, bared His breast for the stroke of death, took man’s guilt and its penalty, and offered in man’s behalf a complete sacrifice to God. By virtue of this atonement He has power to offer to man perfect righteousness and full salvation. Whosoever shall believe on Him as a personal Saviour shall not perish but have everlasting life. {HP 65}

(8) WHAT REVEALS THAT THE LOVE OF GOD IS BEING PERFECTED IN US?

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. (1 John 2:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:27; Luke 11:28; Revelation 12:17

He that abideth in Christ is perfected in the love of God, and his purposes, thoughts, words, and actions are in harmony with the will of God expressed in the commandments of His law. There is nothing in the heart of the man who abides in Christ that is at war with any precept of God’s law. Where the Spirit

of Christ is in the heart, the character of Christ will be revealed, and there will be manifested gentleness under provocation, and patience under trial. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” Righteousness can be defined only by God’s great moral standard, the Ten Commandments. There is no other rule by which to measure character. {RC 59.4}

(9) BECAUSE OF CHRIST’S SELF-SACRIFICING, SELF-RENOUNCING, AND REDEEMING LOVE, WHAT DID HE DO TO OBTAIN OUR ETERNAL REDEMPTION?

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 1:3, 4

Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look”, and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God. {AG 45}

(10) WHEN WE ACCEPT CHRIST’S AMAZING INVITATION TO SAL-

VATION, WHAT ARE WE NOT SAVED BY AND WHAT ARE WE SAVED BY?

not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:8-10, 16; Isaiah 57:12

God desires us to trust in Him who justifieth the ungodly. His reward is given not according to our merit but according to His own purpose, “which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Eph. 3:11. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:5. And for those who trust in Him He will do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Eph. 3:20.

Not the amount of labor performed or its visible results but the spirit in which the work is done makes it of value with God. Those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were thankful for an opportunity to work. Their hearts were full of gratitude to the one who had accepted them; and when at the close of the day the householder paid them for a full day’s work, they were greatly surprised. They knew they had not earned such wages. And the kindness expressed in the countenance of their employer filled them with joy. They never forgot the goodness of the householder or the generous compensation they had received. Thus it is with the sinner who, knowing his unworthiness, has entered the Master’s vineyard at the eleventh hour. His time of service seems so short,

he feels that he is undeserving of reward; but he is filled with joy that God has accepted him at all. He works with a humble, trusting spirit, thankful for the privilege of being a co-worker with Christ. This spirit God delights to honor.

The Lord desires us to rest in Him without a question as to our measure of reward. When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service. It is true that in a subordinate sense we should have respect to the recompense of reward. God desires us to appreciate His promised blessings. But He would not have us eager for rewards nor feel that for every duty we must receive compensation. We should not be so anxious to gain the reward as to do what is right, irrespective of all gain. Love to God and to our fellow men should be our motive. {COL 397-398}

I am grateful that, through His blood and His righteousness in me by faith, that I am considered the spiritual seed of Abraham and may become a conqueror and over comer.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I thank and praise the Lord Jesus for His great love for me that was so great that He paid the ultimate price. It is my desire to bring Him glory in every part of my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My heart is filled with love for Christ for valuing me so much that He became my redeeming kinsman into the family of God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to not doubt and dwell on my value but rather on Christ's worthiness and lay hold by faith on the worthiness supplied by Jesus Christ my righteousness and Saviour.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Lesson 13

Abiding in God's Love

(1) WHEN, BY GOD'S GRACE, WE CHOOSE TO ABIDE IN LOVE, WHAT IS THE RESULT?

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:12; 1 Corinthians 2:9

Whenever we maintain ourselves in the atmosphere of love, it follows that we must be maintaining ourselves in the presence of God. Because we dwell in love, we dwell in God, who is love (v. 8). To abide continually in the realm of love toward God and men, in the face of contrary influences, calls for spiritual stamina that can be sustained only by constant communion with the Lord. {7BC 668}

All who have tasted the joys of this mutual indwelling with the God of love

know that the reward is well worth the effort. Satan knows it too, and is clever enough not to attempt a direct denial of its value. Instead, he paints many lesser good things in glowing colors and leads us to center our thoughts upon them, even if only for a brief moment. Once he can thus divert our attention from God, he often succeeds in leading the mind along to harmful thoughts of self and others. Before we know it or even realize our danger, we are harboring thoughts of resentment, with the result that love and God have both been driven from our hearts. It is an old technique, but it is still all too successful!

Our best defense is a deliberate and constant centering of the mind upon the blessings we have enjoyed at the hand of God (Psalm 63:6; 139:17, 18). The memory of what God has done for us, of what fellowship with Him has meant, is also strengthened when we tell others of our joys. Such testimonies encourage our brethren and strengthen our determination to maintain the connection between ourselves and Heaven (Malachi 3:16). {MH 100}

(2) HOW DOES THE LOVE WE SHOW TO OTHERS REFLECT ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:8; 2:4, 5; 3:16, 17

The life of him in whose heart Christ abides, will reveal practical godliness. The character will be purified, elevated, ennobled, and glorified. Pure doctrine

will blend with works of righteousness; heavenly precepts will mingle with holy practices.

It is the fragrance of our love for our fellow men that reveals our love for God. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toil that the welfare of Israel (others) is promoted. God upholds and strengthens the one who is willing to follow in Christ's way. {AA 560}

It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christ-like love for his brethren. He who loves God and his neighbor is filled with light and love. God is in him and all around him. Christians love those around them as precious souls for whom Christ has died. There is no such thing as a loveless Christian; for "God is love," and "hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." {MS 133, 1899}

(3) TO WHOM DOES THIS VERSE ADVISE US TO CONSTANTLY LOOK IN CONTEMPLATION OF MERCY, IMMEASURABLE LOVE, AND ETERNAL LIFE?

keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 1:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 12:1, 2; Micah 7:7

In the contemplation of Christ we linger on the shore of a love that is measure-

less. We endeavor to tell of this love, and language fails us. We consider His life on earth, His sacrifice for us, His work in heaven as our advocate, and the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him, and we can only exclaim, O the height and depth of the love of Christ! “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 4:10; 3:1.

In every true disciple this love, like sacred fire, burns on the altar of the heart. It was on the earth that the love of God was revealed through Christ. It is on the earth that His children are to reflect this love through blameless lives. Thus sinners will be led to the cross to behold the Lamb of God. {AA 333, 334}

(4) WHAT IS OUR TWO PART ROLE IN AN ABIDING CONNECTION WITH THE LORD THAT WE MAY STAND COMPLETE IN HIS LOVE?

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 11:29, 30; Ephesians 6:11-18

All the plan of redemption is expressed in these precious words: “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christ actually bore the punishment of the sins of the world, that His righteousness might be imputed

to sinners, and through repentance and faith they might become like Him in holiness of character. He says, “I bear the guilt of that man’s sins. Let Me take the punishment and the repenting sinner stand before Thee innocent.” The moment the sinner believes in Christ, he stands in the sight of God uncondemned; for the righteousness of Christ is his: Christ’s perfect obedience is imputed to him. But he must cooperate with divine power, and put forth his human effort to subdue sin, and stand complete in Christ. {FE 429}

(5) LIST THREE MORE WAYS JAMES GIVE THAT, DONE BY THE GRACE OF THE LORD, WILL HELP US STAY CONNECTED IN AN ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM?

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:8 NKJV)

(6) IF WE CONSTANTLY ABIDE BY BEHOLDING GOD’S GLORY [HIS CHARACTER OF LOVE], BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, INTO WHAT WILL WE BE CHANGED?

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:2; Titus 3:5, 6

The manifestation of God’s love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through

faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. Looking unto Jesus and trusting in His merits we appropriate the blessings of light, of peace, of joy in the Holy Ghost. And in view of the great things which Christ has done for us, we are ready to exclaim: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”

Brethren and sisters, it is by beholding that we become changed. By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour, by contemplating the perfection of the divine character and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, we are to be transformed into the same image. Then let us not gather together all the unpleasant pictures--the iniquities and corruptions and disappointments, the evidences of Satan’s power--to hang in the halls of our memory, to talk over and mourn over until our souls are filled with discouragement. A discouraged soul is a body of darkness, not only failing himself to receive the light of God, but shutting it away from others. Satan loves to see the effect of the pictures of his triumphs, making human beings faithless and disheartened. {5T 744}

(7) WHEN WE LOVE AND TRUST GOD ENOUGH TO SUBMIT OUR WILL TOTALLY TO HIS WILL, WHAT IS THE RESULT?

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 143:10; Matthew 7:21; John 7:17; Romans 12:2

Pure religion has to do with the will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power, which works in the children of men unto obedience to God, or unto disobedience....

You cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire, but you can control the will, and you can make an entire change in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you will be hid with Christ in God, and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from God that will hold you fast to His strength; and a new light, even the light of living faith, will be possible to you. But your will must cooperate with God's will.

By steadfastly keeping the will on the Lord's side, you will bring every emotion ... into captivity to the will of Jesus. You will then find your feet on solid rock. It will take, at times, every particle of willpower that you possess, but it is God that is working for you, and you will come forth from the molding process a vessel unto honor. {RC 294}

**(8) WHAT MUST WE KNOW,
LOVE AND HAVE ABIDING IN
US TO BE ABLE TO ABIDE IN
THE FATHER AND HIS SON JE-
SUS?**

*I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.
(1 John 2:21 NKJV)*

Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what

you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:18; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:10

The Bible is not studied as much as it should be; it is not made the rule of life. Were its precepts conscientiously followed, and made the basis of character, there would be steadfastness of purpose that no business speculations or worldly pursuits could seriously influence. A character thus formed, and supported by the Word of God, will abide the day of trial, of difficulties, and dangers. The conscience must be enlightened, and the life sanctified by the love of the truth received into the heart, before the influence will be saving upon the world.

What is needed is men of action for the time, prompt, determined, firm as a rock to principle, and prepared to meet any emergency. Why we are so weak, why there are so many irresponsible men among us, is because they do not connect with God; they have not an indwelling Saviour, and do not feel the love of Christ ever fresh and new.... No earthly relationship is as strong as this love. Nothing can compare with it. {RH, August 28, 1879}

(9) WHEN WE ARE TRULY ABIDING IN GOD'S LOVE, HOW WILL OUR LOVE BE MANIFESTED?

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in

tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:17-18 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 2:16; 3:11, 12; Proverbs 3:27, 28

Every individual, by his own act, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish His spirit and follow His example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience. We must, each for himself, choose Christ, because He has first chosen us. This union with Christ is to be formed by those who are naturally at enmity with Him. It is a relation of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud heart. This is close work, and many who profess to be followers of Christ know nothing of it. They nominally accept the Saviour, but not as the sole ruler of their hearts. {FLB 135}

(10) BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, WHAT HAS GOD GIVEN THAT WE CAN “HIDE” IN OUR HEART TO INSPIRE AND EQUIP US FOR VICTORY OVER SIN?

*Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
(Psalms 119:11 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Colossians 3:16; 1 John 2:14

The Word of God in the heart both inspires and equips the soldier of the cross to fight the good fight (see on Eph. 6:17). It reveals the fallen state of man, the craft and malice of Satan, the saving power of Christ exerted through the Holy Spirit, the high standard men are to reach through devotion to it, and the glorious reward of the overcomer. The

Saviour Himself used the written Word in His struggle with the tempter (Matt. 4:1–11). Fighting man's battle as a man, the Saviour had no keener weapon than the words which the Holy Spirit had inspired for just such occasions (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). It is only as Christians follow Christ's example, filling their memory with God's precious Word and following its counsel, that they can gain the victory over self and sin. {7BC 641}

(11) HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT GOD'S LOVE IS BEING PERFECTED IN US AND THAT WE ARE TRULY ABIDING IN HIM?

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:3, 4; Proverbs 8:32-36; Revelation 12:17; John 15:10

We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:5, 6. Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." 1 John 3:7. Righteousness is defined by the stan-

dard of God's holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai. {SC 61}

(12) IF WE ABIDE IN THE LOVE OF THE LORD MOMENT BY MOMENT, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. (1 John 3:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3;9; 2:28; John 15:4-7

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” He feels that he is the purchase of the blood of Christ and bound by the most solemn vows to glorify God in his body and in his spirit, which are God's. The love of sin and the love of self are subdued in him. He daily asks: “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts the service of Jesus as the truest freedom. The law of God is his delight. Instead of seeking to bring down the divine commands, to accord with his deficiencies, he is constantly striving to rise to the level of their perfection. {5T 220-221}

This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly

receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us. {5T 229}

(13) AS WE DRAW NEARER TO CHRIST AND REALIZE THAT WE FALL SHORT, WHAT PROMISE HAS HE GIVEN US THAT WE CAN CLAIM?

being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; (Philippians 1:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 2:13: 1 John 1:9; Hebrews 8:10

There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. And do not forget the words of Christ, "The Father Himself loveth you." John 16:27. He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ.

Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance. {SC 64-65}

(14) IF WE ACCEPT CHRIST'S LOVE AND ALLOW HIM IN OUR LIFE, WHAT WONDERFUL ASSURANCE DOES THIS TEXT GIVE US ABOUT OUR ETERNAL LIFE?

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:12-13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:23; John 1:12; 3:36

To have the Son means so to believe on Him that He becomes to us all that His name implies: a Saviour, a Lord, One anointed to be our King (see on John 1:12; 5:24). It means to have Christ dwelling in the heart as the supremely honored Guest (see on Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Rev. 3:20). {7BC 677}

It is my desire to dwell in the atmosphere of love which is in God's presence.

Circle: *Yes Undecided*

It is my desire for God to input His love into me that I may truly love others in a real practical way. I want the fragrance of love to be revealed in my humble, diligent, and faithful compassion and service for others.

Circle: *Yes Undecided*

I choose to look constantly to Christ in contemplation of His mercy, immeasurable love and so thankful for the gift of eternal life He has provided for me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to surrender my will totally to the Lord that He may abide in me and live out His righteousness of loving Him and other s within me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Lesson 14

Our Love for God

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST DO FOR THE JOY OF OUR SALVATION AND TO WIN OUR LOVE?

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:19; John 3:16, 17; 1 Peter 3:18

The cross of Calvary appeals to us in power, affording a reason why we should love our Saviour, and why we should make Him first and last and best in everything. We should take our fitting place in humble penitence at the foot of the cross. Here, as we see our Saviour in agony, the Son of God dying, the just for the unjust, we may learn lessons of meekness and lowliness of mind. Behold Him who with one word could

summon legions of angels to His assistance, a subject of jest and merriment, of reviling and hatred. He gives Himself a sacrifice for sin. When reviled, He threatens not; when falsely accused, He opens not His mouth. He prays on the cross for His murderers. He is dying for them; He is paying an infinite price for every one of them. He bears the penalty of man's sins without a murmur. And this uncomplaining victim is the Son of God. His throne is from everlasting, and His kingdom shall have no end.

Come, you who are seeking your own pleasure in forbidden joys and sinful indulgences, you who are scattering from Christ, look upon the cross of Calvary; behold the royal victim suffering on your account, and while you have opportunity be wise, and seek the fountain of life and true happiness. Come, you who complain and murmur at the little inconveniences and the few trials you must meet in this life, look on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. He turned from His royal throne, His high command, and, laying aside His divinity, clothed Himself with humanity. For our sakes He was rejected and despised; He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Can you, beholding by the eye of faith the sufferings of Christ, tell your trials, your tale of woe? {LHU 233}

(2) WHAT DOES JOHN ADMONISH US TO “BEHOLD” AND IS THE FIRST STEP IN FALLING IN LOVE WITH GOD?

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the

world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:12; Romans 8:14-16

When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe the love of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, “No, it cannot be described.” We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in His exaltation to the throne of God, He might also exalt those who believe in Him, to a seat with Him upon His throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in Him, shall be made whole. {FE 179.4}

(3) WHAT IS THE SECOND AND THIRD STEP IN DISCERNING GOD’S LOVE FOR US SO THAT WE MAY FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM?

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:16; Psalm 31:19; 36:7-10

The one thing essential for us in order that we may receive and impart the forgiving love of God is to know and believe the love that He has to us. 1 John 4:16. Satan is working by every deception he can command, in order that we may not discern that love. He will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous that the Lord will not have respect unto our prayers and will not bless and save us. In ourselves we can see nothing but weakness, nothing to recommend us to God, and Satan tells us that it is of no use; we cannot remedy our defects of character. When we try to come to God, the enemy will whisper, It is of no use for you to pray; did not you do that evil thing? Have you not sinned against God and violated your own conscience? But we may tell the enemy that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

When we feel that we have sinned and cannot pray, it is then the time to pray. Ashamed we may be deeply humbled, but we must pray and believe. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Timothy 1:15. Forgiveness, reconciliation with God, comes to us, not as a reward for our works, it is not bestowed because of the merit of sinful men, but it is a gift unto us, having in the spotless righteousness of Christ its foundation for bestowal. {MB 115.1}

(4) IF WE ALLOW HIM, WHAT HAS CHRIST PROMISED TO DO TO OUR STONE COLD HEARTS SO THAT WE MAY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO LOVE HIM AND OTHERS?

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 31:33; 32:39, 40; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 11:19-21

The grace of Jesus Christ alone can change the heart of stone to a heart of flesh, and make it alive unto God. Men may perform great deeds in the eyes of the world; their achievements may be many and of a high order in the sight of men, but all the talent, all the skill, all the ability of the world will fail to transform the character and make a degraded child of sin a child of God, an heir of heaven. Men have no power to justify the soul, to sanctify the heart. Moral disease cannot be healed save through the power of the great Physician.

The highest gift of heaven, even the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is alone able to redeem the lost. What gratitude, what love, should fill our hearts as we contemplate the love of God! The heart should be softened and subdued as we meditate upon the risk that Jesus took in order that man might be elevated and restored. The world's Redeemer endured sufferings commensurate to all the guilt of a lost world. The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross is a consideration that surpasses all the overwhelming power of sin; and when a sense of sin presses upon the heart of the sinner, and the burden seems intolerable, Jesus invites him to look to him and live. There is power in Christ to cleanse the soul. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” {ST, May 2, 1892 par. 8}

(5) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM IF WE DILIGENTLY SEEK GOD?

I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. (Proverbs 8:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 29:13; Deuteronomy 4:29-31; Matthew 6:33, 34

Seek me early. This means to seek so diligently that one rises early in the morning to press the search. Because of the distractions of worldly affairs, and the deceitfulness of the human heart, persevering diligence is required to maintain a saving relationship with true wisdom and with God. {3BC 972}

(6) WHAT MEANS MORE TO GOD THEN OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES, AND IS OUR HIGHEST CALLING AND PRIVILEGE?

And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; Joshua 22:5; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27

To love God in the sense here stated and implied is to dedicate to His service one's entire being, the affections, the life, the physical powers, and the intel-

lect. This kind of “love” is “the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10), the kind of “love” in which a person will abide when he sets out, by the grace of Christ, to “keep” the “commandments” of Christ (John 14:15; 15:9, 10). In fact, God sent His Son into the world with the specific purpose of making it possible for us to keep “the law” in this sense and in this spirit. It is thus that “the righteousness of the law” is to be “fulfilled in us” (Rom. 8:3, 4). He who truly “knows” God will keep “his commandments” because the “love” of God is “perfected” in him (1 John 2:4–6) {5BC 782}

To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient one, with the whole strength and mind and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {RC 51}

(7) WHAT IS THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF OUR LOVE THAT CAN BE GIVEN FOR THE AMAZING SACRIFICE CHRIST HAS MADE FOR US?

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (John 14:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:15; 1 John 5:3

Christ attaches a weight of importance to the obedience of His people to the commandments of God. They are to have an intelligent knowledge of them, and bring them into their daily life. Man cannot keep the commandments of God, only as he is in Christ, and Christ in

him. And it is not possible for him to be in Christ, having light on His commandments, while disregarding the least of them. By steadfast, willing obedience to His word, they evidence their love for the Sent of God.

Not to keep the commandments of God is not to love Him. None will keep the law of God unless they love Him who is the only begotten of the Father. And nonetheless surely; if they love Him, they will express that love by obedience to Him. All who love Christ will be loved of the Father, and He will manifest Himself to them. In all their emergencies and perplexities they will have a helper in Jesus Christ. {TDG 142}

Let a living faith run like threads of gold through the performance of even the smallest duties. Then all the daily work will promote Christian growth. There will be a continual looking unto Jesus. Love for Him will give vital force to everything that is undertaken. Thus through the right use of our talents we may link ourselves by a golden chain to the higher world. This is true sanctification, for sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God.

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. {ML 250}

(8) SINCE WE CANNOT, OF OURSELVES, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS AND OUR NATURAL INCLINATION IS TOWARDS DISOBEDIENCE, WHAT WILL GOD

DO IF, IN LOVE AND FAITH, WE WILLINGLY SUBMIT TO HIS CONVERTING POWER?

For this is the covenant that i will make with the house of israel after those days, says the lord: i will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and i will be their god, and they shall be my people. (Hebrews 8:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 10:16; Jeremiah 31:33; 32:39

The law of God condemns all selfishness, all pride of heart, every species of dishonesty, every secret or open transgression. The natural heart is not inclined to love its precepts, or obey its requirements. “It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” But genuine faith in Christ converts the heart, works a change in its attitude to the law, until it delights in the law of God. The man who manifests enmity to the law has not submitted to the converting power of God. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. Says John, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.”... {ST, March 30, 1888}

(9) WHEN OUR “RELIGION” IS LOVE-BASED AND NOT JUST A RITUAL AND THEN, BY HIS GRACE, WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, WHERE WILL WE CONTINUE TO ABIDE?

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:10 NKJV)

True religion [based on relationship] brings man into harmony with the laws of God, physical, mental, and moral. It teaches self-control, serenity, temperance. Religion ennobles the mind, refines the taste, and sanctifies the judgment. It makes the soul a partaker of the purity of heaven. Faith in God's love and overruling providence lightens the burdens of anxiety and care. It fills the heart with joy and contentment in the highest or the lowliest lot. Religion tends directly to promote health, to lengthen life, and to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings. It opens to the soul a never-failing fountain of happiness.

Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them that they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by Him who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of His creatures. The path of transgression leads to misery and destruction; but wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Proverbs 3:17. {PP 600}

(10) SINCE IN OUR OWN ABILITIES WE DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO LOVE, WHAT WILL GOD DO FOR US IF WE LET HIM?

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:5; Deuteronomy 10:16; Leviticus 26:41; Jeremiah 32:39, 40

To circumcise the heart means to quicken one's spiritual perception and make tender one's conscience. {1BC 1060}

It is God that circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord's from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised." {1SM 392}

(11) WHEN THE HEAVENLY PRINCIPLE OF LOVE FOR GOD FILLS OUR HEART, AND BY HIS SPIRIT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, HOW WILL WE TREAT HIS CHILDREN?

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. (1 John 5:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 John 1:5, 6; 2

When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action, and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates the affections. This love is not contracted, so as merely to include "me and mine," but is as broad as the world

and as high as heaven. It is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the entire life, and sheds a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we cannot but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. And if we love God with all the heart, we must love His children also. This love is the spirit of God. It is the heavenly adorning that gives true nobility and dignity to the soul. {OHC 175}

(12) WHEN WE TRULY LOVE GOD AND EXPERIENCE THE HAPPINESS THAT OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS BRINGS, WHAT THREE THINGS WILL WE DESIRE TO DO?

Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. (Proverbs 7:2-3 NKJV)

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97-98}

No man can be happy and depart from God's specified requirements, and set up a standard of his own which he decides

he can safely follow. Then there would be a variety of standards to suit the different minds, and the government taken out of the Lord's hands and human beings grasp the reins of government. The law of self is erected, the will of man is made supreme; and when the high and holy will of God is presented to be obeyed, respected, and honored the human will wants its own way...to do its own promptings, and there is a controversy between the human agent and the divine. {RC 56}

(13) WHEN WE, OUT OF LOVE AND BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, WHAT IS THE PROMISED BLESSING?

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 5:3; Deuteronomy 30:16; Psalm 37:31

The world's Redeemer is speaking to us; let us hear what He says: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). Then those who see the claims of God in His Word and do not obey, but excuse their negligence or willful disregard of God's requirements, testify by their course of action that they are not embraced in the blessed promise on condition of obedience.

They are not the ones who will have a right to the tree of life, but are with the willful transgressors of the law of God to whom Jesus says, "Depart from me,

all ye workers of iniquity” (Luke 13:27)
{TDG 207}

(14) ONCE WE KNOW AND EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT WILL WE BE OUR TESTIMONY AND SONG?

*I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness, And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.
(Psalms 7:17 NKJV)*

It is our privilege to rest in an active, living faith in Christ as the Life-giver. It is our privilege to comprehend with all saints, what is the length and depth and height, and to know the love of God which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God. Let us contemplate Christ as the One in whom all fullness dwells. Beholding Him as our personal Saviour, we shall appreciate the value of His saving grace. We should think about Jesus more than we do. We should let His praise be in our hearts. We should speak of the love that has been so abundantly expressed for us. We certainly have every reason to praise God with heart and soul and voice, saying, I will praise the Lord for His great love wherewith He hath loved me.

Lift Him up, the Christ of Calvary; lift Him up, that the world may behold Him. Talk of His goodness, sing of His love, and give Him the grateful thanks of your hearts. {UL 37}

I am so glad and blessed that for the joy of our salvation Christ endure the cross. He has won my love and I desire to make Him first, last and best in everything.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for my eyes to clearly “Behold” the manner of love that the Father has bestowed upon me in the amazing fact that He accepts me as His Child.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray that I may truly know and believe His love and that He will give me words to express this amazing love to others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I claim the Lord’s promise to remove my stone cold heart and replace it with a heart of love that I may have the capacity to love Him and others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pledge my heart to Him and choose to seek Him with all my soul, strength, and mind. To give my entire being, affections, life, physical powers, and intellect for His service.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray that by God’s grace I can experience the true religion that comes from a relationship with Him that results in His constant abiding presence in my life. I want to live in harmony with the laws of God that it will be my joy to obey His commands.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I look forward to the day that He opens the gates of the city to invite me and all who are faithful into His glorious kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 15

Obtaining the Power of God's Love

(1) WHAT DIVINE, POWERFUL GIFT HAS GOD LAVISHED UPON US, AND IF WE ALLOW, WILL MODIFY OUR CHARACTER, GOVERN OUR IMPULSES AND ENABLE US TO LOVE HIM AND OTHERS?

*We love Him because He first loved us.
(1 John 4:19 NKJV)*

Related Texts: 1 John 4:9, 10, 16-18;
Luke 7:47

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another --this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. "We love Him, because He first loved us." In the heart

renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551}

(2) WHAT DOES PURE LOVE, COMBINED WITH THE BLOOD AND THE SPIRIT, HAVE THE POWER TO DO?

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. (Proverbs 10:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 4:18; Romans 13:10

Love is power. Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. The power of wealth has a tendency to corrupt and destroy; the power of force is strong to do hurt; but the excellence value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good. Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh than the amount he doeth. Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly growth, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns. {2T 135}

Christ's love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come

in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899).

(3) WHAT THREE THINGS DOES GOD LONG TO GIVE US SO THAT WE MAY REFLECT THE IMAGE OF CHRIST AND REVEAL HIS CHARACTER TO THE WORLD?

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:15; 1 John 4:18

Whenever men reject the Saviour's invitation, they are yielding themselves to Satan. Multitudes in every department in life, in the home, in business, and even in the church, are doing this today. It is because of this that violence and crime have overspread the earth, and moral darkness, like the pall of death, enshrouds the habitations of men. Through his specious temptations Satan leads men to worse and worse evils, till utter depravity and ruin are the result. The only safeguard against his power is found in the presence of Jesus. Before men and angels Satan has been revealed as man's enemy and destroyer; Christ, as man's friend and deliverer. His Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature. It will build man up for the glory of God in body and soul and spirit. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7. He has called us "to the obtaining of the glory"—char-

acter—"of our Lord Jesus Christ;" has called us to be "conformed to the image of His Son." 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Romans 8:29. {DA 341}

(4) ONCE THE GIFT OF LOVE IS RECEIVED AND FAITHFULLY EXERCISED, WHAT CAN THE POWERFUL FLOOD WATERS OF EVIL NOT DO TO IT?

*Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods drown it. If a man
would give for love All the wealth of
his house, It would be utterly despised.
(Song of Solomon 8:7 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Isaiah 43:2; Matthew 7:24, 25

Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love. It is diffusive in its nature and quiet in its operation, yet strong and mighty in its purpose to overcome great evils. It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful.

Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjec-

tion to Himself. Wisdom and strength He could command, but the means He employed with which to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love. Suffer nothing to divide your interest from your present work until God shall see fit to give you another piece of work in the same field. Seek not for happiness, for it is never to be found by seeking for it. Go about your duty. Let faithfulness mark all your doings, and be clothed with humility. {2T 135}

(5) ONCE WE HAVE EXPERIENCED THE POWER OF CHRIST'S LOVE IN US AND SEEK MORE, HOW MUCH WILL HE INCREASE OUR CAPACITY TO LOVE?

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (Ephesians 3:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 3:16-19; Jeremiah 32:27; Romans 4:21

“Give, and it shall be given unto you” (Luke 6:38); for the word of God is “a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams of Lebanon” (Song of Solomon 4:15). The heart that has once tasted the love of Christ, cries out continually for a deeper draft, and as you impart you will receive in richer and more abundant measure. Every revelation of God to the soul increases the capacity to know and to love. The continual cry of the heart is, “More of Thee,” and ever the Spirit’s answer is, “Much more.” Romans 5:9,10. For our God delights to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20. To Jesus, who emptied

Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should “all the fullness dwell,” and “in Him ye are made full.” Colossians 1:19; 2:10 {MB 20-21}

(6) WHAT PROMISE CAN GOD TRUST US TO CLAIM WHEN THE REDEEMING POWER OF LOVE FILLS OUR HEART AND GOVERNS OUR EVERY MOTIVE?

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:22; Jeremiah 33:3; John 14:13, 14

John strove to lead the believers to understand the exalted privileges that would come to them through the exercise of the spirit of love. This redeeming power, filling the heart, would control every other motive and raise its possessors above the corrupting influences of the world. And as this love was allowed full sway and became the motive power in the life, their trust and confidence in God and His dealing with them would be complete. They could then come to Him in full confidence of faith, knowing that they would receive from Him

everything needful for their present and eternal good. “Herein is our love made perfect,” he wrote, “that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.” “And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, . . . we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” {AA 551-552}

(7) LIKE PAUL, WHAT MUST BE OUR TESTIMONY REGARDING SELF IN ORDER FOR CHRIST’S LOVE TO FLOW FROM US TO OTHERS?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:24, 25; 6:14

The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. Self is in need of being crucified. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere (Letter 97, 1898).

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {TDG 272}

(8) WHEN WE CHOOSE TO WE DIE TO SELF, WHO THEN CAN LIVE WITHIN OUR HEARTS SO THAT WE CAN TRULY LOVE OTHERS?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 6:13; Colossians 1:27

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within--when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384}

(9) IF WE ARE WALKING IN THE SPIRIT BY FAITH, WHAT IS THE FIRST FRUIT AMONG MANY THAT WE WILL EXHIBIT TO PERISHING SOULS?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, good-

ness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:2, 5; Ephesians 5:9, 10

God bids you with one hand, faith, take hold of His mighty arm, and with the other hand, love, reach perishing souls. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Follow Him. Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Walk even as He walked. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. The work you have to perform is to do the will of Him who sustains your life for His glory. If you labor for yourselves, it can profit you nothing. To labor for others' good, to be less self-caring and more in earnest to devote all to God, will be acceptable to Him and be returned by His rich grace. {2T 169-170}

(10) WHEN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE IS IMPARTED UNTO US, WITH WHAT CHRIST-LIKE METHODS WILL WE BE SUCCESSFUL IN REACHING PEOPLE?

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; (1 Peter 3:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jude 1:22; Mark 5:19

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time

were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit. {MH 143}

(11) WHAT GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM SO THAT WE CAN LOVE OTHERS WITH A SANCTIFIED LOVE AS CHRIST DID?

by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:25-27; Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 1:20

Love One Another...If this love is truly cultivated, finite will blend with finite, and all will center in the Infinite. Humanity will unite with humanity, and all will be bound up with the heart of Infinite Love. Sanctified love for one another is sacred. In this great work Christian love for one another—far higher, more constant, more courteous, more unselfish, than has been seen—preserves Christian tenderness, Christian benevolence, and politeness, and enfolds the human brotherhood in the embrace of God, acknowledging the dignity with which God has invested the rights of man. This dignity

Christians must ever cultivate for the honor and glory of God. {Letter 10, 189}

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others.

Christ's love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy. {MS 17, 1899}

I realize that the power of wealth can corrupt; the power of force can cause hurt, but the but the power of love can only result in good. I desire this power in my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that love is not an impulse, but a divine principle that can only be present where Jesus reigns. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor

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Lesson 16

Christ's Example of How to Love

(1) TO WHOM SHOULD WE LOOK AS AN EXAMPLE ON HOW TO LOVE OTHERS AND ATTRACT THEM TO CHRIST?

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: (1 Peter 2:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 16:24, 25; 10:38, 39; 11:29

Jesus, the Master, became poor that we might have eternal riches; he died that we might have life, immortal life. Should we not be willing to follow his example, and do for others as nearly as possible as he has done for us? In so doing, our own character will be disciplined and improved, our faith will grow

stronger, our zeal will become more steady and earnest, our love for God and the truth and the souls for whom Christ died will become intensified, and precious souls will be saved as the result of our labors. What greater and more ennobling work can be engaged in, than seeking to attract souls to Christ. This has been successfully done time and again by ordinary men and women, not by the most learned, eloquent or wealthy, but by the true and faithful who do their work in simplicity. One soul thus reached may, in turn, bring an army into the service of Christ. But every worker must depend wholly and constantly upon Jesus Christ for wisdom and strength. {RH, June 10, 1880}

(2) WHAT INSTRUCTION CONCERNING OUR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS DID CHRIST GIVE BY EXAMPLE AND PRECEPT?

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (John 13:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:16; Galatians 6:2; 2 John 1:5

Christ had bidden the first disciples love one another as He had loved them. Thus they were to bear testimony to the world that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory. “A new commandment I give unto you,” He had said, “That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34. At the time when these words were spoken, the disciples could not understand them; but after they had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, after His crucifixion and resurrection, and ascension to heaven,

and after the Holy Spirit had rested on them at Pentecost, they had a clearer conception of the love of God and of the nature of that love which they must have for one another. Then John could say to his fellow disciples: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” {AA 547}

God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice. But in order to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us, He has chosen to employ men to do this work.

Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others will strengthen the spirit of beneficence in the giver’s heart, ally-ing him more closely to the Redeemer of the world, who “was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.” And it is only as we fulfill the divine purpose in our creation that life can be a blessing to us. All the good gifts of God to man will prove only a curse, unless he employs them to bless his fellow men, and for the advancement of God’s cause in the earth. {RH, Dec. 7, 1886}

(3) WHAT DID CHRIST SAY WOULD GIVE THE GREATEST EVIDENCE TO THE WORLD OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM?

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35 NKJV)

Followers of great teachers reflect the characteristics of their teachers. Love

was one of the principal attributes of Jesus. Jesus' life had been a practical demonstration of love in action. A manifestation of this same kind of love by the disciples of Jesus would give evidence of their relationship and close association with their Master. It is love rather than profession that marks the Christian. {5BC 1032}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {LHU 298}

There is nothing that can so weaken the influence of the church as the lack of love.... The people of the world are looking to us to see what our faith is doing for our characters and lives. They are watching to see if it is having a sanctifying effect on our hearts, if we are becoming changed into the likeness of Christ. They are ready to discover every defect in our lives, every inconsistency in our actions. Let us give them no occasion to reproach our faith. {TMK 153}

(4) WHEN WE TRULY EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE FOR US, WHAT WILL WE REFLECT TO THE WORLD?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:14, 15; John 12:36; Romans 2:19, 20

By imparting to others the love and tenderness which God has so abundantly bestowed on us, we are to let our light shine. We should put every gift of God to the best possible use, making it a producer of good. To God we can give nothing which is not already His, but we can help the suffering ones around us. We can supply them with the necessities of this life, and at the same time speak to them of the wonderful love of God. {RC 198}

...Whoso dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love. All who have indeed become acquainted, by experimental knowledge, with the love and tender compassion of our Heavenly Father will impart light and joy wherever they may be. Their presence and influence will be to their associates as the fragrance of sweet flowers, because they are linked to God and heaven, and the purity and exalted loveliness of heaven are communicated through them to all that are brought within their influence. This constitutes them the light of the world, the salt of the earth. They are indeed saviors of life unto life, but not of death unto death. {MYP 363}

(5) WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL EACH ONE OF HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE, WRITTEN BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THAT THE WORLD MAY BE SHOWN HIS GOODNESS AND MERCY?

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:2-3 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 6:16, 17; John 13:35

The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world,” said Jesus, “even so have I also sent them into the world.” “I in them, and Thou in Me; . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17: 18, 23. The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, “Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,” “known and read of all men.” 2 Corinthians 3:3, 2.

In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ’s follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him. {SC 115}

(6) WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF FAITH THAT IS NOT DEMONSTRATED BY CHRISTLIKE WORKS OF LOVE TO OTHERS?

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (James 2:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 2:14-16

It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christlike love for his brethren. He who loves God and his neighbor is filled with light and love. God is in him and all around him. Christians love those around them as precious souls for whom Christ has died. There is no such thing as a loveless Christian; for “God is love,” and “hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” This is the fruit that is to be given back to God . {MS 133, 1899}

(7) IN WHAT TWO WAYS WILL GOD REJOICE OVER THOSE WHO EXEMPLIFY CHRIST BY HAVING THE ABIDING PRINCIPLE OF LOVE IN THEIR SOULS?

The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 65:18, 19; Jeremiah 32:41

God takes none to heaven but those who are first made saints in this world through the grace of Christ, those in whom He can see Christ exemplified. When the love of Christ is an abiding principle in the soul, we shall realize that we are hid with Christ in God.

These only who, by prayer and watchfulness and love, work the works of Christ, can God rejoice over with singing. The more fully the Lord sees the character of His beloved Son revealed in His people, the greater is His satisfaction and delight in them. God Himself and the heavenly angels rejoice over them with singing. {ML 273}

(8) WHAT QUESTION ASKED AT THE END OF THIS VERSE CONFIRMS THAT IT IS A FATAL DECEPTION TO SUPPOSE THAT A MAN CAN HAVE FAITH UNTO LIFE ETERNAL, WITHOUT POSSESSING CHRISTLIKE LOVE FOR HIS BRETHREN?

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 4:10; Acts 11:29

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another.

The qualities which it are essential for all to possess are those which marked the completeness of Christ's character—His love, His patience, His unselfish-

ness, and His goodness. These attributes are gained by doing kindly actions with a kindly heart. ... {MS 133, 1899}

(9) WHAT EXAMPLE, PRIVILEGE, AND COMMISSION DID CHRIST GIVE TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM FOR SAVING THE SPIRITUALLY LOST?

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47

Jesus looked upon the world in its fallen state with infinite pity. He took humanity upon Himself that He might touch and elevate humanity. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He reached to the very depth of human misery and woe, to take man as He found him, a being tainted with corruption, degraded with vice, depraved by sin, and united with Satan in apostasy, and elevate him to a seat upon His throne. But it was written of Him that “He shall not fail nor be discouraged,” and He went forth in the path of self-denial and self-sacrifice, giving us an example that we should follow in His steps.

We should work as did Jesus, departing from our own pleasure, turning away from Satan’s bribes, despising ease, and abhorring selfishness, that we may seek and save that which is lost, bringing souls from darkness into light, into the sunshine of God’s love. We have been

commissioned to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. We are to bring to the lost the tidings that Christ can forgive sin, can renew the nature, can clothe the soul in the garments of His righteousness, bring the sinner to His right mind, and teach him and fit him up to be a laborer together with God. {FE 199}

(10) WHEN WE ARE ABIDING IN CHRIST, WHAT WILL HE, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, GIVE US THE POWER TO DO THAT WE WILL LABOR IN LOVE FOR OTHERS?

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 1:6; Psalm 85:13

The conduct of Christians is like that of their Lord. He erected the standard, and it is left for us to say whether or not we will rally around it. Our Lord and Saviour laid aside His dominion, His riches and glory, and sought after us, that He might save us from misery and make us like Himself. He humbled Himself and took our nature that we might be able to learn of Him and, imitating His life of benevolence and self-denial, follow Him step by step to heaven. You cannot equal the copy; but you can resemble it and, according to your ability, do likewise. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Such love must dwell in your hearts, that you will be ready to give the treasures and honors of this world if thereby you may influence one soul to engage in the service of Christ. {2T 169-170}

As I read Scripture I am amazed that Christ the Master and Creator became poor that I can have eternal riches; that He died that I might have life; that He gives me the privilege and example of earnest zeal, discipline, and faith in the saving of precious souls for His kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to follow Christ's the Great Teacher's example of love, and thus demonstrate to his children what practical love in action looks like. I want to be His love letter written and delivered to the world.

Circle: Yes Undecided

As I realize the power of love and see His example, it is my hearts desire to love others as He loves me. I know it is not because God is dependent on me for the advancement of His cause that He gives me this privilege, but rather to cultivate in me a spirit of benevolence.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to abide in Christ daily that I may be filled with His Holy Spirit and be His hands and feet dedicated to consistently carry the gospel to this lost and dying world.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Lesson 17

Love in Practice

(1) WHAT GIFT FROM CHRIST DOES GOD DESIRED TO SEE IN HIS FOLLOWERS AND IS A PRECIOUS TREASURE IN HIS SIGHT?

rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Peter 3:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 4:22-24; Psalm 149:4; Isaiah 57:15

The most beautiful dress He bids us wear upon the soul. No outward adorning can compare in value or loveliness with that “meek and quiet spirit” which in His sight is “of great price.” 1 Peter 3:4. {MH 289}

Christ's gift, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is authoritatively declared by Him who can make no mistake to be of great price. We must each find out its worth for ourselves by seeking it from God. However men may estimate us, if we wear this ornament, we bear the sign of our discipleship with Christ. We are esteemed by the Most High; for the ornament we wear is in His sight of great price. This precious gem is to be sought for. {OHC 274}

(2) WHEN IT COMES TO LOVING OTHERS THE LORD DOESN'T DESIRE OUR LIP SERVICE, HOW DOES HE ASK US TO LOVE?

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 2, 3; James 2:15, 16; 1 Peter 1:22

“Let us not love in word,” the apostle writes, “but in deed and in truth.” The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life and enables God to bless his work.

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” In the heart

renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551-552}

(3) CONCISELY DESCRIBE THE EIGHT PRACTICAL WAYS LISTED IN THESE VERSES THAT WE CAN CARRY ON CHRIST'S MISSION OF LOVE TO THE WORLD?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isaiah 58:6-7 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 1:27; 3:17, 18

God requires that all of us should be self-sacrificing workers. Every part of the truth has a practical application to our daily lives. Blessed are they that hear the word of the Lord and keep it. Hearing is not enough; we must act, we must do. It is in the doing of the Commandments that there is great reward. Those who give practical demonstrations of their benevolence by their sympathy and compassionate acts toward the poor, the suffering, and the unfortunate, not only relieve the sufferers, but contribute largely to their own happiness and are in the way of securing health of soul and body. Isaiah has thus plainly described the work that

God will accept and bless His people in doing. {4T 59-60}

(4) IF WE ARE FILLED WITH THE LOVE AND SPIRIT OF CHRIST, WHAT CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE WILL BE EXHIBITED IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BELIEVERS?

fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (Philippians 2:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:16; 15:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 13:11

Let each one who claims to follow Christ esteem himself less and others more. Press together, press together! In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat. These words have been spoken to me from heaven...Let everyone seek to answer the prayer of Christ: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." Oh, what unity is this! and says Christ: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." {5T 488-489}

(5) WHEN WE ABIDE IN CHRIST'S LOVE AND HIS LOVE FLOWS THROUGH US, HOW WILL WE TREAT OTHERS?

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; (Romans 12:9-10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 2:3, 4

The Saviour's example is to be the standard of our service for the tempted and the erring. The same interest and tenderness and long-suffering that He has manifested toward us, we are to manifest toward others. "As I have loved you," He says, "that ye also love one another." John 13:34. If Christ dwells in us, we shall reveal His unselfish love toward all with whom we have to do. As we see men and women in need of sympathy and help, we shall not ask, "Are they worthy?" but "How can I benefit them?" {MH 162.2}

Every earthly blessing has come to us because of the infinite price that has been paid in our behalf. If it has cost so great a price to redeem man, so that he should not perish, but have everlasting life, how we should rejoice that we are privileged to become co-workers with Christ in saving those for whom He has given His precious life! The Lord Jesus loves those for whom He has made the greatest sacrifice. He gave His own most precious life to bring life and immortality to light to all those who should believe. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" {John 17:3}. Those who receive Christ are in copartnership with Him, and will not mistake their lifework. They will heed the words spoken by Christ. They will be guided by the Holy Spirit, and become more and more intelligent in regard to the requirements of God, and will reveal the love and grace that were revealed in the life of Christ toward those with whom He came in contact.--Review and Herald, Jan. 14, 1896. {SW 53.1}

(6) WHEN WE ARE IN UNION WITH CHRIST AS CHRIST IS

WITH THE FATHER, HOW WILL THIS DISCIPLESHIP BE REVEALED TO THE WORLD?

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:21, 23; 1 John 2:10

The union between Christ and His people is to be living, true, and unfailing, resembling the union that exists between the Father and the Son. This union is the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All true children of God will reveal to the world their union with Christ and with their brethren. Those in whose hearts Christ abides will bear the fruit of brotherly love. They will realize that as members of God’s family they are pledged to cultivate, cherish, and perpetuate Christian love and fellowship, in spirit, words, and action.

To be children of God, members of the royal family, means more than many suppose. Those who are accounted by God as His children will reveal Christ-like love for one another. They will live and work for one object,—the proper representation of Christ to the world. By their love and unity they will show to the world that they bear the divine credentials. By the nobility of love and self-denial, they will show those around them that they are true followers of the Saviour. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” {SD 293}

(7) TO WHAT CAN IT BE COMPARED WHEN WE, IN CHRIST-LIKE LOVE, SHOW ACTS OF KINDNESS AND SPEAK WORDS

OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS?

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver. (Proverbs 25:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 15:23; 24:26

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. ...

Christ's love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899).

(8) LIST CONCISELY THE 16 PRACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE AND THEREFORE OF GOD FOUND IN THESE TEXTS?

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is

not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 4:21; Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Peter 4:8

If a man will not exercise his arm, it becomes weak and deficient in muscular strength. Unless the Christian exercises his spiritual powers, he acquires no strength of character, no moral vigor. Love is a very precious plant and must be cultivated if it flourishes. The precious plant of love is to be treated tenderly (practiced), and it will become strong and vigorous and rich in fruit-bearing, giving expression to the whole character. A Christlike nature is not selfish, not unkind, and will not hurt the souls of those who are struggling with Satan's temptations. It will enter into the feelings of those who are tempted that the trials and temptations shall be so managed as to bring out the gold and consume the dross. This is the practice which God appoints to all. In this, Christ's school, all may learn their lessons daily, both teachers and pupils, to be patient, humble, generous, noble. You will all have to seek God most earnestly in prayer mingled with living faith, and the molding hand of God will bring out His own image in your character.

We have need of the rich grace of God every hour, then we will have a rich,

practical experience, for God is love. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. Give love to them that need it most. The most unfortunate, those who have the most disagreeable temperaments need our love, our tenderness, our compassion. Those who try our patience need most love. {FE 280-282}

(9) WHEN THE DIVINE LOVE OF GOD DWELLS IN THE HEART, WHAT CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTERISTIC WILL WE NOT WITHHOLD FROM THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED?

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. Every member of His church militant must manifest the same qualities, if He would join the church triumphant. The love of Christ is so broad, so full of glory, that in comparison to it, everything that men esteem as great, dwindles into insignificance. When we obtain a view of it, we exclaim, O the depth of the riches of the love that God bestowed upon men in the gift of His only-begotten Son! {FE 179.3}

Divine love makes its most touching appeals to the heart when it calls upon us to manifest the same tender compassion

that Christ manifested. That man only who has unselfish love for his brother has true love for God. The true Christian will not willingly permit the soul in peril and need to go unwarned, uncared for. He will not hold himself aloof from the erring, leaving them to plunge farther into unhappiness and discouragement or to fall on Satan's battleground. {AA 550}

(10) THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHAT MUST WE OBEY WHICH BRINGS PURIFICATION TO THE SOUL AND HELPS US TO SINCERELY LOVE ONE ANOTHER FERVENTLY?

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, (1 Peter 1:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:17, 19; 8:32

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.

The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please

him, because they appreciate his merits, but because they are Christ's purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.

The countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the heart shines out in the faces of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Truth is written there. The sweet peace of heaven is revealed. There is expressed a habitual gentleness, a more than human love. {COL 101-102}

**(11) WHEN WE CHOOSE TO
TURN THE THOUGHTS AWAY
FROM SELF AND FOLLOW
THE LORD'S COMMISSION OF
PRACTICAL LOVE TO OTHERS,
WHAT BLESSING COMES BACK
TO US?**

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. (Isaiah 58:7-8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6, 9-11; Proverbs 4:18

Those who do not feel that it is a religious duty to discipline the mind to dwell upon cheerful subjects will usually be found at one of two extremes:

they will be elated by a continual round of exciting amusements, indulging in frivolous conversation, laughing, and joking, or they will be depressed, having great trials and mental conflicts, which they think but few have ever experienced or can understand.... Appropriate labor, the healthy exercise of all their powers, would withdraw their thoughts from themselves.... The hands and mind should be occupied in useful labor, lightening the burdens of others; and those who are thus employed will benefit themselves also.... The mind should be drawn away from self; its powers should be exercised in devising means to make others happier and better. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). {ST, October 23, 1884}

As I read God's Word about the life of Christ, I see the beauty and value in a "gentle and quiet spirit." It is my prayer that these characteristics that are precious in God's sight will be revealed in my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I desire the gift of supreme love for God and unselfish love for others that only God can impart. May it modify my character, govern my impulses, control my passions, and ennoble my affections for the glory of Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my prayer that the world may see that I am a follower of Christ by the love and grace that I choose to allow Him to demonstrate in my life.

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

*I ask from God that I may receive the
leaven of truth in my heart that it may
regulate my desires, purify my thoughts,
and sweeten my disposition that I may
be the hands and feet of Christ to carry
forth His mission to the world.*

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

[illegible]



Lesson 18

Love Our Enemies

(1) WHAT THREE WORDS SUM UP HOW, AS CHRISTIANS, WE ARE CALLED TO TREAT OUR ENEMIES?

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (Matthew 5:44 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:20, 21; Exodus 23:4; Psalm 109:4

Give love to them that need it most. The most unfortunate, those who have the most disagreeable temperaments need our love, our tenderness, our compassion. Those who try our patience need the most love. We pass through the world only once; any good thing we can do, we should do most earnestly, untiringly, with the same spirit as is stated of Christ in His work. He will not fail nor

be discouraged. The rough, stubborn, sullen dispositions are the ones who need help the most. How can they be helped? Only by that love practiced in dealing with them which Christ revealed to fallen man. Treat them, you may, as they deserve. What if Christ had treated us thus? He, the undeserving, was treated as we deserve.

Still we are treated by Christ with grace and love as we did not deserve, but as He deserved. Treat some characters, as you think they richly deserve, and you will cut off from them the last thread of hope, spoil your influence and ruin the soul. Will it pay? No, I say no, a hundred times no. Bind these souls who need all the help it is possible for you to give them close to a loving, sympathizing, pitying heart, overflowing with Christlike love, and you will save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. Had we not better try the love process? {FE 281-282}

Are not the principles here brought to view often overlooked? The amount of evil that might be avoided by following them is by no means small: for sometimes the hearts of persecutors are susceptible of divine impressions, as was the heart of the apostle Paul before his conversion. It is always best to endeavor to carry out the whole will of God as He has specified. He will take care of the results.--MS. 148, 1902. {MM 256}

(2) AFTER CHRIST TOLD US TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES, WHAT THREE SPECIFIC METHODS DID HE DESCRIBE?

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to

those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (Matthew 5:44 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:14, 20; Luke 6:28

Just before making this requirement, the Saviour said to His disciples: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.” We are to love our enemies with the same love that Christ manifested toward His enemies by giving His life to save them. Many may say, “This is a hard commandment; for I want to keep just as far as I can from my enemies.” But acting in accordance with your own inclination would not be carrying out the principles that our Saviour has given. “Do good,” He says, “to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” This scripture illustrates one phase of Christian perfection. While we were yet enemies of God, Christ gave His life for us. We are to follow His example.

Let us daily represent Christ’s great love by loving our enemies as Christ loves them. If we would thus represent the grace of Christ, strong feelings of hatred would be broken down and into many hearts genuine love would be brought. Many more conversions than are now seen would follow. {MM 253-254}

(3) WHEN WE RETURN GOOD FOR EVIL BY GIVING FOOD AND DRINK TO OUR ENEMIES, WHAT EFFECT DOES IT HAVE ON THEIR CONSCIENCE?

Therefore “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” (Romans 12:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:35; 1 Peter 3:9

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

If you had laid their wrong course of action before them, they would have braced themselves in stubbornness and defiance. But to be treated in tenderness and consideration they feel more deeply their own course of action, and contrast it with yours. Then . . . you occupy vantage ground; and when you show a solicitude for their souls, they know that you are no hypocrite, but that you mean every word you say.
{MM 209-210}

(4) HOW DID CHRIST REACT TOWARDS HIS ENEMIES WHO TREATED HIM WITH EVIL?

who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; (1 Peter 2:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 2:21; 3:9; Isaiah 53:7; Hebrews 12:3

The whole earthly life of Jesus was a manifestation of this principle. It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Saviour left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Isaiah 50:6. {MB 70}

(5) WHAT ACTION BY THE CHILDREN OF GOD IS HEAVENS INSIGNIA GIVING EVIDENCE TO THE WORLD THAT WE ARE PART OF GOD’S FAMILY?

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. (Luke 6:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:21

The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utter-

ly closed to God's Spirit will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate. {MB 73-75}

(6) WHAT IS PRESENT WHERE ENVY, SELFISHNESS, AND PRIDE EXISTS AND HINDERS OUR ABILITY TO UNITE IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE WITH CHRIST?

For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. (James 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 3:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 3:3

Selfishness and pride hinder the pure love that unites us in spirit with Jesus Christ. If this love is truly cultivated, finite will blend with finite, and all will center in the Infinite. Humanity will unite with humanity, and all will be bound up with the heart of Infinite Love. Sanctified love for one another is sacred. In this great work Christian love for one another—far higher, more constant, more courteous, more unselfish, than has been seen—preserves Christian tenderness, Christian benevolence, and politeness, and enfolds the human brotherhood in the embrace of God, acknowledging the dignity with which God has invested the rights of man. This dignity Christians must ever cultivate for the honor and glory of God. {Letter 10, 1897}

(7) HOW DID CHRIST SUMMARIZE IN SIMPLE, PRACTICAL TERMS HOW TO LOVE OTHERS?

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:31; Romans 13:8-10

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

Blessed results would appear as the fruit of such a course. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Here are strong motives which should constrain us to love one another with a pure heart, fervently. Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. We are not commanded to do to ourselves what we wish others to do unto us; we are to do unto others what we wish them to do to us under like circumstances. The measure we mete is always measured to us again.

Pure love is simple in its operations, and is distinct from any other principle of action. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life and frequently a blameless conversation. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions, acknowledge the present truth, and express humility and affection in an outward manner, yet the motives may be deceptive and impure; the actions that flow from such a heart may be destitute of the savor of life and the fruits of true holiness, being destitute of

the principles of pure love. Love should be cherished and cultivated, for its influence is divine. {2T 136}

(8) AS RECIPIENTS AND TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF THE GIFT OF GRACE, WHAT IS OUR COMMISSION FOR NOT ONLY OUR ENEMIES BUT ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN?

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 28:19, 20; Romans 12:6-8

As the plan of redemption begins and ends with a gift, so it is to be carried forward. The same spirit of sacrifice which purchased salvation for us will dwell in the hearts of all who become partakers of the heavenly gift. Says the apostle Peter: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Said Jesus to His disciples as He sent them forth: "Freely ye have received, freely give." In him who is fully in sympathy with Christ there can be nothing selfish or exclusive. He who drinks of the living water will find that it is "in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Spirit of Christ within him is like a spring welling up in the desert, flowing to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the water of life... {5T 730-731}

The principle of the cross of Christ brings all who believe under heavy obligations to deny self, to impart light to others, and

to give of their means to extend the light. If they are in connection with heaven they will be engaged in the work in harmony with the angels. {3T 382}

(9) WHAT ARE 5 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOD OF LOVE AND THEREFORE OF HIS CHILDREN?

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; (1 Peter 3:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Zechariah 7:9; Matthew 18:33; 1 Peter 1:22

The Word of God enjoins upon every one of His children: “Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” 1 Peter 3:8. Now unless godliness was added to patience man would not show that brotherly kindness. In His mission to our world, Christ has shown man the graces of the Spirit of God which, when accepted, fashion and mold the entire man, externally as well as internally, by abasing his pride and leading him not to esteem himself highly but to esteem his brother as precious in the sight of God because Christ paid an infinite price for his soul. When man is valued as God’s property then we will be kind, amiable, and not condescending toward him.

The religion of Jesus Christ is a system of the true heavenly politeness and leads to a practical exhibition of habitual tenderness of feeling, kindness of deportment. He who possesses godliness will also add this grace, taking a step higher on the ladder. The higher he mounts the

ladder, the more of the grace of God is revealed in his life, his sentiments, his principles. He is learning, ever learning the terms of his acceptance with God, and the only way to obtain an inheritance in the heavens is to become like Christ in character. The whole scheme of mercy is to soften down what is harsh in temper, and refine whatever is rugged in the deportment. The internal change reveals itself in the external actions. The graces of the Spirit of God work with hidden power in the transformation of character. The religion of Christ never will reveal a sour, coarse, and uncourteous action. Courtesy is a Bible virtue. The virtue of this grace of brotherly kindness characterized the life of Christ. Never was such courtesy exhibited upon the earth as Christ revealed, and we cannot overestimate its value.... {OHC 72}

(10) TO WHOM SHOULD WE SHOW ESTEEM HIGHER THEN OURSELVES AND WHOSE INTEREST SHOULD WE LOOK OUT FOR?

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:13, 14; John 15:12, 13; Hebrews 13:16; Ephesians 5:1, 2

If the Majesty of heaven could do so much to show His love for man, what ought not men to be willing to do to help one another out of the pit of darkness and suffering! Said Christ, “Love one another, as I have loved you;” not

with a greater love; for “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Our love is frequently selfish, for we confine it to prescribed limits. When we come into close union and fellowship with Christ, our love and sympathy and our works of benevolence will reach down deeper and will widen and strengthen with exercise.

The love and interest of Christ’s followers must be as broad as the world. Those who live merely for “me and mine” will fail of heaven. God calls upon you as a family to cultivate love, to become less sensitive in regard to yourselves and more sensitive to the griefs and trials of others. This selfish spirit that you have cherished all your lives is correctly represented by the priest and the Levite who passed by the unfortunate on the other side. They saw that he needed help, but purposely avoided him. {3T 529}

(11) WHAT HAS GOD BESTOWED ON ALL OF US IN ONE DEGREE OR ANOTHER FOR THE BLESSING OF OTHERS?

And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. (Matthew 25:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:6-8; 2 Corinthians 8:3

There are many souls to be brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. The prodigal is far from his Father’s house, perishing with hunger. He is to be the object of our compassion. Do you ask: “How does God regard those who are perishing in their sins?” I point you to

Calvary. God “gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Think of the Saviour’s matchless love. While we were yet sinners, Christ died to save us from eternal death.

In return for the great love wherewith Christ has loved you, You are to bring to Him your thank offering. You are to make a gratitude offering of yourself. Your time, your talents, your means--all are to flow to the world in a tide of love for the saving of the lost. Jesus has made it possible for you to accept His love and in happy cooperation with Him to work under its fragrant influence. He requires you to use your possessions in unselfish service, that His plan for the salvation of souls shall be carried forward with power. He expects you to give your undivided energies to His work. {9T 50}

(12) WHAT WONDERFUL WORDS WILL THOSE HEAR WHO, BECAUSE OF THEIR LOVE FOR CHRIST, HAVE USED THEIR TALENTS AND MEANS TO LOVE AND BLESS OTHERS?

His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ (Matthew 25:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 16:10; Mark 12:41-44

The Lord will investigate the use we have made of the talents He has entrusted to us. He has paid the wages of His own blood and His own self-denial and

sacrifice and sufferings, to secure the willing service of every soul as a laborer together with God. If only all felt their accountability to God wisely to employ the gifts in talents entrusted, what a revenue would be brought to God through Jesus Christ! The one talent may and will increase by use. The supposed lowliest gift, the humblest service, may reach minds and influence hearts that those who possess larger talents could not touch.

Now is our most favorable time to work. Individual visitation is of great value. In love for Jesus Christ and love for human souls the truth is to be carried to every family, talked of by every fireside that it is possible for you to find access to.... Bear in mind that the Holy Spirit is the worker. The human agent working for God is not alone.

Labor in perseverance, in tenderness, compassion, prayerfulness, and love will do more than sermons. The Lord Jesus, in giving His life for the saving of the world from the curse of sin, intended greater things than our eyes have yet witnessed. The Holy Spirit is waiting for channels through whom to work.... Satan will not always triumph. The Spirit of God will be poured out upon the church just as soon as the vessels are prepared to receive it. {TKH 330}

I now realize that those who need to be treated with untiring effort and kindness are the ones who deserve it the least. I ask Christ to fill me with His sympathizing, pitying, heartfelt love that I reflect Him to these individuals and all whom I come in contact with.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

Circle: *Yes* *Undecided*

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.



Lesson 19

The Effect of Love

(1) WHAT DOES “ABIDING IN THE LIGHT” MEAN, AND WHAT IS THE RESULT IF WE APPLY IT TO OUR LIVES?

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. (1 John 2:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:11; 1:5-7

He is in the light. God is constantly surrounded by light that radiates from Himself. The best that Christians can do is to walk in the rays of light that emanate from God. As a traveler will follow the light of a guide along a dark and unknown road, so the child of God will follow light from the Lord along the road of life (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8) .

If we walk in the light we walk with God, from whom the light shines, and

have fellowship not only with Him but also with all others who are following the Lord. Serving the same God, believing the same truths, following the same instructions on the pathway of life, we cannot fail to walk in unity. The slightest sign of ill will between us and our brethren should make us review our own conduct, to be sure that we are not veering away from the lighted path of life. {7BC 631}

God is love (ch. 4:8), God is light (ch. 1:5), and he who keeps on loving his brother despite circumstances that might produce hatred, must be living a life with God, and therefore dwelling in His light.

He that hateth. Such a man is a complete contrast to the loving one (v. 10). Instead of abiding, or dwelling, in God's life-giving light he dwells in spiritual darkness. {7BC 639}

(2) IF WE LOVE OTHERS FERVENTLY REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY TREAT US, WHAT WILL THIS ACCOMPLISH IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM?

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS." (1 Peter 4:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 10:12; Matthew 5:39; 1 Thessalonians 4:9

The love that suffers long and is kind will not magnify an indiscretion into an unpardonable offense, neither will it make capital of others' misdoings. The Scriptures plainly teach that the erring are to be treated with forbearance and consideration. If the right course is followed, the apparently obdurate heart

may be won to Christ. The love of Jesus covers a multitude of sins. His grace never leads to the exposing of another's wrongs unless it is a positive necessity. {CPTS 267}

(3) WHEN WE TRULY LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL OUR HEART, SOUL, MIND AND STRENGTH, HOW WILL WE WANT TO TREAT OUR NEIGHBOR?

And the second, like it, is this: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:31 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:39

It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christlike love for his brethren. He who loves God and his neighbor is filled with light and love. God is in him and all around him. Christians love those around them as precious souls for whom Christ has died. There is no such thing as a loveless Christian; for "God is love," and "hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." ... "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." This is the fruit that is to be given back to God. {MS 133, 1899}

(4) AFTER BEHOLDING THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S LAW OF LIBERTY AND LOVE, WHAT IS THE A CHRISTIAN TO DO THAT

WILL BRING BLESSINGS AND STRENGTH OF CHARACTER?

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:25 NKJV)

If a man will not exercise his arm, it becomes weak and deficient in muscular strength. Unless the Christian exercises his spiritual powers, he acquires no strength of character, no moral vigor. Love is a very precious plant and must be cultivated if it flourishes. The precious plant of love is to be treated tenderly (practiced), and it will become strong and vigorous and rich in fruit-bearing, giving expression to the whole character. A Christlike nature is not selfish, not unkind, and will not hurt the souls of those who are struggling with Satan's temptations. It will enter into the feelings of those who are tempted that the trials and temptations shall be so managed as to bring out the gold and consume the dross.

This is the practice which God appoints to all. In this, Christ's school, all may learn their lessons daily, both teachers and pupils, to be patient, humble, generous, noble. You will all have to seek God most earnestly in prayer mingled with living faith, and the molding hand of God will bring out His own image in your character. Temptations will come, but not overcome. But through grace found in opening the heart to the knock and voice of Jesus, Christian character and experience are growing more and more beautiful and heavenly.

Let us bear in mind that we are dealing with souls that Christ has purchased

with infinite cost to Himself. O tell the erring, God loves you, God died for you. Weep over them, pray with them. Shed tears over them, but do not get angry with them. They are Christ's purchased possession. Let every one seek a character that will express love in all his actions. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." It were better not to live than to exist day by day devoid of that love which Christ has revealed in His character, and has enjoined upon His children. Said Christ, "Love one another as I have loved you." We live in a hard, unfeeling, uncharitable world. Satan and his confederacy are plying every art to seduce the souls for whom Christ has given His precious life. Every one who loves God in sincerity and truth, will love the souls for whom Christ has died. {FE 280-281}

(5) WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN, WITH CHRISTLIKE LOVE, WE GIVE THE GIFT OF KINDNESS TO OTHERS?

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 15:10, 11; Proverbs 10:22; 19:17

We are not to think of reward, but of service; yet kindness shown in this spirit will not fail of its recompense. "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." While it is true that

God Himself is the great Reward, that embraces every other, the soul receives and enjoys Him only as it becomes assimilated to Him in character. Only like can appreciate like. It is as we give ourselves to God for the service of humanity that He gives Himself to us.

No one can give place in his own heart and life for the stream of God's blessing to flow to others, without receiving in himself a rich reward. The hillsides and plains that furnish a channel for the mountain streams to reach the sea suffer no loss thereby. That which they give is repaid a hundredfold. For the stream that goes singing on its way leaves behind its gift of verdure and fruitfulness. The grass on its banks is a fresher green, the trees have a richer verdure, the flowers are more abundant.

When the earth lies bare and brown under the summer's parching heat, a line of verdure marks the river's course; and the plain that opened her bosom to bear the mountain's treasure to the sea is clothed with freshness and beauty, a witness to the recompense that God's grace imparts to all who give themselves as a channel for its outflow to the world. {MB 81-82}

(6) AS BLESSED RECIPIENTS OF THE GIFT OF REDEMPTION, WHAT IS OUR PRIVILEGE AND HIGH CALLING TO DO WITH IT FOR OTHERS?

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

As the plan of redemption begins and ends with a gift, so it is to be carried forward. The same spirit of sacrifice which purchased salvation for us will dwell in the hearts of all who become partakers of the heavenly gift. Says the apostle Peter: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Said Jesus to His disciples as He sent them forth: "Freely ye have received, freely give."

In him who is fully in sympathy with Christ there can be nothing selfish or exclusive. He who drinks of the living water will find that it is "in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Spirit of Christ within him is like a spring welling up in the desert, flowing to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the water of life. It was the same spirit of love and self-sacrifice which dwelt in Christ that impelled the apostle Paul to his manifold labors. "I am debtor," he says, "both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Our Lord designed that His church should reflect to the world the fullness and sufficiency that we find in Him. We are constantly receiving of God's bounty, and by imparting of the same we are to represent to the world the love and beneficence of Christ. While all heaven is astir, dispatching messengers to every part of the earth to carry forward the work of redemption, the church of the living God are also to be co-laborers with Christ. We are members of His

mystical body. He is the head, controlling all the members of the body. Jesus Himself, in His infinite mercy, is working on human hearts, effecting spiritual transformations so amazing that angels look on with astonishment and joy.

The same unselfish love that characterizes the Master is seen in the character and life of His true followers. Christ expects that men will become partakers of His divine nature while in this world, thus not only reflecting His glory to the praise of God, but illuminating the darkness of the world with the radiance of heaven. Thus will be fulfilled the words of Christ: “Ye are the light of the world.” {5T 730-731}

(7) WHEN, FROM THE HEART, WE HAVE PRACTICED LOVE BY MINISTERING TO THE NEEDS OF THE LEAST, IN THE EYES OF HEAVEN TO WHOM HAVE WE MINISTERED?

And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ (Matthew 25:40 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 18:4, 5; 10:42; Luke 9:48

Every act, every deed of justice and mercy and benevolence, makes music in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds and numbers the performer of them with His most precious treasures. “And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, when I make up My jewels.” Every merciful act to the needy or the suffering is as though done to Jesus. Whoever succors the poor, or sympathizes with the afflicted and oppressed,

and befriends the orphan, brings himself into a more close relationship to Jesus.
{RH August 16, 1881}

(8) INSTEAD OF OUR ACTIONS OF INJUSTICES TO OTHERS, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ACTS OF HEARTFELT LOVE THAT WE WILL BE JUDGED BY IN THE FINAL JUDGMENT?

*for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’
(Matthew 25:35-36 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; Galatians 5:22, 23

Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on, but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree.... When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat at your fireside and to a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act, every deed of justice and mercy and benevolence, makes sweet music ring in heaven...

Our heavenly Father lays blessings disguised in our pathway, which some will not touch for fear they will detract from their enjoyment. Angels are waiting to see if we embrace opportunities within

our reach of doing good—waiting to see if we will bless others, that they in turn may bless us. The Lord Himself has made us to differ—some poor, some rich, some afflicted—that all may have an opportunity to develop a character. The poor are purposely permitted of God to be thus, that we might be tested and proved, and develop what is in our hearts. {TMK 335}

(9) IN THE GREAT JUDGEMENT, WHAT WILL BE THE MEASURING STICK THAT REVEALS IF WE TRULY LOVE GOD AND ARE FIT FOR HEAVEN?

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 13:34; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 4:8

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641}

The Lord is good. He is merciful and tender-hearted. He is acquainted with every one of His children. He knows just what each one of us is doing. He knows just how much credit to give to each one. Will you not lay down your credit list and your condemnation list, and leave God to do His own work? You will be given the crown of glory if

you will attend to the work that God has given you. {TSW, 5-14-1903}

(10) ON THE GREAT DAY OF JUDGMENT, WHAT BLESSED WORDS WILL BE HEARD BY THOSE WHO HAVE LOVED THOSE IN THE WORLD AS CHRIST LOVED?

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Matthew 25:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 10:24; Psalm 112:9

At the day of judgment, those who have been faithful in their everyday life, who have been quick to see their work and do it, not thinking of praise or profit, will hear the words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Christ does not commend them for the eloquent orations they have made, the intellectual power they have displayed, or the liberal donations they have given. It is for doing little things which are generally overlooked that they are rewarded. “I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat,” He says. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” {LHU 346}

When the cases of all come in review before God, the question, What did they profess? is never asked, but, What have they done? Have they been doers of the word? Have they lived for themselves? or have they been exercised in works of benevolence, in deeds of kindness, in love, preferring others before themselves, and

denying themselves that they might bless others? If the record shows that this has been their life, that their characters have been marked with tenderness, self-denial, and benevolence, they will receive the blessed assurance and benediction from Christ, “Well done,” “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” {RH 7-13-1886}

It is my hearts desire to walk in the rays of light that emanate from God as a traveler following a guide along a dark and unknown road.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that this light is love and I desire for God’s love to flow through me as a channel of light to others that I may be Christ’s coworker for the kingdom of heaven.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that love is not just an emotion but rather an action. My desire is to exercise the spiritual power of love that it may be a might power in my life that is may be like a might stream flowing out to others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that the practice of love to others not only is like a well spring in the desert to them but also flows back to the giver and brings spiritual growth. I desire this in my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is the desire of my heart to hear the blessed words from the Father, “Well

done my faithful servant enter into the joy of the Lord.”

Circle: Yes Undecided

REFERENCE RESOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

[Book code = Title, # of Volumes. year. publisher]

Publisher Information

- PPPA = Pacific Press Publishing Association (Mountain View, CA)
RHPA = Review and Herald Publishing Association (Washington, D.C.)
SPA = Southern Publishing Association (Nashville, TN)
AA = The Acts of the Apostles. 1911. PPPA.
AG = God’s Amazing Grace. 1973. RHPA.
#BC = SDA Bible Commentary: Ellen G. White Comments. 8 vols. plus supplement s. 1953-1960. RHPA.
CH = Counsels on Health. 1923. PPPA.
CME = A Call to Medical Evangelism. 1966. RHPA.
COL = Christ’s Object Lessons. 1900. RHPA.
CPTS = Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education. 1913. PPPA.
CT = Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students. 1913. PPPA.
DA or DOA = The Desire of Ages. 1898. PPPA.
FE = Fundamentals of Christian Education. 1923. SPA.
FLB = The Faith I Live By. 1958. RHPA.
FW = Faith and Works. 1979. SPA.
GC = The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan. 1911. PPPA.
HP = In Heavenly Places. 1967. RHPA.
LHU = Lift Him Up. 1988. RHPA.
Mar = Maranatha; 1976. The Lord Is Coming. RHPA.
MB = Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing. 1896. PPPA.
#MCP = Mind, Character, and Personality. 2 vols. 1977. SPA.
MH = The Ministry of Healing; Ministry of Healing. 1905. PPPA.
ML = My Life Today. 1952. RHPA.
MM = Medical Ministry. 1932. PPPA.
MS# = Manuscript
MYP = Messages to Young People. 1930. SPA.

OHC = Our High Calling. 1961. RHPA.

PK = Prophets and Kings. Conflict of the Ages Series, Volume 2; 1917, PPPA.

PP = Patriarchs and Prophets. 1890. PPPA.

RC = Reflecting Christ. 1985. RHPA.

RH = The Review and Herald. RHPA.

SC = Steps to Christ. 1892. PPPA.

ST = The Signs of the Times.

#SM = Selected Messages. 3 Vol., 1958, RHPA.

#T = Testimonies for the Church. 9 vols. 1855-1909. PPPA.

TDG = This Day With God. 1979. RHPA.

TMK = That I May Know Him. 1964. RHPA.

TSB = Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce. 1889. E.G. White Estate.

TSW = The Southern Watchman

UL = The Upward Look. 1982. RHPA.